

MOST EXCELLENT GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER OF TEXAS

# THROUGH THE VEILS



"THE FOUR STARS" - 2025 GRAND COMMANDERY RECEPTION

## WELCOME TO "THROUGH THE VEILS" MONTHLY NEWSLETTER!



Companions, thank you for those who have used the alternative email address we published last month! It allows for your photographs and visuals to be included in this platform, social media, and the website while remaining organized. For any content submission, please continue to us [GrandChapterOfTexas@gmail.com](mailto: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



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# MOST EXCELLENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Companions,

The other day I was on my tractor mowing, thinking about things as you have lots of hours to think about the meaning of life and other things. The Glen Campbell song "Try a little kindness" came on the radio in the cab. I then started about how such a great song is a major part of our masonic groundwork. We as masons are bound together not only by our shared values but also by our commitment to making the world a better place. This month serves as a reminder of the importance of kindness, the essence of leadership, and the legacy we aspire to leave behind as good men. What a great idea to have as a basis for an organization.

**Kindness: The Foundation of Brotherhood:** At the heart of Freemasonry lies the principle of brotherly love. One of our most cherished tenets is the obligation to treat others with kindness and respect. Whether it be fellow Masons, friends, family, or those outside our fraternity, our actions reflect the values we hold dear.

Practicing kindness can take many forms such as Acts of Service: where we participate in community service initiatives, lending a hand to those in need and helping to create a positive impact. Offering Support and Encouragement: being there for a brother or friend during challenging times. A listening ear or a few words of encouragement can go a long way. Celebrating Others: Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of others, fostering a spirit of camaraderie and support. When we embody kindness in our daily interactions, we strengthen our bonds with one another and contribute positively to the world around us.

**Leadership in Unity, Even in Disagreement:** Freemasonry teaches us that true leadership is defined by how we respond to challenges, especially when differences of opinion arise. Disagreements are a natural part of any group dynamic, but it's how we navigate these differences that sets us apart as leaders. Some principles to guide us include communicating openly, where we can encourage open dialogue within our lodges. When we create an atmosphere where members feel safe to express their opinions, we build trust and respect. To seek understanding, where we approach disagreements with a willingness to understand each other's viewpoints. This enables us to find common ground and work toward solutions that honor our values. To lead by example where we can demonstrate integrity and respect during discussions. Your behavior can inspire others to cultivate the same qualities, promoting a culture of mutual respect and leadership. And to uphold our values, remembering the foundational principles of Freemasonry—truth, charity, and brotherly love. These values should guide our actions, even in heated moments.

**Leaving a Legacy of Goodness:** "What will they say about me when I'm gone?" is a question that encourages reflection on the legacy we create. As Freemasons, we aspire to be remembered as good men who uplifted those around us. Our actions today determine how we will be remembered tomorrow.

**To Build This Legacy:** Be a Role Model: Live your life in accordance with Masonic principles. Strive to be a person of integrity, kindness, and compassion. Invest in Relationships: Take the time to develop meaningful relationships within and outside our fraternity. The connections we make are a testament to our values. Pay It Forward: Encourage acts of kindness within your lodge and community. Whether organizing charitable events or small gestures, every action contributes to a kinder world.

Finally, as we continue our journey together as Masons, let us commit to being leaders marked by kindness and understanding. By embracing these values, we not only uplift our fraternity but also enrich the larger community. We should all strive to be remembered as good men whose lasting impact was defined by their compassion, wisdom, and unity. It's never too late to do the right thing, and to Try a little kindness.

Fraternally,

Don Paul Payton  
Grand High Priest



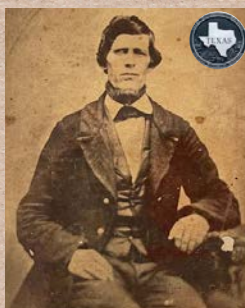




## FROM THE GRAND ORATOR'S SCROLL

Japheth, the third son of Noah, is the final character from the Great Flood we will highlight. He, like his father and brothers, survived in the Ark and helped to repopulate the world. Having seven sons with his wife after the Great Flood, he is credited as the ancestor of the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Macedonians, and various other parts of Europe and Asia. Unlike Ham, he and Shem were blessed by Noah. From this blessing, Japheth's territory was extended. As history unfolds, the populations tied to him developed large empires and eventually travel westward to the Americas. Truly, Japheth's territory was extended and reaches across the world today.

