

# Eduardo Estrada, KYGCH

159th Grand Master Cryptic Masons California



Most Illustrious Companion

## Sword & Trowel

## April 2020

The Sword and Trowel is a monthly Newsletter published by the Grand Council Cryptic Masons of California and provides information to all Companions of Grand York Rite of California.

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## *Vision Statement*

**Cryptic Masonry is an organization where men of good character come together to improve themselves, their families, and their communities. It is where the highest Masonic values are learned by its member and applied in all their doings. As Cryptic Masons, we learn a way of life from our ancient teachings, develop meaningful and fulfilling lifelong relationships, and grow as enlightened men. We never hesitate to go out of our way to assist a widow, or a fallen brother.**

**Furthermore, membership in our Cryptic Councils provides us with a place where we, and our families, can find spirituality and likeminded positive thinkers, and where members of our community can depend on us for stability, leadership, and enlightenment.**



## **Grand Secretary/Recorder Grand York Rite**

**High Priests, Illustrious Masters, Eminent Commanders and Grand Officers - you are all receiving this message as a blind copy**

**1. The Grand Officers and Trustees met by teleconference Wednesday night and voted to re-schedule Grand Sessions to July 14-16 at the Wyndham in Visalia. This, of course, is conditional on the Grand Master removing his restriction on masonic meetings before then, and other public health considerations. As this is a weekday event, there will be no "frills" - no Banquet, no Drill Team, no Vespers program, no Royal Arch Widows degree. Grand Commandery will have all day Tuesday, the 14th, to accomplish its tasks; Grand Chapter will have all day Wednesday; and Grand Council will have all day Thursday. As the practice has been the last few years, the Corporation will meet Monday night, and again on Friday morning.**

**2. The Grand Sessions Committee will be refunding all registration payments sent in, either by check or PayPal, and a new registration document will become available early next week. Check the website as early as Tuesday morning: [www.ca-gyrs.org](http://www.ca-gyrs.org). The Grand Presiding Officers have been tasked to produce a new schedule for each day by Monday, March 30th, when there will be another teleconference. So check the website on Tuesday morning.**

**3. Please distribute this information to everyone in your orbit who may have already registered for Grand Sessions, or may do so in the future. The Grand Sessions Committee will arrange with the Wyndham to cancel all reservations made for May in our block of rooms. If anyone made a reservation outside that block, or at another hotel, they will need to make their own cancellation.**

**4. These developments are a considerable inconvenience for everyone involved, and we can only ask for your understanding during these unparalleled times. Keep in mind that the Grand Officers have gone to considerable time and expense to plan Family Dinners, Installations and Receptions. It would be a nice gesture on your part, if you can make a mid-week event, to come, participate, enjoy the fellowship (however we may prefer to greet one another and at what distance!), to honor these Companions and Sir Knights who are, indeed, struggling mightily to preserve our institution and its practices.**

**Sincerely and fraternally,**

**Phil Hardiman  
Grand Secretary-Recorder**



**Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of California  
Eduardo Estrada, Grand Master of Cryptic Masons-California**

**Dear Companions All,**

I hope this message finds you, your family, friends, and community healthy and safe. As we settle into the current situation with the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic, I would like to remind each of you to please take care of yourselves during these trying times. We are all in this together so please follow the medical and governmental guidelines for your personal safety and for the greater good. As we enter the fourth week of sheltering in place as much as we can, our routine has taken a beating. This is uncharted territory as a planet, nation and fraternity. My advice is to be calm, do not overreact, lead, refrain from mob mentality, trust but verify information, be hygienically hawkish, and maintain social distancing. Your masonic leadership team understands what a challenging time this is, and we are grateful that the number of cases among our members remains low. However, there is no doubt that several us have been impacted greatly, whether as caretakers, parents, family members or friends. For those that have felt the effects of COVID-19 on a deeper level, our thoughts and well wishes are with you. Please take care of yourself and your family. Don't underestimate the toll this virus will take on those who are closest to and rely upon you. Take time away when you can to get fresh air, go for a walk, or just unplug. If you can work from home, don't go into the office. If you can't work from home, follow social distancing guidelines. By now you have been bombarded with information on how to minimize your exposure to the COVID-19 virus, so I won't go into it now. Just remember to practice preventative procedures to keep you and those around you healthy.

As you probably already been informed, our upcoming Grand York Rite Sessions (May 2020) has been canceled due to the current pandemic. The three Grand Presiding Officers, or Three Such As We, and the Board of Directors of the Grand York Rite Corporation of California have re-scheduled the event for the second week of July, contingent upon the lifting of the Grand Master's edict to refrain from any masonic gatherings due to COVID-19 Pandemic, and other health and safety considerations. Additional details will follow later this week.

