

MOST EXCELLENT GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER OF TEXAS

THROUGH THE VEILS



CLASS OF NEW COMPANIONS JOIN AT FLOYDADA FOLLOWING 2ND CONVIVIUM

WELCOME TO "THROUGH THE VEILS" MONTHLY NEWSLETTER!



Companions, we have an alternative email address that will help us organize and ensure your shared photographs and visuals can be included in this platform, social media, and the website. Please send your photos, visuals, or other information for content submission to GrandChapterOfTexas@gmail.com.

As always, the [Newsletter Survey](#) will remain open and allow your ideas and opinions on this publication be received! All submissions are anonymous. Thank you!

CONTACT / SUBMISSIONS



Companion

Michael Cote II

Editor

817-219-2916

mj2cote@yahoo.com

MOST EXCELLENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Companions,

As spring graces us with bluebonnets and warmer days, it offers the perfect opportunity for companions to step outside, embrace the beauty of the season, and strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship within the Masonic community.

Spring symbolizes renewal and growth, making it an ideal time for companions to reconnect with one another and explore new avenues of engagement. Here are some ways to enjoy the season while fostering camaraderie among York Rite companions. Last weekend we held a York Rite Convivium with a dinner and fellowship in God's Country in Turkey, Texas. The food and hospitality extended to everyone was amazing. A Great time was had by all. Followed by a great festival in Floydada the following day. Being back in Floydada and seeing items again that belonged to Very Excellent James "Jimmy" McCorry Willson, Jr. makes one stop and reflects on how GREAT of a man Jimmy was. We had over 65 Companions at this event in the panhandle.

- **Outdoor Gatherings:** Organize picnics, barbecues, or potluck gatherings locally. These relaxed settings provide a chance to enjoy good food, share stories, and deepen friendships while basking in the fresh air and sunshine.
- **Community Service Projects:** Spring is an excellent time for community clean-up initiatives. Participating in such activities not only benefits the community but also promotes teamwork and brotherhood among companions.
- **Fellowship Events:** Host outdoor events such as game days or sports tournaments. Like attending a game of the First Place Texas Rangers. Engaging in friendly competition can foster a sense of camaraderie and fun, drawing companions closer together.
- **Educational Workshops:** Consider conducting educational sessions outdoors, where companions can learn about the rich history and teachings of the York Rite in a refreshing environment. This setting can enhance participation and engagement.
- **Family-Friendly Activities:** Involve families by organizing outings like visits to arboretums, festivals, or fairs. This inclusivity strengthens the bonds of fellowship and allows companions to share memorable moments with their loved ones.

Let us take advantage of this season to come together as York Rite companions. By enjoying the fellowship, sharing experiences, and working towards common goals, we can nurture our connections and embody the true spirit of Masonic brotherhood.

Fraternally,

Don Paul Payton
Grand High Priest



CAPSTONE ACADEMY

A DAY OF CAPITULAR LEARNING



We are excited to announce the upcoming *Capstone Academy* on **Saturday, June 7th**, a day dedicated to capitular learning, featuring insightful presentations from distinguished guest speakers, an on-site lunch, a full agenda designed to deepen your knowledge, and personal keepsakes for the attendees. Hosted by the Grand Orator at the Grand Lodge Memorial Temple in Waco, this event offers a unique opportunity to engage with fellow members, learn from experts, and immerse yourself in a day of meaningful discussions and growth. Registration will begin at 8:00 AM, with the event kicking off at 9:00 AM. Stay tuned for more details on the speaker lineup – this is an event you won't want to miss!

STATEWIDE FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 26-27, 2025



We're thrilled to announce that the *Statewide York Rite Festival* is back on after rescheduling! Mark your calendars for the new dates, **September 26-27**, when this highly anticipated event will take place in Waco, TX. For those looking to get involved, **Gabriel Jagush** is the main point of contact for any questions or assistance.

Registration and more information will be available on the website soon, so stay tuned for updates. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to network with fellow members and experience a memorable weekend of York Rite traditions!



FROM THE GRAND ORATOR'S SCROLL

Ham, the second son of Noah, and also survived the Great Flood. His descendants would become the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Cushites. Today, we know these people as those that live in Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Lebanon, and Israel. Essentially, our modern-world Africa and the Middle East are connected to Ham's offspring. His son Canaan bore the curse from Noah due to the sin committed by Ham. Many scholars have debated the interpretation of the sin and the results of the curse over several millennia, sometimes controversially. However, he remains a key figure in Biblical texts in understanding the lineage of many early civilizations along with his brothers.

