

Brad S. Billings, PGM

GRAND SECRETARY

PO Box 446

Waco, Texas 76703



BUS: (254) 753-7395

FAX: (254) 753-2944

gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org

GRAND SECRETARY'S MONTHLY COMMUNICATION

SEPTEMBER 2026



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

- Product of the Month – Masonic License Plate, Retiring Soon
- Grand Secretary's Office – Law Books, Form 71, Secretary School, Secretaries Facebook Group
- Monthly Law Reading – Lodge Consolidations – Jeremy Johnson, PM
- Statistics – Officer Trends – Zachary Haston, PM
- Lodge Spotlight – James F. Taylor Lodge No. 169 – Backpacks for Students
- Texas Masonic Retirement Community – Family Day 2026, Saturday Oct. 10
- Footstone Ceremony – Sunday, Sept. 27
- Grand Master's Calendar of Events
- Cornerstone Leveling Ceremonies – September & October 2026
- Committee on Work Schedule – September & October 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>.

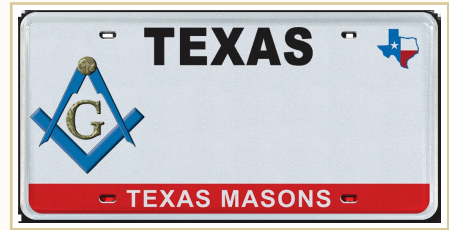
For more content from the Grand Secretary's Office, please see our official website at: <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/grand-secretary>. To stay connected with the Grand Secretary and other Secretaries across the state, see our facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1486287938821817>.

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH – MASONIC LICENSE PLATE

The Old License Plate is Retiring Soon. Order Now to be ‘Grandfathered’ in.

The current Masonic license plate is being retired in the coming months, and once it is gone, it will not be available for new customers.

Buy it now and you are grandfathered in. The plate stays yours, and you can keep renewing it year after year, long after it has left the shelf.



If you do not purchase the old plate before it is gone, you will only have the option to purchase the new design (coming soon).

For more details see the article in this month’s edition of the Texas Freemason Magazine.

If you have been meaning to put the Square and Compasses on your vehicle, this is the month to do it.

PLEASE READ

GRAND SECRETARY’S OFFICE

Law Books

We expect law books to be in stock the Tuesday after Labor Day. Watch for updates on [Texas Freemasons](#) or the [Texas Secretaries Group](#) on Facebook or check the [online store](#).

Form 71

Due Tuesday, September 15. The Lodge Minimum Audit Report, Form 71, is due in the Grand Secretary’s Office no later than September 15 (Art. 284). If your audit committee has not met yet, now is the time to get it on the calendar.

New Digital Submission

The report is submitted online, and the tips below cover the questions we hear most often.

Didn’t get the sign-in or signing email? Make sure you have entered the email GrandView has for you personally, not a lodge email. Also, it comes from noreply@forms.grandlodgeoftexas.org. Check your Spam, Promotions, and Updates folders

– it sometimes lands there. Add that address to your contacts so future emails reach your inbox. Still missing? Your Lodge Secretary can resend the link from the dashboard.

Link expired or won't open? Just request a new one – the Secretary can resend it, and the fresh link will work.

Member missing from the audit committee list? The roster syncs from GrandView on a schedule, so recent changes may take a day or two to appear. If someone eligible still isn't showing up, contact the Grand Secretary's office. Remember that the WM, Treasurer, and Secretary cannot, by previous GM Decision, be on the Audit committee.

Need help? Contact the Grand Secretary's office.

Secretary School

September 26th – Waco, TX (Central)

Time: 9 AM

Baylor Masonic Lodge No. 1235

722 Washington Ave #724, Waco, TX 76701

Save the Dates:

October 24th – Irving, TX (North)

November 7th – Houston, TX (South)

Join the Texas Lodge Secretaries Facebook Group

Secretaries, if you are not in the Texas Lodge Secretaries group on Facebook yet, come join us. It is the place to bring the questions that come with the job, from annual returns and dues to GrandView and the forms you touch once a year. Get answers from Brothers who have already worked through the same thing, share what has worked in your Lodge, and you will pick up a few ideas you had not considered.