In the meantime, it gives me great pleasure to share with you some background on our Right Illustrious Robert (Bob) Morrison, Deputy Grand Master, who will most likely be elected as your new Grand Master in July, or sometime thereafter. RI Bob graduated from Ponderosa High School, in Shingle Springs, CA. This is where he acquired his distinctive voice. He served in the Navy from 1968 to 1977, as an Electronics Technician on many types of ships. After a stint as an entrepreneur, he decided to pursue higher education. He subsequently enrolled in Clark College, Vancouver, WA, in 1979. While working his way through school as a Property Manager, he married the love of his life (Pauline) in 1981 and they have lived happily together ever since. He graduated with an AA in Arts & Science, with a specialization certification in Administration of Justice in 1982. Almost immediately, he transferred to Evergreen College, Vancouver, WA, and graduated with a B.A. in 1984. As for his masonic History, it would not fit within the confines of this article, but I will have it included in this edition of the Sword & Trowel. And now, in his own words:

“Having the Masonic family as part of my life meant everything to my father and it has become a very large part of my life which I enjoy dearly. In retirement I plan to do more of the things I enjoy, fishing, camping, and spending more time with family, friends and of course my Masonic family.”

“Life is but a stony path upon which we must travel-leaping.” Excerpt from an Aztec Poem.

**Sincerely and Fraternaly,**

**Eduardo Estrada**  
**Grand Master Cryptic Masons of California**  
[estrada.exe@gmail.com](mailto:estrada.exe@gmail.com)

# Robert A. Morrison Biography

**Born:** July 19, 1949 to James Morrison and Donna Williams

**Graduated** 1967 Ponderosa High School Shingle Springs, CA

**Married** Christine in December 1968 and had two children, Wendy and Cheri. Christine and I divorced in 1973. Wendy has blessed our lives with two wonderful Granddaughters, Nichole and Jordan

**Drafted** July 1968 and served until March 1977 in the U.S. Navy as an Electronics Technician (Radar) or ETR, on many types of ships, Submarines to Aircraft Carriers. Served 7½ years overseas during the Vietnam War, was home 1 month or less every 18 months which explains why my first marriage didn't last.

From 1975 until 1979, owned and operated Growlersburg Television and Appliance in Georgetown, CA. When I couldn't make a living running my own business, I decided that I needed to get an education.

I moved to Vancouver, WA in June of 1979 to be closer to my mother and my stepfather (Jim) and started college at Clark College on the GI Bill.

The GI Bill is not known as a way to make someone rich so while attending college I took a position as an Apartment Manager and Maintenance Man. About a month after I started working, I noticed a young lady every day parking her car in my parking lot. She would park, get out of her car, open the hood, do something, and close it then leave the property. Later she would return, open the hood, do something then get in her car and drive away. After watching her perform this ritual each day, I became interested in her and in what she was doing. I never got the chance to approach her to ask her what she was doing, but one day she came knocking on my door and introduced herself. She was with a couple young children and she was training them how to sell newspapers. They asked if I wanted to subscribe for the paper and I asked if she would like to go out after she got off work. I took the paper and she declined my invitation. But, luckily for me, she returned every day in the course of her duties and I continued to ask if she would like to go out until she finally agreed and we began our journey in life together. Pauline and I were married in July 1981 and she's been putting up with me for 36 wonderful years.

I graduated in 1982 from Clark College with an Associate Arts and Science Degree and a Certificate of Proficiency in Administration of Justice than started attending Evergreen State College, Vancouver, WA. I graduated in 1984 with a Bachelors of Arts Degree.

While attending college, I worked several jobs. A couple include, Camson Company from 1979 -1981 as an Apartment Manager and Maintenance Man. Groat Brothers as a Truck Driver 1981-1983 hauling everything from logs and lumber to saw dust in the wood products industry. Once I started my education at Evergreen State College, I became the Veterans Representative from 1983-1984.

After Graduation we purchased our first home in 1984 and I started my new career as a production manager for O'Ryan Industries Inc. in Orchard, WA from 1984-1985.

We decided that we wanted to live closer to my children so we moved back to CA and I started attending Cal Northern School of Law in Chico. I attended one year before life took hold.

I went to work full time in 1985 working for Everett Apartments as the Maintenance Supervisor and continued to work there until retiring in Jan 2011

## **Masonic History:**

Initiated: 09/21/74

Passed: 03/08/75

Raised: 05/10/75

We all know you cannot ask a man to join the Masonic lodge. My Father kept fast to this rule and never asked if I would join the Lodge. What he did do was make sure that at every meeting between us he had an application conveniently available and would press this into my hand and say, "Just in case you lost or misplaced the last one." My Father was the Master of Georgetown Lodge No. 25 in Georgetown, CA. In 1975 during his second time sitting in the Oriental Chair, I had the honor of being raised by him. After waiting the obligatory year after being raised I began my journey joining other Masonic organizations and my current memberships include:

## **Masonic Lodges:**

Olivet No. 205

Corning and Red Bluff No. 84

Red Bluff:

**Master** 2006, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015

**York Rite****Royal Arch Masons: 11/12/76****Cryptic Masons: 10/17/77****Knights Templar: 11/27/78****Chapter**

Red Bluff Chapter No. 40 Royal Arch Masons

Chico Chapter No. 42 Royal Arch Masons

High Priest 2006, 2007, 2014, 2015

**Council**

Shasta Council No. 6 Royal and Select Masters, Cryptic Masons

Red Bluff: Illustrious Master 2007

Butte Council No. 50 Royal and Select Masters, Cryptic Masons

California Grand Council Cryptic Masons Grand Steward 2015

**Commandery Knights Templar**

Red Bluff Commandery No 17 Knights Templar

Butte Commandery No. 5, Knights Templar

Oroville Commandery: Commander 2008, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

