

Chapter – 2026 GYR Convention Committee Reports

Updated as of May 18, 2026

Audit

The records of the Grand Treasurer for the period of the 2025-2026 Capitular year were examined by Ken Tutor and myself at the Grand York Rite Office in Tampa on Saturday, February 21st, 2026.

A thorough review of each warrant and the related entries into the financial records of the Grand Chapter was completed. All checks and EFT transactions were accounted for in a review of the bank statements. The Grand Treasurer's records were found to be a true and accurate accounting of the Grand Chapter's funds.

As a recommendation as more transactions move from check to EFT which do not produce a cancelled check to easily compare to the warrant a printout for each EFT transaction would make it easier to match the warrant to the electronic funds transaction.

The committee would like to thank the Most Excellent Grand High Priest for the opportunity to serve the Grand Chapter in its capacity this year.

Fraternally Submitted,
Jeffrey T. Sklet
Grand Scribe

Benevolence Committee

Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Distinguished Grand Officers, and Companions:

Your Benevolence Committee respectfully reports that during the Capitular year 2025–2026, no requests for assistance were received by the Grand Chapter.

While no formal petitions were submitted at the Grand Chapter level, it is recognized that our subordinate Chapters may have continued their important work in providing aid and relief within their respective communities. The spirit of benevolence remains a cornerstone of Capitular Masonry, and we commend those Chapters and Companions who quietly extend charity where needed.

The Committee expresses its sincere appreciation to the Most Excellent Grand High Priest for the opportunity to serve the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Florida in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Craig Frazier
Grand Chaplain
Chairman, Benevolence Committee

Manuel Lozada
Grand Master of the First Veil

Carlos Carreea
Grand Sentinel

Committee on Charters, Dispensations, and By-Laws

There was some confusion as to who chairs this committee and this resulted in the receipt of the dispensations and by-laws changes being received late.

There were a total of seven dispensations that were requested as follows:

Eureka Chapter 7 submitted 5 requests
Surf Chapter 57 submitted 1 request
Sarasota Chapter 35 submitted 1 request.

All seven were reviewed and found to be in order.

There were a total of two by-law changes that were submitted as follows:

Eustis Chapter 33
Plant City Chapter 16.

All two were reviewed and found to be in order.

There were no requests for Charters submitted.

Respectfully Submitted,
James W. Hogg, Chairman
PGHP (AK) and PDDGHP (Poinciana Chapter 50)

Committee on Education

The Royal Arch Chapter imparts some of the most practical and at the same time profound lessons in Freemasonry. From the Mark Master Degree and its teachings of honesty in industry and equality among all of God's children to the Royal Arch Degree lessons on rebuilding the Great Architect's house without the need for fee or reward and experience the rediscovery and knowledge of the Ineffable Word, the Chapter is filled with wisdom essential to every Freemason. It is said that a Master Mason has not completed his journey until he receives the degree of Royal Arch.

The Florida Chapters are utilizing the profound teachings of their degrees and lessons to impart education sessions within their local convocations. Every district has several Companions that are making sure that every convocation has a moment for education. Free from the constraints of the Symbolic Lodge, the Chapters are engaging in meaningful discussions where topics range from the practical to the esoteric, always leaving a lasting impression on the Companions present.

I am aware of districts that had their District School to not only answer questions about the opening and closing ceremonies of the Chapter, but also to share ideas and education.

In addition, the premier education organization within the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Florida, the Florida Chapter of Research, met twice in different areas of the state of Florida where education was the primary goal. Several Companions presented interesting lectures relevant to the Royal Arch Chapter. This resulted in promoting the Chapter and the York Rite as a whole, as Brothers who were not yet York Rite members, attended the Chapter of Research meetings and became interested in joining.

The Signet Program not only offered incentives for Companions who attended meetings, but it also encouraged Companions to read books, attend lectures, or even better, become lecturers themselves to give presentations. Most Excellent Grand High Priest Chuck Harper's motto for the year, Education and Retention, inspired the Companions of our great state to view education as the key to membership retention. The Grand Chapter's commitment to education gave us a learning environment free from organizational constraints to ensure every Royal Arch Mason is a well-educated Mason.

With Fervency and Zeal,
Manuel E. Lozada, Chairman
Grand Master of the First Veil

Committee on Thanks

The Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Chuck G. Harper, II, and the Most Excellent Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Florida extend their sincere gratitude to Most Excellent Past Grand High

Priest Corey Kosciuszko for his unwavering and exceptional leadership throughout the preceding year.

Appreciation is also due to the Management and Staff of the Orlando Marriot at Lake Mary, whose efforts ensured the Grand Convocation was both pleasant and welcoming.

Our thanks are further directed toward the Convention Committee, as well as the Companions and their Ladies who dedicated their time and service, facilitating the smooth and effective operation of the Grand Convocation.

We are grateful to the Distinguished Guests for gracing us with their attendance, thereby contributing to the highly memorable nature of the Grand Convocation.

