

Texas Grand Commander's Message

Grand Commander's Message — March 2005

Taken from the Texas Insert for the Knight Templar Magazine
Volume LI, Number 3, March 2005

To the Sir Knights of Texas:

Death of Past Grand Commander: I regret to report that Sir Knight Roland J. Maddox of Dickinson, R:E: Grand Commander in 1987-1988 died on January 21 and was laid to rest on January 24, 2005. He has performed yeoman service in all bodies of the York Rite and his presence will be sorely missed.

Death of Widows of Past Grand Officers: I also regret to report Genie Seay, widow of Past Grand Commander A.B. Seay (Arlington) (1980), and Nelia Owen, widow of Past Grand Commander Winford H. Owen (Seguin) (1973), have each passed away in December. They worked very diligently for their Sir Knights during their respective years of service to the Fraternity and should not be forgotten.

York Rite Festivals: El Paso: Chap/Coun/Cdry on Fri-Sat. **Mar 11-12** — Contact Ed Lindke ((915) 585-1509); **Lubbock:** Chap/Coun/Cdry on Sat. **Mar 12** (7 AM) — Contact David Melear ((806) 655-3821) or Skip Dees ((432) 697-6175); **Tyler:** Chap/Coun/Cdry on Fri-Sat. **Apr 1-2** — Contact John E. Andrews ((903) 566-1163 or Ray Burcham ((903) 565-4855).
Courtesy candidates welcome.

Sesquicentennial Celebration in San Antonio on March 5, 2005 has now come and gone. At this writing, however, we are a month away and plans have been finalized for a wonderful evening of celebration and reminiscing about our wonderful past, as well as some wonderful songs of our Tex-Mex heritage by Sir Knight Gordon Downing of San Antonio Commandery #7. I trust that those who attended this celebratory event commemorating our life and history as a Grand Commandery left with a feeling of historical participation, an experience of wonderful Templar and Christian fellowship and a whetting of the appetite for our celebratory finale at the Sesquicentennial Grand Conclave April 15-18 in its birthplace, San Antonio.

Sesquicentennial Grand Conclave, April 15-18: We are only one month from the conclusion this Grand Chivalric Year. Although April 15 is Tax Day, more pleasantly, it is the advent of our Sesquicentennial Grand Conclave, marking the conclusion of our Sesquicentennial year and the beginning of another new Grand Year under those who will lead us into our future years of Christian Chivalric endeavors.

Barbara and I, with the immense help of our 2005 Grand Conclave Committee, have planned what we believe will be a grand finale to our Sesquicentennial Year celebration(s). You will get to meet at least one *unique* San Antonio Fiesta dignitary, some area secular dignitaries, as well as our customary Masonic ones. We will experience our Drill Competition at Alzafar Shrine Center and our Ritual Competition at the Hotel. The Ladies of the SOOB will have a wonderful Fiesta themed luncheon on Saturday hosted by San Antonio Assembly #159. Attendees at the Awards Banquet on Saturday, in addition to learning the Drill and Ritual Competition winners, and the other awardees, will receive a unique Sesquicentennial Fiesta medal as an attendance memento that we hope you will wear and cherish as a keepsake of your participation in this Sesquicentennial event. Our Memorial and Worship Service, as noted below, will be unique and, we hope, a true worship experience for you. After all, the central focus of our Templary is the improvement of our relationship with our Lord and

Saviour, and it is our sincere desire to have you leave this service with a renewed and rejuvenated faith and relationship with and in Him.

Following the spiritual nourishment of the Worship Service led by our Grand Prelate, you can be physically nourished at our Fiesta Brunch, enjoying our excellent San Antonio Tex-Mex cuisine, while being serenaded with music by some of our many great Alamo City mariachis.

Although Sunday afternoon is free to visit our many historic sites or shop at North Star Mall (across the Loop from the hotel) or Rivercenter Mall (downtown near the Alamo), members of the KYCH and Knight Preceptors attend a meeting. There will always be time for fellowship at the Grand Commander's Hospitality Suite that evening.