**Knights of the York Cross of Honour**

Golden Redwood,

Red Bluff and

San Francisco Pories

2015 Warder Golden Redwood Priory

Sacramento Valley York Rite College Governor 2011-12

Red Cross of Constantine – Cross and Crown Conclave, Folsom,

**Allied Masonic Degrees**

Edwin J Gribble No. 241

Red Bluff Sovereign Master 2011

Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priest

Royal Order of Scotland

Golden Claymore Clan

**Order of the Eastern Star**

Vesper Chapter No. 20,

Red Bluff Worthy Patron 2011 and 2012

**Scottish Rite**

Sacramento Valley Scottish Rite, 1st Lt Com Council Knights Kadosh 2015

Black Butte Scottish Rite Club President 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 Ben Ali Shrine

Just so I cannot be accused of favoritism: Chico Elks Lodge #423

Having the Masonic family as part of my life meant everything to my father and it has become a very large part of my life which I enjoy dearly.

In retirement I plan to do more of the things I enjoy, fishing, camping, and spending more time with family, friends and of course my Masonic family.

## Secretary/Recorder Essentials

**Forms and Documents**, you will need are located at the Grand York Rite website: [Grand York Rite of California](http://www.yorkriteusa.org).

Scroll down and click on "**York Rite Forms and Documents**." Then click on the appropriate logo. A window opens where you enter the userid, which is "cagyr" and the password, which is "brio"

Scroll down to Officers Manual, which has information for the Secretary, and print that out. Many concepts in the Grand Chapter manual are relevant to the Councils and Commanderies. Priorities are as follows:

1. **Dues Collection:** You should send out dues notices no later than October, with payments from members due by December 31st.
2. **Membership control:** Especially important is the very last item, "Royal Arch Monthly Report." This is relevant to you as a Secretary/Recorder if you do not yet have a userid for access to MMS – Masonic Membership Solutions. If you fill the paper report out each month, whenever you encounter changes to the membership, you will find it much easier at the end of the year to produce the year-end report, which is used to compute the amount of per capita the Chapter needs to pay. That payment is due by Jan 15th each year. Important changes to your membership include new members, demits, remits and deaths. Maintain e-mail addresses for members and you can easily then forward the monthly newsletter, The WORKMAN & Sword and Trowel, to them.
3. Do not cavalierly **suspend members** for non-payment of dues. There is a Constitutional process that should be followed rigorously in order that members, who may have moved and not received your dues notice, are treated fairly. See the following sections of the relevant Constitution in order to learn about this process:

**Chapter:** Section 201 in the Constitution at

<http://www.yorkriteusa.org/cagyr/forms/Chapter/ROYAL%20ARCH%20Constitution%202018%20Rev1.pdf>

**Council:** See Section 30-10 in the Constitution at

<http://www.yorkriteusa.org/cagyr/forms/Council/Grand%20Council%20Constitution%202018%20Rev1.pdf>

**Commandery:** See Section 347 in the Constitution at

<http://www.yorkriteusa.org/cagyr/forms/Commandery/GRAND%20COMMANDERY%20Constitution%202018%20Rev1.pdf>

4. **Per Capita:** Per Capita payment, due each Jan 15th, does not require action by the Chapter to be paid. You will need good, up-to-date membership data in order to compute the end-of-year number of active members that is crucial to computing your per capita payment. Without good data you will most likely overpay your per capita requirement. It is sensible to begin your process near the end of the CY, as soon as possible. It is also sensible, if you have access to the Grand Lodge database, to check each member to see if they are still alive. But most important is getting a userid to utilize MMS.

5. **Insurance:** Insurance payment, due each July 15th, does not require action by the Chapter, Council or Commandery to be paid. You will be billed for the payment by the Grand Secretary-Recorder.

6. Lodge **Book of Marks:** Maintain this up-to-date, or perhaps arrange for a PHP to take on the responsibility of maintaining.

7. **Minutes:** Take good minutes, but don't over-do it by trying to capture everything that is said. Focus on having a clear representation of motions made and the vote count by which they passed or failed. In addition to keeping petitions in a separate file, it is good practice to replicate the basic petitioner information in the minutes. It is also a good practice to keep the names of attendees at each meeting in the minutes. If conferring a degree, keep a copy of the cast members and the candidate(s).

8. **Grand Sessions:** Before April meeting, remind Dais officers they are responsible to attend, and arrange a stipend if your Chapter, Council or Commandery can afford it. Remind members who expect to attend to be sure to take their dues cards. If Dais Officers of Chapter and Council cannot attend, they may issue a proxy, or they may elect a representative. This is true also for Commanderies, whose members cannot issue proxies. Appropriate forms can be obtained on Grand York Rite website: Scroll to "Elected Representative and Proxy Credentials."

9. **Order of High Priesthood:** Be sure the current High Priest and Past High Priests' know they are eligible to receive this Order. In fact, it is a Constitutional requirement! Share the petition with them and send to the Grand Secretary. This requirement does not appear to be true for the Thrice Illustrious Master Degree or the Past Commander's Association. Petitions for all three bodies are available at the website.