Finally, we acknowledge the diligence and commitment demonstrated by the Elected and Appointed Officers of the Grand Chapter Line in fulfilling their respective obligations. The Committee on Thanks extend its gratitude to M.E. Chuck G. Harper, II for the privilege of serving the Grand Chapter under his authority.

With Fervency and Zeal,
R.E.C. Manuel E. Lozada, Chairman
R.E.C. Carlos Correa
R.E.C. Eric Cole

Constitutional Review Committee

There were five (5) Resolutions for changes in the Laws, Rules and Regulations. These were submitted on the proper forms and in a timely manner and will therefore be put to the Craft, during the Grand Chapter Convocation, for their consideration and vote. There were two (2) resolutions which were not submitted on the proper forms, and where withdrawn for consideration.

Resolutions one through four were submitted by Companion Thomas Metcalfe Jr. on behalf of the Committee on Work and dealt with changes in the requirements for various proficiency cards. Resolution five, also submitted by Companion Metcalfe, deals with a change in an exemption of Chapter dues.

It has been the duty of this Committee to keep any changes in the Constitution, Rules and Regulations current and up to date since in 2012 it was realized this hadn't been done in over a decade. We now have a junior member of the Grand Line perform this task. Over the last several years this has been accomplished by R.E. Companion Jeffrey Sklet. As he approaches a senior

position in the Grand Line we thank him for his years of service and relieve him of this duty. The task will now be carried out for the next several years by R.E. Companion Frank Kiefer.

I wish to thank Most Excellent Charles G. Harper II for the opportunity to serve the Grand Chapter on this committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Harry V. Eisenberg, M.D., Chairman
Gary Paxinos
James Hogg
Jeffrey Sklet
Frank Kiefer

Grand Representative to the Grand Chapter of Kansas

I am honored to submit this report in my capacity as Grand Representative of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the State of Kansas on behalf of the Grand Chapter of Florida for the 2025–2026 Capitular year. I am grateful for the confidence placed in me by Most Excellent Companion Corey D. Kosciuszko, who appointed me to this position, and I extend my appreciation to our current Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Charles G. Harper, II, for his leadership and continued dedication to Capitular Masonry in Florida.

I am pleased to report that the 2026 Kansas Grand York Rite Sessions were held from April 30 through May 2, 2026, in Manhattan, Kansas, and included the 160th Annual Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Kansas, along with the meetings of the companion York Rite bodies. These sessions provided an opportunity for Companions and Sir Knights to assemble in fellowship, conduct the business of their respective Grand Bodies, and continue the work of Capitular Masonry within their jurisdiction.

I have made efforts to remain informed on the activities of the Grand Chapter of Kansas and to maintain fraternal awareness between our jurisdictions. The continued operation and success of their Grand Chapter reflects the same principles we uphold in Florida: dedication to the Capitular degrees, commitment to Masonic education, and the strengthening of fraternal bonds.

The office of Grand Representative serves as a symbolic and fraternal link between jurisdictions, reinforcing the unity of Royal Arch Masonry beyond state lines. It is my intention to continue to fulfill this role by promoting goodwill, awareness, and mutual respect between the Grand Chapters of Kansas and Florida.

Respectfully submitted,
Max Bornstein

Grand Representative to the Grand Chapter of Kansas

Insurance and Investment Committee Report

The investments under the oversight of the Investment Committee are maintained by our investment advisers at Edward Jones & Co., and presently total \$1,428,075 as of 28 February 2026, up from \$1,232,169 one year ago. This represents a 15.90% NET annual return on Grand Chapter invested assets - after the required 5.00% payouts on Perpetual membership funds, and after the market volatility suffered recently. There are two major portfolios:

Administrative Account - The first portfolio is the Administrative Account, also sometimes referred to as the General Fund. As of 28 February 2026, the total value was \$756,181 – vs. \$637,751 a year ago, for an increase of \$118,430, or 18.57%. This account has a target investment mix of 60% equities, and 40% bonds and other fixed instruments.

At 31 December 2025, the total value of this account was \$724,650, vs. \$622,709 at 31 December 2024, for an increase of \$101,941, or a 16.37% investment return. Since our governing documents allow 75% of any annual increase to be included in the Budget for the following year, the 2025 gain in value will allow up to \$76,455 of these funds to be available for charitable and necessary operating expenditures during 2026.

The original primary goal of the Administrative Account was to put the Grand Chapter in a position to be able to place less reliance upon Per Capita dues increases in the future, as this Fund grew. Instead, the funds have been allowed to accumulate. During at least the past 20 years, a cumulative total of \$Zero has been paid out of this Fund account.

Life and Perpetual Account – The second portfolio is the Life and Perpetual Account, often referred to as the Sacred Fund. As of 28 February 2026, the total value was \$671,894 – vs. \$594,409 one year ago, for an increase of \$77,485 (i.e., 13.04%), and after the payout of the 5.0% annual perpetual payments to constituent Chapters. This account has a target investment mix of 50% equities, and 50% bonds and other fixed instruments.

At 31 December 2025, the total value of this account was \$665,119 vs. \$573,413 one year ago, for an increase of \$91,706, or a 15.99% NET investment annual increase in value over the past year, after the required 5% perpetual fund payout.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the other members of the Investment Committee to thank the Most Excellent Charles G. Harper II, MEGHP, for allowing us to serve the Grand Chapter this past year.

