



**NORTH DAKOTA
SUPPLEMENT**
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SK David Bickel
RE Grand Commander



Grand Commander's Thoughts
Sir Knight David Bickel

I want to thank the Knights Templar in North Dakota for allowing me to serve as their Grand Commander this year. And, I wish to congratulate Sir Knight George Vettel on having an excellent year as our leader amid challenging circumstances. SK George and I began our journey in Grand York Rite together, and we became fast friends with a strong working relationship over the years. These ties have served us extremely well in the past few years. We are developing similar ties with Sir Knights Greg Taylor, Leo Rognlin and Gary Williams after they stepped onto the dais. Their vision, keen eye for detail and dedication to hard work will serve us well. The strong bonds of fraternity are extremely valuable assets in statewide Masonic Leadership.

The COVID-19 pandemic rapidly thrust us face-to-face with the future in a manner unaccustomed to Masons, and we survived. Grand Conclaves still work in spite of being video conferences. The in-person bonding and shared wisdom of hallways, meals and bars are missing, but Masonry's collective skills with modern communications have taken a quantum leap forward. We need to encourage the use of this technology among our brethren to promote greater participation even in the best of times. Changing our future Grand Session dates to July will make possible more relaxed, family friendly venues and events without the stress of winter travel. A budding interest in historic reenactment of our Medieval Templar namesakes is growing in the state and holds promise for adding additional dignity and drama to our degrees and promoting Masonic scholarship.

My past few years in Grand York Rite leadership have been mostly devoted to revitalizing the inner workings of the organization. A wise brother once told me the functions of a well-run Masonic organization should be handled by subordinate officers and by committees. The Grand Commander should be free to spend most of his time interacting with the membership of constituent bodies and with other jurisdictions much like the CEO of a major corporation. He was right. I hope to spend this year visiting Commanderies, conversing with old friends in the York Rite and meeting or talking with some of you for the first time. We realize that for some of you circumstances make these center pages your only contact with Knights Templar in North Dakota and that we need to increase the information coming to you about your fellow Sir Knights in the state.

Finally, I wish to invite everyone to our Grand Sessions next year on July 9-10, 2021 at the Ramada Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center, Bismarck, ND. If pandemic circumstances allow, it will be a traditional in-person gathering, but without the April snow and ice

Fraternally
David Bickel

Biography

David Bickel is a 78 year old geologist and groundwater hydrologist who has taught in higher education, worked in the oil and mining industries, in government and is a practicing consultant. He's a third generation Mason, Past Grand Master, 33° Scottish Rite, York Rite, El Zagal Shriner and a hunter, fisherman, book collector, bagpiper, traditional archer and muzzleloader who enjoys things of the past along with present technology.

Dave was born in Louisville, Kentucky, educated at the University of Louisville and The Ohio State University. He and wife Sue came to North Dakota for him to teach at Minot State, fell in love with the region, and raised a son and daughter here. Their children didn't share a love of the northern winters and let their careers take them and their families to the southeastern US.