

Gray Line



NEWSLETTER OF GRAY MASONIC LODGE No. 329, A.F. & A.M.

MARCH 2021

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CHARTERED JUNE 24, 1870

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Greetings from the South



Brethren,

As you may imagine, our WM Billy Moreno has been frantically busy following the recent freeze, so once again I share his fraternal greetings with you all.

Gray Lodge's January Stated Meeting happened to fall on the 6th – the same day as the riot at the U.S. Capitol. Because all Masons are charged at initiation that "you are not to countenance disloyalty or rebellion," I'm confident we can all agree that no matter your politics, the events at the Capitol on Jan. 6 were un-American, and definitely un-Masonic. Seven lives were needlessly lost and dozens of people were injured; these included the death of one officer and injuries to dozens more.

I'm sure you share my pride in being part of a fraternity that counts so many peace officers among our members. It's very easy, until a tragedy such as this occurs, to take their voluntary assumption of danger for granted. We can agree that without peace officers, our society would be much more chaotic than it is; and any time one makes the ultimate sacrifice, we should

reflect on their mortality as readily as we reflect upon our own.

Please share a prayer for the seven who lost their lives in Washington, and add a prayer for the safety of all our peace officers – especially those who are our Brethren – to whom every Mason should be grateful for their sacrifices.

During the recent February freeze, Gray Lodge fared remarkably well. The lodge building still had power and water the first day after the freeze; however, once the energy companies began rolling 24-hour

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Greetings From the South

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blackouts across the region, we suffered one burst pipe and one broken faucet, both in the kitchen. When the power came on and the pipes thawed ... the pipes flowed. Fortunately, flooding was limited to the kitchen and dining room, and several Brethren were able to cut off the water and dry the floors. We hope each of your homes fared as well during the freeze. If it didn't, please remember that the Brethren of Gray Lodge are ready and willing to provide assistance and relief, and all you have to do is ask.

Our Right Worshipful Secretary and D.D.G.M. Darrin Pitts has rescheduled his first official visit to Gray Lodge to our upcoming stated meeting on Wednesday, March 3. He informs me that our District Education Officer and guest Steward, Marvin Hass, PM of Bellaire #1336, will make his "famous" chili in honor of R.:W.:Pitts' visit. We hope you will join us for dinner at 6:00 p.m. with a Master Mason's Lodge to open at 7:00 p.m. Social distancing protocols will, of course, be in place; but if you are not feeling well, *please stay home*. (We've had more than our share of close calls already ...)

- Gary Wiener, Junior Warden

Congratulations to our Newest MM Leo Barnuevo

On February 11, Gray Lodge raised Brother Leo Barnuevo to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. The degree was conferred by R.:W.: Aaron Tyksinski, D.D.G.M. at Large and sitting WM of Morton #72, followed by the lecture and charge



Bro. Barnuevo (center) and the Degree Team.

by Gary Wiener, JW, and the Apron and Bible presentations by Doug Hissong, PM, Chaplain. The Degree Team included visiting Brethren Cody Moore, JW of Cypress #1423, and Maynard Fernando, PM of Walter M. Pierson #1339.

Brother Barnuevo has been "awaiting the time with patience" since September 2018, when he was initiated. Despite numerous frustrating delays (the latest of which was the cancellation of Bellaire Lodge's "Dinosaur Degree", at which he was going to be the Candidate to be raised), we have finally brought him into the fold. Congratulations and a belated hearty welcome to the Fraternity, Brother Leo!

Our ~~150th~~ **151st** Anniversary Celebration — May 22, 2021!

SAVE THE DATE! Gray Lodge's 150th Anniversary Celebration has been scheduled!

Gray Lodge's Officers have been watching the public health situation carefully ever since we were forced to postpone our 150th Anniversary Banquet and Celebration last summer. We now feel confident in rescheduling our 150th Anniversary celebration. (... during our *151st* year. Hey, it's still gonna be a big deal.)



Celebrating 150 Years of Masonic Service

The festivities will be held in the auditorium of the Scottish Rite Temple, 2401 West Bellfort (just west of Kirby) on **Saturday evening, May 22, 2021**. Ticket information will be available soon.

Most Worshipful Kenneth C. Curry, Grand Master of Texas Masons in 2021, is expected to attend, along with many other Grand Lodge Officers and local Masonic dignitaries. We hope you will be able to join us as well!

Official Visit of R.:W.: Darrin Pitts, D.D.G.M.