Courteously and Fraternally,

Wm. Lee Popham Sr., PHP
Wade Atchison, Chairman
Charles Hollinger

Legal Advisory Committee

There were no requests for assistance with any matters submitted to this committee by the Grand High Priest this Capitular year.

Respectfully Submitted,
James W. Hogg, Chairman
PGHP (AK) and PDDGHP (Poinciana Chapter 50)

Membership Committee

On my behalf and those of the Membership Committee, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the State of Florida for his trust in our ability to serve on this committee. It was both an honor and a privilege to serve. It was also an eye-opener for those involved. We would also like to thank the Grand Secretary for his help and guidance in performing the many tasks required to try to effect changes in membership.

During my time as an MLT instructor, we had 15 sections in this program. I usually started with the section on "Membership," which was in the middle of the pack. I chose this section to be first because, without membership growth, the other sections are pointless. It is a downhill slope to extension.

There are six factors that influence the membership equation. They are the number of new exaltations, reinstatements, affiliations, deaths, demits, and suspensions. I will address "deaths" first, since it is a factor we have no control over, but it does affect membership negatively and must be planned for in our efforts to increase membership. Affiliations are another factor that affects membership, but not the overall picture. It does nothing to increase our total membership number because an "Affiliation: is an existing member joining another body. I do feel that an affiliation with another Chapter makes the original Chapter at risk of losing its members to that new Chapter. I feel that we do nothing about why he is affiliating. The Secretary and High Priest should interview this member, who is seeking another Chapter, to determine why he feels he should dilute his commitment to the original Chapter.

I have attached a spreadsheet to this report to highlight the balance of the factors affecting membership. Before starting, I would like to state that every Grand Line officer, every District Deputy, every sitting High Priest, and every Secretary received via email a spreadsheet showing

their current membership level and their 2025 plan. We have 30 Chapters in the State of Florida, and 15 have achieved or exceeded their plan, and another 4 missed it by 1%. Districts One, Five, and Seven performed the best, while Districts Eight, Nine, and Ten performed the least. Jericho Chapter led the State with 16 new members, Jacksonville was second with 11, and Palm Beach also had 11; Eustis was third with 9. These four Chapters represented 47 of the total 128 new members, for 37%. What a great job by these four Chapters.

I did not see much effort put into recruiting; many of the new members were recruited by a single individual within their Chapter. Our Blue Lodge Representatives are not as effective as they once were. I feel this rep is also the Rep for the Scottish Rite, Shrine, and other Bodies. Thus, they lose their shock and awe. One standout among the new members is that their average age was 54. I know that sounds old to a lot of you, but comparing it to our existing average age of 60 and older is 68%, this is young.

I have two other concerns about membership. The first is that we had 5 Chapters that did not secure any new members, and we had 6 that recruited only 1 new member. My second concern was that there are 4 Chapters with 32 or fewer members; of those, how many are active? There are 11 chairs in the Chapter to be filled; who fills those chairs? How can they meet regularly, and what other activities can they have?

Our main source for membership is through the Blue Lodges, and we are failing there, so let's look at the other source for new members. This one is the easiest to tap, but the others are forgotten; that is "Reinstatements." Every Chapter should seek out those members who have been suspended or demitted. Find out why they left and try to bring them back. And no, an email is NOT trying to bring them back. It will take a phone call or visit from you to do this.

I feel the greatest hurdle we have in recruiting is that we know little about the York Rite. When I worked for Komatsu, many of our salespeople, when asked about our products, would say it's like Cat. Until we can articulate to the uninformed just what we are and what we do, we can't increase our membership. We make Good men better is like Cat.

Our last section for discussion is the "demit." This affects membership in two ways. One is that it reduces our numbers, but secondly, it may have an adverse effect on our existing membership. Before any demit is granted, an exit interview should be conducted to determine why he is leaving and what we can do to keep him. Does he need help with his dues? Does he need a ride? Is he overworked or underworked? Is it a health problem, or is it a personal problem? All of these questions should be reviewed with the Companions so they understand why someone is leaving.

In closing, we feel we are on the right track for future growth, but a lot of training is needed on recruitment and retention. Membership is where our future is, and we need to put it more in the forefront and spend more money on it.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Olsen (DDGHP#7)
Membership Chairman

ROYAL ARCH RESEARCH ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Total contributions were \$52,395.08 for the 2025-26 year. Our goal at the year's beginning was to better last year which we did by \$940, so this was a successful campaign. Plus we did not have the benefit of a \$7,000 estate gift which we had last year. I wish to thank all the companions and Chapters who worked so hard with their time and donations to make this happen. Looking forward to the future I know our incoming Grand High Priest is again making this a priority of his so we will aim to be even more successful in the coming year. This we can do if everyone who made a donation this past year repeats what you gave and companions and chapters who did not participate do so. The goal of \$5 per member should not be a burden and most of our Chapters are far exceeding it already. Hopefully the rest of you will be working towards that goal.

