

**THE GRAND CHAPTER OF ROYAL ARCH
MASONS
OF NOVA SCOTIA
with jurisdiction over
Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island**

**MANUAL
OF
PROCEDURE GUIDELINES**

for the use of

**GRAND CHAPTER OFFICERS,
DISTRICT GRAND SUPERINTENDENTS,
and officers of
CONSTITUENT CHAPTERS**

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MANUAL OF PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

Purpose:

The purpose of this Manual is to serve the needs of Grand Chapter officers, District Grand Superintendents, and officers of Constituent Chapters, for:

- a reference source of answers to common questions of procedure,
- summaries of the *basic* duties and responsibilities of officers drawn from the *Constitution*, the *Installation Ceremonies* and other sources, and combined in one place here (although Chapters often add other duties in their own By-Laws), and
- information on other texts and forms available through the office of the Grand Secretary.

Authority:

This Manual is based on:

- the Grand Chapter *Constitution*,
- Edicts issued by Grand High Priests and sustained by the Grand Chapter in annual convocation assembled, and
- specific recommendations made to and approved by the Board of General Purposes by the Committee on Ritual & Education,

and adds *guidelines* to further help meet the purposes identified above.

But just as no Chapter may make a By-Law that contradicts the *Constitution*, approved Edicts, or specific decisions of the Board of General Purposes, nor do the *guidelines* in this Manual establish additional 'law'. They do, however, reflect general Custom and Usage, and as such may be helpful in resolving disputes on points not covered as fully elsewhere.

While the purposes, statement of limited authority, and general contents of this Manual have been endorsed by the Board of General Purposes, all Chapters are invited to help further improve its contents in the usual ways:

- discussion with your District Grand Superintendent, who holds a seat on the Board of General Purposes,
- submission to the Board via the Grand Secretary or other member,
- a Resolution offered at an Annual Convocation, preferably with advance notice to the Grand Secretary (who can call for a Motion or Resolution to be presented in writing before it is considered).

Contents:

This Manual is divided into three parts: Grand Chapter, Districts, and Constituent Chapters. For maximum benefit, the entire Manual should be read by everyone, as each section contains information affecting all members. But the Index of Contents will help the reader locate any subject of specific interest.

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GRAND CHAPTER

STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

The Grand Chapter is composed of all the present Scribes, Kings and High Priests of the Constituent Chapters, and all past High Priests. They elect the principal officers who administer the Grand Chapter's affairs between Annual Convocations according to the written *Constitution*, which itself is by due process within the control of the voting members. Those elected officers appoint others (or reappoint, since all offices are subject to annual or biennial review), to fill out a full slate of Grand officers.

Further, the actions of the officers, as described in their annual reports to Grand Chapter, are subject to review, approval, or even reversal, by the vote of those in attendance at the Annual Convocations.

'Grand Chapter' is thus not any given set of Grand officers; not the Grand High Priest and Grand Secretary; nor the Board of General Purposes which the Grand King chairs. True, they are called upon to assume many duties and make many decisions during their terms in office, and the purpose of having such a structure of officers, Board and committees is to allow for orderly administration between Annual Convocations.

But the 'Grand Chapter' is composed entirely of qualified representatives of the Constituent Chapters meeting in Annual (or Emergent) Assembly. While in office, it is also the duty of the elected and appointed Grand officers to ensure that such Assemblies are conducted by due process according to the *Constitution*. But should the majority of voting members be dissatisfied, it is within their power to elect different senior officers; to amend the Regulations by which the Assemblies are conducted; or to amend the *Constitution* itself – all by such due process as their predecessors designed, and which they can redesign!

The ultimate purpose of the 'Grand Chapter' is thus to place and maintain ultimate authority over the affairs of Royal Arch Masonry in this Jurisdiction in the hands of those members of the Constituent Chapters who themselves have been judged qualified through election by the general membership.

BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES

As per the *Constitution* (sections 30, 31 & 32, as amended in 1997), the Board of General Purposes (BGP) is composed of the senior elected and appointed Grand officers, three additional members of Grand Chapter elected at the Annual Assembly, three more appointed by the incoming Grand High Priest, and all Past Grand High Priests. Selection of the majority of its members is within the direct or indirect influence of the annual electorate.

Those same sections of the *Constitution* describe the powers of the BGP and its committees. The Ritual & Education Committee is one such, and this Manual is the result of that Committee's efforts, guided and endorsed by the BGP.

The purpose of the BGP is to function in a capacity similar to a corporate Board of Directors. Its specific duties are listed in the *Constitution*. It conducts much of its work through delegation to its committees, and review and approval of their proposals and products. The Grand Secretary serves also as Secretary of the BGP, as correspondence link between the BGP and the Constituent Chapters, as source for virtually all printed materials intended for circulation, and as coordinator of all Reports and Award applications. The total volume of such work flowing through the Grand Secretary and the Board surprises all its new members.

ATTENDANCE AT ANNUAL CONVOCATIONS

The right to present a Notice of Motion, the Motion itself, or a Resolution, and to speak on and vote on Motions and Resolutions, is first granted to Scribes, Kings and High Priests of the constituent Chapters (and also extends to all Past High Priests). The three officers are the principal representatives of the Chapters, and can constitute the majority in attendance! They should attend not only to represent their Chapters, but also to represent the fresh new blood and reinvigorating energy of the entire Jurisdiction. Lack of experience in the customs and usages of Grand Chapter convocations can and probably should restrain their enthusiasm initially, but others with experience will be always ready to help them learn the customs and usages, prepare advance submissions to Board of General Purposes committees, gather support for possible Notices of Motion, or correctly word possible Resolutions.

Attendance at every Grand Chapter Annual Convocation is expected of all who have been promoted to the rank of Very Excellent Companion, or higher, especially those appointed to a current Grand Chapter office. Grand Chapter Annual Convocations are opened and closed in the same form as a regular Chapter convocation, using those Grand Chapter officers. In their absence, presentation of their Regrets is, of course, expected, but they must also be replaced. Therefore, just as at a regular Chapter convocation, it is only reasonable that officers unable to attend should show their courtesy in providing *advance notice* of their inability, so all chairs can be filled without delay or difficulty.

Grand Chapter committee members are drawn from the higher ranks, and their attendance at Annual Convocations is as important as their attendance at committee meetings, to support their committee reports and the Districts and Chapters they represent.

Committee reports to the Grand Chapter are expected to be made by committee chairmen, and seconded by other committee members, in person, with their names recorded in the Proceedings of the meeting. A report cannot be moved or seconded by somebody who is not present.

District Grand Superintendents are appointed by, reappointed for a second year by, and hold rank directly subordinate to the Grand High Priest. Their attendance is a mark of their support for the Grand High Priest they are serving, who installs them at the Annual Convocation or as soon as possible after (at any Regular Convocation). Their annual reports to Grand Chapter, concerning their service to the Districts they represent, should be made in person, for the record.