Our Past Master, Secretary, and now District Deputy Grand Master, R.:W.: Darrin Pitts, has rescheduled his official visit to Gray Lodge for Wednesday, March 3, during our regular Stated Meeting. Dinner will be served beginning at 6:00 p.m., with a Master Mason's Lodge to open at 7:00. Please plan to join us to present the Private Grand Honors to our Right Worshipful Brother!

"Brotherly love is not a tangible commodity. We cannot touch it or weigh it, smell it or taste it. Yet it is a reality; it can be creative, it can be fostered, it can be made a dynamic power. The Master who has it in his Lodge and his brethren will find that Lodge and brethren give it back to him. The Master too worried over the cares of his office to express friendliness need never wonder why his Lodge seems too cold to his effort."

~ Carl H. Claudy

From the West



Greetings Brethren! I hope that Winter Storm Uri did not wreak too much havoc on your homes or lives two weeks ago. Our priority in these situations should be to make sure our families are looked after, but we should remember that there are always brethren ready to lend a helping hand within length of their cable tow, so please reach out in times of need.

This past week I was at the Houston Scottish Rite and had a chance to enjoy some time visiting with brethren over drinks after the meeting. We discussed the storm, the pandemic, caught up on each other's lives and families, and finally landed on the state of Freemasonry in America. Several of these brethren were well travelled, having visited lodges in different countries and one was even raised in a French lodge. This all reminded me of a conversation I had years ago with an author and Masonic Brother who travelled all over the world giving presentations on his book. He was contacted by a lodge in a foreign country where Freemasonry was outlawed by the government as a dangerous secret society. They flew him out to address their lodge in secret. The location of the meeting was secret until a couple hours prior to protect its members and the Tiler(s) literally stood guard with machine guns as lookouts. If caught, they faced imprisonment or even death, yet these brothers (of different faiths) met despite these potentialities.

This story has stuck with me ever since that night. Sometimes we take what he have for granted. Sometimes we don't treat our Order with the respect or reverence it deserves. By failing to study the symbolism and lessons inculcated in every Masonic degree, by failing to do everything in our power to better ourselves, our lodges, and our Fraternity, we do a disservice to the future of Texas Freemasonry and dishonor the Brethren who came before us. I don't write this as a criticism of American Freemasonry or to guilt anyone. I write this to encourage brethren to investigate the deeper meaning of Freemasonry and to remember that we have a tried-and-true system of personal development at our fingertips. The next time you think, "Eh, the lodge can do without me" or "I'll just show up, eat dinner, hear the minutes, and leave" remember that there are Brethren, your Brethren, out there in the world who think so highly of our Order that they are willing to risk their lives to labor in the quarries.

Coins and Caps Are Still On Tap

As part of Gray Lodge's 150th Anniversary celebration, we have finalized designs for our Sesquicentennial challenge coins and for commemorative merchandise. All proceeds will go toward our Scholarship and Building Funds.

All Members will receive an email soon with pictures and ordering information for the coins and for Gray Lodge anniversary-logo embroidered baseball caps.

If there is specific merchandise you'd like to see bearing our 150th Anniversary logo, please let SW Erickson Ybarra (swarden@gray329.org) or JW Gary Wiener (jwarden@gray329.org) know as soon as possible!

Stay at Seventeen Inches

Original Text © 2016 Chris Sperry, Baseball/Life, LLC
 Commentary (in italics) by Gary Wiener, Junior Warden
 Gray Lodge No. 329 (Houston, TX)

For as long as I have been a Texas Mason – all of 36 years – the debate has raged about increasing our membership. Most of us automatically chant, “Guard the West Gate”, but then look at the decline in our Lodge’s dues-paying rolls and get nervous. “Well ... maybe we should give these Petitioners the benefit of the doubt ...” And so it goes, just as it has always gone.

I found the following blog post and cannot help but find Light here to help us guide our Fraternity forward. I present it here with the author’s permission, edited for brevity (you can find the unedited version at <https://www.sperrybaseballlife.com/stay-at-17-inches/>), and have added my own comments at the end. Former collegiate baseball coach Chris Sperry tells this story:

In Nashville, Tennessee, during the first week of January, 1996, more than 4,000 baseball coaches descended upon the Opryland Hotel for the 52nd annual [American Baseball Coaches Association] convention. ... Nashville in '96 was special because it was there and then that I learned that baseball — the thing that had brought 4,000 of us together — was merely a metaphor for my own life and those of the players I hoped to impact.

While I waited in line to register with the hotel staff, I heard other more veteran coaches rumbling about the lineup of speakers scheduled to present during the weekend. One name, in particular, kept resurfacing, always with the same sentiment — “John Scolinos is here? Oh man, worth every penny of my airfare.”

