

**STATED
COMMUNICATION**

**First & Third
Tuesday**
Dinner 6:30 PM
Meeting 7:30 PM

June 4

★ **June 18**

Tropical No. 56 F&AM



TropicalLodge56.org



**TRESTLE BOARD
JUNE 2024**

10868 METRO PARKWAY
FORT MYERS, FL 33966

PHONE: (239) 334-6074

2024

OFFICERS

Worshipful Master

Aaron Averhart

Senior Warden

Brian Apfel

Junior Warden

Robert Zimmerman

Treasurer

Gene Sims, PDDGM

Secretary

Randy Crone

Senior Deacon

Shawn Hubbard

Junior Deacon

Andy Silvia

Chaplain

Joseph Setaro, PM

Marshal

Tom Knafel, PM

Senior Steward

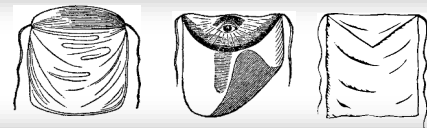
Christopher Saxby

Junior Steward

Nicholas Gadbois

Tyler

John, Gavin, PM





Greetings from the East

It's amazing to think we are almost halfway through the year already! I would like to thank everyone who has supported, encouraged, and guided our Lodge officers thus far. We are so much stronger together and we hope to continue serving you as we strive to meet your Masonic needs.

While we have big plans for the second half of the year, I want to take a moment to reflect on these past six months of Masonic activity, charity, and fraternity. Every year begins with a host of Masonic installations of the various Lodges and appendant bodies. We try to attend as many of these as we can to show our support for those people committed enough to accept the responsibilities of an officer for their organizations.



Several Tropical officers were able to travel to Fort Myers Beach No. 362, where we attended their installation ceremony and enjoyed friendship, fellowship, and their warm hospitality. I was also in attendance for the installation of officers of Cape Coral No. 367, the Fort Myers York Rite, and our resident chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star; I was warmly received by them all. The beautiful and solemn ceremonies helped to reinforce my own passion for the Craft and to serve it with my utmost determination.

At our February 20th communication, Worshipful Jeff Zimmerman and the officers of Tropical conferred the Fellow Craft degree on numerous Brothers, with another fantastic lecture delivered by Brother Chris Tilman. We also performed courtesy work that night for a Brother from Punta Gorda No. 115 and welcomed a large group of their Lodge members who had traveled with him. It was a wonderful night of Masonic growth & fraternity and the degree team did an excellent job.

The season of Lent provided the opportunity for Tropical Lodge to join in on some charity work with Cape Coral Lodge by putting on a fish fry February 16th and 23rd, and on March 1st. It was an incredible success both in the funds raised for various charity efforts, and the opportunity to work side by side with our Brothers from the Cape. We plan to repeat these efforts next year.

On March 19th we celebrated St. Patrick's Day with our First Annual Kilt Night, which included the obligatory corned beef and cabbage (thanks to our Junior Warden Bob Zimmerman). We had six Brothers from three different Lodges participate, which was fantastic for a first showing; I think we can easily double that next year. That night also saw us visited by our Brothers from Fort Myers Beach Lodge in a "Traveling Gavel" exchange. As initiated by our Worshipful Jeff Zimmerman, the gavel belonging to Worshipful Master John Herman was "borrowed" and they were left with a substitute of comical proportions. They were challenged to bring as many of their members as they could muster to retrieve it from our next communication, and boy did they ever. As a result, there was an incredible showing of Beach Lodge members who truly lived up to the challenge and gracefully added some fantastic humor and Brotherly love to the night's events!



On Tuesday April 2nd Past Right Worshipful District Deputy Grand Master Michael O. Gardner paid us an official visit. He delivered the Junior Past Most Worshipful Grand Master Glen Bishop's message, which was well received.

On April 16th we made some local Masonic history with our Brothers from Cape Coral Lodge. After opening, we passed control of the Lodge room to the officers of Cape Coral Lodge, who proceeded to initiate two new members into our fraternity and the Tropical family. This was a momentous event for both Lodges; it was something neither Lodge has done before and served as yet another bonding moment between our members.