District Grand Superintendents who have performed their duties well, and who are present at the Annual Convocation at the conclusion of their term, may receive commendation and confirmation of permanent rank from the Grand High Priest. Each is also expected to be present to help install his successor, including handover of the regalia of office. Further, each District Grand Superintendent, as part of his duties, is expected to encourage attendance at Annual Convocations by the Scribe, King and High Priest of each Chapter in his District, and as many Past High Priests as possible, because these are the voting members of Grand Chapter. His own attendance sets the example.

REGALIA AND DRESS CODE

Grand Chapter has a substantial investment in the apron, collar and sash of office provided for the use of senior officers, and replacement costs are extremely high.

The Board of General Purposes has ruled that this dress regalia is for official use only and is never to be worn on casual visits to a home or other Chapter.

Official Visits have been defined as:

- When accompanying the Grand High Priest.
- When specially directed by the Grand High Priest.
- At convocations of Grand Chapter.
- At District Meetings, installations, and authorized appearances in public.
- On visits to Chapters when specially invited, or when previous notice has been given.

Past Grand Chapter officers who have been honoured with permanent rank may apply to the Grand Secretary to purchase regalia appropriate to that rank, and may wear that regalia at any Chapter convocation, as their own property.

The dress code for this Grand Chapter Jurisdiction has long been essentially the same as for the Grand Lodges, although standards became more relaxed during the late 20th century. Still, on ‘full dress’ formal occasions such as Grand Chapter Annual Convocations and Official Visits to Constituent Chapters, senior officers correctly wear morning suits (‘greys’) during daytime, and black tails or tuxedos for evening wear, beneath their dress regalia. On similar occasions, other members may correctly wear tuxedos or dark suits at all times.

‘Undress’ regalia is worn by some members holding Past Grand officer rank, and simply lacks the gold braid and other expensive decorations that mark the regalia of the member in office.

Our *Constitution* calls for all Royal Arch Masons to wear appropriately decorated lambskin aprons (most Grand Lodge Constitutions also call for all Freemasons to wear lambskins), and certainly all Chapter officers are expected to wear dress aprons at every convocation, not just on obvious formal occasions.

Strictly speaking, the simple cloth imitation is intended only for the casual visitor who arrives without his own regalia, and is properly known as a ‘Visitor’s Apron’. Despite the *Constitution*, the widespread use of cloth aprons by the general membership now approaches Custom & Usage. Nonetheless, the *Constitution* has not been amended, and members should be guided accordingly.

Only a grey or black ‘tails jacket’ may be worn ‘over’ an apron, because its open front style permits clear sight of the “pure and spotless” lambskin and the insignia of rank it bears. No matter a member’s girth, his apron otherwise should always be worn outside all other clothing, for the same reasons. Dress aprons with especially long ribbons can be obtained through the Grand Secretary.

Beyond the instruction to the inner guard in every Masonic body to see that a member or visitor seeking entry should “come properly dressed” in the regalia of that body, each also has its own expectations or ‘standards’ concerning other clothing. While “or dark suit” continues to be the most common request, “jacket and tie” appears now to be the minimum expectation by all, although none would turn away a member or visitor who has good reason for wearing less.

(See also *Regalia – Chapter* in Constituent Chapters section.)

PRESENTATION OF FLAGS

Prior to the opening of a Grand Chapter Convocation, or other occasion when flags are to be presented and placed, the person in charge of the Flag Party determines which flags are to be presented, and ensures that receptacles are properly placed across the East and the Organist is prepared to lead all anthems.

The Flag Party is assembled outside and its duties rehearsed. Usually, these are to enter at the appropriate moment in single file, national flags first in alphabetical order (e.g. Canada, UK, USA), then Provincial flags in alphabetical order (e.g. Nova Scotia, PEI), this order being the approved way to avoid argument. National flags other than those of Canada and the United Kingdom are presented only when official guests from such nations are present.

The captain orders the Flag Party to “Quick March” down the centre of the assembly. From the single file, the bearers of the Canadian and Nova Scotia flags peel off to pass north of the Altar, and the bearers of all other flags pass the Altar on the south. They turn to march towards each other from north and south into line across the east, halt, and are ordered to “Inwards face” towards the dais.

If more than three flags are to be placed and space permits the procession to march in two columns, the bearers of the Canada and Nova Scotia flags form the north column and the bearers of the other national flags and the PEI flag form the south column. The columns then pass their respective sides of the Altar without dividing further.

After the line across the east has turned to face the dais, the captain orders, “Place the flag of Canada”. That flag bearer steps forward, places his flag in its receptacle (to the ‘near’ north), and takes one step back. The presiding officer then calls for the accompanying anthem to be sung, during which the flag bearer stands at attention, after which he steps back into position and remains there. Other national flags come next, placed to the ‘near’ south; then the Nova Scotia flag, placed to the ‘far’ north. Finally, the flag of PEI is placed to the ‘far’ south.

During their anthem, Americans stand on their Sign of Allegiance, but no Canadian Companion should give that or the Masonic Sign of Fidelity then or at any other time during this ceremony.

After the last anthem, the Flag Party is ordered to “Turn right - Dismiss”.

RECEPTION OF DISTINGUISHED VISITORS AND GUESTS AT GRAND CHAPTER ANNUAL CONVOCATIONS

In the context of a Grand Chapter Annual Convocation, a ‘Visitor’ is a Royal Arch Mason from another Jurisdiction. If officially invited to represent that Jurisdiction, he is a ‘Guest’. Such Royal Arch Guests and Visitors may travel together in groups. But the category of ‘Guests’ also includes people who may not be Royal Arch Masons or Freemasons at all, but special speakers or representatives of municipal governments or other organizations.

At Grand Chapter Annual Convocations, individuals and groups representing other Jurisdictions are introduced in reverse order of seniority (by date of Warrant or Charter), and their senior members seated accordingly, successively to left and right of the Grand Council. Only the most senior in each group is seated near the East, the others elsewhere, to leave room for the presiding officer to seat others.

Order of reception:

After the Opening (at which only Scribes, Kings, High Priests and Past High Priests may be present), a Motion to admit Companions of the Royal Arch is in order. They are conducted by the Grand Captain of the Host (GCH) to the Altar, salute, and retire to seats among the Companions.

Past Grand High Priests of the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia are then received, in a line in reverse order of seniority west of the Altar, are acknowledged by the Grand High Priest, and one among them offers a comment. Each is then conducted to the Grand High Priest, then seated near the East by the Grand King, or they may be seated elsewhere as a group.

Grand High Priests of other Grand Chapters (or their Official Representatives) are next to be received as Guests, along with Visitors from their Jurisdictions who are accompanying them, one group at a time. The groups are received in reverse order of seniority, that with the youngest Warrant entering first, junior officers within each group leading. After introduction of each Guest and his presentation to the Grand High Priest on the level, he is seated near the East by the Grand King (who then returns to stand at the GHP’s right), and Visitors in his group are conducted by the GCH to seats on the north side on the level.

Next come any Grand Representatives of the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia near other Grand Jurisdictions who have not already been received within groups, or who are not scheduled to be received within another group or otherwise welcomed. (Note that Grand Representatives of other Grand Chapters near the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia are neither Guests nor Visitors, being members of the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia resident here. They are therefore not ‘received’ as a group, although the presiding officer may choose to recognize them during his agenda.)