One thing before you click: the group asks admission questions, and they are not optional. Requests that leave them blank, or answer them incorrectly, will not be admitted. Take the extra minute, answer them in full, and we will see you inside.

Join the Texas Lodge Secretaries Group

READ PORTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LODGE

MONTHLY LAW READING – LODGE CONSOLIDATIONS

In recent months, several Texas Lodges have completed consolidations. Consolidation is never an easy conversation, but when membership, attendance, or finances make it the right

choice, the Law Book provides a clear and orderly path in Title II, Chapter 8, Articles 245 through 253. Here is what the Law requires.

Art. 245. Proposal Presented at Stated Meeting. – Whenever the majority of members of the Lodge present, after all of that Lodges members having been given a twenty (20) day notice via: (1) posting outside the Lodge Room; and (2) the usual communication methods used by the Lodge’s Secretary for membership notices such as email, social media, or written newsletter, that a proposal to consolidate their Lodge will be considered at a specified stated Lodge meeting, shall at that specified stated Lodge meeting, sign a written declaration that they deem it for the best interest of Masonry to consolidate such Lodge with another specified Lodge having concurrent or adjoining jurisdiction with it, and shall present the same at a stated meeting of their own Lodge, the master shall thereupon cause the same to be read in open Lodge and entered on its minutes. (*Revised 2023*)

The process begins in the petitioning Lodge with notice to every member, followed by a majority of those present signing the declaration at the specified stated meeting. The Lodge named must have concurrent or adjoining jurisdiction. Use Masonic Form No. 20, the Declaration to Consolidate Lodge.

Article 247 then puts the Secretary to work. He transmits to the petitioned Lodge the original declaration, a certified copy of his Lodge’s proceedings, an invoice of all property and effects, and a complete list of members, including those in arrears and all Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts with their dates of initiation or passing. Under Articles 248 and 249, the petitioned Lodge reads the papers at its next stated meeting, takes the matter up as new business at the following stated meeting, and votes by ballot. The proposition fails unless at least two-thirds of the members present vote in favor.

Once the Grand Master approves, the two Lodges become one, existing under the charter and governed by the bylaws of the petitioned Lodge. Members of the petitioning Lodge become members of the petitioned Lodge, its books and records are delivered for safekeeping, its charter and seal go to the Grand Secretary, and all unfinished work and business is completed in the petitioned Lodge. All property, money, and effects pass to the petitioned Lodge, and under Article 250a any real property is conveyed in the form required by Article 340. The officers and bylaws of the petitioned Lodge are not affected.

Article 251 settles jurisdiction. The consolidated Lodge holds personal jurisdiction over all candidates elected in the petitioning Lodge, and its Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts become members as if originally members of the consolidated Lodge. Under Articles 252 and 253, the consolidation becomes effective when the Grand Master issues his certificate and it is spread upon the minutes of the petitioned Lodge, after which the Grand Secretary files the papers and conforms the records of his office.

One final note for Secretaries: under Article 318a, an endowed member whose endowed membership was not purchased in the surviving Lodge has twelve months from the date of consolidation to transfer that endowment to another Texas Lodge if he affiliates there, provided that Lodge did not purchase the endowed membership. As always, the Grand Secretary's Office stands ready to help.

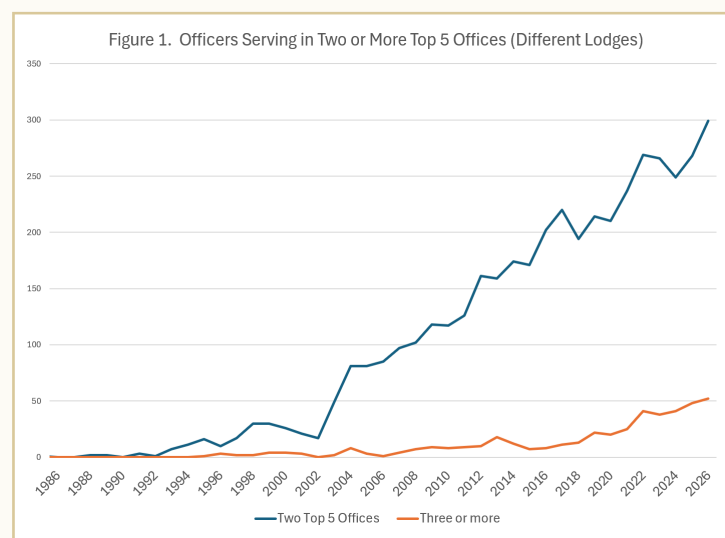
Before beginning a consolidation contact Jeff Frayser at fraternal@grandsecretaryoftx.org and copy the Grand Secretary at gs@grandsecretaryoftx.org.