Twenty-seven of our thirty chapters contributed or 90%. This was up from 84% last year. There is no reason that every chapter should not contribute something, no matter how small. I won't name the Chapters that did not support our charity this year but it is now several years running and I would ask that they do some soul searching. With the new standard of \$5/member, 23 chapters were at 100%, or 77%. A nice gain from last year of 61%. As we get used to these new standards hopefully more chapters will strive to attain this goal. Even so Florida was first in donations by far in the Eastern section of the country and now ranks second overall of all jurisdictions internationally. According to RARA Secretary Bill Riggs, Florida donates more than twice its nearest competitor of all jurisdictions internationally. We should be very proud of this. Anyway this is the new reality and we need to look to new and better ways to raise money for RARA. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) are significant life challenges for the individuals affected and Autism Speaks and The Hearing Health Foundation, which are giving multiple research grants to study and treat these problems, depend on the funds we raise for them. RARA has committed to \$250,000 between the two charities so we have our work cut out for us. RARA has also taken on another challenge as we are now contributing to Veterans with service related hearing loss.

The following chapters donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$1.00 per member:

Indian River No. 27
Clearwater No. 45

The following chapters donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$7.00 per member:

Putnam No. 9
Plant City No. 16

Sarasota No. 35

The following chapters donated or had donated in its name a minimum of \$8.00 per member:

Gainesville No. 2
Keystone No. 20
Bay County No. 39

The following chapter donated or had donated in its name a minimum of \$9.00 per member:

James Yeager No. 62

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$10.00 per member:

Tampa/Cushing No. 3

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$12.00 per member:

Halifax No. 5

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$13.00 per member:

Jericho No. 11

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$14.00 per member:

Mt. Horeb No. 6

The following chapters donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$16.00 per member:

Monroe No. 15
Joppa No. 28

The following chapters donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$19.00 per member:

Florida No. 1
Nassau No. 49

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$21.00 per member:

Eureka No. 7

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$22.00 per member:

Melbourne No. 59

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$28.00 per member:

Crestview No. 40

The following chapters donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$40.00 per member:

Jacksonville No. 12
St. Petersburg No. 31

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$44.00 per member:

Poinciana No. 50

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$50.00 per member:
Surf No. 57

The following chapter donated or had donated in their name a minimum of \$69.00 per member:
Eustis No. 33

Contributions were received from the following organizations and individuals: (over \$500)

NE York Rite College No. 114 -----	\$700
Florida Grand Chapter -----	\$1,000
Order of the High Priesthood -----	\$500
M.E. Charles Harper -----	\$2,578
Robert Dean Sever -----	\$2,500
Tom Olsen -----	\$2,420
Eric Cole -----	\$2,028
Jerry Miller -----	\$1,664
Stephen Meserve -----	\$1,056
Robert Eisenhardt -----	\$1,000
Ed Mayfield -----	\$1,000
Carlos Correa -----	\$1,000
Brett Gordon -----	\$1,000
Robert St. John -----	\$1,000
Steven Q. Steele -----	\$1,000
Henry Adams -----	\$1,000
Corey Kosciuszko -----	\$1,000
Brian Zeppa -----	\$900
Jeffrey Sklet -----	\$550
Joseph Schoonover -----	\$518
Gary Paxinos -----	\$508
Mike Hartman -----	\$500
Hector Mirabile -----	\$500
John Champion -----	\$500
Damien Vargus -----	\$500

The following chapters have contributed 100% for a number of consecutive years. (Number of years in parentheses)

- Crestview No. 40 (22)
- Eureka No. 7 (29)
- Gainesville No. 2 (33)
- Jericho No. 11 (8)
- Melbourne No. 59 (13)

- Mt Horeb No. 6 (27)
- Sarasota No. 35 (38)
- Eustis No. 33 (10)

The RARA Board of Directors has approved \$600,000.00 between The Hearing Health Foundation and Autism Speaks. In addition, they also approved an average of \$75,000.00 to the Henry M Jackson Foundation. They are working with Walter Reed on developing a test that would take 2 minutes, versus the current 40 minutes, allowing many more veterans to get tested for service related hearing loss.

Remember gifts are tax deductible as we are a 501 (c) 3 organization. Also please consider RARA in your estate planning. All donations should be sent to me directly and I will forward them on so that you and your chapter will get the proper credit. If I have omitted giving credit to anyone or made mistakes I apologize in advance, as I try to keep as accurate records as I can so as not to offend anyone or group. If corrections need to be made please contact me. I wish to thank Most Excellent Charles G. Harper II for the opportunity to serve the Grand Chapter in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry V. Eisenberg, M.D.

Most Excellent Past Grand High Priest, RAM of Florida

Past Deputy General Grand High Priest Royal Arch Masons International Southeast Region

State Chairman

RARA

Dr. Joshua Schutts

Jerry Miller

Tom Olsen

Religious Affirmation

Per Directive No. 1 ordered by, the Most Excellent Grand High Priest directing all chapters in Florida to hold a religious affirmation day in October or November if needed and to report the same to the RE Grand Scribe by December 15th.