Representatives of Concordant Bodies are received next, separately or as a group, York Rite bodies first, then Scottish Rite, then others (see also ‘Reception of other Guests who are not Royal Arch Masons’, below).

The Grand Master of Nova Scotia and/or of Prince Edward Island is the last Freemason to be received, the one in whose Jurisdiction the meeting is being held being given pre-eminence (see below).

Finally – or at appropriate times later – other Guests are received (see below).

Grand Master of Nova Scotia, and Grand Master of Prince Edward Island:

Whether at the Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter or at a meeting of a constituent Chapter, the Grand Master of the Jurisdiction in which the meeting is held has the right to visit, and it is possible for both to be present.

If both are present, the first is presented one step ahead and to the left of the second, both are introduced, and the second is brought forward to be greeted first, on the level, then seated by the presiding officer to the immediate left of the Scribe. The Grand Master in whose Jurisdiction the meeting is being held is then brought forward, greeted on the level, and seated in the Oriental Chair (the King moving over to make room for the presiding officer). The meeting is then called up and the Grand Master given Grand Honours and invited to bring Greetings. After the Greetings, the presiding officer invites the Grand Master to take the King's chair, and reassumes the East.

Each Grand Master is invited to remain, but if he asks to retire he is conducted to the Altar by the Grand Captain of the Host, the meeting is called up, and all applaud as he retires.

If the meeting is of a constituent Chapter, and the Grand High Priest or his official representative is present, that officer has already been seated to the presiding officer's right, and he and the King move over one more position to make room for the Grand Master. But if the Grand Master is attending merely as a Royal Arch Mason and not in his official capacity, he should be acknowledged with courtesy but need not be received formally.

Reception of other Guests who are not Royal Arch Masons

General:

It has been ruled that there is no need to disarrange the Great Lights before receiving a Guest who is not a Royal Arch Mason, or even one who is not a Freemason, as the display and position of the Great Lights involve no secret. However, before the Guest is received the presiding officer should declare the Grand Chapter (or Chapter) "at Ease" (see also p.52), caution those present to display no Sign but the Sign of Fidelity while he or she is present, and inform the Tyler. There is no occasion when a Chapter may be called to Refreshment without disarrangement of the Great Lights, a ritual of substantial meaning and value.

Guests who are not Royal Arch Masons are introduced at the Altar by the Captain of the Host with all the normal words, *but without an 'arch' of swords or wands, and without Grand Honours*, then escorted towards the East, greeted by the presiding officer on the level, and invited by him to take an appropriate seat.

No Guest who is not a Royal Arch Mason is ever offered the Gavel, as the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia (including its constituent Chapters) is a wholly autonomous body operating under its own charter and constitution. (Grand Masters can suspend Craft Lodge Masons, and thus cause them to stand suspended in all Masonic bodies operating within the same Jurisdiction, but have no authority to preside over another autonomous body.)

No business that requires use of Masonic Signs, Grips, Words or esoteric ritual, is to be conducted while a Guest who is not a Royal Arch Mason is present. Guests who are not Freemasons are usually invited to retire after the special activities in which they are involved, but those who are at least Freemasons may remain during ordinary business proceedings.

Eligibility to be received as Distinguished Guests or Visitors:

As a useful rule of thumb, it should not be necessary to receive any Guest or Visitor at the Altar more than once, even if he is to be recognized in more than one capacity.

Secondly, the honour of formal reception and recognition is confined to individuals or groups representing Concordant and Related Masonic bodies. Around the Masonic world, the limits of the definition of that term – Concordant and Related – are somewhat fluid, and it is occasionally necessary to seek a decision in advance from the Grand Chapter Board of General Purposes (the senior officers and Tyler should work as a team to ensure they are aware of and duly prepared for all expected Guests and Visitors). But the definition does not include Masonic clubs, loose associations without Warrant or Charter, bodies that do not acknowledge the ultimate authority of the Grand Master(s) of the Jurisdiction(s) in which their meetings are held, or bodies that do not conform to the most essential Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry.

As an initial guideline, it is presently deemed appropriate to formally receive and recognize representatives of the following bodies: Royal & Select Masters, Knights Templar, Red Cross of Constantine, Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, York Rite Colleges, Knights of the York Cross of Honour, Order of the Secret Monitor, Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite, and Royal Order of Scotland.

However, *after* the reception and seating of the representatives of Concordant and Related bodies, and *before* the reception of non-Mason Guests such as the local mayor or guest speaker, the presiding officer may use his own discretion in choosing whether or not to formally acknowledge other individuals or groups *who have not already been received in some other capacity*, and who may be asked to stand, introduce themselves, and receive applause, e.g. a Royal Arch Mason seated among the Companions who is a ruling officer of a Concordant body in another Jurisdiction (such as the Grand Master of New Brunswick, or the Grand Master of the Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters of Ontario).

GRAND HONOURS

Grand Honours take different forms around the world and in ‘public’ vs. ‘private’ circumstances. The form practised in this Grand Chapter Jurisdiction for all occasions is the simple 3x3 claps, given only when called for by qualified officers who know the correct moments and positions according to the approved rituals for formal ceremonies (e.g. installations, reception of senior officers).

Although even that simple form may appear archaic to some, it has historic continuity, being “an imitation of the plaudits and acclamations practised by the ancient Greeks and Romans in their theatres, their senates, and their public games ... within as explicit rules and regulations as those that govern the system of giving the Grand Honours in Freemasonry” (*Mackey*).

The numerical significance of 3x3, and its symbolic and practical importance in Royal Arch Chapters, deserves to be explored in detail by all, and can be the subject of rewarding research and beneficial presentations. At least two such talks are available through the Grand Lecturer, and others deserve more circulation.

BALLOTING AND PROXIES – GRAND CHAPTER ELECTIONS

Ballots for elections at Grand Chapter are provided upon registration to Chapter High Priests, Kings, Scribes, and Past High Priests in good standing, or duly registered proxies. Each Chapter has a conditional right to a minimum of three ballots, intended to be used by those officers. If all three attend, each receives one ballot upon registering. If only two of the Chapter’s three principal officers attend, the senior receives two ballots and the junior one. If only one of the three principal officers attends, he receives three ballots.

Each Chapter should determine in advance which of its three senior officers plan to attend the Annual Convocation. Should neither the High Priest, King, nor Scribe of a Chapter be able to attend, the Chapter may, by an open vote, delegate any Excellent Companion member of such Chapter to represent that Chapter as its proxy in casting its three ballots, which will be issued to him upon registration and presentation of a copy of his Chapter’s Minute (properly certified under seal by the High Priest and Secretary) appointing him proxy.

If any of the three principal officers attends, no proxy is recognized.

MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Constitution Section 17, *Rules of Procedure*, requires that “Any motion for the repeal or alteration of an existing law, or the introduction of a new one, shall be made by notice in writing through the Grand Secretary to the Board of General Purposes at least ten weeks previous to the Annual Convocation.” That section also gives details for handling all kinds of motions, including those calling for decisions or ‘Resolutions’. The Grand Secretary also has power to request that any Resolution or Motion be presented in writing before it is considered.

Such rules and regulations exist to allow Grand Chapter business to be conducted in good order, and disharmony occurs only when a member who has not studied them seeks to press his views regardless of them. But by giving advance notice to the Grand Secretary of any proposed motion or resolution, a member can not only avoid being silenced by a request that he put his motion in writing before speaking further, but also obtain advice on the most appropriate wording likely to help his motion attract a positive vote. But note that the Board of General Purposes, not just the Grand Secretary, appraises such proposals.

Similarly, section 60 of the *Constitution* governs amendments of Constituent Chapter By-Laws (see also later section in this Manual). But any Chapter wanting to insert into its By-Laws procedures for handling Motions and Resolutions, or now lacking such, may safely be guided by those in Section 17 that govern the Grand Chapter.

Procedures for handling Motions, Resolutions and – especially – amendments are not considered complicated by those who have studied Section 17. And it is important that all understand that Masonic business is conducted according to Masonic constitutions and by-laws, never by Robert’s or Bourinot’s *Rules of Order*, or any other outside procedures, which are made superfluous and non-operative by the existence of our own laws. Any Companion who quotes such another set of rules has probably not read or fully understood ours.

GRAND CHAPTER OFFICIAL BANQUET OR LUNCHEON

A Grand Chapter Official Banquet or Luncheon is always held in association with the Annual Convocation. Attendance is always by prior registration or invitation (although there are often a few seats made vacant at the last minute).

The event always includes a Head Table, where the Grand High Priest and his Lady preside, along with a speaker and his Lady, and other honoured guests.

The Head Table parades in. The Grand Chaplain says Grace, and the Grand Captain of the Host (as Master of Ceremonies) calls for the loyal Toast to “The Queen and the Craft” (to which there is no response), before calling all to be seated.

Additional toasts may be offered by the Master of Ceremonies, who also introduces the Head Table and the speaker.

It is highly desirable that there be Masonic music and song, if possible. The Head Table retires at the formal conclusion of the event.

GRAND CHAPTER DIVINE WORSHIP SERVICE

At the Grand Chapter Annual Convocation, there is usually a Divine Worship Service, although the time within the schedule may vary.

Whereas many such services attended by Freemasons are the regularly scheduled services of local churches, during which the extent of our involvement depends on the goodwill of clergy and congregation, the annual Divine Worship Service of a Grand body is usually arranged specifically for the benefit of the Craft and our families, and its format and content is more flexible. The Grand Chaplain usually presents the meditation, the Grand High Priest at least reads a principal lesson, and local members look after all other arrangements (including serving as ushers, etc.). The content should never be so sectarian as to discourage attendance by any Freemason not of the majority affiliation.

DISTRICTS

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS

DISTRICT GRAND SUPERINTENDENTS

(Term: Two years unless released by Grand High Priest)

General:

The District Grand Superintendents, within their Districts, are the personal representatives of the Grand High Priest – his eyes, his ears, and, when authorized, his voice. The Grand High Priest may call on his District Grand Superintendents for any kind of advice and assistance in respect to Masonic affairs in their Districts.

District Grand Superintendents should be constantly careful to preserve harmony among companions and Chapters. They should not allow themselves to be drawn into factional disputes or into concerted efforts to elect or defeat any particular companion who may be nominated for a Grand Chapter office. They must not take upon themselves the prerogative of speaking for the Grand High Priest or for the Grand Chapter without previous direction to do so on a specific subject, must neither give nor appear to be giving rulings or granting Dispensations without prior direction from the Grand High Priest, Board of General Purposes or Grand Secretary, and must never act in a dictatorial manner. Their kindly and helpful advice and counsel is to be cheerfully given to all presiding High Priests.

The whole purpose of the office is to link the Chapters of the District more closely with Grand Chapter and encourage a more vigorous and intimate life.

Immediately after his installation (which must take place before he can make any Official Visit), the District Grand Superintendent should:

- Study the proceedings of Grand Chapter for at least the past five years, paying particular attention to the addresses of the Grand High Priest, the reports of the Committee on the Condition of the Order, and amendments to the *Constitution*.
- Study reports on Chapters in his District from the past five years.
- Study the *Constitution* and the authorized *Work*.
- Prepare at least one address on some Masonic subject for use on an appropriate occasion.

Until he has prepared himself through this reading and study, he should not consider himself fully equipped to visit or advise a Chapter or to deal intelligently with the problems and duties of the office.

Official Visits:

After his installation, the District Grand Superintendent should notify the High Priest and Secretary of each Chapter well in advance of his Official Visit so that a reference may be inserted in the Chapter's Summons. Lack of such notice may result in small attendance and general disappointment.

District Grand Superintendents are not to plan their Official Visit to any Chapter for the same evening as the Official Visit of the Grand High Priest (whose schedule must take priority). They should, however, attend all Official Visits by the Grand High Priest (or his Official Representative) within their Districts.

The District Grand Superintendent should make at least one Official Visit to each of his Chapters, but more than one per year if necessary to both carefully examine the books and records of the Treasurer and Secretary and also observe Degree work. He should also endeavour to attend the annual installation of officers at each, and be prepared to advise the Chapters in the procedure to follow in case of absentees on that occasion.

The District Grand Superintendent should plan his visits early and send a copy of his itinerary to each Chapter Secretary and to any present or past Grand Chapter officers resident in the District with an invitation to the latter to accompany him. They are equally interested in the welfare of Grand Chapter and some of them may seek the experience and knowledge of affairs which will qualify them for larger duties and service.

The District Grand Superintendent must not under any circumstances send Part 2 of the Confidential Report form to the High Priest, Secretary or any other companion, to be completed. Part 1 only is to be sent in advance. (See section on Reports on pages 19/20.)

Secretary's accounts:

The District Grand Superintendent should arrange to meet with the Chapter Secretary and Treasurer before the meeting so that he may examine their records at leisure. He will examine the Secretary's minutes since the last District Grand Superintendent's Official Visit, noting neatness and clarity, reference to Degree work, special occasions, special services rendered the Craft or community, etc.

In reviewing the Secretary's accounts, he should keep the following questions in mind:

- Are they neat, correct, and intelligible to anyone inspecting them?
- Are monies paid over immediately to the Treasurer and his receipt taken therefore, or is too much money held in the Secretary's hands?
- Is the state of each companion's account with the Chapter immediately ascertainable?
- Is a record made by the Secretary of intention to suspend, of actual suspensions, and of demits, reinstatements and deaths?

- Does the Secretary keep a record of Degrees conferred?
- Does the Secretary keep a record of the signatures of newly exalted companions made when they receive a copy of the Chapter's By-Laws?
- Are any undelivered diplomas on hand?
- Is the Secretary keeping an up-to-date record of Marks in a Mark Book?