## ScholarShips

Companions, your children, grandchildren, & for some, great-grandchildren may receive financial help for attending school. After opening up Scholarship Center website, have them go to bottom of page & find the Scholarship Manual in (PDF format – 450KB) to download.

There they will find instructions for filling out the forms.

This is the [link](#) which will take you to the public Grand Lodge web page on scholarships. All the information you need should be right there. This is a complete manual that you can download that talk about all of the scholarships available from the California Masonic Foundation as well as the [Scottish Rite](#), [York Rite](#), [Eastern Star](#), [High Twelve](#), [DeMolay](#), [Job's Daughters](#), & [Rainbow for Girls](#).

## Contacts

### Illustrious Grand Master Cryptic Masons:

**Most Illustrious Companion,**

**Eduardo Estrada, KYGCH**

**Lady Natasha**

**Grand Master Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Omega Council No. 11**

### Grand Secretary/Recorder:

**Philip Hardiman, OSV, KYGCH, PGHP**

Grand Secretary Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons California,

Grand Recorder, Grand Council Cryptic Masons California, &

Grand Recorder, Grand Commandery Knights Templar California

1123 J Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

E-mail: [sec-rec@yorkriteofcalifornia.org](mailto:sec-rec@yorkriteofcalifornia.org)

### Assistant Secretary/Recorder:

**Thomas Krummell, KCT, KYCH**

1123 J Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

e-mail: [assistant-sec-rec@yorkriteofcalifornia.org](mailto:assistant-sec-rec@yorkriteofcalifornia.org)

### Website:

**Grand York Rite of California**

**Note:** Hyperlinks or links to other pages or web sites are prevalent throughout the document.



# Officers: Grand Council Cryptic Masons California

**Most Illustrious Companion**

**Eduardo Estrada, KYGCH**

**Lady Natasha**

**Grand Master Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Omega Council No. 11**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Robert A. Morrison, KYCH, & Lady Pauline**

**Deputy Grand Master**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Butte Council No. 50**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Peter G. Champion, KYCH, & Lady Janice**

**Grand Principle Conductor of the Work**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**San Luis Obispo Council No. 38**

**Most Illustrious Companion**

**Robert Whitfield, KCT, KYGCH, MIPGM, Columbian Medal & Lady Genie**

**Grand Treasurer**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Oakland Council No. 12**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Philip Hardiman, KYGCH, PGHP, & Lady Nancy**

**Grand Recorder**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Sacramento Council No. 1**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**K. Mark Harris, KYCH**

**Grand Director of Ritual**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Oakland Council No. 12**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Thomas A. Krummell KCT, KYCH, & Lady Marcia**

**Assistant Grand Recorder**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Gateway Council No. 13**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Jonathan H. Prestage KYCH & Lady Hanna K**

**Grand Chaplain (North)**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Sword and Trowel Council No. 65**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Eric Bertolli**

**Grand Chaplain (South)**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Omega Council No. 11**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Guy M. Chalmers, KYCH, & Lady Jeanne**

**Grand Captain of the Guard**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Redwood Empire Council No. 46**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Michael T. Sherman, KYCH**

**Grand Conductor of the Council**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Helix Council No. 58**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Jeffrey A. White, KYCH & Lady Lisa**

**Grand Steward**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Pacific Council No. 37**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Andrew B. Pippin, KYCH, & Lady Juli**

**Grand Sentinel**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Pacific Council No. 37**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**James M. Sunseri, KYCH**

**Grand Orator**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Orange County Council No. 14**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**William J. Miklos III, KYCH & Lady Angelica**

**Grand Marshal (North)**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Amador Council No. 31**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Michael Miller, & Lady Martha**

**Grand Marshal (South)**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Alpha Council No. 39**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**K. Mark Harris, KYCH**

**Grand Soloist**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Oakland Council No. 12**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Ron Presser, & Lady Kathleen T (Kate)**

**Grand Bible Bearer**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Omega Council No. 11**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Bruce Ewald, KYCH, & Lady Ruth**

**Grand Standard Bearer**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Omega Council No. 11**

**Right Illustrious Companion**

**Merrick R. Hamer**

**Grand Organist**

**Grand Council Cryptic Masons**

**Alpha Council No. 39**

## ***Happenings in our State & in a Galaxy far, far, Away***

**For those Companions who do not access our Internet Site on a regular basis but on an irregular basis do read the Sword and Trowel we will re-post letters from Grand High Priest, Illustrious Grand Master, Grand Commander, and Grand Master of Masons, California.**

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### **Grand High Priest**

Emergency Blanket Dispensation:

1. Any Chapter under this Grand Jurisdiction may, without requesting a special dispensation, postpone a stated convocation until further notice. This postponement is authorized even if it would cause the Chapter to be in violation of the quarterly meeting requirement.
2. The High Priest of any Chapter may authorize the payment of any bills that are in the Chapter's budget without further vote, provided the budget was accepted by the Chapter.
3. No vote may be taken by telephonic or email communication.
4. All Chapters meeting during this health emergency are encouraged to provide means of hand sanitation and follow basic good hygienic procedures.
5. Instructions on procedures at any festivals that may take place will follow.

