



The Masonic News



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May 2020

Grand Master's Edict #2 and Missive #2

Most Worshipful Grand Master Ronald D. Stites

To: All members of all subordinate Masonic Lodges in Nebraska

Acting under my authority as Grand Master of Masons in Nebraska, I do hereby extend my order to cancel all lodge activities, including but not limited to all Regular and Special Communications of subordinate lodges, ritual practice, fund raising, and social events until June 1, 2020. The Supplemental Directions given on March 16, 2020 and March 30, 2020 remain in effect.

This Edict will be reviewed regularly. If the state of emergency is lifted or recommendations of State or Federal substantially change, this Edict will be revisited and updated as required.

As with Edict No. 1, this decision was made with the utmost consideration for the safety and health of our brethren, their families, and our communities.

Please continue to pray for those afflicted, their families and caregivers, those responding to and treating the afflicted, and the local, State, and Federal officials.

Fraternally yours,

Ronald D. Stites
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of Nebraska

As I mentioned in Missive #1, the Grand Lodge has email addresses for about 1/3rd of its members. Therefore, I request that you pass the below information on to any Mason you know, whether it be by word of mouth, hard copy, or email.

Grand Master's Edict No. 2: You probably have seen or heard by now that, on April 22, 2020, I extended Edict No. 1 to June 1, 2020. The reasoning to extend the date was based on the "peak" COVID19 caseload is reported to be at least two weeks away and not knowing what Governor Ricketts' phased reopening of Nebraska will entail, as well as the health and safety of Masons, their families, and our communities.

Blood Drive Challenge: The Challenge continues and information can be found on the Grand Lodge Website and/or in Grand Masters Missive #1. The Challenge will end May 31st and is for all Masons, their families, and friends.

The Nebraska Mason: Due to Masonic cancellation of

activities among all bodies because of COVID19, and the lack of news from The Nebraska Masonic Home and the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children, it was determined by the Grand Lodge Officers to only publish an online issue of the June Nebraska Mason.

Lodge Leadership Seminars: Anticipating a lessening of the severity of the current State and Federal COVID19 restrictions, Lodge Leadership Seminars are going to be scheduled in late June for Ainsworth, Alliance, Kearney, Lincoln, North Platte, and Omaha.

Grand Lodge Awards: With the slowdown of Masonic activities, this would be a good time for lodges to review their active lodge members and consider recognizing those brothers who contributed to be nominated for the Individual Masonic Achievement/Service Awards. Also, it would be a good time to review all award applications and see what your lodge is already doing that could qualify it for an award and what the lodge could do to

qualify.

Continue Reaching Out: A number of lodges across Nebraska have been reaching out to their members to check on their well being and ask if any assistance is needed. What a grand testament to Brotherly Love. To those who are reaching out – well done and please check back periodically with your brothers; to those who have not reached out – please consider doing so.

Remain safe. Take a moment daily for prayers for all involved, as well as treatment and cure for COVID19.

Fraternally yours,

Ronald D. Stites
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of Nebraska



Lincoln Lodge #19

Bruce Anderson

May has rolled around and the Masonic organizations are still under the Grand Master's Edict that we hold no face-to-face meetings. I sure will be glad when this virus becomes history. I just hope that we don't forget how to hold business meetings and confer degrees and function as a Lodge. This would a good time to brush up on your ritual work and perhaps take the time to learn a new part or lecture. I really miss seeing faces that I know at Lodge and other functions.

This has been a good time to do some sorting of papers and pictures that I don't need

and to organize those that I do have. Boy do you accumulate a lot of junk.

Last month we needed to at least pay bills and approve the minutes of the last couple of meetings. As we could not meet face-to-face, I decided to send out e-mails to our officers and have them respond. It worked well.

For our May communication, our Senior Warden set up a ZOOM meeting and we had 15 officers and other brothers join in the ZOOM meeting. Again, the only item we really had to do was pay bills, discuss future plans and find out how all our Brothers were

doing.

We did find out that our project to provide lunches for the youth at the F Street Community Center was successful and we will be presenting a check to this organization soon. When all the information is in, I will let you know the amount given to this charity and more about them.

I have received word that Past Master Kurt Weiss has gone to that House, not made with hands from whose borne no one returns. WB Kurt died on February 9th in Oklahoma City. He served as our Worshipful Master in 1990, 2005 and 2007. Sympathies of the Lodge have been sent. I did receive a very nice letter back from his sister thanking the Lodge for remembering him.

For now, STAY HOME, STAY SAFE AND STAY HEALTHY.