Treasurer's Accounts:

- Are his Accounts correct?
- Are sums received from the Secretary promptly deposited?
- Is the exact financial position of the Chapter readily ascertainable?
- Is an annual audit made and on file?

Premises:

- Is the Chapter Room safe from prying eyes?
- Are the room, equipment and regalia clean and in good repair?
- Are the Anteroom and Preparation Room kept neat and clean?
- Is the building safe and in good repair?
- Is proper care taken of the warrant and old meeting books and records?

Prudence and tact are most necessary. The inspection is not for finding fault, but for assisting by independent counsel and constructive advice. It is better to discuss privately with the High Priest any irregularities discovered, and a good rule is to never criticize any officers in open Chapter on a matter not previously discussed with the High Priest. The District Grand Superintendent should make sure he is right, that his criticism is necessary, and is made in a kindly manner.

Finances:

The inspection of the Chapter's financial affairs is an important part of the District Grand Superintendent's duties. While the 'confidential report' form indicates what is regarded as wise and proper, the District Grand Superintendent should make sure:

- that adequate insurance is carried and that the policy has not lapsed;
- that official dues receipts are used (available through the Grand Secretary);
- that all funds are deposited in a chartered bank;

- that cheques are signed by at least two officers, preferably the High Priest and the Treasurer (but this is governed by the Chapter's By-Laws which should be checked);
- that a copy of the last annual financial statement is furnished him;
- that such statement is properly audited and signed by the auditors;
- that Chapter dues are sufficient to cover the operation of the Chapter;
- that all grants for non-Masonic purposes are made from a fund collected for such purpose (Benevolent, Fraternal Assistance, Sunshine Fund, etc.);
- that all surplus funds are invested in securities legal under the Provincial Trustees Act (or equivalent) and that all securities are kept in a safe depository in the name of the Chapter.

Visit Program:

The following is the recommended program for the District Grand Superintendent's Official Visit. It should be discussed with the High Priest and adapted to the occasion and to any plans the High Priest may have made.

The District Grand Superintendent should be accompanied by his Assistant Grand Captain of the Host, or appoint a skilled companion to serve in the absence of that officer (who is then titled 'Acting Assistant Grand Captain of the Host').

1. **Opening:** The Chapter is opened as usual by the High Priest and officers. It is permissible for the District Grand Superintendent to be present to witness the opening ceremonies so that he may satisfy himself as to the proficiency of the officers. After the opening he should retire without any special ceremony.
2. **Reception:** As the District Grand Superintendent is visiting for the specific purpose of examining the Chapter's welfare, capabilities and conformity with the *Constitution* and the ritual *Work*, he should be the only Grand officer needing formal reception on this occasion (others may accompany him).
If he has participated in the Opening inside, the High Priest should invite him and his Assistant Grand Captain of the Host (AGCH) to retire for formal reception.
For reception procedure, see 'Reception of Grand Chapter officers and Guests' in the Constituent Chapters section.
3. **Degree:** It is important that a Degree is conferred or exemplified. The District Grand Superintendent makes note of any liberties taken with the authorized *Work*.

4. **Speeches and remarks:** Speeches should be brief. The District Grand Superintendent's speech concludes the evening's program. Any remarks on the work and the records should be constructive, fair and frank; not harsh or destructive; not overdone, nor merely conventional praise. His inspection should be evidently thorough; his criticism necessary and constructive. (Unless he is experienced in ritual and has seen the work in other Chapters, he should be cautious in his comments on Degree work.) His remarks should include a brief and instructive address on some Masonic topic. Subjects of a personal nature concerning the High Priest, and/or subjects of a potentially controversial nature that the High Priest should be encouraged privately to handle himself, should be raised with him in private after the meeting is over.

Ritual:

Each Chapter should be advised that the District Grand Superintendent will expect to witness a Degree conferred or exemplified by the Chapter officers (not by Past High Priests) on the occasion of his Official Visit. He is expected to be so familiar with the authorized *Work* that he can detect any departures or innovations. He should make sure that the latest edition of the *Work* is in use and should be careful in his comments, especially in the presence of those with longer and richer experience.

Reports:

There are two report forms:

- The *Confidential Report Form* which is in two parts. The District Grand Superintendent is to forward Part 1 of the Confidential Report to the Chapter Secretary in advance so that it can be completed and be waiting for him when he arrives to make his Official Visit. The District Grand Superintendent is himself expected to complete Part 2 of the Confidential Report during or after his Official Visit. Once completed, the contents of these reports are confidential and must not be shared with others. Both parts of this Form are to be forwarded to the Grand Secretary immediately after the Visit. All questions must be answered.

Recommendations for Grand Chapter rank should be made only after thorough discussion with at least the High Priest and Secretary. Such recommendations should represent the wish of the Chapter and carry the District Grand Superintendent's recommendation. Open competition for promotion should, however, be avoided.

- The *Annual Report to the Grand High Priest*: At the end of each year of his term the District Grand Superintendent submits an annual report to the Grand High Priest. He should aim at giving a true picture of the condition of the Chapters in his District, the quality of the work, the efficiency of the officers, attendance, enthusiasm, interest, etc.

Weak Chapters:

If the District Grand Superintendent finds a weak Chapter he should:

- acquaint himself fully with its past history;
- ascertain by a personal visit why it languishes and the prospect of giving it new life;
- discuss with the Grand Secretary the appropriate remedy for the existing situation (withdraw the warrant, move to a better location, merge with another Chapter, etc.);
- be prepared to support his recommendations with facts.

If a Chapter in his District is in arrears for dues to Grand Chapter, the District Grand Superintendent should endeavour to secure early payment.

Installations:

It is the prerogative of each retiring High Priest to install the incoming officers of his Chapter and he should be encouraged to undertake this duty. Some High Priests are unwilling to learn the ceremony and appeal to the District Grand Superintendent to do the installation. Although it is neither his inherent right nor duty, the District Grand Superintendent may accept an invitation to undertake the ceremony. He would be well advised, however, to insist that the retiring High Priest take a prominent part, and to invite other Grand Chapter officers and ruling High Priests of the District to share in the work. The District Grand Superintendent should not make his official inspection on the night of installation.

Regardless of whether the DGS or other Grand Chapter officers are involved, or none are available and a Past High Priest is appointed to serve as Principal Installing Officer, the retiring High Priest must still begin the Installation Ceremony according to the approved ritual by calling for the reading of the election results and vouching for the accuracy of that report. His minimum role should also include administration of the Obligation to his successor.

ASSISTANT (DISTRICT) GRAND CHAPTER OFFICERS

For each District, the offices of Assistant Grand Lecturer, Assistant Grand Captain of the Host, and Assistant Grand Secretary, are intended to be conditional (see each below) two-year appointments. These positions have become more significant since reassessment of how valuable they have been in some Districts – and could be in all – has led to clarification and expansion of the duties and responsibilities assigned to them (see below).

To be as valuable as possible, these officers must be selected on criteria of related knowledge, experience, positive personality, desire to be active, and general Masonic abilities. The positions, therefore, are not merely openings for promotion from the rank of Past High Priest, but opportunities for the most capable in each District to serve their Districts more extensively. As such, they may have already served in other high offices. For the same reasons, once appointed to one of these District offices and proved of value in it, each may be invited to continue serving for more than one year.