Leland Routt  
Grand High Priest  
Royal Arch Masons of California

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### **GENERAL ORDER OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER EDUARDO ESTRADA IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

Whereas, on March 5, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state emergency in California due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19),

Whereas, today, March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a state of emergency nationwide due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19),

Whereas, the majority of our California membership in Subordinate Councils of the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of California are in the "at risk" age demographic and are being advised to avoid public gatherings,

Whereas, our Constitution in Section 37-2 provides for the expenditure of Council funds without the express consent of the Council in non-emergency situations, viz, (a) Funds disbursed by the Charity Committee; (b) Funds due to the Grand Council (Per Capita, Annual Insurance, Supplies, etc.); (c) Funds paid for local, California, or Federal taxes,

Whereas, our Constitution in Section 10-1 defines the Grand Master's duties as, "The Grand Master, during the interval between Annual Assemblies, has all the executive power of Grand Council, except the granting of Charters. ...",

I therefore issue this General Order to cope with the declared State and National Emergency:

For the months of March 2020 and April 2020, if the installed Illustrious Master deems it prudent, he may elect the option of authorizing the payment of regular necessary bills, limited to those delineated below, if made with the unanimous consent of the Illustrious Master, Deputy Master, Principal Conductor of the Work, Treasurer, Recorder, and the Inspector (six in total). The Recorder will make a memorandum of the officers polled and their consent. Said memorandum to be preserved in the book of minutes and a copy communicated to the Inspector and Grand Officer.

Such necessary regular payments that may be authorized include:

1. The Council's rent payable to the Masonic Hall Association,
2. The Council's monthly trestleboard printing and postage or assessment,
3. Utilities (including regular telephone and internet charges),
4. Previously authorized secondary insurance payments,
5. Previously authorized bond on the Treasurer and/or Recorder,
6. Printing and postage required by the Recorder for sending notices to the membership.

Councils may approve such payments against the Council funds only when the bills are supported by proper documentation, such as an invoice or receipt. No warrant shall be drawn unless there are sufficient funds to honor it.

Eduardo Estrada  
Grand Master  
March 13, 2020

**GRAND ENCAMPMENT OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR**

Jeffrey N. Nelson, *Most Eminent Grand Master*  
3112 Tyler Parkway  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503

Lawrence Eugene Tucker, *Right Eminent Grand Recorder*  
5909 West Loop South, Suite 495 Bellaire, Texas 77401

**GENERAL ORDER NO. 11**

**POSTPONEMENT OF THE STATED CONCLAVE OF A GRAND,  
SUBORDINATE, OR CONSTITUENT COMMANDERY**

March 10, 2020

To all Grand Commanderies and Subordinate Commanderies within the Jurisdiction of, and holding Allegiance to, the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar.

**GREETINGS:**

The numbers of persons infected with the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, are increasing in the United States and throughout the world, posing a danger to vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, many of whom are our Fratres. In the face of the crisis, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge persons to "avoid all nonessential travel" and take other appropriate measures to prevent community transmission of the virus, for example, avoiding large public gatherings and working from home.

Accordingly, I, the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the United States of America, by the authority in me vested by Section 23 of the Constitution of the Grand Encampment, do hereby waive the requirement of Section 36 (a) of the Constitution and authorize the Grand Commander of each Grand Commandery within the Grand Encampment, with the prior approval of the cognizant Department Commander, to postpone its Stated Conclave for a period not to exceed six (6) months. In the event of such postponement, the revised date for the Stated Conclave shall not conflict with the date of the Stated Conclave of another Grand Commandery within the Department. Any postponement for a longer term shall require my approval.

In the alternative, I authorize the Grand Commander or his designee to convene the Stated Conclave by means of teleconference or webcast, provided that the necessary facilities are widely available to the members of the Grand

Commandery and the Stated Conclave be conducted in full compliance with the requirements of Sections 37 through 39 of the Constitution.

In addition, I do hereby waive the requirement of Section 65 (a) of the Constitution, and authorize the Commander of a Constituent Commandery within each Grand Commandery, with the prior approval of the Grand Commander, to postpone or cancel a quarterly Stated Conclave or, alternatively, to convene the same by means of teleconference or webcast, provided that the necessary facilities are widely available to the members of the Constituent Commandery and the Stated Conclave be conducted in full compliance with the requirements of Sections 65 and 66 of the Constitution. Commanders of Subordinate Commanderies enjoy the same discretion, subject to prior approval of the cognizant Department Commander.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America at Bismarck, North Dakota, this tenth day of March 2020, A.O. 902.



Attest:

*Lawrence E. Tucker*

Grand Recorder

Courteously,

*Jeffrey N. Nelson*

Grand Master

**Protocols for Commandery meetings during the Corona Virus pandemic**

The average age of our York Rite membership is almost 66. Since the threat of the Corona Virus is considered to be greater for those over 60, it is important that we reduce the exposure of our older Sir Knights to this sickness. Therefore, we are directing that all stated conclaves from now until April 30th be suspended, without adverse consequences to the organization, at the option of the Presiding Officer. Those Commanderies that meet bi-monthly or quarterly may reschedule any meeting during this period to a day of their choosing in the following month or quarter, except Sunday. Exceptions to this suspension are hereby permitted under either of the following circumstances:

- I. The Presiding Officer in consultation with his Dais Officers, Recorder, and Treasurer, may choose to hold the stated meeting, as usual, but taking suitable precautions, such as:
  - a. The use of gloves and/or hand sanitizer when touching is felt to be necessary
  - b. Limiting contact between Sir Knights
  - c. Urging your members to wash their hands before and after each meeting, to not touch their face during the meeting, and to cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- II. The Stated meeting during the suspension period is held by teleconference, under the following conditions:
  - a. Each member must contact the Recorder for the access code, which will be given to the member when the Recorder can identify and vouch for the member
  - b. The usual and appropriate quorum requirements are met
  - c. Members will not release the conference call number to anyone even a known fellow member, who must himself contact the Recorder
  - d. Non-member visitors are not permitted
  - e. No secret work will be mentioned at the conference
  - f. Commanderies may use the Short Form opening on pages 98-99
  - g. Each member participating will have a copy of the Bible in his visible presence
  - h. No video conferencing is permitted
  - i. No recording, audio or video, is permitted.
- III. Absent the ability to hold a stated conclave as described in "II" above, a Presiding Officer along with the Recorder, and the Treasurer, acting in concert by teleconference, may, by email from the Recorder, solicit votes from members on matters of immediate concern, such as the payment of bills, election of representatives to Grand Sessions meetings, approval of stipends to defray expenses of Dais officers and/or elected representatives, and other urgent matters as determined by the Presiding Officer. Such voting on bills or expenses may not be necessary if they are provided for in your annual budget, as approved by your membership. Quorum requirements must still be met, so any action considered must have a total of six or more members, or nine in the case of full form opening, voting for, against, or abstaining.

In the case of either circumstance, Records must still produce minutes that document actions taken, and identify who participated so that the Sentinel's Register can be maintained. Copies of relevant emails should be attached to the minutes, certifying who voted and how. No balloting on petitions is permitted under Options II and III above.

Requirements for notification of members about meetings will be deemed to have been satisfied, if email messages are sent at least one day before the teleconference or, for members that do not have email addresses, phone calls are made at least one day prior to the teleconference.

### **Guidelines for Festivals**

Consider re-scheduling, if at all possible, to a date certain in the future.

If your event is not re-scheduled, provide gloves and hand sanitizer for participants, if at all possible. Cotton gloves and latex gloves, or the non-latex variety, are not overly expensive.

Limit contact between Sir Knights. Urge your members to wash their hands before and after each meeting, to not touch their face during the meeting, and to cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing.

Provide a copious supply of large napkins and/or Kleenex to all attendees. Provide numerous containers for disposal of gloves and napkins.

Minimize the length of time members are exposed by abbreviating the work where-ever it may be reasonable to do so – for example, utilize the Short Forms of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross (page 9) and the Order of Malta (page 58).

FREE Teleconferencing is available at the following sites:

1. [www.FreeConferencecall.com](http://www.FreeConferencecall.com)
2. [www.Onconference.com](http://www.Onconference.com)
3. [www.freeconferenceuse.com](http://www.freeconferenceuse.com)
4. [www.powwownow.com](http://www.powwownow.com)



GRAND LODGE  
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS  
OF CALIFORNIA  
CALIFORNIA MASONIC MEMORIAL TEMPLE  
1111 CALIFORNIA STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94108  
(415) 776-7000 | FAX (415) 776-0483



## **Masonic Events During COVID-19 Gathering Restrictions**

March 18, 2020  
Masonic Events During COVID-19 Gathering Restrictions

On March 16, the California Department of Public Health released new guidance on the prevention of COVID-19 transmission. The Department has found that all non-essential gatherings should be postponed or canceled until further guidance is provided. **All Masonic gatherings are non-essential in the context of this guidance.**

In addition, a growing number of counties are issuing "shelter in place" orders, directing everyone in those counties to stay inside their homes and away from others as much as possible while the order is in effect. They may leave their homes only to provide or receive certain essential goods or services, engage in certain essential activities or work for essential business and government services. **All Masonic gatherings are also non-essential in the context of these shelter in place orders.**

**Based on the foregoing, it is my direction that there be no Masonic gatherings of any kind in this state until further direction is received from me.**

This includes all Masonic organizations and Masonic Youth Orders. None of our Masonic organizations or Masonic Youth Orders may hold a gathering of any kind in this state until further direction is received from me.

### **Masonic Funeral and Burial Services**

While there is some authority to the effect that a funeral is an essential activity, you should contact the licensed funeral director for the service about your participation. If the licensed funeral director believes that the conduct of the funeral will qualify as an essential activity which you may attend, then members of lodges, Masonic organizations, and Masonic Youth Orders may attend and participate, but only in such numbers and with such social distancing as the licensed funeral

director for the service shall determine.

#### **Payment of Lodge Essential Bills Including Charity**

As a result of these actions, no lodge can hold a stated meeting to pay its bills, and there is no clear remedy in our law to solve this problem. I do note CMC §403.095 which allows the elected officers of Grand Lodge to conduct the essential business of the Grand Lodge if a competent state or national authority prohibits an Annual Communication. While this provision is not available for use by constituent lodges, I believe that the extraordinary and unforeseeable circumstances we are now experiencing allow me to exercise my powers as follows:

#### **Special Procedure for Lodges**

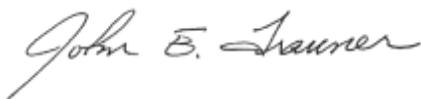
**Effective today, a majority of the elected officers of the lodge may order the advancement of lodge funds to pay those essential lodge bills whose payment cannot reasonably be deferred.**

- The elected lodge officers may confer by telephone, video conference, or email in making this determination.
- Expenditures by the lodge charity committee are an essential lodge bill for which payment should not be deferred.
- The lodge must ratify these payments at the next stated meeting held by the lodge.