– Jeremy R. Johnson, PM

STATISTICS – OFFICER TRENDS

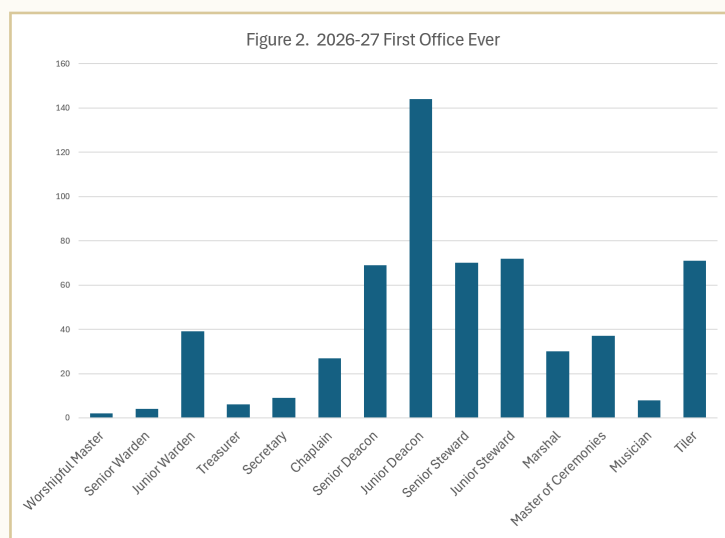
Brethren, we're into another Masonic year, and the transitions have gone well. With the data now in, I did want to point out just a few things though regarding officer trends.

First of all, consolidations have increased this year, to the point of having had 18 consolidations over the past 12 months. In addition to those 18, another 25 have moved in with someone else (another lodge, Shrine, or Scottish Rite building) for a total of 43 changes in just the last 12 months. I even hear talk of a 5 into 1 coming. Mergers bring substantial financial and administrative benefits, not to mention hopefully having more people in their meetings. Still, while notably increased, 18 consolidations is only a few percent of our total number of lodges, and we continue to have an upward trend in the number of people holding Top 5 offices in multiple Lodges at the same time (Figure 1). We currently have 299 men serving a Top 5 office in two lodges this year and 52 men serving a Top 5 office in 3 or more different lodges this year, including one Brother serving a top office in 5 Lodges and another Brother in 6 different Lodges this year. Now that's a substantial commitment!



These men are not concentrated in just a small number of Lodges either. 447 of our now 715 Lodges, a whopping 63% of our Lodges, have at least one Top 5 Officer who is also a Top 5 Officer in another Lodge at the same time. The allowance of plural memberships combined with our number of lodges shrinking at a lower rate than our membership has resulted in more and more of our most committed men being tapped more and more. Still, it must be said that while the above 351 men are filling 763 top offices, that's out of 3575 total Top 5 offices (5 x 715). The other 79% of Top 5 officers are doing that job in one Lodge only.

On the other end of the spectrum from the most involved is the first time officers. Figure 2 shows what office they took as their first according to GrandView (yes, I'm checking on those two WM histories). Figure 2 is pretty consistent with previous charts I've supplied with the notable exception of Junior Steward. Two years ago, when the GM made a point about the Steward offices, we had 462 Junior Stewards. After all that, we passed a Resolution removing them from that Article, and this year, we have 251 Junior Stewards, basically half as many. That has impacted where new guys get their first office. The main two first offices used to be the Junior Deacons and Junior Stewards, being nearly evenly split overall for an entry office. With many of those "extra" Steward offices eliminated, the Junior Deacon is now clearly the lead first office when looking at the Statewide totals.



One more note on the first office: we did have 4 Treasurers and 2 Secretaries who were raised within the last year take those roles as their first office. In addition to it being a big ask for a new Master Mason, please also keep in mind that, just a few years ago, we had a new Secretary, who had access to the money, embezzle the lodge funds, to the tune of \$350k, and run off to another State. Such a thing is exceedingly rare, and totally, of course, against all we teach, but ever since then I've raised an eyebrow whenever I see a new guy be given access to all the Lodge money.