District Grand Superintendents are expected to help identify the best possible candidates for these offices, as are other members of the Board of General Purposes, through specific reports and general comments over time. Selection, retention or replacement can therefore be influenced by many.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASSISTANT GRAND LECTURERS

(Term: Two years satisfactory performance)

Duties listed in *Constitution*:

- Work under the direction of the Grand Lecturer.
- Respond to requests from the Chapters within the District to speak on Masonic subjects or matters of interest to Capitular Masonry.
- Attend all meetings of the Board of General Purposes.

Other reasons the position exists:

- To provide a communications link between the expertise of the Grand Chapter Ritual & Education Committee (chaired by the Grand Lecturer) and the local Chapters.
- To give or obtain answers to ritual questions and encourage emphasis on the educational element of Capitular Masonry.
- To attend the annual District Meeting, for the same purposes.
- To assist the Grand Lecturer and Ritual & Education Committee in introducing new or updated materials to all Chapters.

Voluntary:

- Accompany the District Grand Superintendent on his Official Visits, assisting him as needed.
- Attend the Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter.

**DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF
ASSISTANT GRAND CAPTAINS OF THE HOST**

(Term: Two years minimum)

This office was created in 2003 by Constitutional amendment including the following duties:

- Work under the direction of the Grand Captain of the Host.
- Accompany and introduce the District Grand Superintendent at each of his Official Visits and at his annual District Meeting.
- Serve as the DGS's director of ceremonies, by:
 - giving such advance instruction as is necessary to ensure that Chapter officers are properly prepared to receive the DGS and other dignitaries;
 - conducting the DGS, and leading Grand Honours;
 - conducting others called to the Altar by the DGS, and introducing them;
 - assuming the necessary duties of the Grand Captain of the Host when the GHP, GK or GS is making an Official Visit and the GCH is absent.
- Assist in the training of new Chapter officers, especially Captains of the Host, by:
 - visiting all Chapters to help answer questions on and/or demonstrate correct ceremonial procedure;
 - organizing and leading Schools of Instruction for Chapter CHs.

Other reasons the position exists:

- Procedures used in receiving Visitors and Guests should be uniform throughout the Jurisdiction.
- Senior members were often in the past asked to serve as 'Acting Grand Captain of the Host'. The Assistant Grand Captains of the Host are expected to reduce this need.

Voluntary:

- Attend occasional Schools of Instruction for all Assistant Grand Captains of the Host.
- Attend the Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter.

**DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF
ASSISTANT GRAND SECRETARIES**

(Term: Two years or remaining term of DGS who recommended him)

Duties listed in *Constitution*:

- Act as liaison with the Grand Secretary's office on matters concerning the District as a whole and conduct the correspondence of the District.
- Attend to the requirements of the District Grand Superintendent by acting as his secretary in correspondence with the Chapters in the District in setting dates for Official Visits, District Meetings and on other occasions as required.
- Accompany the District Grand Superintendent, when possible, on his Official Visits within the District and assist him in the examination of the Chapter's records and books when directed.
- Attend to the distribution of notices of the District Meetings to the Chapters in the District.
- Attend the District Meeting and act as secretary for the meeting by recording the minutes and performing such other duties as required there.
- Prepare the minutes of the District Meeting and see to their distribution to the Chapters in the District as soon as practical after the meeting.
- Send a copy of the minutes of the District Meeting, along with the reports of the High Priests presented at the meeting, to the Grand Secretary.

Note: Copies of the minutes of the District Meeting are also to be sent to the Grand High Priest, Grand King, Grand Scribe, Grand Archivist, Grand Historian and Grand Lecturer, as well as to the District Grand Superintendent and to the Secretaries of all Chapters in the District.

Voluntary:

- Attend the Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

Scheduling dates:

The dates for the various District Meetings must suit the convenience of the Grand High Priest and must fit into a practical itinerary. As soon as possible after he is installed, each DGS is asked to submit two or three suggested dates (in order of preference) for his District Meeting, so the Grand High Priest can select a full set of District Meeting dates to best fit his schedule.

Host Chapter:

It is desirable that the privilege of acting as Host Chapter rotate among the Chapters in each District in numerical order, subject of course to changes to permit a Chapter to celebrate a special anniversary, etc.

Notice:

As soon as the date and program have been arranged, the District Grand Superintendent should arrange with the Grand Secretary to have sufficient copies of the program printed to cover the entire membership, or – after discussion with the Grand Secretary – himself create and arrange to have them printed locally, and send a supply to each Chapter Secretary to send out with his regular monthly notice. Copies should also be sent to the Grand High Priest, Grand King and Grand Scribe, and also to the Grand Secretary, Grand Archivist, Grand Historian and Grand Lecturer.

The District Grand Superintendent should arrange for adequate items concerning the District Meeting to be published in the local newspapers.

Reception of Grand Chapter officers, Visitors and Guests:

For sequence of reception, see ‘Program’ sub-section below.

For more detailed reception procedures, see ‘Reception of Grand Chapter officers and Guests’ in the Constituent Chapters section.

At a District Meeting, the host High Priest is responsible for receiving other ruling High Priests and for receiving the District Grand Superintendent. Reception of all other Visitors and Guests is the responsibility of the DGS himself, once he has the Gavel.

When the Grand High Priest or his official representative is to be present, he will likely be accompanied by the Grand Captain of the Host. If so, he and the Assistant Grand Captain of the Host for the District may share appropriately the duties of announcing and introducing the Visitors and Guests. If the GCH is absent, the Assistant GCH becomes responsible for all announcements and introductions.

Aside from the District Grand Superintendent, no present or past Grand Chapter officer other than the Grand High Priest is entitled to ever make an ‘Official’ Visit unless specifically designated to do so by the Grand High Priest, and therefore none is ever received separately except in that capacity.

On all other occasions, they enter as part of the retinue of either the DGS (past DGSs) or the GHP or his designate. Exception: If the Grand High Priest or his designate announces his intention to attend a District Meeting but is unable to reach the meeting and unable to communicate his designation of a third party, the most senior Grand officer present may assume that role. But if the Grand High Priest does not intend to attend, and does not designate anyone else to do so in his stead, then *all* present and past Grand officers enter with the DGS.

It is not appropriate for the local Grand Master to be received formally at a Grand Chapter District Meeting (from the Anteroom). If he is present as a Royal Arch Mason, it is appropriate for the Grand High Priest, as his first act, to recognize him on the sidelines by title of office, call for him to be introduced at the Altar and then be conducted to a seat in the East to the left of the Scribe, call for him to be given Grand Honours, and invite him to say a few words.

At a District Meeting, a Royal Arch Mason from outside the District, attending as a Visitor, need not be recognized unless he is a presiding officer of a Chapter or other Masonic body. It is then the DGS’s privilege to acknowledge him, ask him to rise to be recognized, and invite him to bring Greetings.