During this year 19% of our chapters reported their religious affirmation event. Five of these were held at a lodge building while the other one was held at a Grotto. These Chapters combined had a total of 79 Royal Arch Masons and family members present.

These are lowest numbers the Grand Chapter has seen in sometime. While I believe the numbers are higher, I can only report on what was submitted. Companions, I hope we can do better in the future.

The committee would like to thank the Most Excellent Grand High Priest for the opportunity to serve the Grand Chapter in its capacity this year.

Fraternally Submitted,
Jeffrey T. Sklet
Grand Scribe

Preliminary Treasurer's Report

This is my preliminary report on the financial status of the Grand Chapter, Grand Council and Grand Commandery for the 2026 Grand Convention. The attached balance sheets, actual vs budget statements and income-expenses statements reflect transactions through the end of March. Final reports will be included in the Proceedings which will reflect the fiscal year's activities through May 31st.

Each of the presiding officers has submitted proper warrants for all expenses.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert C St John, Grand Treasurer

Grand Chapter Account Balances - As of 3/31/2026	
Bank Accounts	
Grand Chapter Checking	\$ 14,984.50
Grand Chapter Savings	\$ 27,894.89
TOTAL Bank Accounts	\$ 42,879.39
Asset Accounts	
Admin Fund Investment Acct	\$ 698,130.95
Life-Perp Fund Investment Acct.	\$ 634,571.21
TOTAL Asset Accounts	\$ 1,332,702.16
Liability Accounts	
40040 Triennial Escrow Fund	\$ (6,834.00)
40050 Carryover Funds	\$ (500.00)
40051 Collected Advance Per Capita	\$ (31,325.00)
40054 Collected Per Capita for Future	\$ (26,358.00)
40080 Signet Program	\$ (3,594.91)
TOTAL Liability Accounts	\$ (68,611.91)
NET ASSETS/LIABILITIES	\$ 1,306,969.64

Grand Chapter Approved Budget - FY 2025-2026

40000 INCOME		
	Budget	Actual
40000 Annual Per Capita	\$ 33,721.00	\$ 33,721.00
40011 Other Interest		\$ 2.73
40012 Other Income:Admin Invest. Fund Allowance	\$ 16,292.00	
40012 Other Income:Donations		
40021 Grand Office Return		\$ 4,389.28
40024 Annual Convention Return	\$ 1,533.21	\$ 139.29
40026 Signet Program - Income		\$ 4,512.03
40050 Carryover Funds - FY 2024-25		\$ 1,676.00
Total Income	\$ 51,546.21	\$ 44,440.33
10010 ALLOWANCES		
10011 Grand High Priest	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
10012 Grand King	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
10014 Jewel Apron & Case	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,062.87
10015 Grand Treasurer	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
10016 Grand Scribe	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
Total Allowances	\$ 8,250.00	\$ 8,312.87
10020 CHARITIES		
10022 Youth Charities:DeMolay	\$ 300.00	
10022 Youth Charities:Rainbow	\$ 300.00	
10022 Youth Charities:Job's Daughters	\$ 300.00	
10023 Masonic Home		
10024 Donation to GHP Charity (RARA)	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Total Charities	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,000.00
10030 MEETINGS		
10031 Triennial	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
10032 District Meetings	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
10033 Summer Assembly	\$ 250.00	
10034 GHP SE Conference	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
10035 Grand King SE Conference	\$ 250.00	
10036 Grand Scribe SE Conference	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
10037 Grand Secretary SE Conference	\$ 84.00	\$ 84.00
Total Meetings	\$ 3,084.00	\$ 2,584.00
10040 GRAND CONVOCATION		
10044 Distinguished Visitors	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,742.26
Total Grand Convocation	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,742.26
10050 OFFICE EXPENSES		
Total Office Expenses	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
10060 PRINTING		
Total Printing	\$ 825.00	\$ 824.00
10070 SALARYS & STIPENDS		
Total Salaries & Stipends	\$ 16,200.00	\$ 16,200.00
10080 TAXES		
10081 Florida Corporation Tax	\$ 61.25	\$ 61.25
10082 General Grand Chapter Per Capita	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 7,710.00
Total Taxes	\$ 8,561.25	\$ 7,771.25
10090 SUNDRY		
10091 Education & Training	\$ 350.00	
10092 Awards	\$ 950.00	
10093 Membership Services (MMS Fee)	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 976.77
10095 Insurance	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,532.00
10096 Contingencies	\$ 1,225.96	
10097 Signet Program - Expenses	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 4,748.55
Total Sundry	\$ 7,025.96	\$ 8,257.32
10100 Miscellaneous		
10102 Bank Service Charges		
10110 Reserves	\$ 200.00	
Total Miscellaneous	\$ 200.00	\$ -
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 54,046.21	\$ 55,691.70
NET INCOME/LOSS	\$ (2,500.00)	\$ (11,251.37)

