

# Texas Grand Commander's Message

Grand Commander's Message - December 2004

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**York Rite Festivals: Houston:** Chap/Coun/Cdry on Sat., **Dec. 11** (7 AM) at Holland Lodge Masonic Temple, 4911 Montrose - Contact Leonard O. Pierce ((713) 468-6116) or Tom Snedecor ((281) 333-3992); **Dallas:** Chap/Coun on Sat **Jan. 15** ( AM); Cdry w/ **Grand Officers conferring O/T** on Sat. **Jan. 22** (8 AM) - Contact Loyd L. Chance ((214) 651-6070); **San Antonio:** Chap/Coun/Cdry on Sat. **Feb 26** (8 AM) - Contact Gerald Nowotny ((210) 573-3829). **Courtesy candidates welcome.**

**Sesquicentennial Celebration in San Antonio on March 5, 2005.** The festivities begin at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, Ave. E & 4th St., with cocktails (donations benefiting the South Texas SR Learning Center (6PM) and dinner (NY Strip with stuffed baked potato and other delicious condiments) (7PM), all for **\$25.00**. Check the website in coming months for additional information about this significant event.

## To the Sir Knights of Texas:

Our Grand Prelate has prepared a Christmas Message for our consideration and edification as follows:

The celebration of Christmas by Christians around the world is usually marked by decorated homes, festive lighting along streets and byways, parades, Santa Claus, the traditional Christmas tree in homes, and the famous New York's huge Christmas tree in Times Square. Even our government becomes involved with the President lighting the traditional Christmas tree on the mall in Washington, D.C. Christmas becomes the season for carolers, festive dinners, church services, numerous forays into malls and stores and exchanges of gifts. But is this what Christmas is all about? Regardless of the commercial side of the Christmas season, we cannot forget that, for us, as Knight Templars and Christians, December 25th is the day that Christ came into our world.

It wasn't until the 5th century that our church fathers settled on December 25th as the official observance of Christ's birth. Other significant dates allied with the Christmas date is the observance of St. John the Evangelist on December the 27th and the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles (The Three Wise Men) on January 6th.

At the time of His birth, who could have thought, imagined or foreseen the impact on the peoples and nations of the world resulting from the birth of this infant? Yes, it had been foretold by a few Old Testament prophets. However, a "King" born in a stable? This time of the year, more than any other time, we recall the birth of the Baby Jesus. Although, we all know the story from the scriptures, it is exceedingly difficult to place oneself at the time and place of the event. Just imagine you are with Joseph and his pregnant wife Mary as they travel those many difficult miles from Galilee to Bethlehem. They arrive at their destination, dirty, exhausted, and searching for a place to stay. With all the travelers coming to the area, there is no room at the inn. Finally, they find a stable. Mary gives birth and places her child in a manger. The baby is named Jesus. Suddenly, a brilliant star in the heavens leads shepherds

and the Wise Men to the stable. Although the scriptures are silent, presumably, many others gather to behold the child. Somehow, the onlookers know that this little infant from the ancient line of David is destined for greatness. Jesus, then and now, is the greatest gift in all of this world. Let us, every day, thank God for the gift of His Son.

Of course, as the well-known commentator Paul Harvey states; we already know the "rest of the story." But what if we had been one of the shepherds? What if we had been at the inn? Would we have seen the star? Surely, the shepherds would have spread the wonderful news. Again, our scripture is silent. However, we do know that the good news has, through the centuries spread from that tiny stable in Bethlehem to all the earth. God has given His Son to us.

So, enjoy the season. Thank God for your blessings. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May His countenance shine upon you and give you peace. And let us pray for those less fortunate, but especially for those of our sons and daughters, wives and husbands, relatives and friends who serve our country in the Armed Forces and who now are in harm's way.

Merry Christmas to all.

James E. Sonneborn  
Eminent Grand Prelate

**Choir at Grand Conclave:** I am choral person. I believe that worship is enhanced with music and even more enhanced with choral music. I have, therefore, planned to enhance our worship experience at our Grand Conclave Worship Service on April 17, 2005 with choral music. I have prevailed upon Phyllis Rogers (PSWP, SOOB) to serve as our Choir Director on this occasion and lack only people like you to fill our choir. We will be singing 2-3 numbers that will be easy for all with a church choir background to quickly learn and perform; easy because I know that we will not have very much time to practice. I am confident, however that we, with the assistance of your voice, can pull this off and create a more worshipful atmosphere by our choral music. If you and your voice would like to help and 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.** Of course, you can mail, call or email you willingness to participate to me as well. We have picked out the music and are planning to send it to you in advance to "warm up on." **I look forward to you making a joyful noise with me in our Grand Commandery Choir!**

**Grand Lodge:** I will be in the opening ceremony, parading in my uniform, along with the other presiding Grand York Rite officers in their regalia. In a show of jointness and uniformity, our Grand Master has invited all of the presiding officers of all Texas Masonic Bodies to wear their regalia/uniform/fez, etc. during the opening session of Grand Lodge. I am proud to wear my uniform in representing each of you on this occasion. When called upon for remarks, **I intend to invite each Templar present to stand and be counted! Be there and be identified as a Templar!**

Finally, as we prepare for Christmas, I again encourage each of you to continue working on a **Zero Tolerance for NPDs.** Try to regain some of those who have been or are in danger of being lost as **Suspended NPD.** They are already SKs, so they should be an easier sell on staying a SK and/or being reinstated than the effort in gaining a brand new SK. Thank you in advance for your hard work.

OUR UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST,

James N. (Jim) Higdon  
Grand Commander

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