

# Texas Grand Commander's Message

Grand Commander's Message - September 2004

Taken from the Texas Insert for the Knight Templar Magazine

Volume L, Number 9, September 2004

**District Visitations in Sep/Oct** (all times approx. 7PM unless noted): **SEPT: 20 - San Antonio; OCT: 7 - Sweetwater; 8 - Amarillo; 9 - Borger (9 AM), Plainview; 11 - Lubbock, Abilene; 14 - Stamford; 16 - Vernon (10:30 AM), Wichita Falls; 19 - Brownwood; 22 - Brady.** (Announcement of others not yet received.)

**York Rite Festivals: San Antonio:** Cdry Orders on Sat. **Sept. 11** (8 am), Contact Jerry Nowotny ((210) 573-3829). **El Paso:** Chap. on **Fri. Sept. 10**, Coun. & Cdry on **Sat. Sept. 10**, Contact Lionel Hartzog ((915) 593-8492). **Tyler:** MM, PM, MEM on **Fri. Sept 24** (7 pm) & RAM, RM, SM & Cdry on **Sat. Sept. 25** (7 am), Contact Jim Smith ((903) 845-3545). **Waco:** MM - O/T on **Sat. Oct 2** (8 AM), Contact Daniel Walling ((254) 829-2910). **Courtesy candidates welcome.**

**Sesquicentennial Celebration in San Antonio on March 5, 2005.** More information about this significant Grand Commandery event in future issues.

## **To the Sir Knights of Texas:**

Each day, we complete simple, mundane tasks-things that have to be done, but that have no grand and glorious purpose. We've all spent time showing a child how to ride a bicycle, drive a nail or bait a hook. Sometimes we've taught a class of wriggling Sunday School kids or instructed a Boy Scout troop. At the time, it may have felt like a waste of productive time. We may think that what we do in helping someone learn some task is not going to change the world.

Sometimes, however, we look back in the rear view mirror of our own lives and see how someone's simple mundane caring act affected us, or, better yet, how some similarly minimal act on our part had a significant impact on someone else's life.

That is what mentors do. They serve by performing seemingly meaningless jobs, activities and tasks that teach us, often almost accidentally, how to act, how to dress, what is appropriate, etc.

Recently, at our Grand Officers' meeting, our Grand Prelate, Jim Sonneborn, brought a message that blended very well into what I wanted to discuss in this article. In his homily, he discussed "The Five People You Meet in Heaven," a book by Mitch Albom of "Tuesdays With Morrie" fame. Although the book does not specifically address "mentors" or "mentoring," it does address people whom we will want to see in heaven-people who have had a significant impact upon our lives.

Sometimes these are people whom we may have significantly disliked at the time, such as a Drill Sergeant, an English teacher or a football coach. Whether we liked them or not, in our

rear view mirror we can now see the important and significant way that they affected who and what we are today.

I encourage you to take time to think about and recognize the people in each of your lives who have had a substantive affect upon who and what you have become, people who have mentored you. And since I'm writing this for a Masonic audience, I ask you to especially consider those Masons who have directed your paths in the Fraternity.

I can certainly think of many who have influenced me in life in general, as well as in my Masonic pursuits: my parents, Dain and Jean Higdon; a Sunday School teacher named Jim Byrom; several of my school teachers; Capts. John Rice and Alan Bentz and other Naval Officers during my Naval career; Arthur Shell (who, at 80, taught me my Q&A), Jim Sinclair and Louie Barnett (who each mentored me in being a WM and earning my Esoteric Certificate), Conrad Carr and Don Lively (who preceded and followed me as WM) in my Lodge; Frank Draper (my Recorder), Jack Burton, Jack Hall and Lou Herrick as well as traveling companions, Dick Moore and Joe Estlack, all in Commandery and Grand Commandery; plus attorneys, Rotarians and many, many others too numerous to name who taught me much by example. There are some whose names I cannot not immediately recall, but I vividly remember what they did. Unfortunately, some of these are now deceased, but I hope they are among "the five" I meet in heaven.

Who are your mentors in life and in the Fraternity? Have you thanked them for the things that they did that were very significant to you? I urge you to make a list and set out to thank them now, before the opportunity slips away.

Who have you taken time to mentor knowingly? We will rarely ever know who we unknowingly mentor, for good or bad, but we have to keep in mind that this is what has made Masonry and Templary what it was, and, more importantly, what it well be! Remember every opportunity to serve someone is an opportunity to mentor.

In the College, we learn that "The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Matt. 23: 11-12. This instruction is given to all of us in positions of trust and authority (and this includes each and every one of us as Christian Masons) and is repeated for emphasis in two of the other three Gospels: Mark 10: 41-45; Luke 22: 24-27. In each of these passages, the message for each of us to whom has been entrusted a position of trust, confidence and authority over others is that **to lead, we must serve**--just as did our Savior, Jesus Christ. Only then can we be considered great as a leader.

Yours in the faith,

James N. (Jim) Higdon  
Grand Commander

**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@hhzlaw.com](mailto:jnh.kt@hhzlaw.com). **Check out your website at [www.texasyorkrite.org/grcommandery](http://www.texasyorkrite.org/grcommandery).**

**P.P.S.** I only have a few Templar dress ties left (about 25 of each). See the "ad" in the Knight Voices at the end of the magazine. JNH