ROYAL ARCH RESEARCH



PAST MASTER EMBLEM

Per the Texas Capitular monitor, the jewel of a Past Master is a pair of compasses extended to sixty degrees, and resting on the fourth part of a circle, between the extended points of the compasses, is a flaming sun - with the symbolic color of the degree being purple.

Compared to other Past Master emblems, often seen in craft lodges, there is neither a square nor the letter "G" depicted. These differences assist in showing who is a Past Master of a Craft Lodge versus a Companion who has received this degree.

DISTRICT BREAKDOWN

DISTRICT 7

- Haggai
- Sherman
- Sulpher Springs
- Pender-Laney
- Greenville



DISTRICT 8

- Dale E. Miller
- Terrell
- Seagoville
- Mabank

TEXAS VISITS ARKANSAS



Our Excellent Grand Royal Arch Captain, Joe Jones, who also serves as the Grand Capitular Representative to Arkansas, attended the Grand York Rite Sessions in Arkansas. He was accompanied by Right Excellent Miles Sheerin, Deputy District Grand High Priest for District 9. Together, they are pictured here with Joe Dixon, the outgoing Most Excellent Grand High Priest of Arkansas 2024-2025.

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS



It is our hope to hit 1,000 Facebook followers this term! With your help, we can grow our audience and share our missions with a larger group! Please click [here](#) or click on the Facebook icon above to be taken to the page. Content is always being uploaded, added, posted, & shared.

UPCOMING CONVIVIUMS

REGIONAL WEEKENDS FOR UNITED FELLOWSHIP & QUARRY WORK!

**EAST TEXAS
YORK RITE
CONVIVIUM**

TYLER, TEX

May 9 & 10, 2025
"THE MIDTERM"

Come join us for a two-day Convivium in the Piney Woods. We will gather Friday evening (May 9) at "The Country Tavern" in Kilgore, TX. The next day (May 10), we will join the East Texas Companions in Tyler, just 30 minutes west, for their annual festival with registration opening at 8am. For further inquiries, please contact the event coordinator, Richard Gaiser at (903) 571-3841.

MAY 9-10

Friday Night, we will assemble at "Country Tavern" in Kilgore, TX for an authentic Texas BBQ meal! On Saturday, we will assist in a festival hosted by the Companions in Tyler, TX. Registration for the festival will open at 8am with the degrees following soon after.

GRAND CHAPTER ONLINE STORE - SHIPS TO YOU!

- FUNDRAISER JEWEL -



The Grand High Priest's Fund Jewels were commissioned for Capitular Masons in Texas and elsewhere to support the effort of the "No Mason Left Behind" program. By donating **\$150.00** (plus an online fee and shipping) to this program, you will receive a jewel in a beautiful red presentation case. The jewels can be purchased [online](#) and shipped to you! They are typically worn the right side of your red chapter suit jacket.

- TEXAS SHEKELS -



Online purchases for the Texas Shekels can be found [here](#). Minimum quantity for online purchases are five shekels are calculated for your desired quantity. These shekels are being sold in record numbers as many Chapters and Districts purchasing in bulk to give to new Mark Master Masons, to visitors, and to add to your own personal collection! Additionally, many Companions themselves are purchasing in bulk to give to new Master Masons or to Masons who have not joined the York Rite as a possible recruitment gift. Their purposes are endless!

MENTIONING MARKS

DON PAUL PAYTON - 2003



Each Capitular Mason designs a personal mark after receiving their Mark Master Degree, which is then officially recorded in the Chapter's Book of Marks. This mark is a unique symbol chosen by the individual, representing them personally within the Masonic tradition.

Above is the digitized version of the Grand High Priest's personal mark, which he created when he was received the Mark Master Degree in 2003 from Hugh J. McClellan Chapter No. 248, now known as Lubbock Chapter No. 248. The mark bears his initials from their family brand encased within a keystone outline.

COUNTERPART CORNER



This month showcases Illustrious Michael L. Wiggins, 33°- Sovereign Grand Inspector General (SGIG) in Texas of the Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of the Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.

COMMITTEE COLUMN

- GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEES -



GRIEVANCES & APPEALS

The Committee on Grievances and Appeals shall examine and consider all memorials of Companions complaining of the action of any Chapter, and likewise all appeals from the actions of any Chapter, or the decisions of any High Priest, and shall report thereon, with their opinion with citations, and make recommendations concerning the proper action. This Committee has five seats and is fully selected by the Grand High Priest every year. The current Chairman is Companion Mike Malone.