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Electa Chapter #8

Mike Lagueux

I would like to welcome you to spring in Nebraska! So please keep both your bathing suit AND your parka close at hand. Summer is coming folks, wait for it. Electa has some very good news for you this month and couldn't we all use that. First, we have the great news of trying to help a young man through his first years of higher education. Congratulations to Dalton Hellwege of Lincoln North Star High School for being our



recipient of the OES scholarship this year. If you need good news about the future all you have to do is look at Dalton's GPA: 4.48, and his class standing: #1.

Dalton is looking forward to a double major in college in finance and computer science with minors in Spanish and mathematics. His end goal hopefully leads him to a career in finance/banking, preferably in New York City.

His accolades so far are very numerous, but to mention a few; he belongs to the National Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America, Lincoln Public Schools Youth Advisory Board, has co-founded a Non Profit called "Ashton" which provides free tutoring to as many students as possible, and is active in sports such as Track and Field, football, and tennis. With all of this activity he still finds time to hold down various jobs to help work his way through his higher education goals.

Dalton is one of those young men who will definitely make an impact on the world as we know it and one whose career will be exciting to watch develop. Please join in extending him all the assistance and best wishes we have available to give. He has worked hard for this scholarship and it is indeed our pleasure to award it to him this year.

We also would like to thank all those members of Electa who have been making a real difference during these trying times. Sue Stroud continues to keep lines of communication open as the Business Manager for the Masonic News. Adam Thayer is the guy responsible for putting out the Masonic News as the Editor. He has

sought out direction and wisdom from the Grand Bodies of our Masonic organizations and made sure it was printed for all to follow. If communication is the heart of an organization, these two people are surely the soul for all of us.



We also thank Brenda Collins for producing masks for members and the general public to wear when they must go out. She procures the material, cuts, sews, and distributes them to people who otherwise would probably not have this PPE in their lives. Thank you for a very selfless endeavor Brenda.

We would also like to thank those who devote their time during these difficult days to keeping our Masonic buildings and Brotherhood alive and vibrant. The OES has a virtual coffee/tea started by Worthy Grand Matron Karen Byrdsal on Saturdays at 0930. While I have not attended one, I hear they can be quite lively.

Earlier this year the OES was going to have a "best in class" photo opportunity to help funding for their service dog project. Since this did not happen due to the COVID19 virus, Worthy Matron Denise would like to submit this picture of Thea, our puppy to you to enjoy during these difficult times. Thea was not a "morning girl" and this is the best Mohawk we could ever capture right after she woke up! Enjoy.



If you feel like Bill Murray in the movie *Groundhog Day* lately you're probably not far off! There are a lot of similarities since we have started practicing "social distancing" and limiting trips out of the house and so on... all necessary, but very trying. The COVID 19 virus that we are currently dealing with is certainly

new to most people living now. While this pandemic is concerning, it is far from new in our world. Some of the more recent instances of pandemics include the 1918-1919 Spanish flu, H1N1 which decimated almost one third of the world's population at that time with the number of deaths estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. At the time there was not the medical breakthroughs we have today in immunology. The most common recommendation was to get outside, open windows so fresh air could get in, and not gather in large groups to stop the spread of this deadly disease.

Surprisingly the decade of the 1940's was the most progressive in dealing with these types of socially spread pandemics; the World Health Organization (WHO) was officially formed to study and track these events in history. This was also the decade that saw the first vaccines for these outbreaks used on the civilian population, with good results.

In 1957-1958 the H2N2 strain, called the "Asian Flu" since it was first discovered in Singapore and then Hong Kong before finding its way to the costal United States in the summer of 1957. How serious was this new offshoot of past virus pandemics? The estimated number of deaths was 1.1 million worldwide and 116,000 in the United States. Thanks to the progress of science and the study of immunology far more recovered than at any time in the preceding half of the century.

1968 brought the next round of these evolving strains of flu, designated as H3N2 series and was especially devastating to people 65 years and older due primarily to what was discovered to be "antigenic drift"...the strains of the flu were mutating and becoming resistant to the vaccines we currently had. The toll during this event was an estimated number of deaths at 1 million worldwide and about 100,000 in the United States. While certainly terrible in terms of death toll, it was by comparison of population to fatalities, far less than had previously been expected.

2009 brought a new pandemic designated (H1N1)pdm09 and unfortunately the vaccine for this strain was not developed until the second wave of the flu had

already been realized. Still, the CDC estimated there were 60.8 million cases, 274,304 hospitalizations, and 12,469 deaths in the United States due to the (H1N1)pdm09 virus. Again, due in large part to the advances of medical sciences and surprisingly to older people having been exposed to previous strains of these viruses, far fewer fatalities were realized than ever before.

