



# The Florida Knight

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Right Eminent Grand Commander 2020  
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## State Supplement Editor

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Greetings Sir Knights,

Happy New Year!!! I hope that all of you had a wonderful New Years Celebration, and I trust all of us will have a much more productive and prosperous year than we did during 2020. As the local commanderies have been open for the past two months, I hope all of you are returning to normal meetings. For those commanderies that have elected new dais officers I am looking forward to attending your installations this month. Each year during "installation month" I enjoy attending the various Blue Lodge and York Rite Body installations to meet the new officers and congratulate those that are ending their year in the East. Installation ceremonies also provide me with a chance to reflect on what happened with that particular masonic body during the past year, along with looking at those officers being installed in anticipation of what will happen in the coming year.

It is fitting that we conduct our installations during January, as this is obviously the start of a New Year for everyone around the globe. We all make New Year's resolutions for ourselves and family, but what resolutions do we make for our Lodges, Chapters, Councils, Commanderies, and the various other Masonic Bodies that we enjoy membership in? As of March 21st, of this year I will celebrate my thirty-third year of membership in our honorable Fraternity and during the Summer I will celebrate thirty-two years as a Templar. Like many of you I have witnessed a great many Brothers, Companions, and Sir Knights ascend to the East to rule our local bodies for their respective term. Interestingly, however, in all but a handful of cases I was completely unaware of what they planned to actually do during their year. A few might have provided a calendar of some specific events, but for the most part there was no real plan of what would take place. No direction, no vision for what the respective Masonic organization would look like after their year was completed.

This short message from me is certainly not going to be a lesson in making goals or planning terms in office, etc. It is only a message of trying to make you think about your Fraternity, and more particularly it is about how you perceive your local York Rite Bodies. As you install your new Commander for the 2021 Masonic year, ask yourself what you expect to happen by December 31st. Do you have an idea of how many members will you initiate this year, or is it merely a floating number that will depend on how many new Brothers are raised in your individual lodges and how quickly you can shove a petition in their face upon passing their Master Mason Catechism? Does your Commander have a plan for education, or will that depend on who shows up to read something that they printed from the Internet?

During the past year COVID19 has allowed us a lot of time to ponder how we can improve our Fraternity and its appendant bodies. We have learned that we can hold executive planning meetings via ZOOM or some other platform, rather than making people drive hours for a 30-minute chat. We have demonstrated the ability to have nationally

recognized speakers provide Masonic Education to a large crowd without the need to; book a lodge, provide lunch, or even travel beyond the comforts of our own home. While many of you might retort that Masonry is not practiced over the Internet looking into a computer screen, let me be the first to say that I am in 100% agreement. However, we must understand that this is not the 1950's where television shut off at 1am with the playing of the National Anthem, wives are no longer content to let their husbands leave the house with the words, "I'll be back soon, I'm going to lodge," and men no longer need to merely spend an hour or two on a weekend with their children to feel satisfied that they are effective role models. Times have changed, and Masonry will also need to change.

If you are a student of Masonic history you will notice that Masonry, from its modern invention (e.g. 1717 formation of the Grand Lodge of England), seems to have gone through periodic changes in its overall form and manner in which it presents itself to the world. This "change" usually happens about every 30-40 years. In the United States, that change seemed to happen around the War of 1812, the Morgan Affair, the Civil War, the First World War, and the Second World War. Interestingly, after the great surge of membership experienced in the 1950s after WWII the fraternity has not really changed much. We are operating today as if we were in the 1950s. As an example, it was not until a few years ago that we finally allowed our Trestle Board to be emailed to the members rather than spending hundred of dollars a month sending it by regular mail. For those that say we have older members without computers, I would have bought into that argument 20 years ago but not today in 2021. Not having a computer today is equivalent to saying in 1970 that someone might not have a phone in their house. If by chance you still have that one member that still cannot open an email, by all means please mail them the Trestle Board, but I urge you not to base the entire operation of your local Masonic body on that one person.

Masonry has been experiencing a decline for many years and everyone has tried to determine what the cause is for this decline. I personally view things differently. Masonry was never in a decline in my opinion. We merely opened the doors too wide and allowed people into the Fraternity that should have never been admitted. The "decline" we experienced was just the deadwood dropping off the tree. I say these words not with insult or in anger but as a warning. We have an obligation to keep our current membership happy, but with the notion that they too must make Masonry a thing that future generations can look forward to joining. As a Fraternity we need to develop new channels of communication, new ways of educating our members and lastly, new ways of demonstrating to the public that we are a valuable asset to the community. Gone are the days of marching in a local parade in our regalia to show how involved in the community we are as a group.

As I close this first message to you of 2021, I want each of you to reflect a little on your time in Masonry and as Knight in the Order of the Temple. Think back about what could have made your experience better? What can you, as an individual, do to change the way your Lodge, Chapter, Council, and Commandery operates? How can you make your Masonic experience more rewarding during the coming year and for years to come?

I hope all of you have a safe and prosperous 2021 and I hope to see all of you as I make my travels around the State during these final months of the 125th Anniversary year.

Donec Totem Impleat Orbem,

Brett A. Gordon, KYCH  
Right Eminent Grand Commander