## ROYAL ARCH RESEARCH



Of the more than 16,000 Texas Historical Markers, seven reference Royal Arch Masonry. Five mark structures, one a cemetery, and one honors an individual – **Companion Andrew Jackson McGown** (1816–1870) – at his burial site.

McGown was a Presbyterian minister and newspaper editor who served in the Texas Army and fought at the Battle of San Jacinto. He was tasked with recruiting ministers and raising funds for a statewide church newspaper. His efforts grew the number of Presbyterian clergy in Texas from about ten in 1844 to nearly seventy by 1852. After initial publishing attempts failed, he launched *The Texas Presbyterian* himself on November 3, 1846, in Victoria—the first regularly issued English-language church newspaper based in Texas. His grave is located in Glenwood Cemetery in Crockett, Texas.

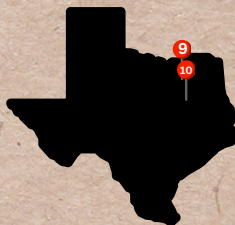
[Click here](#) for his TSHA biography.

[Click here](#) for more on Historical Marker No. 11237.

## DISTRICT BREAKDOWN

### DISTRICT 9

- Dallas
- R.C. Buckner
- George Washington
- Garland
- Love Field



### DISTRICT 10

- Corsicana
- Ennis
- Midlothian
- Teague

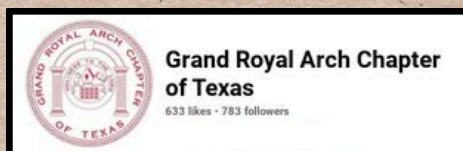
## STATEWIDE FESTIVAL



**September 26-27**

The Statewide York Rite Festival is back on after rescheduling! Mark your calendars for **September 26-27**, when this highly anticipated event will take place at the Grand Lodge Memorial Temple 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!

## 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  
CONVIVIVUM**

**TYLER, TEX**

May 9 & 10, 2025  
**"THE REAL DEAL"**



Come join us for a two-day Convivium behind the Pine Curtain! Beginning on the 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm with the finest BBQ at the legendary "Country Tavern" in Kilgore, TX, where we will be limited to 75 people and you must pay in advance. Please contact the event coordinator, Chad LaGrone at (903) 806-4763 prior to sending your check of \$45 payable to: East Texas York Rite College No. 140 at 323 W. Front St. Tyler, TX 75702 in order to reserve your seat on the waiting list! The next morning, we will have a Festival at St. John's Lodge in Tyler with registration beginning at 8AM.

**\*\* STAG EVENT \*\***



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER

## MAY 9-10

Friday Night, we will assemble at "Country Tavern" in Kilgore, TX for an authentic Texas BBQ meal! Please reserve your limited seat [here](#). 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 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!



## CAPSTONE ACADEMY

-|- POSTPONED -|-



The Capstone Academy originally scheduled to take place in Waco on Saturday, June 7th has been postponed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding. Further details will be shared as they become available.

## COUNTERPART CORNER



Congratulations to Sir Knight Jason Lesikar on his installation in Grapevine, TX as the Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Texas! We wish him the best of luck!

## COMMITTEE COLUMN

- GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEES -



### INTERNET

The Committee on Internet is responsible for the development, regulation, and promotion of capitular activities through webpages, social media usage, and other online platforms as this Grand Chapter continues to evolve in an increasingly digital world. This Committee has five seats and is fully selected by the Grand High Priest every year. The current Chairman is E. Companion Justin Winch.



### INVESTMENTS

The Committee on Investments shall be composed of members who are experienced in financial investments as a result of substantial time (not less than five years) spent as a professional in the field of financial management and investments. The Committee shall prepare for presentation to each joint session with the Grand Chapter Trustees its recommendation as to how monies in the General Fund, Endowed Membership Fund, and in all funds of this Grand Chapter shall be prudently invested for the maximum benefit to this Grand Chapter. They also shall meet each calendar quarter in joint session, exchange information pertinent to the investments. Any changes or implementation of investment policies and procedures shall require a combined majority approval of the Trustees and members of the Committee. This Committee has five seats with one member rolling off every year. The current Chairman is Right Excellent Companion Scott Stanton.