Who the hell is John Scolinos, I wondered. No matter, I was just happy to be there. ...

In 1996, Coach Scolinos was 78 years old and five years retired from a college coaching career that began in 1948. He shuffled to the stage to an impressive standing ovation, wearing dark polyester pants, a light blue shirt, and a string around his neck from which home plate hung — a full-sized, stark-white home plate.

Seriously, I wondered, who in the hell is this guy?

After speaking for twenty-five minutes, not once mentioning the prop hanging around his neck, Coach Scolinos appeared to notice the snickering among some of the coaches. Even those who knew Coach Scolinos had to wonder exactly where he was going with this, or if he had simply forgotten about home plate since he’d gotten on stage.

Then, finally ...

“You’re probably all wondering why I’m wearing home plate around my neck. Or maybe you think I escaped from Camarillo State Hospital,” he said, his voice growing irascible. I laughed along with the others, acknowledging the possibility. “No,” he continued, “I may be old, but I’m not crazy. The reason I stand before you today is to share with *you baseball people* what I’ve learned in my life, what I’ve learned about home plate in my 78 years.”

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Several hands went up when Scolinos asked how many Little League coaches were in the room. "Do you know how wide home plate is in Little League?" After a pause, someone offered, "Seventeen inches," more question than answer.

"That's right," he said. "How about in Babe Ruth? Any Babe Ruth coaches in the house?"

Another long pause.

"Seventeen inches?" came a guess from another reluctant coach.

"That's right," said Scolinos. "Now, how many high school coaches do we have in the room?" Hundreds of hands shot up, as the pattern began to appear. "How wide is home plate in high school baseball?"

"Seventeen inches," they said, sounding more confident.

"You're right!" Scolinos barked. "And you college coaches, how wide is home plate in college?"

"Seventeen inches!" we said, in unison.

"Any Minor League coaches here? How wide is home plate in pro ball?"

"Seventeen inches!"

"RIGHT! And in the Major Leagues, how wide home plate is in the Major Leagues?"

"Seventeen inches!"

"SEV-EN-TEEN INCHES!" he confirmed, his voice bellowing off the walls. "And what do they do with a Big League pitcher who can't throw the ball over seventeen inches?" *Pause.* "They send him to *Pocatello!*" he hollered, drawing raucous laughter.

"What they *don't* do is this: they don't say, 'Ah, that's okay, Jimmy. You can't hit a seventeen-inch target? We'll make it eighteen inches, or nineteen inches. We'll make it twenty inches so you have a better chance of hitting it. If you can't hit that, let us know so we can make it wider still, say twenty-five inches.'"

Pause.

"Coaches ..."

Pause.

"... what do we do when our best player shows up late to practice? When our team rules forbid facial hair and a guy shows up unshaven? What if he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit him, do we widen home plate?"

The chuckles gradually faded as four thousand coaches grew quiet, the fog lifting as the old coach's message began to unfold. He turned the plate toward himself and, using a Sharpie, began to draw something. When he turned it toward the crowd, point up, a house was revealed, complete with a freshly drawn door and two windows. "This is the problem in our homes today. With our marriages, with the way we parent our kids. With our discipline. We don't teach accountability to our kids, and there is no consequence for failing to meet standards. *We widen the plate!*"

Pause. Then, to the point at the top of the house he added a small American flag.

"This is the problem in our *schools* today. The quality of our education is going downhill fast and teachers have been stripped of the tools they need to be successful, and

to educate and discipline our young people. We are allowing others to widen home plate! Where is that getting us?"

Silence. He replaced the flag with a Cross.

"And this is the problem in the *Church*, where powerful people in positions of authority have taken advantage of young children, only to have such an atrocity swept under the rug for years. Our church leaders are widening home plate!"

I was amazed. At a baseball convention where I expected to learn something about curveballs and bunting and how to run better practices, I had learned something far more valuable. From an old man with home plate strung around his neck, I had learned something about life, about myself, about my own weaknesses and about my responsibilities as a leader. I had to hold myself and others accountable to that which I knew to be right, lest our families, our faith, and our society continue down an undesirable path. ...

This story, provides an excellent allegory for Freemasonry. Our Fraternity is steeped in tradition, and every newly-raised Master Mason is charged to carefully preserve the Ancient Landmarks of the Order, and never suffer deviation from their established customs and usages – in other words, we are charged that we must never “widen the plate”. True, Masonry must evolve with the times, just as modern Freemasonry has always reflected certain societal evolution since the ancient days of the operative Masonic trade guilds .