Grand Chapter Income Expense Statement	
INCOME	
40000 Annual per Capita	\$ 26,685.50
40011 Other Interest	\$ 2.73
40012A Other Income	
40012A Other Income:Donations	\$ 500.00
40012A Other Income:Signet Program	\$ 4,512.03
TOTAL 40012A Other Income	\$ 5,012.03
40014 Grand Office Unused Income	\$ 4,389.28
40020 Annual Convention Income	\$ 139.29
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 36,228.83
EXPENSES	
10010 Allowances	
10010 Allowances:10011 Grand High Priest	\$ 3,000.00
10010 Allowances:10012 Grand King	\$ 1,500.00
10010 Allowances:10014 Jewel, Apron & Case	\$ 1,062.87
10010 Allowances:10015 Grand Treasurer	\$ 2,000.00
10010 Allowances:10016 Grand Scribe	\$ 750.00
TOTAL 10010 Allowances	\$ 8,312.87
10020 Charities	
10020 Charities:10024 Donation to GHP Charity	\$ 500.00
TOTAL 10020 Charities	\$ 500.00
10030 Meetings	
10030 Meetings:10031 Triennial	\$ 1,000.00
10030 Meetings:10032 District Meetings	\$ 952.39
10030 Meetings:10034 GHP SE Conference	\$ 250.00
10030 Meetings:10036 Grand Scribe SE Conference	\$ 250.00
10030 Meetings:10037 Gr. Sec'y SE Conf.	\$ 84.00
TOTAL 10030 Meetings	\$ 2,536.39
10050 Office Expenses	\$ 8,000.00
10060 Printing	\$ 824.00
10070 Salaries, Stipends, Payroll Taxes	\$ 16,200.00
10080 Taxes	
10080 Taxes:10081 Florida Corp. Tax	\$ 61.25
10080 Taxes:10082 Gen. Grand Chapter per Capita	\$ 7,710.00
TOTAL 10080 Taxes	\$ 7,771.25
10090 Sundry	
10090 Sundry:10090 Signet Expenses	\$ 4,748.55
10090 Sundry:10093 Membership Services	\$ 976.77
10090 Sundry:10095 Insurance	\$ 2,538.00
TOTAL 10090 Sundry	\$ 8,263.32
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 52,407.83
NET INCOME/EXPENSES	\$ (16,179.00)



Grand Chapter Address – 2026

Artificial Intelligence and the Path to Enlightenment

Todd Connor

V1.5

May 2026

The Digital Trestle Board: The Utility of Artificial Intelligence in Masonic and Esoteric Research

The study of Freemasonry and esoteric traditions often involves navigating a labyrinth of historical records, symbolic lexicons, and fragmented archives. As researchers move further into the twenty-first century, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative "digital trestle board," offering tools that enhance the precision, accessibility, and scope of such scholarship. While the "secrets" of our traditions were once guarded by physical distance and linguistic barriers, AI now facilitates a more rigorous analysis of the "hidden patterns" that define the Western esoteric tradition.

One of the primary benefits of AI in this field is its ability to process vast amounts of digitized historical data. Freemasonry, in particular, possesses a sprawling history of lodge minutes, orations, and correspondence that remains understudied due to its volume. AI-powered Natural Language Processing (NLP) allows scholars to perform sentiment analysis and thematic mapping across centuries of texts in seconds. This capability enables researchers to trace the evolution of specific moral allegories or political shifts within the fraternity that might be invisible to a human reader limited by time and cognitive bandwidth.

Furthermore, AI serves as a powerful bridge for linguistic and paleographic challenges. Many foundational esoteric texts are written in Latin, Greek, or early modern dialects with complex shorthand. Machine learning models, trained on historical manuscripts, can now transcribe and translate these documents with increasing accuracy. For the Masonic researcher, this means that archives from the Grand Orient of France or the German Aufklärung are no longer inaccessible due to language barriers, fostering a more global and comparative understanding of the Craft.

Finally, the use of AI in generating scholarly papers provides a structural advantage. Esoteric topics are notoriously dense and prone to wandering prose. AI assistance can help organize these complex abstract concepts—such as the relationship between Hermeticism and speculative Masonry—into clear, logical frameworks. By leveraging AI as a research partner, scholars can ensure that their arguments are grounded in the extensive data sets now available, preserving the intellectual rigor of the field while embracing the efficiency of the digital age.¹

¹ Generated by Google Bard Gemini on February 13, 2026 based on the prompt "generate a one page essay on why AI should be used to research esoteric papers on Freemasonry."

My dear Companions – the preceding four paragraphs were generated by the Google Bard Gemini generative AI engine in a matter of seconds.

In the several roles I play in Masonry, I am frequently called upon to review, advise, and mentor fellow Masonic scholars in developing their work. In the past year, I've noticed something that I find a bit concerning: a rising instance of Brothers coming to me with work possessing a tone and character that diverges from what I've observed in their prior works. Oftentimes, this is quite subtle and manifests simply in perfect grammar and sentence structure. I'm not suggesting that the Florida public school system does not provide a solid basis for English composition. Far from it, but what I'm seeing is grammatical perfection – not only in elements such as punctuation and sentence structure, but also in such things as citations and formatting; additionally, the tone and rhythm of the piece are usually different from a person's natural style of writing as well -- Although the introductory portion of this talk did align well with my usual writing style, and I have heard that Pax's wife can't distinguish AI writing from his own.

