

Texas Grand Commander's Message

Grand Commander's Message - June 2004

Taken from the Texas Insert for the Knight Templar Magazine

Volume L, Number 6, June 2004

To the Sir Knights of Texas:

By now your Recorders should have received General Order #1 as well as Bulletin #1. They should have also received letters from your various District Officers announcing the date and location of your District School of Instruction. This year, to encourage attendance at our Schools, I have instituted a "bonus system" that will reward Commanderies whose installed officers attend a School of Instruction. I have also instituted, in addition to the usual penalties for substitutions, a bonus system for installed officers who perform their installed stations during the Order of the Temple (O/T). It is my hope by this action to encourage our constituent Commandery officers to learn the part for the station in which they are installed. We are seeing too many "degree teams," which, although is good for the individual candidates, may not be the best thing for the long—term "health" of the Commandery as we lose key players in the team to death, incapacity or transfer. Although one of the purposes of "the Inspection" is to validate that each Commandery can Open and Close **and** is able to confer the O/T, it is to also ensure that each Commandery is and will remain "healthy" with respect to "learned" members who have been exposed to and can work more than one station. Unfortunately, we have, probably due to time constraints, tend to only focus on the terminal Order, the O/T, rather than also inspecting to ensure that each Commandery can also confer the other two Orders in our Rite. Perhaps we have focused on the O/T since it is the most beautiful of our Orders and we have our Grand Conclave Ritual Competition in the other two Orders on a rotating basis. That, however, only results in "an inspection" if you will of those Commanderies desiring to compete and we have woefully too few given the number of Commanderies in this State. At Midland (2003) we had 13 teams competing in the Malta and only 7 at Tyler (2004) when the chosen Order was the Red Cross. We had some new teams competing, for which we are grateful. The competition in San Antonio (2005) will again be in the Red Cross. Begin now planning to have a competition team (1) to prove to yourselves that you can compete while enjoying the thrill of competition—and you receive a badge for competing, win or not; and (2) to prove to all of your neighboring Commanderies that you do know how to and can confer the Red Cross. I know that I speak for the Templar Instruction Committee when I invite you to plan to make them work harder this year by having more teams to grade than last. They enjoy—**LOVE**—what they do and, if you come and compete, so will you.

Membership: As you can see from my putting the Festival announcement before my comments, we must do more than we have been doing if we are to survive. We have had the privilege **live and make Templar history**. We will never have another opportunity like **what we have experienced thus far**; that **is**, in fact, **our history!** Each day experience an "advent." We daily close another chapter of our history, but that is all that we close. Each day as we rise to another day Our Lord has made, we are charged to rejoice and be glad in it. Ps. 18:24. We necessarily experience a new beginning, the beginning of a new chapter in our Templar history. We-you and I-are part of the *living history* of our Grand Commandery. What we make of the history we are making, however, is up to each of us.

Moses, one of the great leaders of the Bible, said, "*O Lord, please send someone else to do it.*" Ex 4:13. Send someone else. Doesn't that sound just like you and me! Don't we hear that in our Lodges, Chapters, Councils and Commanderies all too often! We pray for God to use us and help us to preserve our Masonic heritage, but we want Him to send someone else to do it, just like Moses wanted God to send someone else to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. Unlike Moses, in general, we have no pharaoh stopping us and there is not a whole nation of people counting on us, so what's the big deal? The big deal is that a job faces us that needs doing—**must be done**—and we are each individually and collectively being called to do it. If we were not called to preserve our Masonic ideals, our Christian Masonic ideals, then why are we Knights Templar today? Why are we placed in positions of leadership and service in our Lodges and York Rite Bodies, if we are not called to preach, in our case, the Christian gospel as well as our Masonic ideals? We must, like Moses, take up *the staff*—in our case **the Cross**—and lead as God has chosen us to lead from the various positions of leadership and service in which He has separately and individually placed each one of us. If

each of us is responsible for just one Master Mason becoming a Companion and Sir Knight, we can double our membership this year without even making a dent in the *fields yet to be harvested!* Jn 4:35.

Yours in the Faith,

James N. (Jim) Higdon
Grand Commander

P.S. Please feel free to contact me this year at: 10122 N. Manton Lane, San Antonio, Texas 78213-1948; O: (210) 349-9933; H: (210) 344-4309; F: (210) 349-9988; Email: jnh.kt@hhzlaw.com. I want your input and suggestions. Visit our website at www.texasYorkrite.org/grcommandery.

York Rite Festival: Gulf Coast York Rite College #106 will host a festival on **June 19, 2004** at Melrose Commandery #109, 13106 Chrisman Rd., Spring, commencing at 7:00 AM. Contact SK Leonard O. Pierce ((713) 468-6116) or SK Tom Snedecor ((281) 333-3992) for details. **Courtesy candidates welcome.** The Grand Commandery Officers will confer the Order of the Temple.

Temple Commandery #41 will celebrate its **100th Anniversary** on **August 17, 2004** (Tuesday) at the Masonic Center of Temple, 16 E. Central Ave. Doors open at 6:00 PM, dinner at 7:30; \$15.00 per plate. **Please RSVP if attending NLT July 31:** mail: P.O. Box 1387 Temple 7659-1387; phone: (254) 773-2348; or e-mail: Yorkrite@vvm.com. Dress: SKs: Uniform with Sword and Chapeaux; Ladies and guests: Sunday attire/coat & tie. Y'all come!

Sesquicentennial Celebration: Our Sesquicentennial will be celebrated in **San Antonio** on **March 5, 2005**. Put this date on your calendar now. More information about this significant Grand Commandery event will be forthcoming.