*The one area in which we should **never** evolve, however, is in our standards in guarding the West Gate. When we say that “Masonry takes good men and makes them better”, we must never overlook the requirement that we start with **good men**. If we make exceptions to our standards simply so we can collect dues from another Member, not only do we cheat the candidate of the benefits of Masonic Light, but will certainly contribute to to the death of our Fraternity.*

If we allow ourselves to “widen the plate”, Masonry will no longer be an exclusive Fraternity of trust, friendship and virtue – and our exclusivity is what makes us Masons rather than simply members. Not everyone can – or should – be a Mason, and as uncomfortable as it may be to tell someone “No”, our standards must continue to acknowledge this reality. A Fraternity that is no longer exclusive will not remain significant, neither to its members nor to society.

Brethren, let's not widen the plate. Let's continue to be as diligent as possible regarding newcomers at our West Gate. Let's keep that doorway width right where it is – at seventeen (allegorical) inches. Our Fraternity will be the better, and will thrive longer, for our diligence.

Gray Lodge #329 conducts our Stated Meetings the first Wednesday of each month. Dinner is served at 6:00 pm, with the Lodge opening at 7:00 pm. Please visit the Gray Lodge website at <http://www.gray329.org>, or email JW Gary Wiener, jwarden@gray329.org, for more information.

UPCOMING LOCAL MASONIC EVENTS (Gray Lodge activities are [hyperlinked](#))

Please note that due to the current pandemic, all plans are subject to change at the direction of the Grand Master and the discretion of the individual Masonic bodies.

The most up-to-date calendar info is always available at <http://www.GRAY329.org/calendar>.

MARCH 2021

3	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
4	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
9	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
11	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
15	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
18	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	7:00 pm
24	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
25	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
27	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	Texas City #1118	Forum 9:30 am / Exam to follow

APRIL 2021

1	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
7	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
8	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
10	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	League City #1053	Forum 9:30 am / Exam to follow
13	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
15	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
19	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
22	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
24	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	Huffman #1428	Forum 9:30 am / Exam to follow
28	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
29	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

MAY 2021

5	Wed.	Gray Lodge Stated Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
6	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
11	Tues.	Bluebell Chapter OES Meeting	Gray Lodge #329	7:30 pm
13	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
15	Sat.	GL CoW Forum & Exam	Oakwood #1444	Forum 9:30 am / Exam to follow
17	Mon.	Arabia Shrine Stated Meeting	Arabia Shrine Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
20	Thurs.	Lodge Education & Esoteric Work	Gray Lodge #329	7:00 pm
26	Wed.	District 30 MWSA Meeting	Reagan Lodge #1057	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm
27	Thurs.	Scottish Rite Stated Meeting	Scottish Rite Temple	Dinner 6:00 pm / Meeting 7:00 pm

"I violate no secret when I say that one of the greatest values in Masonry is that it affords an opportunity for men of all walks of life to meet on common ground where all men are equal and have one common interest."

~ Theodore Roosevelt

Keep Us Posted

If you have moved, or updated your email address or phone number, please update your record at grandlodgeoftexas.org (in the Member Portal), call us at 713-730-9329, or email Secretary Darrin Pitts secretary@gray329.org with your new information so we can stay in touch.

Also, please let the Secretary know if you have any personal announcements you would like us to pass along to the Brethren.

If you have suggestions for how we can continue to improve the *Gray Line* newsletter, please email them to Bro. Gary Wiener at jwarden@gray329.org.

MASTER MASON ANNIVERSARIES

MARCH 2021

7	Richard Cobb Sr.	14	Alex Trevino	27	Kenneth Wallis
10	William Britt	18	Zach Willner	28	Curtis Buchan
10	Hamlin Elrod	19	Roland Milligan	28	Noil Frisby
10	Frederick Schwartz	19	James Shafer	29	Lloyd Sherbert
10	Gregory Stephens	20	Daniel Boyd	30	David Black
13	Ricardo Abuabara	20	Darrin Pitts *	30	Lawrence Rathbun
13	Kevin Roberts *	21	Luiz Soriano	31	David Jurgens
14	Willard Cox	24	Iain Dobbie	31	Cary Maurstad