On April 25th I attended the 55th Anniversary celebration of the chartering of Cape Coral Lodge No. 367. It was a lovely event that included oral histories delivered by various Past Masters, and the presentation of the Past Master's medal to their Worshipful members (including our own Worshipful Jeff Zimmerman), honoring them for their service to the Craft. Worshipful Master Pennewaert's invitation was appreciated; it was an honor to be at such a historic event for our Cape Coral Brothers.

On May 11th Cape Coral Lodge hosted The Entered Apprentice Degree Dissected with Right Worshipful Joe Fleites, which began with a fantastic breakfast beforehand. I had the pleasure of helping in the kitchen that morning, starting at 5:30 am. I would like to thank the Cape Coral officers for their hard work and effort to bring such an enlightening event to our district.

Continued...

Capping off the (almost) first half of the year was the 195th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Florida, from May 26th through the 29th at the Rosen Plaza in Orlando. This annual conference is held for the purpose of voting on legislation and the installation of Grand line officers, among other important things. The Junior Past Most Worshipful Grand Master Glen Bishop led the proceedings with purpose and authority. A productive session was held and he ended his term with dignified remarks, thanking everyone for the support he received.



Our new Most Worshipful Grand Master Donald Cowart was installed with his elected and appointed officers. He laid out his plan to focus on education & ritual, and selected the Masonic youth programs to be his charitable focus. We look forward to supporting his initiatives and to another fruitful year under the guidance of the Grand Lodge.

Congratulations are in order for Right Worshipful District Deputy Grand Master Acey Edgemon Sr. and Right Honorable District Instructor Bruce Rivera for their appointments. We look forward to working with them in the coming Grand Lodge year.

The Grand Lodge proceedings are open to any Master Mason to attend. Much like being involved with our own Lodge committees, charitable activities, and ritual work, we invite you to consider attending next year. Being surrounded by over one thousand Brothers, making new friends, creating memories with old friends, and experiencing the gravity of such monumental proportions is something I think every Mason would enjoy and benefit from.

Our Lodge has a lot planned for the remainder of 2024 and we encourage you to get involved.

On Tuesday June 18th our Senior Warden Brother Brian Apfel will put on the Third Annual Brother Harry Houdini Interactive Lecture. As in years past, this promises to be entertaining, funny, thought provoking, and educational. Brian has some new tricks up his sleeve, pun intended, and I am sure we're in for another fantastic event. We will be serving an elegant dinner and then retire to the Lodge room for the big show. We hope you can join us with your family and friends, as this event is open to the public.

On Saturday June 22nd members of Tropical Lodge and other Brothers from the 24th Masonic District will be volunteering our time and energy to the Midwest Food Bank from 10am to 12pm. Please join us as we get out into the community and continue our efforts to help combat the food insecurity that effects so many members of our communities.

July 2nd will be the first official visit to our Lodge by the Right Worshipful District Deputy Grand Master Acey Edgemon Sr. and his party, representing the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Freemasons of Florida Donald Cowart. We look forward to receiving him and his party as we begin this new Grand Lodge year.

On Saturday August 17th we will hold our Past Masters and Awards Night to honor the many people who have done (and continue to do) so much for our Lodge -- from our extensive list of Tropical and Lehigh Acres Past Masters to Master Masons of the Year, and more. This black-tie event will include a lovely dinner and light entertainment. We sincerely hope you will join us.

On Tuesday September 17th we will receive representatives from the Calusa Nature Center, who will explain their mission and activities, and be recognized as our charity of the month. They are likely to be accompanied by some animal ambassadors as well, which is sure to be exciting. That night will be a called communication, as we are also planning to hold an informal *Freemasonry 101* after our guests' presentation. We will be opening in the Entered Apprentice degree so that all our new Brothers can join us on the level. For those interested in being involved, please contact Senior Warden Brian Apfel.

On September 28th the Most Worshipful Grand Master Donald Cowart will make his official visit to the 24th Masonic District. This event will be held at Tropical Lodge and will be hosted by Right Worshipful Acey Edgemon Sr. and Cypress No. 295. The Grand Master will hold a tiled Lodge meeting and all Master Masons in good standing are encouraged to attend. He looks forward to addressing the Craft, talking about our concerns and the future of the fraternity, and spending time among the Brethren. Please join us and welcome our Grand Master to Tropical Lodge and the 24th Masonic District.