Monday, we open the Sesquicentennial Grand Conclave and formally receive and recognize our many expected Masonic and secular dignitaries in attendance on this memorable occasion. We hope that you will be present to help us properly receive them, including one of our Fiesta dignitaries, *EL REY FEO*, the Ugly King. We will then move right into our Grand Conclave business session so that we can hold our elections and then install our new Grand Officers at or near the usual time that afternoon.

That evening, following the installation, you may want to stay over and take in some of the many opportunities to experience our City's Fiesta celebration. Our famous River Parade will happen Monday night, with *NIOSA* (Night in Old San Antonio) at La Villita (the original San Antonio village area) commencing on Tuesday evening and running through Friday night. The Hotel will honor our room rate for as long as you want to stay following the conclusion of our Sesquicentennial event, so take advantage!

I am looking forward to a great Sesquicentennial event and want you to be there to enjoy it with me. If you have not obtained your Hotel Registration or Conclave Registration and Credentials Forms from your Commandery Recorder, you can get them off these websites: www.texasorkrite.org/grcommandery.htm or www.yorkrite.albertpikedemolay.org or contact me and I will see that you get one mailed to you. Please pre-register regardless of whether you're attending only a part of the Grand Conclave. **Our Registration and Credentials Committee is handling all room reservations and assignments, so be certain to mail the Hotel Reservation Form to the address indicated at the bottom of the form.** You can also find a letter from our General Chairman, Sir Knight Harry J. "Moose" Moosegian, on the website that more completely details all of the events that will occur during your *Fiesta San Antonio* stay. If you choose to miss this historic event in the life of our Grand Commandery, you will have missed a great time of fellowship and living this facet of our Texas Templar history.

Choir at Grand Conclave: I believe that worship is enhanced with music, and that it is even more enhanced with choral music. So, this year, we'll augment our worship experience at our Grand Conclave Worship Service on April 17 with choral music. Phyllis Rogers (PSWP, SOOB) has agreed to serve as our Choir Director on this occasion and all we lack are folks like you to fill our choir. We will sing 2-3 numbers that will be easy for all with a church choir background to learn and perform--easy because I know that we will not have much time to practice. I am confident that with your voices, we can fill the hall with great music. If you and/or your family members would like to help be part of this historical first, send your name, address, phone number and email address (if you have one) to **Mrs. Harry S. Rogers, 14416 Aldine-Westfield, Houston, Texas 77039** or call her at **(281) 449-5660** or send the information to me. The selected music will be sent to you in advance to "warm up on." **I look forward to our Grand Commandery Choir's joyful noise!**

Membership: Our membership efforts are showing fruit. We have had and/or will have

several Festivals and Conferrals during the first quarter of 2005 and the reports being received are very gratifying. At this writing (1/29), Dallas completed its Festival and I was privileged to personally knight almost all of the 21 new Sir Knights on January 22. On January 29, 5 were knighted in Corpus Christi for Corpus Christi (3) and Hidalgo (2) Commanderies in South Texas. Arlington and San Antonio will have had their Festivals in February and 20-30 new knightings are expected to have occurred. Lubbock and El Paso will be conducting their Festivals about the time you are receiving this Magazine and Tyler is hosting a Festival on April 1-2 as noted above. Other Commanderies have men waiting to be knighted, such as St. John, Waco, Llano, Teague and others. If we can, in the interim, recoup some of the demits and NPD lost in the past 10 months, we will show a net gain, not counting deaths over which we have no control. Thank you Sir Knights for your hard work! I Believe we can do it. I know you do, too.

OUR UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST,

James N. (Jim) Higdon
Grand Commander

Visit your website at www.texasorkrite.org/grcommandery.

P.S. Please contact me this year at one of the following: 10122 N. Manton Lane, San Antonio, Texas 78213-1948; O: (210) 349-9933; H: (210) 344-4309; F: (210) 349-9988; Email: jnh.kt@hbzlaw.com.