What we are currently experiencing is the "Wuhan Coronavirus" or COVID19, since it originated in Wuhan China and quickly spread from there due in part to current travel conditions. People can literally be in several parts of the world impacting multiple people in each place they stop within a 24 hour period. The statistics from this pandemic to date are: 2,396,383 active cases, who are Currently Infected Patients or 2,348,941 or 98% in what is considered a "mild condition." That leaves 47,442, or 2% who are in a critical situation. These include people who are struggling for their lives and are in great danger of succumbing to the virus. These are the statistics we are currently seeing broadcast on news shows and special updates all day, every day. Now, let me give you the good news in this horrible situation: 1,736,570 patients due to the pandemic have either been deemed as closed cases. Of that group 1,445,492 (84%) have recovered and returned to their lives, or are currently recovering at home and are in no danger of dying due to this event. While this is great news, the tragic truth is that 281,078 people have died from this pandemic so far. Any death is a

tragedy, however we are losing far less people to these types of outbreaks due to science than ever before.

What you are doing, wearing personal protective equipment when you are out, limiting your contact with others, taking care of yourselves both mentally and physically are all making a difference in this battle...please keep it up. Finally, realize that we are in good hands. Our government, federal, state, and local, are doing what they can for us here in Nebraska, thank them when you have a chance... they need to know what they are doing is making a difference for all of us. Also realize they are not miracle workers, they are just doing an incredibly difficult job in the face of opposition from many who would never be satisfied. Finally, never forget to thank the one who gives us all the strength we need in the darkest of times...keep your faith in our God and know that He will not bring you to anything He will not help you through. Until next time, stay well and healthy, and God bless you all.



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Myrtle Chapter #94

Brenda Frank-Collins

Hope all our Mighty Myrtle members are safe at home, practicing Social Distancing, and in good health! There isn't too much going on right now, but we DO have some very important achievements to Celebrate:



Jennifer Dierks, (Associate Matron)- received her Bachelors of Business from Doane University.

Courtney Edelmaier, (Member)- received her Bachelors in Education from Doane University.

Justin Williamson, (new member in Dec 2019)- received his Bachelor's of Business Administration from Chadron State College.

Katie Warwick, (Miss Nebraska Job's Daughter 2019/20) - from Lincoln Southwest High School.



Congratulations to these graduates, and when we can get together....we will celebrate YOU! Until then, please feel free

to send a card or give them a call and say: Congratulations! Way to go! If you know of any celebrations or concerns for the chapter to be aware of, please let WM Dehnia or WP Gregg know. Sending a note or card, or making a phone call is always appropriate and welcome to raise the spirits of our Members!

Hope we can get together soon, but until then: Mark your Calendars for the upcoming JUNE events: June 9th: Stated Meeting, and June 20: Myrtle's Charter Day event. If they are postponed or canceled, WM & WP will let us all know.

A Psalm for encouragement during this unsure time of the COVID-19 Virus: "May Your

unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our love in You." Psalm 33:22

Until we can gather again..... May the Lord watch between me & Thee, while we are absent, one from the other." Mizpah

Congratulations to our Sister Jennifer and Brother Justin! Myrtle Chapter is so proud of you! Sorry that your ceremonies and parties got postponed or done online. But that won't stop your Eastern Star family from celebrating your achievements! Jennifer graduated with her Bachelors of Business from Doane University. Justin graduated with his Bachelors in Business

Administration from Chardon State. We know the future holds many great adventures for you both!



Katrina Kendle, Myrtle Chapter's Scholarship Recipient

Grand OES

Karan Birdsall

As our journey through the public health crisis of Covid-19 continues, our prayers abound for your health, safety and well-being.

Thank you to all of our Chapters and members for your gracious acceptance and faithful adherence to our decision for no meetings and events through the month of May. Our business and activities of our chapters are important, and we miss being together but your health is more important. However, practicing social distancing and staying home does not mean we are not able to serve and make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Chapters are practicing safety and yet reaching out to others. Shown here are Special Deliveries that have been created and delivered to encourage and support members, healthcare workers, and those who are not able to leave their homes. Our Grand Master's blood drive and challenge is also a great reminder of how we can serve. We are encouraged by each idea and effort to serve. While our concern and efforts need to focus on safety in this public health crisis, we are reminded that there are still many things we can do and great ways to serve those around us.