On Sunday October 27th Worshipful Jeff Zimmerman will be leading us in our Trunk or Treat event, which was incredibly well supported and attended last year. We're working to get the word out early this year and hope that you will get involved when we begin candy collection and for the event itself. We will keep everyone informed as plans develop and solidify.

On Saturday November 9th Tropical Lodge will be holding a ladies appreciation event to help honor the women who support us in our Masonic endeavors both in and out of the Lodge. Please contact me or Worshipful Zimmerman if you would like to get involved with this event. This promises to be a wonderful night of appreciation for the special women in our lives.

We are hoping to do some charity work to provide food to insecure residents of Lee County with Thanksgiving meals and are in the process of developing some programs to help make that goal a reality. Anyone wishing to get involved with this mission can contact me or Senior Deacon Shawn Hubbard.

We have a few more events in the works and will keep you informed as they develop. In the meantime, make sure you keep up on all the activity at the Lodge by visiting our website and calendar at www.tropicalodge56.org.

Lastly don't forget that we are conducting a year-long food drive entitled Feeding Minds to help combat food insecurity issues facing students enrolled at Florida Gulf Coast University. As many as 150 students a week utilize the FGCU Food Pantry as they seek to build better lives for themselves and their communities. Thank you for your continued support with this project and for helping us to provide some Masonic faith, hope, and charity to our future nurses, educators, scientists, entrepreneurs, and more.

We hope that you will not only join us for these planned events, but also to break bread over dinner before Lodge. Whether you are in search of bonds built through fraternity, the opportunity to serve the Lodge, the chance to do charity work, or because of an interest in our illustrious & ancient past, Freemasonry and Tropical Lodge still have so much to offer. We urge you to get involved and to come enjoy the ever-growing list of planned activities and events.

I speak for all of your elected and appointed Lodge officers when I say "thank you" for the opportunity to serve the Craft. We look forward to a great remainder of the year and meeting your Masonic needs. Thank you again for your support, Brothers and Sisters!

Humbly & Fraternally,

Aaron A. Averhart

Worshipful Master

(239) 995-8837

cmndraeverhart@gmail.com



Charity of the Month



midwestfoodbank.org

Midwest Food Bank is a faith-based organization to help alleviate hunger and malnutrition locally & throughout the world and to provide disaster relief; where needed. Their vision is to provide industry-leading food relief to those in need while also feeding them spiritually.

District 24

Grand Lodge Officers

District Deputy Grand Master

R.:W.: Acey Edgemon, PM
(239) 860-4045

District Instructor

R.:H.: Bruce Rivera, PM
(239) 297-9400



Quote of the Month

"Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late."





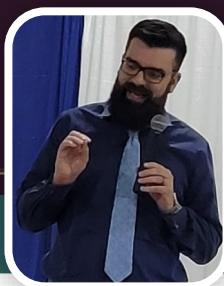
TROPICAL MASONIC LODGE #56 PRESENTS



HOUDINI NIGHT



JUNE 18, 2024 | SOUTHWEST FLORIDA MASONIC CENTER | 7:30 PM



Presented By:
Bro. Brian Apfel, Senior Warden



Harry Houdini was a Hungarian-born American Illusionist and Stunt Performer, born on March 24th, 1874 in Budapest, Austria-Hungary (now just Hungary) as Erik Weisz.

He arrived in the United States on July 3rd, 1878 with his pregnant mother and four brothers. The family settled in Appleton, Wisconsin where his father served as a Rabbi. In 1887 the family moved to New York City, New York.

His magic career began in 1891 and initially had little success. He changed his name to Harry Houdini after a French magician named Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin. He initially focused on card tricks and even billed himself as the "King of Cards." Most magicians at the time saw Houdini as a competent magician, lacking the finesse for slight of hand magic. Before long he started experimenting with escape acts.

In 1893, while performing with his brother "Dash," Houdini met his future wife Bess. She joined the act and a year later Houdini and Bess were married and the act was renamed to "The Houdinis." In 1899 Houdini met Martin Beck in Minnesota who booked the act on the Orpheum Vaudeville circuit. In 1913, Houdini introduced the Chinese Water Torture Cell where he was suspended upside down in an overflowing water tank while handcuffed.

Later in life as the President of the Society of American Magicians he wanted to keep professional standards very high by exposing fraudulent performers. In the 1920's he turned his attention to alleged spiritualists and mediums. He was a member of the Scientific American committee offering a cash prize to anyone who could prove their supernatural abilities.