The lodge master should inform the inspector of any other circumstances that may need to be addressed while this special procedure is in effect.

This special procedure is available only during the pendency of any applicable inhibition or prohibition on non-essential gatherings. In any event, it will have no further force or effect after my term as Grand Master ends.

Sincerely and fraternally,



JOHN E. TRAUNER  
Grand Master  
Grand Lodge F&AM of California

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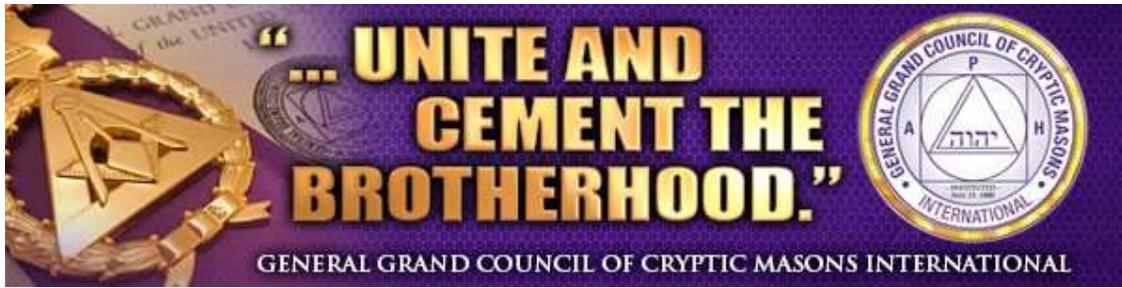
## **Grand Sessions**

**High Priests, Illustrious Masters, Eminent Commanders and Grand Officers - you are all receiving this message as a blind copy**

1. **The Grand Officers and Trustees** met by teleconference Wednesday night and voted to re-schedule **Grand Sessions to July 14-16 at the Wyndham in Visalia**. This, of course, is **conditional on the Grand Master removing his restriction on masonic meetings** before then, and other public health considerations. As this is a weekday event, there will be no "frills" - no Banquet, no Drill Team, no Vespers program, no Royal Arch Widows degree. Grand Commandery will have all day Tuesday, the 14th, to accomplish its tasks; Grand Chapter will have all day Wednesday; and Grand Council will have all day Thursday. As the practice has been the last few years, the Corporation will meet Monday night, and again on Friday morning.
2. **The Grand Sessions Committee** will be refunding all registration payments sent in, either by check or PayPal, and a new registration document will become available early next week. Check the website as early as Tuesday morning: [www.ca-gyrs.org](http://www.ca-gyrs.org). The Grand Presiding Officers have been tasked to produce a new schedule for each day by Monday, March 30th, when there will be another teleconference. So check the website on Tuesday morning.
3. **Please distribute this information** to everyone in your orbit who may have already registered for Grand Sessions, or may do so in the future. The Grand Sessions Committee will arrange with the Wyndham to cancel all reservations made for May in our block of rooms. If anyone made a reservation outside that block, or at another hotel, they will need to make their own cancellation.
4. **These developments are a considerable inconvenience** for everyone involved, and we can only ask for your understanding during these unparalleled times. Keep in mind that the Grand Officers have gone to considerable time and expense to plan Family Dinners, Installations and Receptions. It would be a nice gesture on your part, if you can make a mid-week event, to come, participate, enjoy the fellowship (however we may prefer to greet one another and at what distance!), to honor these Companions and Sir Knights who are, indeed, struggling mightily to preserve our institution and its practices.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Phil Hardiman  
Grand Secretary-Recorder



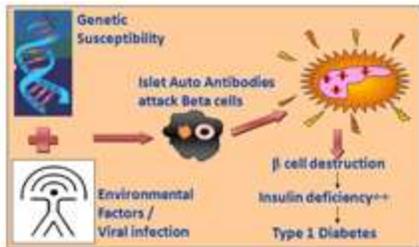
The Decryption - News from Cryptic Masons International

March 10, 2020

General Grand Council and General Grand Chapter Triennial

September 24-29, 2020: Louisville, Kentucky Tentative Schedule and Hotel Reservations

Online: <https://yrtriennial2020.com/> See the Right Sidebar for articles on recent award recipients.



CMMRF - Did We Just Cure Diabetes?