It is true that a top goal of the many Masonic research organizations that I participate in is the generation of scholarly material for the consumption, enjoyment, and enlightenment of our Brothers, which AI is bountifully capable of compiling, but on the other side of the coin, the very act of researching and writing a piece of work, not only develops skills within the crafter, but almost invariably leads to an "ah-ha!" moment – a moment where the writer catches a glimmer of Light that they had not previously seen. This "ah-ha" moment, at least for me, many times opens up a new page and leads to gaining further knowledge, understanding, and Light in Masonry... and in life.

Then, Now, and Tomorrow

Indeed, our digital age has streamlined the entire process of research and has made the job far easier than it had been in the past. Not long ago, a researcher might have to visit a number of book stores or libraries in search of reference material – perhaps to even make pilgrimages to some of the legendary Meccas of rare and obscure esoteric tomes such as the library at the House of the Temple in Washington DC or the Scottish Rite Supreme Council in Lexington, MA. Nowadays, the internet and the extensive availability of online book sellers have alleviated that challenge and while the proliferation and availability of books have led to a general increase in publicly available esoteric knowledge, *digitally* available content in the form of searchable PDFs or webpages has introduced a new hazard. You see, my observation is that by reading an actual, physical book in search of a particular nugget of knowledge, the researcher is likely to come across a number of other unexpected pearls that might contribute directly to their present work – *or* perhaps even open them up to a new page of learning, however with digital search engines that allow us to precisely extract a targeted segment, those **pearls** often remain "**shellfish-ly**" embedded in their hosts, never to see the light of day.

Our Companion and soon to be Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Garry Paxinos, in an article published in the Lodge of Research's issue 13 of Further Light, writes that large language models essentially "learn" about the foundational content that comprises its "mind" through repetitive iterations as a means to develop context and increase "understanding" or "synapses," so to speak. AI ingests massive volumes of essentially **all** of the electronically formatted data available from the internet or privately sourced networks, and that whole of information becomes integrated into the "mind" of AI. That foundation naturally includes Masonic knowledge. So, much like our Masonic initiates will study, memorize, and exemplify our successive degrees, each iteration performed by an AI engine similarly results in a refinement and greater "understanding" of the content. Like all digital technologies, AI Large language

models benefit from Moore's Law which basically states that computing power doubles annually. An AI research resource known as the Model Evaluation & Threat Research (METR) report² suggests that AI's ability to complete complex tasks has been doubling even more rapidly, at approximately every seven months as of early 2026 – and it is likely to keep up this pace for some time into the future.

Currently, we have reached a point with this rapidly advancing generative artificial intelligence capability where even rudimentary, targeted research by AI's biological counterparts (us) – beyond just crafting an instructional prompt for the AI engine, has become an optional point for producing a paper or even performing QA validation on works created by the tool. AI has given us the ability to create wonderful and rich content, simply by asking a large language model a few questions in the form of those AI prompts with only our imagination being the limit to what can be produced. The content that is delivered contains the vast published wisdom of the ages translated from myriad languages, arranged in a logical and clear manner conforming to whatever research paper format you might wish.³

How Do We Compete? Or Should We?

I still recall a stirring moment in a 1984 movie when my dear Auntie Sarah Connor was informed:

Listen, and understand! That Terminator is out there. It can't be bargained with. It can't be reasoned with. It doesn't feel pity, or remorse, or fear! And it absolutely will not stop, ever, until you are dead!⁴

This example may be a little extreme – but from a more practical viewpoint, how can a mere human being compete with this kind of opponent, and what does a reliance on AI do to our Craft overall? I'm pretty sure that my poor brain is not doubling in capacity every seven months. More likely, I've **lost** computing power at some level over the years, and without regularly exercising my cognitive skills, I would likely experience a more rapid decline going forward.

Think about this on a more global Masonic scale and imagine what might happen if our infamous ruffians were granted the Master's Word prior to being found worthy of being deemed masterful in our Craft. What might happen if those unskilled ruffians were given the charter to build the finest cathedrals dedicated to our Supreme High Priest of Heaven and Earth? Those cathedrals might very well collapse for a lack of a proper knowledge of architecture – or even the skill of crafting a perfect ashlar or keystone. Maybe those temples would never be built at all.

Does AI have an Achilles Heel?

Putting aside the potential effect of a reliance on AI for Masonic scholarly work, it can be argued that AI generated content is certainly of good quality and vastly suited for presentation to our Brothers who thirst for Masonic Light. In my experience, however, I've observed that it cannot provide a substitute for certain essential elements that make Masonry what it has been for untold ages. I assert that AI is missing the

² Model Evaluation & Threat Research, or METR conducts research and evaluations to improve public understanding of the capabilities and risks of frontier AI systems. METR.org

³ The AI engine can even be asked to conform to the Quarry Project Style of formatting for a collegiate-level research paper – and it will do it dutifully. Quarry Project Style, by the way, is a derivative of Kate Turabian's Chicago style of research paper formatting dictated in *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 8th ed*, which style is a universally requested format for Masonic publications.