Other than the above two Figures, most of the rest is in line with recent officer pools and previously published Figures. We have 341 (48%) first-time WMs this year compared to 312

last year and 352 the previous year. 23% of this year's Worshipful Masters have served once before, and the remaining quarter of them have served 2+ previous times. 60% of this year's WMs are Gen X or younger, compared with 53% last year, a jump that was predicted from looking at last year's Wardens, but which should smooth back some as 57% of this year's SWs are Gen X or younger. I doubt older than Gen X will ever be majority again, and we're even up to 18 Gen Z (men in their 20s right now) Worshipful Masters this year. Time marches on.

– Zachary Haston

LODGE SPOTLIGHT

James F. Taylor Lodge No. 169 Helps Students Start the School Year Strong

As a new school year gets underway across Texas, James F. Taylor Lodge No. 169 found a simple but meaningful way to support the young people in its community.

The Lodge recently provided students at Hallsville North Elementary with new purple drawstring backpacks, delivered just in time for the beginning of the school year. Brother Drew Scholl was among the Brethren who helped deliver the bags to the school and make sure they reached the students they were intended to serve.

On the surface, a backpack may seem like a small thing. To a child beginning a new school year, however, having something new of their own can bring a little extra excitement, confidence, and school spirit as they walk through those doors.

More importantly, efforts such as this demonstrate what our Lodges can accomplish when we look beyond the walls of our buildings and ask a simple question: What does our community need, and how can we help?

The answer does not always require a large fundraiser or an elaborate program. Sometimes it is backpacks for elementary students. It might be collecting school supplies, recognizing outstanding teachers, supporting a local scholarship, helping a family in need, or simply developing a relationship with the schools that serve our communities.

Freemasonry has long placed great value on education and the development of future generations. When our Lodges support local schools and students, we have an opportunity



to put those values into action while showing our neighbors that Texas Masons are invested in the communities we call home.

Thank you to Brother Drew Scholl, the brethren of James F. Taylor Lodge No. 169, and everyone who helped make this effort possible.

As Hallsville North Elementary begins another school year, we wish its students, teachers, staff, and families a successful year ahead. And perhaps their story will encourage another Texas Lodge to ask:

What can we do for the students in our own community?

Submitted by – Mike Mistry, P.M.

TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Join Us for Family Day 2026! – Saturday, Oct. 10

You're invited! Bring the family! Join M:W: Grand Master Jim Rumsey and M:E: Grand High Priest Lawrence E. "Larry" Tucker for Texas Masonic Family Day on Saturday, Oct. 10, from 10 am to 4 pm at [Texas Masonic Retirement Community in Arlington](#)!

Have a great time with thousands of Masons, their families, and friends at the largest Masonic gathering in Texas!

- **LAST CALL** to [reserve your free vendor booth](#) to raise money for Masonic projects! Deadline Sept. 21, 2026.
- Enjoy free admission to this [day of fun and festivities](#) in the shady pecan grove!
- Listen to live music! Shop at hundreds of vendor booths! Feast on hot dogs, BBQ, ice cream, snow cones, kettle corn, and more!
- Delight your children and grandchildren with pony rides, bounce houses, video games, and a petting zoo.
- Enter or visit the Classic Car & Motorcycle Show or the Masonic BBQ Cookoff! Check out [YourTMRC.org for entry details](#).

TEXAS FREEMASON MAGAZINE

*****New Edition of the Texas Freemason Magazine is scheduled to be out the Tuesday after Labor Day.*****

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.