**"WE ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS WE ARE UNITED,  
AS WEAK AS WE ARE DIVIDED."**

**- J.K. ROWLING -**



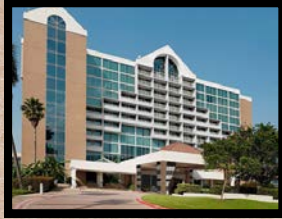
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# SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF YORK RITE MASONS

ARKANSAS - KANSAS - LOUISIANA - MISSOURI - OKLAHOMA - TEXAS

## SEPTEMBER 19-20

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The 68th Annual South Central York Rite Conference is just around the corner, and we invite you to join us in **League City, Texas**, for an exciting and informative weekend. The conference will be held on **September 19-20, 2025**, at the **South Shore Harbour Resort**, located at 2500 South Shore Blvd, League City, TX 77573.

Hotel accommodations are available at the South Shore Harbour Resort for just \$149 per night (before taxes). Be sure to [reserve your room](#) by the hotel deadline of August 25, 2025, to secure the discounted rate. Please note that the conference registration deadline is September 12, 2025.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to connect with fellow York Rite leaders from around the nation, engage in thought-provoking discussions, and enjoy a weekend of camaraderie and learning.

We look forward to seeing you at the 68th Annual South Central York Rite Conference!





## PRESERVING OUR PASTS

V.: E.: ZACHARIAH ELLIS COOMBES, PGHP

Zachariah Ellis Coombes (1833-1895) affiliated with Dallas Chapter No. 47 on December 17, 1855, where he would serve as High Priest twice (1870 & 1875). He later served as the thirtieth Most Excellent Grand High Priest in 1880. Professionally, he made a career as a teacher, lawyer, state legislator, and soldier. Coombes was the headmaster of a school on the Brazos Indian Reservation in Young County. In 1862 he entered the Confederate Army and was later promoted to Captain. That summer, he was elected County Judge of Dallas County in the June 1866 election. By the 1870s, he actively and successfully practiced law. He was later elected a member of the Texas State House of Representatives in 1885. As the presiding Grand Master, he laid the 12,000-pound cornerstone of the Texas State Capitol in Austin in 1885, on the 49th anniversary of Texas independence.

## 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!



### SAPPHIRE

Sapphire is the second stone of the second row of the Breastplate. The celestial blue color has always symbolized heaven and attracted divine favor and wise judgment which made it common for clergy to wear. The name is derived from the Latin word sapphirus, itself from the Greek word sappheiros, which referred to lapis lazuli - a natural blue toned metamorphic rock. Ancient Persians and Babylonians believed the world rested on a giant sapphire due to the color of the oceans and the sky.



# 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 Elders**  
**Middle Chair Empty**  
**Sorrowful**  
**Ornate Architecture**  
**Divine Background**  
**White Temple**  
**Funeral**  
**In Remembrance**

The generated AI caption of the photo reads, "Two elders of ancient times kneel within an ornate white temple and observe an empty chair once filled by their well-respected passed confidant, to which they will forever mourn his lost."

## GRAND PHOTOGRAPHER'S PORTFOLIO



 **Texas Grand Chapter**  
**Photo Gallery**





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## TEXAS MASONIC RETIREMENT COMMUNITY UPDATES!

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**DON'T MISS THIS - Cottage Duplex 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 [THIS LINK!](#)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

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### MAY



10 // East Texas Convivium (Kilgore)

11 // East Texas Festival (Tyler)

18 // Masonic Oak Observance (Brazoria)

29-30 // TAMDA (Waco)



### JUNE

19-22 // Grand Assembly of Rainbow Girls (Waco)



## EDITOR'S NOTE

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

Companions,

As we publish yet another edition, I want to extend my sincerest thankfulness to each and every one of you—our loyal Companions, dedicated team, and valuable contributors. Your support and commitment continue to make our work not just possible, but truly meaningful. I am not worthy of the praise. To show my appreciation, I am introducing a new "Contributor Pin" (seen above). I personally had these created as a small token of recognition for those who help me in creating this publication. This pin will be personally handed out by me as a thank you to those who help me with this good and square work. Thank you once again for being an essential part of the Fellowship and Unity we are so deeply enjoying this year! **This newsletter is for you!**