Non-Mason Guests should preferably be invited to attend and speak at the Banquet rather than the Meeting. But if it is necessary that he or she attend the Meeting, the Chapter should be called from Labour to Refreshment (with Disarrangement of the Great Lights) before the Guest is escorted into the Room by the GCH (or AGCH), introduced at the Altar, and conducted to an appropriate place. On retiring, the Guest is conducted to the Altar, appropriate words are spoken by the DGS, all rise and applaud as the Guest leaves, and the Meeting is then called back from Refreshment to Labour (with Rearrangement of the Great Lights).

Installation:

In the extraordinary event of the DGS having not yet been formally installed, the earlier announcement of his appointment by the Grand High Priest may be taken as sufficient authority for him to be received formally and presented with the Gavel. But his formal installation should then be the first order of business of the Grand High Priest or his official representative at the District Meeting.

All other appointed Grand Chapter officers resident in the District and not previously installed should be installed at the District Meeting, and the District Grand Superintendent should endeavour to have these officers present for that purpose.

Program:

The following is a standard program, but District Grand Superintendents are urged to exercise their originality and attain some variety.

1. Opening of the Host Chapter by its High Priest and his officers.
2. Reception of other ruling High Priests of the District. In the case of a High Priest being absent, his King or Scribe may be included in this reception ceremony in his stead, or the Past High Priest delegated in writing to represent him. They are received west of the Altar, introduced by the AGCH and then conducted to chairs arranged for them on the south-east side of the Chapter Room. (Other Kings, Scribes and Companions enter before the Opening and remain inside.)
3. Reception of the District Grand Superintendent (accompanied only by Past DGSs of his District and present Assistant Grand Chapter officers of his District, unless neither the GHP or any designated Grand officer is to be received separately), who is accorded Grand Honours at the Altar, welcomed by the High Priest and conducted by the AGCH towards the East. He is greeted and given the Gavel on the level. The High Priest then sits at his left (Scribe moves one position left). Past DGSs are conducted to seats reserved for them on the north-east side of the Chapter Room.
4. Reception of the Grand High Priest or his official representative (accompanied by all present and Past Grand Chapter officers not already received, including Past DGSs of other Districts and all Past Assistant Grand Chapter officers from all Districts). After introduction at the Altar, he is conducted forward by the GCH (or AGCH), and welcomed by the District Grand Superintendent who presents him with the Gavel and stands at his right (King moves one position right). The GCH calls for the officers accompanying the Most Excellent Grand High Priest to advance in pairs from the rear, salute, and find seats in or near the East. When all have done so, the GCH orders the Companions to be seated, pauses, then calls them up again and leads the Grand Honours. *(The Grand High Priest remains seated. All Companions, including those who accompanied the Grand High Priest, give the Grand Honours. The GCH then orders all to be seated again. If an officer representing the Grand High Priest, or any other Distinguished Visitor, is receiving the Grand Honours at the Altar instead, he and all others accompanying him stand on the Sign of Fidelity during the Grand Honours.)*
5. Installations.
6. Presentations of jewels, commissions, etc.
7. Grand High Priest returns the Gavel to the District Grand Superintendent, and they exchange seats.

8. Roll call of Chapters by the Assistant Grand Secretary. This may be deferred and combined with number 13.
9. Remembrance Service including Necrology Report.
10. Special speaker or other educational feature.
11. Musical program or group singing during the evening.
12. Questions and answers (if required).
13. Greetings from ruling High Priests (or their representatives) with brief written reports of Chapter activities during the year. High Priests should earlier be reminded of this duty by the District Grand Superintendent.
14. Brief addresses by distinguished companions, which should be kept to a minimum or entirely omitted.
15. Grand High Priest's address.
16. GCH announces Grand High Priest's desire to retire.
17. Grand High Priest and those who accompanied him in retire.
18. DGS returns Gavel to High Priest of the Host Chapter.
19. DGS and those who accompanied him in retire.
20. Presiding High Priest may invite other ruling HPs (or representatives) to retire.
21. Host Chapter is closed.

Publicity:

An accurate account of what is proper to be written should be given the local newspapers within 24 hours by the District Grand Superintendent or by a Companion authorized by him.

Expenses:

Banquet expenses (if applicable) should be largely covered by ticket sales. Any balance, *plus printing and other expenses*, should be borne by the Chapters of the District. The Secretary or Treasurer of the Host Chapter should act as Treasurer and, after obtaining all accounts and crediting all receipts, should divide the deficit among the Chapters in the District on a per capita membership basis, using data from the previous December 31 official Reports. Each Chapter will then send its share to the Treasurer who will pay the outstanding accounts. It has been ruled that the Host Chapter must not assume the entire cost of the District Meeting.

Official banquet or luncheon:

A banquet, at the appropriate hour, is always a most desirable feature of a District Meeting program and should be given every consideration in advance by the District Grand Superintendent and host Chapter.

The High Priest of the host Chapter usually presides at Royal Arch banquets. When present, the District Grand Superintendent sits on his left and the Grand High Priest on his right. Grace should be said by the most senior Chaplain present (Grand Chaplain, Chapter Chaplain, or other clergyman), who should be seated at the head table with the High Priest and Grand Chapter officers. Immediately after Grace, the Companions still standing, the Chairman proposes a toast to “the Queen and the Craft” (no other wording is proper and there is no response).

After dinner, additional toasts may be honoured such as:

- “The Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia” (if the Grand High Priest is not present no one can reply on his behalf, and the following toast may be preferred:)
- “The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia” (any member of Grand Chapter may reply)
- “Our Guests”, “The Ladies”, etc.

Divine Worship Services:

A District Divine Worship Service is another excellent opportunity to bring Companions in the District together for a common cause. Should a District Grand Superintendent decide to arrange a District Divine Worship Service during his term in office such service would be hosted by one of the Chapters in the District. The hosting Chapter would seek a Dispensation to appear in public wearing regalia for the purpose of attending the Service (the Dispensation will cover all who attend the Service), and would normally make the local arrangements. For further guidance, see the section under Constituent Chapters on p. 60.

CONSTITUENT CHAPTERS

RECEPTION OF GRAND CHAPTER OFFICERS AND GUESTS

General:

In the context of Official Visits, the Grand High Priest or his designate is termed a ‘Distinguished Visitor’. He and those accompanying him line up in the Anteroom in pairs under the direction of the Grand Captain of the Host (or Assistant GCH). Very Excellent Companions lead, followed by Right Excellent Companions and Most Excellent Companions, with the Distinguished Visitor alone at the rear.

When all is in readiness, the Tyler is instructed to sound the alarm (** ***) and announce that “The Right Excellent Grand Captain of the Host” (or “Very Excellent Assistant Grand Captain of the Host”) “seeks admission”. That officer first enters alone to give instructions concerning preparations to receive the Distinguished Visitor.