As we consider how to serve and benefit those around us, please think of the Masonic Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont and our Nebraska Masonic Home in Plattsmouth. They continue to serve and can benefit from our encouragement, support, and

financial donations. Their needs remain a reality through this time of change and challenge. Therapy Dog and resident of the Plattsmouth Home Opal reminds us to continue our loving support. Koda, MESCH's Star Dog shares love and joy. In the reality of Covid -19, Koda's training is happening virtually. TJ, Koda's human is working with their trainer via ZOOM sessions for Koda's ongoing training.

In ongoing efforts to serve, Star Dog Louie assists with grocery deliveries in Fremont and Star Dog Charlie assists in leading a virtual worship stream from the United Methodist Church of Juanita. The Service and Therapy Dog Committee remains actively engaged and working via Zoom and other electronic platforms. Chapters are receiving opportunities and ideas for how they can serve and engage to meet our unique needs at this time and to support the projects' efforts. Information regarding the QUILT RAFFLE and PET PHOTO CONTEST are available in the OES NEWS and via the Grand Chapter website.

The 2020 Grand Chapter session has been canceled and is scheduled for May of 2021 in Kearney at the Younes Center. The Enduring Hope Star Points are not able to share time together now, but remind us that while fun is postponed it is still alive! We look forward to being able to schedule face-to-face events.

We offer our love, care, concern and support for all members of our Nebraska Masonic Family.

Your lodges, chapters, bethels, and assemblies as well as individuals are in our prayers. Please stay connected via communications and checking in on each other. Serve as you can. We have shared with our Eastern Star Chapters a prayer written by our Grand Chaplain Bill Raymond (Alpha 325, Bellevue). We encourage our members to pray at the time of their Chapter's Stated Meeting and to join with the power of prayer for our entire Masonic Family. We share the prayer here and hope it helps sustain you as we continue to remain physically separated. This prayer is also being shared by Eastern Star members in 18 other jurisdictions. We invite you to add your energy to this powerful chain.



Sisters and Brothers, Let us pray together this prayer in and with our Chapters as written and shared by our Grand Chaplain, Bill Raymond.

Dear Lord, although we can't meet as usual during these trying times, we now come together in prayer and common purpose.

We thank Thee for all Thy blessings You have provided to our fraternal family and friends and our beloved Order; and invite your Holy Spirit to be with us.

Heavenly Father, we ask that you stop this pandemic, that you heal those who have been infected and protect those who have not contracted this disease. We pray for the many souls who have succumbed to this disease and ask that you share your peace and comfort with the families who are mourning the loss of their loved ones.

Watch over and protect our first responders, our military, and all those on the front line in combatting this pandemic.

Heavenly Father be with us as we gather to do the work of our great order. Guide our efforts for the benefit of those we serve. Enhance our ability to reach out and positively touch lives across our Grand Jurisdiction with your love and compassion. Grant us your presence and blessings as we each deal individually with the trials and challenges we face each day. Give us comfort in knowing we are not alone, that You are with us. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen

and may we share the Mizpeh Benediction



Thoughts and verses for your consideration to share as we pray for and with our chapters and members.

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. *Isaiah 40:31*

"We are healed to help others. We are blessed to be a blessing. We are saved to serve, not to sit around and wait for heaven." *Rick Warren*

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. *Psalm 25:5*

May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. *Psalm 33:22*

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people. *Ephesians 1:18*

Temple Chapter #271

Lorrie Bryant



Temple Chapter #271, Order of the Eastern Star, presented a \$1000 scholarship to Alex Martinez, a graduating senior from Lincoln Pius X High School to further his education. While the Chapter was unable to present the scholarship in person to Alex because of social distancing and group gathering recommendations, the Chapter is proud to recognize Alex's

accomplishments. Alex is the son of Cathy and Cesar Martinez. He plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the fall and hopes to eventually transfer to Creighton University and pursue a career as a pharmacist. Alex has been an active community volunteer, especially in the special needs community, excels academically, and works part-time. His letters

of recommendations mentioned his excellent work ethic, sense of humor, energy, quick wit, and awareness of others' needs.

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Lancaster Lodge #54

Adam Thayer

Well, I must say I was hoping (although not expecting) that by now we would have some better news (or really ANY news) to report regarding the short-term future of Nebraska Freemasonry, but as in so many aspects of our life uncertainty has crept into the walls of our lodges. Of course, like with every challenge in life, we should stop and reflect what working tools we could apply to our current situation.

- The two foot ruler is generally used to measure time (especially important if you, like me, are working from home these days), but we could also apply it to measuring what resources we have available to us. Although we may not be able to meet in person, there are multiple platforms available to host virtual (non-tiled) meetings, literally hundreds of online Masonic education symposiums happening over the next few months, and thousands of hours of podcasts on a wide variety of topics. Oh, and never forget, you almost certainly have access to a telephone, and can call or text a brother!