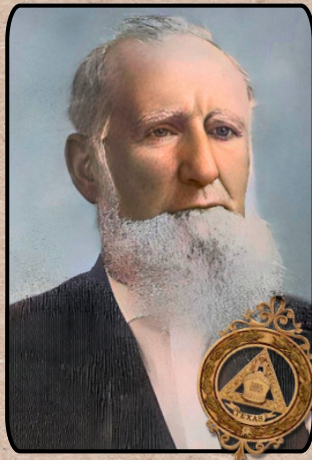


HISTORY & PRESERVATION

The Chairman shall oversee that the committee seeks, locates, restores, catalogs and preserves the records of every kind pertaining to the history of Capitular Masonry in Texas. They are also to ensure that the final resting place of PGHPs are suitably marked and properly maintained. In addition, the committee shall encourage and assist local Chapter leadership in efforts to properly assemble and record local historical records pertaining to the influence of Capitular Masonry in the communities. The Committee is mandated to consist of five Past High Priests of Chapters within Texas; however, it may include no more than three non-Past High Priests. Each member of the committee may succeed himself after serving a full five year term, making this a termed committee. The current Committee Chairman is Very Excellent Robert Loflin, PGHP.

“IT IS NOT IN NUMBERS BUT IN UNITY THAT OUR GREAT STRENGTH LIES.”

- THOMAS PAINE -



PRESERVING OUR PASTS

V.: E.: ANDREW NEILL, PGHP

Andrew Neill (1813-1883) served as the tenth Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas in 1860. Born in Scotland, he later became a lawyer, Lieutenant Colonel in the Texas Rangers, and prisoner of war where he became known for escaping Mexican captivity and sailing back to the United States across the Gulf alone. He was a candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Texas in 1855 but was defeated in his party's primary. He was exalted in St. Andrew's Chapter No. 27. He served as the Most Excellent High Priest there in 1854; the same year he was elected both Right Excellent Grand Scribe of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas and the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Texas.

EXPLORING EXODUS IDENTIFYING THE TWELVE STONES

In the Book of Exodus, we are introduced to Aaron's Breastplate, which is also known as the Breastplate of Judgement. Aaron wore this breastplate which had twelve stones on it representing the twelve tribes of Israel. It was meant to remind him of his obligations not only to God, but also to the people. This breastplate is the symbol used for Past High Priests, and it bears 12 precious stones that are not explained esoterically. Nearly every translation is different and some stones have since been renamed. The **Masonic Heirloom Bible** will be the version used for the remainder of this segment!



EMERALD

Emerald is the first stone of the second row of the Breastplate. The first known emerald mines were in Egypt, dating back to at least 330 BC, where Cleopatra was a famous admirer of emeralds and claimed ownership of all mines. This traditional green gemstone is referred to as "The Jewel of Kings." The word comes from the ancient Greek word "smaragdos", which means "green gem". The oldest emerald known is nearly 3 billion years old and was once believed to cure cholera and malaria.

AN EYE ON AI



With the rising cultural influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), this artistic digital image was generated after entering certain keywords in order to form a visualization of our ancient craft. The words used were:

- Ancient Times**
- Raft with Stones**
- Transporting Stones**
- Workman**
- Boulders**
- River**
- Forest**
- Ancient Construction**

The generated AI caption of the photo reads, "Ancient workmen from the forests move stones and boulders on log rafts down a river in order to transport materials to construct a structure elsewhere."

GRAND PHOTOGRAPHER'S PORTFOLIO



 Texas Grand Chapter
Photo Gallery



TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY UPDATES!



RARE OPPORTUNITY - at Texas Masonic Retirement Community!

Cottage Duplex 2-bedroom + 2 bath now available! ZERO MOVE-IN COST! Call 817-275-2893 to schedule your personal tour! Almost never happens - this will go fast! Includes chef-inspired meals in main dining hall, housekeeping, fun activities, Masonic events, full-size kitchen with refrigerator, full-size washer & dryer, plush carpet, ceramic tile, hardwood cabinets, garage, patio. See floor plan and learn more at [here!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE STATE



APRIL

- 10-13 // Grand Commandery (Grapevine, TX)
- 18 // Grand Commandery Good Friday Observance (Waco, TX)



MAY

- 10 // East Texas Convivium (Kilgore)
- 11 // East Texas Festival (Tyler)
- 18 // Masonic Oak Observance (Brazoria)
- 29-30 // TAMDA (Waco)



EDITOR'S NOTE

COMPANION MICHAEL COTE II
ASSISTANT STATE COORDINATOR & E.: GRAND ORGANIST

Companions,

I'm filled with gratitude, and it's all thanks to each of you. Your continued enthusiasm for this group effort makes this project so enjoyable and fun. I truly appreciate you being a part of this journey. It's a privilege to help make Capitular Masonry a bit more fun alongside such a dedicated group. I can't wait to share more with you in the months ahead. **This newsletter is for you!**