Prior to his death Houdini and his wife Bess setup their own test for the alleged mediums. They decided on a code word; after Houdini's passing, he planned to communicate from beyond the grave if possible. Bess held séances for 10 years on Halloween none of them were successful. After the final unsuccessful attempt Bess put out a candle left burning by Houdini's picture since his death. She was quoted as saying "ten years is long enough to wait for any man."

Houdini passed away on October 31st, 1926. The official cause of death was peritonitis secondary to a ruptured appendix. Witnesses to an incident in Houdini's dressing room prior to his death said a McGill University student challenged Houdini about his belief in miracles in the Bible and whether it was true he felt no pain when he was struck in the stomach. The man began striking Houdini below the belt while Houdini was lying on a couch due to a broken ankle. Houdini was able to stop the man's blows, but the damage was done. After performing in the evening Houdini got a 102° fever.

Houdini was a member of St. Cecile Lodge No. 568.

*This article provided by Today in Masonic History at <http://www.masonrytoday.com>.

Greetings from the West



Greetings Brothers,

I'm excited to announce our first lodge Volunteer Day at Midwest Food Bank's Florida Division. I have been volunteering with my family for years, bringing by wife and 5-year-old daughter every time. PLEASE bring friends, family, share with other masonic bodies, the more the merrier.

About MFB: "Join us in alleviating hunger and malnutrition today. Our volunteers are more than our hands and feet; they are fundamental to the success of our organization. They collect, sort, pack, and distribute food and disaster relief donations, and remind us every day that our mission could not be achieved without them. More than 30,000 volunteers put in over 350,000 hours of service last year, the equivalent of over 175 full-time employees. We turn every \$1 donated into \$30 of food distributed. The Fort Myers, Florida location serves over 230 agency partners. Our volunteers are the life-blood of our organization."



JUNE 22
10 am - 12 pm

TROPICAL MASONIC LODGE
VOLUNTEER DAY AT:

**MIDWEST
FOOD BANK**

5601 DIVISION DR,
FORT MYERS, FL 33905

RSVP

You MUST register and sign the waiver in advance (sign up each family member individually). Please do so ASAP so we can get an appropriate headcount:

<https://volunteer.midwestfoodbank.org/timeslots/nN59IFYOpM>

Date/Time

Sat, Jun 22, 2024
10:00AM-12:00PM EDT

Location

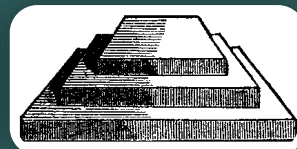
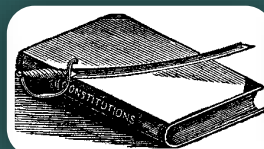
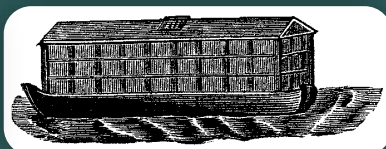
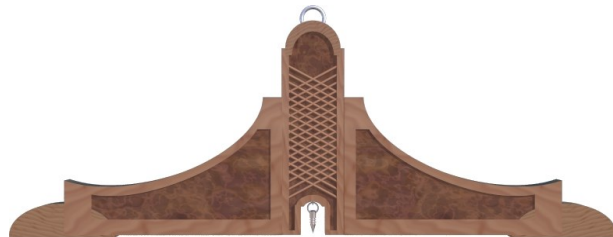
5601 Division Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33905

Please email brianapfel@gmail.com with any questions.

Brian Apfel

Senior Warden

(845) 264-2802 / [brianap-](mailto:brianapfel@gmail.com)



Last Month



Masonic Memorial Service

A Masonic Memorial Service was held on *May 26th* by members of Tropical [and other local Lodges] to honor Brother Donald Disbrow, who laid down his working tools and passed to the Celestial Lodge above.



Just after the start of May we delivered another load of food to the FGCU Food Bank. Thanks to the incredibly generous donations of one particular Brother, the last load weighed a whopping 226 pounds, making it our single heaviest delivery so far. Of course weight doesn't truly reflect our efforts, as many of the items consisted of pasta and noodle dishes, among other lighter foods.



Our running total so far is 530 pounds, which is great, but we would love to triple that number by the end of the year! We need your help to do that though! We ask that you bring in a couple canned goods whenever you come and visit the Lodge, in order to help us reach that goal.