- The common gavel is generally used to remove those parts of our personality that aren't constructive, but couldn't it as easily be applied to remove the general static of life that gets in the way of us focusing on the important things? It's easy to find ourselves overwhelmed when

focusing on the 24-hour news cycle, the constant stream of negativity, and the hovering sense of doom, but I'm telling you that the best thing you can do for yourself right now is to chisel those things out of your life so that you don't miss out on all of the positive things that are happening right now.

- Of course, no discussion about our working tools ever feels complete without discussing the proper application of the trowel, and we don't even have to look at it hard to see how it should be applied right now. Many of our brothers are feeling alone and isolated, and now is the perfect time to pay them a visit. With the weather hopefully finally getting a bit nicer, there's nothing stopping us from standing outside (a safe distance apart, of course) and catching up, although I'll warn you that I've always found these "quick" catch up meetings will last at least an hour or two, so plan your day accordingly.

- One great way to enjoy the fellowship that we're severely lacking these days is by joining in at the 9:00 toast. Wherever you are in the world today, stop at 9:00 tonight, and raise a glass to toast your brothers, knowing that they are doing the same thing for you! This is a great Masonic tradition that goes back many hundreds of years, and is currently being observed by brothers worldwide again. For more

information, you can search on Facebook for the Nine O'Clock Toast group, where brothers are posting their toasts for each other. A huge thank you to Brother Neil for teaching me about this fantastic tradition!

Lodge leadership has been in constant communication regarding upcoming planned events, and while it's disappointing that many have been postponed or canceled, know that each event is being carefully considered prior to cancellation.

Unfortunately, with the Grand Master's edict still in place, our normal Past Master's celebration has to be postponed; Worshipful Master Matt recognizes that this is a very important event to each of us, and plans to hold it later in the year when it is safe to do so. As we do not know when that will be yet, the date has not been set, however rest assured that we will provide an ample amount of communication as soon as more information is available. Thank you WM Matt for all of the hard decisions you've had to make already this year; I know that it hasn't gone as planned, but you've really stepped up and shown the meaning of leadership in the lodge!

To all of the brothers of the lodge, if there is anything that WM Matt or myself can do to assist you, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Tales From The North (Dakota)

Tyler T. Hall

Greetings from Bismarck/ Mandan, North Dakota, from Brother Tyler, a perpetual member of North Star Lodge No. 227 in Lincoln, Nebraska, and dual member of Mandan Lodge No. 8 in Mandan, North Dakota. I bring you news and experiences from my travels from DeMolay to Masonry to other appendant bodies in Lincoln, Nebraska, to the Twin Cities of Minnesota, and finally to western North Dakota. Hope you enjoy each month as we go on a trip together in search for that which may not have been too lost.

Zoom in 2020... Brotherly Love; Relief; and Truth... That was the message for the first few months in 2020. Now it feels that we need that more than ever. Over the past few months, we've been tired of hearing about the pandemic and limitations thereof. I hope and pray that all are safe and healthy, and that we all continue to be that way.

With all the shutdowns of businesses and lodges, and limitations on in-person gatherings, what has been

going on to communicate to our Brothers and extend a hand? I've seen our Nebraska Masonic Education forum site gain more momentum, columns, and replies. More and more leadership teams, groups, and organizations are doing online meetings and webinars including Zoom, WebEx, Go2Meeting, Skype, Google Hangouts, Facebook Live, YouTube, and other live online avenues.

The Scottish Rite has had an 8pm nightly Facebook Live events during this pandemic for nightly toasts to keep in touch with Brothers. Zoom meetings has been a part of that as well, and the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite has invested in the security offerings of Zoom. We've started meeting in Zoom, with no rituals performed, of course.

In North Dakota, we are still under the Edicts of our Grand Master to meet with social distancing and less than 10 persons present. A Zoom meeting in addition to the officers present is a good use to still hold a Lodge meeting,

so more members can attend. Even more so, members who are otherwise unable to make meetings, like out of town/ state, are more than willing and able to join us. In fact that is a great way to engage your membership with a shortened meeting and then having an Educational Presentation.

Stay tuned, my Brothers, Sisters, and friends, and please continue to contact your Lodge Secretaries & Officers so they can make sure you are good and safe; continue to contact your membership & friends who are in the vulnerable groups and make sure they are good in needs and friendly communications; and continue to read your Masonic News and Masonic Education emails and forums. Feel free to send me a Zoom invite, as I'd love to chat with you in our new means of communication these days...Engage those who normally we wouldn't see! Good work, y'all!

Lots of stories in between, but more articles yet to come...Thanks for listening.



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