FOOTSTONE CEREMONY

Sunday, September 27, 2026

- **9:00 am** – Austin Lodge No. 12 open Lodge
- Call to refreshment for breakfast
- **10:00 am** – M:W: Grand Master open Representation of Grand Lodge
- Call to refreshment, travel to the Texas State Cemetery to place stones for:
 - R:W: W. David Counts, Jr., 2009 – Orient No. 905
 - R:W: Jewel P. Lightfoot, 1950 – Frank Sexton No. 206
 - R:W: George M. Patrick, 1848 & 1849 – Orphan's Friend No. 17
 - R:W: Thomas J. Hardeman, 1850 – Bastrop No. 58
 - R:W: James W. McClendon, 1931 – Hill City No. 456
 - R:W: John A. Greer, 1842 – Redland No. 3
- Return to Austin Lodge No. 12, close Representation of Grand Lodge
- Austin Lodge to call back and close Lodge

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

September & October 2026

COMMITTEEMAN	DATE	LODGE	CITY	DISTRICT	FORUM	EXAM
Cody Stewart	Sat, Sep 5, 2026	Danville No. 101	Kilgore	10-B	Jul 24, 8:00 AM	After
	Mon, Sep 7, 2026	Gus Garrison No. 1273	Winnsboro	11	Aug 25, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Sep 12, 2026	Castillian No. 141	Canton	12	Jul 24, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Sep 26, 2026	Arlington No. 438	SUPER FORUM	64-D	Jul 24, 8:00 AM	N/A
John Peters	Sat, Sep 12, 2026	Hondo City No. 756	Hondo	53	Jul 24, 9:00 AM	Jul 24, 1:00 PM
	Sat, Sep 19, 2026	Floresville No. 515	Floresville	38	Jul 24, 9:00 AM	Jul 24, 1:00 PM
	Sat, Oct 3, 2026	Norton Moses No. 336	Leander	47	Aug 25, 9:00 AM	Aug 25, 1:00 PM
	Sat, Oct 10, 2026	Hardeman No. 179	Luling	35-A	Aug 25, 9:00 AM	Aug 25, 1:00 PM
	Sat, Oct 31, 2026	Triune No. 15	San Antonio	39-C	Aug 25, 9:00 AM	Aug 25, 1:00 PM
Cody Cockroft	Sat, Sep 5, 2026	Lufkin No. 669	Lufkin	20	Jul 24, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Sep 12, 2026	Cosmopolitan No. 872	Port Arthur	26-B	Jul 24, 9:00 AM	N/A
	Sat, Sep 26, 2026	B.W. Tinsley No. 1458	Houston	30-C	Jul 24, 8:00 AM	After
	Sat, Oct 3, 2026	Sugar Land No. 1141	Sugar Land	108	Aug 24, 9:00 AM	N/A
	Sat, Oct 17, 2026	Blessing No. 411	Blessing	32	Aug 24, 8:00 AM	After
	Thu, Oct 22, 2026	Huffman No. 1428	Huffman	30-D	Aug 24, 6:30 PM	N/A
	Sat, Oct 24, 2026	Brazos Union No. 129	Bryan	29-A	Aug 24, 8:00 AM	After
	Thu, Oct 29, 2026	Buffalo No. 554	Buffalo	24	Aug 24, 6:30 PM	N/A
Steve Pepper	Sat, Sep 19, 2026	Ochiltree No. 910	Perryton	102	Jul 24, 9:00 AM	1:00 PM
	Sat, Oct 3, 2026	Lubbock No. 1392	Lubbock	93-A	Aug 25, 9:00 AM	1:00 PM
Kevin Moss	Sat, Sep 5, 2026	Cross Plains No. 627	Cross Plains	74	Jul 24, 9:00 AM	After
	Sat, Sep 12, 2026	Webb No. 1454	Arlington	64-D	Jul 24, 10:00 AM	N/A
	Sat, Oct 24, 2026	H. A. McFarland No. 1338	Odessa	82	Aug 25, 9:00 AM	After
	Sat, Oct 31, 2026	Brownwood No. 279	Brownwood	76	Aug 25, 9:00 AM	After

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

CORNERSTONE LEVELING CEREMONIES 2026

Effective 9/1/2026

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
Wednesday 9/2/2026	Postponed	Evadale #1366 43395 Hwy. 96 South Evadale, TX 75951	New Elementary & High School	H.N. "Chip" Green, Jr. Grand Sr. Warden
Thursday 10/1/2026	Breakfast or Coffee & Donuts at 10:00am Open Dickinson Lodge at 11:00am Open Grand Lodge at 11:15am Cornerstone Ceremony at Noon	Dickinson #1324 4301 Missouri Ave. Dickinson, TX 77539	Ruth E. Laird Elementary School	Justin B. Duty Deputy Grand Master
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

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.