As many of you know, I am a full time student at FGCU, and it's shocking to realize that as many as 150 students I interact with on a weekly basis are facing food insecurity issues, forcing them to rely on the food pantry. Seeking a higher education is not a sign of wealth or status, it is a sign of determination and dedication. In light of that, we are asking you to help us support our community's future nurses, scientists, teachers, business owners, employees, and civic leaders as they face the enormous challenges before them.

We pride ourselves on the motto faith, hope, and charity. Let's extend all of those to the next generation, rewarding them for their dedication, and showing them what Freemasonry is all about!



PAST MASTERS



TROPICAL No. 56 F&AM

1882

2024

L.C. Washburn* 1892-1896, 1899-1900 & 1902	Charles Varner* 1935	Berwyn Clifton* 1960	Francis D. Swaringen 1984	Barry P. Thrasher* (PDDGM) 2008
L.C. Stewart* 1897-1898	Ray Kissinger* 1936	C.J. Leffers* 1961	Maynard W. Matz* 1985	Samual Bissell 2009
Charles O. Swanson* 1901	Robert R. Gresham* 1937	James I. Whitaker* 1962	H. Curt Hardin* 1986	Ernest R. Spradling 2010
L.M. Stroup* (PDDGM) 1903 & 1909	Charles R. Smith* 1938	Earl. C. Lewis* 1963	Edward J. Jackman* 1987	Richard T. Nelson* 2011
Frank C. Alderman* 1904	Fred J. Lahor* 1939	George E. Blust* 1964	E.W. Landrum 1988	Edward McCullers 2012
N.G. Stout* (PDDGM) 1905 & 1914-1915	Guy M. Strayhorn* 1940	Robert A. Reedy* 1965	E. Wade Sandahl 1989	John Cavada 2013
George H. Ireland* 1906, 1908, 1912-1913 & 1918	Joe Shofner* 1941-1942 & 1944	Lewis R. Long* 1966	Rodney D. Irvin (PDDGM) 1990	Mark Smith 2014
Frank Kellow* 1907	L.E. Steward* 1943	Irvin I Edenfield* 1967	Wayne A. McConley 1991	Michale P. Lewis 2015
G.F. Funch* 1910	Edgar M. Boyette* 1945	Richard G. Simpson, Jr.* 1968	Gordon A. Fore* (PDDGM & GLO) 1992	John Gavin 2016
T.J. Evans* 1911	John W. Shultz* 1946	Richard T. Edelblut, Sr. 1969	Mark T. Goodman 1993	Gene F. Sims (PDDGM & PDI) 2017-2018
David N. Ireland* 1916	Leslie N. Russel* 1947	Andrew L. Chandler* (PDDGM) 1970	Edward D. Johns 1994	Joseph Setaro 2019
DeWitt T. Farabee* 1917	M.M. Tillis* 1948	Alva R. Jones, Jr.* (PDDGM) 1971	Joe D. Lewis (PDDGM & PDI) 1995	Alexander Guilday 2020
John L. Morris* 1919-1923	J.T. Harper* 1949	William E. Hart* 1972	Charles A. Williford* (PDI) 1996	Jefferey Zimmerman 2021
W.O. Sheppard* 1924-1925	J.D. Holland* 1950	Tom H. Youngblood* 1973	Thomas P. Gordon* 1997	Victor Fiore 2022
R.V. Lee* 1926	Wilson Starnes* 1951	James A. Hamby 1974	Albert H. Andrews 1998	Thomas Knafel 2023
C.M. Storter* 1927	Roland O. Palmer* 1952	Ronald G. Frieden (PDI) 1975-1976	Bernard L. Flynn 1999 & 2001	Aaron A. Averhart 2024
Robert T. Branham* 1928	Dana L. Brechtel* 1953	James P. Stephens* 1977	James L. Record (PDDGM) 2000	<p>This page is dedicated to the Past Masters who have served Tropical No. 56 F&AM from its beginning way back in 1892 to the present day. These Brothers will continue to be honored here for their past service & dedication to our Lodge and Freemasonry.</p> 
T.P. Bartleson* 1929	W. Stanley Hansen, Jr.* 1954	Charles M. McWilliams* 1978	Samual N. Summerall 2002	
J.H. Ingram* 1930	Eugene V. Washburn* 1955	Richard G. Simpson, Jr.* 1979	T. H. Bodenhamer (PDDGM) 2003	
William R. Anderson* 1931	Foy C. Adams* 1956	Tom H. Youngblood* 1980	Roger G. Shields 2004	
John M. Trolan* 1932	Charles A. Powell, Jr.* 1957	Arlan N. Roan 1981	Jason J. Ott (PDI) 2005	
E.L. Daniel* 1933	W.W. Watson* 1958	Vernon E. Lynch 1982	E.W. Lott 2006	
Leslie G. Sheets* 1934	Marshall E. Wilkens* 1959	Earl P. Williams* 1983	Bry G. Parsons* 2007	