** Past Master of Gray Lodge*

APRIL 2021

7	Gasper Puccio	14	Michael Ruppel	23	William Wilkins
8	Michael Bryant	15	Alan Pugh	24	Jim Fritts
9	Jeffrey Bell	16	Alan Harnack	24	William Slater
9	Miguel Grajeda Jr.	16	T. Earl Long *	25	James Cowan
9	Rodrigo Moura	17	Masatoshi Ichikawa	26	Philip Derise
11	Micho Moore	17	David Steen	26	Joel Zimmerman
11	John Taylor	18	Walter Qualls	27	Danny Fuller Jr.
12	Bruce Berger	19	Joe Lester	27	Sonny Johnson *
12	Pirtle DeGeurin	21	Burch Boggess *	27	George Pardue
12	Bruce Levy	21	Greg Weisinger *	27	Ronald Walker
13	Barry Amrich	22	Alex Buddenbaum	28	Raymond Kauffhold
13	George Lillard *	22	Lee Mcmillian	29	Thomas Young
14	Calvin Atkins	22	John Vittrup	30	Brian Dodson *
14	Allen Casals	23	Darrel Smallwood		<i>* Past Master of Gray Lodge</i>

MAY 2021

1	Darrell Dodds	13	Bennett Irish	19	Charles Baxter
1	Donald Smith	13	Gerald Zucker	21	Thomas Smith
3	Darrell Craig	14	Michael Hill	27	Edward Bock
6	Ricardo Ramirez	14	Kenneth Knoblock	27	Charles Janke
8	Jerry Spencer	14	Brad Ledbetter	28	Harry Green Jr
9	Warren Ayres	14	Paul Sala	30	Mike Nanny *
9	Jason Pollick	15	William Gillespie	30	William Pray
11	Joseph Addison	15	Carl Sontag	31	Nelson Fisher
11	Jeffrey Kapche	16	Lee Hooker	31	Michael Green
11	Dragos Oprea	17	Steven Cobb	31	David Reece
11	Samuel Winstead	18	Sidney Victory *	31	Carl Rubly

** Past Master of Gray Lodge*

The Commemorative Magazine is On!

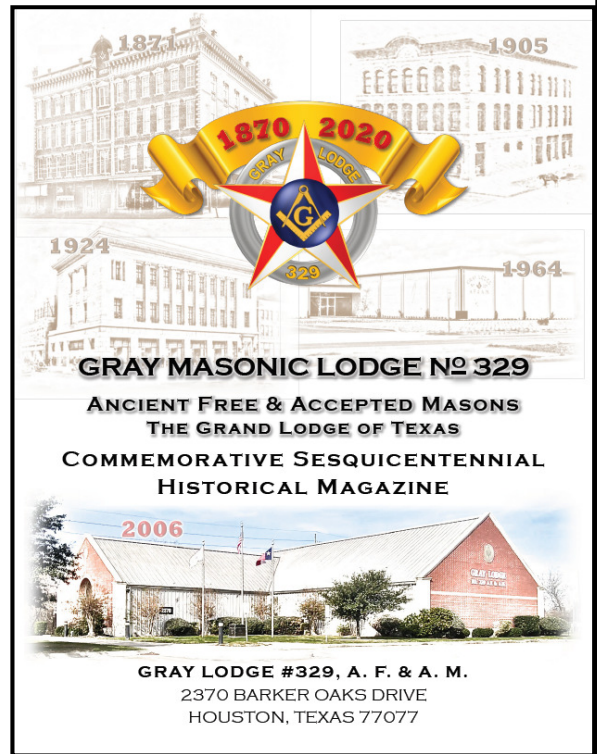
With the rescheduling of Gray Lodge's 150th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration, our plans to publish a commemorative magazine highlighting our Lodge's history are back underway!

To finance the printing and distribution of this free publication, we are selling a limited amount of advertising space in this commemorative, full-color magazine.

Our Masonic family gets first opportunity to participate in the creation of this publication by purchasing space as shown below. You can advertise your business, or you and your affiliate Lodges can simply publish a message of congratulations.

We cannot create graphic ads (though we will lay out black and white text ads with you). Full-color ads of at least a half-page need camera-ready artwork, at least 300 dpi, CMYK preferred.

Please contact our Editor (and Junior Warden) Gary Wiener at jwarden@gray329.org for more information.



\$50

1/8 page

\$90

1/4 page vertical

\$90

1/4 page horizontal

\$160

1/2 page horizontal

\$160

1/2 page vertical

\$300

Full page

Rates for Premium Positioning (full or half page only):

- Inside front cover +20% **SOLD**
- Inside front facing page +15%
- Center spread +25%
- Inside back facing page +15%
- Full inside back cover +35%

Gray Masonic Lodge #329 A.F. & A.M. is a tax-exempt corporation under Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(10), and is exempt from collecting state sales tax for this fundraiser under Texas Tax Code §§ 151.310(a)(1) and (c).