⁴ Quoted from *The Terminator*, Orion Pictures, 1984

human element. The story. Emotion. I'm not alone in the opinion that AI generated Masonic works is informative, but flat. I think I can fairly say that AI is missing the essence of God.

Conclusion

Moving forward, we need to realize that AI is here, and unavoidable. There is tremendous opportunity inherent in its access to previously inaccessible knowledge – but it is a double-edged sword. It represents a unique and invaluable tool that can help us create outstanding content with little more than an inquisitive mind to ask the proper questions. It literally has the collective knowledge of all ages and all cultures integrated within it.

Many good-intentioned Craftsmen will undoubtedly succumb to the temptation to sit down on the brow of a hill to rest and refresh themselves while they watch AI write papers for them, but at what cost does that extract from our cadre of scholars, and our living storehouses of esoteric wisdom? I assert that we should be cautious to NOT pursue leisure over labor, as this does little or nothing to sharpen the saw of our intellect. Benedictine monks of antiquity would assert “laborare est orare,” or to “work is to pray,”⁵ and as an Illustrious Brother and friend of mine once said, “man does not learn from joy.”

AI directed content creation is inevitable; it is also arguably immensely beneficial, but as stewards of our Craft, we should see that we use these tools judiciously and not allow ourselves to become lazy in our craft, lest our skills decay and we become unable to instruct future generations to craft that singular, peculiar stone so essentially necessary for completing that temple dedicated to the Supreme High Priest of Heaven and Earth.

⁵ Pike, Albert, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, 2nd annotated edition, 2nd printing, (Supreme Council, AASR SMJ, Washington, DC, 2016), p 417-418

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We may have one point of salvation: AI can only base its product on documented material, and Masons have historically been considered a tight-lipped bunch, unwilling to cut, carve, write, print, etc. This suggests that with an AI tool that is hoodwinked to the true beauty of the lodge room, so to speak, it will never have been exposed to the Master's Word. But that, in itself becomes a risk, with good-intending Masons short-cutting their way to mastery may lose their connection with what makes us not only the world's oldest memorization club, but also without our unimpaired traditions and landmarks, our Word may indeed become lost to posterity.

Grand Chapter Proposed Budget 2026 - 2027

40000 INCOME	
40000 Annual Per Capita	\$ 31,325.00
40011 Other Interest	
40012 Other Income:Admin Invest. Fund Allowance	\$ 25,214.85
40012 Other Income:Donations	
40021 Grand Office Return	
40024 Annual Convention Return	\$ 1,533.00
40026 Signet Program - Income	\$ 1,500.00
40050 Carryover Funds - FY 2025-2026	
Total Income	\$ 59,572.85
10010 ALLOWANCES	
10011 Grand High Priest	\$ 4,000.00
10012 Grand King	\$ 2,000.00
10014 Jewel Apron & Case	\$ 1,500.00
10015 Grand Treasurer	\$ 3,000.00
10016 Grand Scribe	\$ 1,000.00
Total Allowances	\$ 11,500.00
10020 CHARITIES	
10022 Youth Charities:DeMolay	\$ 500.00
10022 Youth Charities:Rainbow	\$ 500.00
10022 Youth Charities:Job's Daughters	\$ 500.00
10023 Masonic Home	
10024 Donation to GHP Charity (RARA)	\$ 750.00
Total Charities	\$ 2,250.00
10030 MEETINGS	
10031 Triennial	\$ 1,500.00
10032 District Meetings	\$ 1,500.00
10033 Summer Assembly	\$ 400.00
10034 GHP SE Conference	\$ 400.00
10035 Grand King SE Conference	\$ 400.00
10036 Grand Scribe SE Conference	\$ 400.00
10037 Grand Secretary SE Conference	\$ 100.00
Total Meetings	\$ 4,700.00
10040 GRAND CONVOCATION	
10044 Distinguished Visitors	\$ 2,000.00
Total Grand Convocation	\$ 2,000.00
10050 OFFICE EXPENSES	
Total Office Expenses	\$ 8,000.00
10060 PRINTING	
Total Printing	\$ 825.00
10070 SALARYS & STIPENDS	
Total Salaries & Stipends	\$ 16,200.00
10080 TAXES	
10081 Florida Corporation Tax	\$ 61.25
10082 General Grand Chapter Per Capita	\$ 8,500.00
Total Taxes	\$ 8,561.25
10090 SUNDRY	
10091 Education & Training	\$ 350.00
10092 Awards	\$ 950.00
10093 Membership Services (MMS Fee)	\$ 1,000.00
10095 Insurance	\$ 1,000.00
10096 Contingencies	\$ 1,225.96
10097 Signet Program - Expenses	\$ 750.00
Total Sundry	\$ 5,275.96
10100 Miscellaneous	
10102 Bank Service Charges	
10110 Reserves	\$ 200.00
Total Miscellaneous	\$ 200.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 59,512.21
NET INCOME/LOSS	\$ 60.64