[Read More...](#)



The Word - GGC Education Committee

[Read More...](#)



Gebal Council No. 15 Installation

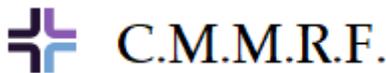
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East Central Region Happenings

[Read More...](#)

Just a LATTE a Month



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*Our Goal: 1000 Participants*

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AWARDS

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[All Recognition News Articles](#)

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[SUBMIT EVENTS](#)



## From the Desk of David A. Grindle, General Grand Master

March 13, 2020

Dear Companions,

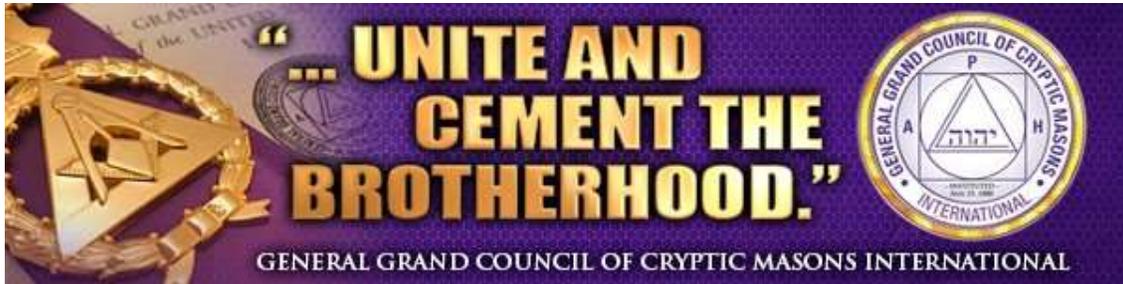
With the current expanding situation of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and the anxiety it is causing, the General Grand Council (Officers or Regional Deputies) will not be required to attend any Grand Sessions for the next 30 days. It is a Masonic fact of life that the majority of our officers are in the vulnerable groups that have been described: over 60, underlying health issues, or caring for others with underlying health issues. If they attend, it is because they enjoy your fellowship, and they will be taking every precaution possible to NOT cause heightened risk for any of your members.

We have received notice that the Arkansas Grand Sessions have been delayed until June because of the global pandemic. I would encourage all York Rite members to consider delaying their sessions/conferences even though these events are not usually large, but the majority of our members are in the vulnerable group and the risk is high. If any Grand Councils/Grand York Rites decide to delay or cancel their sessions, please give us as early a notice as possible so that we can adjust our scheduling.

Near the end of the 30 days, I will take another look and issue another advisory letter.

Fraternally,

David A. Grindle, KYGCH, GGOSV  
General Grand Master



## The Decryption - News from Cryptic Masons International

March 17, 2020 Vol 4, Issue 9

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September 24-29, 2020: Louisville, Kentucky

Tentative Schedule and Hotel Reservations Online: <https://yrtriennial2020.com/>

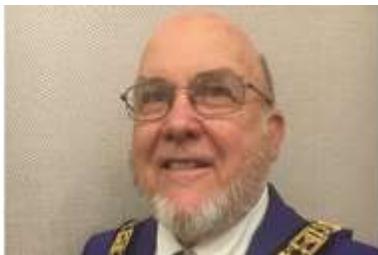
See the Right Sidebar for articles on recent award recipients.



COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Grand Sessions Advisory [Read More...](#)



CMMRF - Science of Growing Muscle and Tissue [Read More...](#)

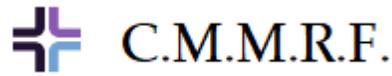


Southeast Region Happenings [Read More...](#)



Attend at the Altar [Read More...](#)

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## From the Desk of David A. Grindle, General Grand Master

March 20, 2020

Dear

Companions,

If your Grand Lodge has issued instructions with reference to the Coronavirus, you need to strictly follow them since you are a Mason within that Grand Lodge's Jurisdiction. You need to add some other things in attempting to control the spread of this virus:

1. Limit your gatherings, official or unofficial, to no more than 10 Companions.
2. Maintain a physical separation/distance of at least 3 feet.
3. Make no physical contact with another Companion.
4. Wash your hands often.
5. Cover any sneezes or coughs with your elbow or a tissue and dispose of any tissues immediately.
6. If you feel sick or have any symptoms of this or any other virus, stay at home and do not risk the exposure of any other Companions.

If your Grand Lodge has provided NO guidance, I am ordering all Cryptic Companions to suspend attendance at any Council meetings or gatherings until advised otherwise. This will limit the unintentional community spread of the virus. We need to protect our Senior Members, those over the age of 65 that have underlying health issues, because of their identified vulnerability.

Each Illustrious Master will be responsible for developing a plan to remain in contact with the Companions of his Council and to check on their well-being.

I encourage you to keep me informed of the situation within your jurisdiction so that I can be knowledgeable and make future judgments of the steps to take as well as share your most innovative and thoughtful plans with other Cryptic Masons.

Fraternally,

David A. Grindle, KYGCH, GGOSV  
General Grand Master

A PDF of the document is available on the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons web site: <https://www.crypticmasons.org/pdf/ggm-edict-47-1.pdf>



# The Decryption - News from Cryptic Masons International

March 24, 2020 Vol 4, Issue 10

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General Grand Recorder's March 2020 Update [Read More...](#)



CMMRF - What is Short Gut Syndrome? [Read More...](#)



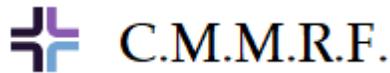
Albert Mackey - GGC Education Committee [Read More...](#)



Staying Engaged Masonically Through COVID-19 [Read More...](#)

Grand Council of Indiana 2019 Ish Sodi Banquet [Read More...](#)

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