*Indicates Deceased

PAST MASTERS

Lehigh Acres No. 344 F&AM



ROBERT BERNSTEIN*	1962
WALTER RIDGE*	1963
GRADY RYMER*	1964
THOMAS BOSWELL*	1965
LEON HURTADO*	1966
WILLIAM BEEMAN*	1967
FRANK LYONS*	1968
THOMAS BOSWELL*	1969
CHARLES GOEHLE JR*	1970
THOMAS BOSWELL*	1971
CHARLES GOEHLE JR*	1972
PAUL MELOY	1973—1974
JAMES FOSTER	1975

ROY C. ROBERTS*	1976
WILBER FRENCH*	1977
PAUL WILLIAMSON*	1978
JAMES BURGETT*	1979
RONALD TEMPLIN*	1980
JOHN BEDNAR*	1981
ERNEST SAMUELSON*	1982
HOWARD SPOERKE*	1983
WALTER REESE*	1984
ROBERT CAMPBELL*	1985
PAUL GOEHLE*	1986
WALLACE BATEMAN*	1987
LEWIS FISH	1988
TED BLOCK	1989
ROBERT HOEPPNER*	1990
ALBERT SAMUELSON*	1991
ANDREW STANFORTH*	1992
J. DOUGLAS WRIGHT	1993
HOWARD SPOERKE*	1994
HARRY HOPKINS*	1995
CLIFF AYERS	1996
KENNETH LAVINE*	1997

JEROME MASSEE*	1998
WILLIAM HORSELING*	1999
CHARLES MARTIN	2000
KENNETH LAVINE*	2001
HELMUT REIMER	2002
JAMES ROSE*	2003
CARL PETERSON	2004
JONATHAN HAMMETT	2005
RALPH MCDONALD*	2006
MICHAEL CROUCHELLI	2007
GUY WALTMAN*	2008
JOHN CARTER	2009
JASON HOLLINGER	2010
WILLIAM HORACIO JR.*	2011
PAUL GOEHLE *	2012-2013
G. RICHARD CURETON	2014
DANIEL AKARD	2015
ROBERT LIPPEK	2016
KEVIN GOURLEY	2017
JAMES BOLLA, SR.	2018
FRED NATOLI	2019
KEVIN GOURLEY	2020
LUIS TULIER	2021

*Indicates Deceased

Tropical No. 56 F&AM Planned Events for 2024

- **June 18th:** Brother Brian Apfel's 3rd Annual *Houdini Night!*
- **June 22nd:** *Midwest Food Bank, 10am-12pm* — A charitable event so we can help out their food distribution center.
- **August:** Cypress Lodge is planning to have a *Master Mason Degree*; the exact date has not been set yet. The Worshipful Master of Cypress has agreed to perform courtesy work for our Fellow Crafts.
- **August 17th:** *Past Masters & Awards Night* — This will be an evening to recognize not only the Past Masters of Tropical Lodge, but the Lehigh Acres Past Masters as well. We will also award the Master Mason of the Year and highlight some other recognitions.
- **September 28th:** *The Grand Master's Official Visit* to District 24. More info will be provided as September approaches.
- **October 27th:** *Trunk or Treat* — Worshipful Jeff Zimmerman has agreed to head up this district-wide event again.
- **November 9th:** *Widow's & Ladies Night* — This will be a celebration of the women that help enrich our lives and organizations. It will include widows, wives, girlfriends, OES, ladies' groups of the Shrine, and other applicable organizations.
- **Early December:** *Feeding Minds Year End Event* — This will be some sort of gathering to celebrate our food drive and may involve a group trip to FGCU, and a few other things.