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To the Sir Knights of Texas:

Greetings and Happy 4th of July! July is the month that we, throughout this great Nation, celebrate our independence. Becky and I have been attending the same fireworks display for twenty years, and Rex has not missed one in the last nine years. What a great day it is to show how much we **CARE** about our United States by celebrating with our **FAMILY** and friends.

Becky and I were blessed to celebrate Easter in Alexandria, Virginia with Sir Knights and their ladies from all over the United States. While we were there, we attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. As we watched the ceremony of the Changing of the Guard, I cannot express to you how proud I felt to be an American. To see these young men who serve with honor looking over the graves of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice was awe-inspiring. What **CHIVALRY** they show to those who have gone before them. To see the guard looking out over the Potomac at the Lincoln and Washington monuments was such a portrait of our freedom. While in the cemetery, we also visited the graves of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Edward Kennedy, Audie Murphy (Texas hero and my favorite), and Abner Doubleday (inventor of baseball and Becky's favorite). As we looked out over the rows and rows of headstones, it made me think of how many men and women have served, and how many have given the ultimate sacrifice, so that I might enjoy the freedom I had to visit my Nation's capitol. Sir Knights, if your Commandery does not honor your veterans at a stated conclave, I encourage you to do so. You can purchase the military service ribbon that can be worn on our uniform – that would be a great way to show how much you **CARE**. Remember, a Patriotic observance is one of the four obligatory services in our Templar year. The observance would also be a great way to include our Masonic **FAMILY** by inviting other bodies to join in celebrating our freedom.

The month of July also completes the annual installations of the officers in our Masonic **FAMILY**. I hope each Commandery has been busy with flag presentations. Visibility is the key to new membership, and we are

never more visible than when we are seen at installations. We have a great chance to make a good impression!

As your officers make ready for the annual Schools of Instruction, I hope all our Sir Knights will make plans to attend as well. I think it would be great to hear of record numbers in attendance throughout the state. I encourage you to ask questions, demonstrate tactics, and really “dive in” to our work. The only way to learn is to ask! I also challenge you to take up a collection at your school to support the Holy Land Pilgrimage in honor of those who were present. Please keep the Permanent Endowment Fund and Penny-A-Day programs at the forefront of your fundraising efforts. I am so proud to report that we raised over \$3000.00 for the Permanent Endowment Fund at the 158th Grand Conclave this year. Congratulations to Sir Knight Ralph Royall (Melrose 109), who is the newest full member of the Fund. Your support of these programs can only better The Grand Commandery of Texas.

As for my **FUN** this month, I am looking forward to attending State Conclave with our DeMolay later this month, and I am especially proud to recognize Sir Knight J. Weldon Clampitte (Houston 95), KTCH, who was installed as Grand Master of DeMolay International at its 91st Annual Session in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dad Clampitte has done so much for the young men of Texas, and we are proud to have bragging rights to our “home folk”. I also had a great time at Masonic Youth Weekend in May. If you need your batteries recharged, just go to a youth function in the state of Texas. I am always so impressed and encouraged by these young ladies and young men. When I see them, I see the future of this Grand Commandery. They are fantastic examples of **CARING, CHIVALRY, FAMILY**, and most of all, **FUN!** I love being “Uncle Paul” to all these young people – they almost make this old man feel like a kid again!

As you enjoy the **FUN** of a backyard bar-b-que with your **FAMILY** this month, take a moment to reflect on just how much you have been given by this great nation of ours. I recently added a quote to our website (www.texasyorkrite.org) from former President George W. Bush, which reads, “We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free.” Let us remember the **CHIVALRY** and **CARING** of our forefathers, and keep their dreams of a “more perfect union” alive.

Enjoy the fireworks, wave your flag proudly, and be as proud to be a Knight Templar as you are to be an American. I'll see you at State Conclave in Austin...

*In Christ's Name,
Paul E. Wunsche,
Right Eminent Grand Commander*