After completing his instructions, the GCH asks present and past Grand Chapter officers within the Chapter Room who wish to enter with the Visitor to attend at the Altar and then retire with him. The High Priest, Excellent King and Excellent Scribe, and any Past or Present Grand Chapter Officers who are serving in stations, will remain in their stations. All attend at the Altar in twos, forming lines through which the GCH and the CH and RAC can turn about and pass. They then turn about and follow the GCH out the door. The CH and RAC stop just within the door but do not form their ‘arch’ until the Visitor himself begins to enter.

Outside, officers who have retired from within now join the procession in due order.

Specific – Receiving the Grand High Priest:

The GCH (or AGCH) is admitted, advances to the Altar on the square, salutes, and says, “Most Excellent High Priest, the Most Excellent Grand High Priest, accompanied by present and past Grand Chapter officers, is without and demands admission. You will order your Captain of the Host and Royal Arch Captain to attend at the Altar, and then call up your Chapter.” Once the Chapter is standing, the GCH may add: “Would any present or past Grand Chapter officers who wish to join the procession now also attend at the Altar and retire with me.”

The Captain of the Host and Royal Arch Captain, with swords (or wands), having been first to join the GCH at the Altar, one on his right, the other on his left, now accompany the GCH to the door, which is immediately opened, then take positions on either side of the doorway and remain there until the Grand High Priest begins to enter, at which time they then – and only then – cross their swords (or wands) to form an ‘arch’, then accompany him to one pace before the Altar. They maintain their arch during the escort and until the Grand High Priest leaves the Altar.

The procession from the Anteroom, led by the GCH, enters without alarm, crosses the West, and marches down the centre of the Room to the Altar. The GCH takes his position just north of the Altar and awaits the arrival of the Grand High Priest. The Grand Chapter officers, in two files well apart, halt when the leaders reach the Altar, and turn to face inwards.

The Grand High Priest accompanied by the Captain of the Host and Royal Arch Captain with crossed swords (or wands) proceeds between the lines to the Altar. When he arrives at the Altar, the Grand Chapter officers turn to face the East, and salute when he does.

The GCH says, "Most Excellent High Priest, I am honoured to introduce to you and through you to the Companions of Chapter No., the Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia, Most Excellent Companion" *He then immediately takes the Grand High Priest by the right hand and escorts him towards the East.*

The High Priest descends to the floor, shakes the Grand High Priest's hand, passes him the Gavel, and moves to stand at his left as he assumes the East (Scribe moves over).

The GCH stands to the Grand High Priest's right on the level and says, "The officers accompanying the Most Excellent Grand High Priest will kindly advance in pairs from the rear, salute, and find seats in or near the East."

The most senior pair of officers at the rear of the procession advances through the lines to the Altar, salutes, and moves to find seats. The next senior pair then advances likewise, until all have advanced, saluted and found seats, their proximity to the East thus in accord with their seniority in rank. (This method is recommended for all such processions.)

The GCH then says: "Companions, please be seated." (*Pause.*) "Companions, you will rise and greet the Most Excellent Grand High Priest with the Grand Honours of Masonry, taking your time from me." (*Leads Grand Honours. The Grand High Priest remains seated. All Companions, including those who accompanied the Grand High Priest, give the Grand Honours. The GCH then says:*) "Companions, be seated."

Grand King, Grand Scribe, District Grand Superintendent:

The procedure is the same except that the GCH uses the words "requests admission" (only the GHP has the right to demand admission), and, immediately after introducing the Distinguished Visitor at the Altar, says, "Companions, let us greet the Right Excellent with the Grand Honours of Masonry, taking your time from me." (*Officers in procession stand on SOF. After the Grand Honours – and only then – is the Distinguished Visitor conducted to the East.*)

Only the reigning Grand High Priest is entitled to receive the Grand Honours in the East; all others receive them at the Altar.

The High Priest always sits at the Visitor's left (Scribe moves over). After the Visitor has returned the Gavel to the High Priest, the High Priest assumes the East with the Visitor at his right (King moves one seat to right and Scribe returns to his own seat).

Grand Chapter officer acting under a special warrant:

When the Grand King or other Grand Chapter officer receives a written directive from the Grand High Priest to represent him on a special occasion, he enjoys all the rights and privileges of the Grand High Priest respecting that particular occasion, except that the Grand Honours are given at the Altar.

The GCH announces that, "The Right Excellent (or Very Excellent) Grand King (etc.) requests admission." The introduction at the Altar is in similar terms but adds the Visitor's full name: "I am honoured to introduce to you and through you to the Chapter, the Right Excellent (or Very Excellent) Grand King (etc.), Right Excellent (or Very Excellent) Companion, who is representing the Most Excellent Grand High Priest in an Official Visit to your Chapter."

Retiring:

When signalled, the GCH rises, salutes, and says, "Most Excellent High Priest, the Most Excellent Grand High Priest (or Right Excellent) has indicated to me that he wishes to retire. You will order your Captain of the Host and Royal Arch Captain to attend at the Altar, and then call up your Chapter." (*Pause.*) "The Grand Chapter officers accompanying the will kindly take their places in lines west of the Altar." (*They assemble in the same order in which they entered, facing the East. The CH and RAC stand far enough apart for the Visitor to come between them, and raise their arch when he arrives.*)

The GCH takes the Distinguished Visitor by the right hand and escorts him to the Altar. The Visitor stands beneath the arch; the GCH one step back.

All salute at the same time as the Distinguished Visitor. As he turns, all Grand Chapter officers face inwards. The Visitor proceeds between the lines followed by the Captain of the Host and Royal Arch Captain, who stop inside the doorway and – after the Distinguished Visitor has left – "carry" swords (or ground their wands). They do not maintain their arch for others to pass beneath. After the escort passes the end of the lines, the Grand Chapter officers turn (seniors in rank leading, juniors following) and follow them through the door. The GCH is last to leave.

Grand Chapter officer (DGS or other) making an unofficial visit:

Arrival before the Opening is courteous and desirable. If the Chapter is already tyled, the Visitor is announced and, if admitted, approaches the Altar, salutes, and takes a seat among the Companions. *Only if invited by the High Priest* is he seated in the East. No Grand Honours are given, and any remarks or greetings he wishes to offer should await the High Priest's invitation. If he is not on the agenda as an invited speaker, his comments should be brief.

Other Visitors from other Chapters or from outside the Jurisdiction:

A Visitor from another Chapter or from outside the Jurisdiction, who has not been invited as a Guest, or who is not well known or not accompanied by two who are (who could vouch for his good standing), should be duly examined. If he has not received the Past Master or Virtual Past Master Degree in a Chapter, an appropriate 'healing' can be quickly arranged by competent officers, or if otherwise qualified he can enter after the Opening and retire before the Closing.

A Visitor who has been examined and if necessary 'healed' should be introduced at the Altar by one of the examining committee members. If already fully qualified, he can enter for the Opening. If invited as a Guest, he should be introduced by the Companion who invited him. If not, it becomes the presiding officer's privilege to acknowledge his presence in due course, and invite him to stand, introduce himself and bring Greetings.

Reception of Guests who are not Royal Arch Masons:

As noted earlier (p. 10), under many circumstances it is permissible for someone who is not a Royal Arch Mason, nor even a Freemason, to be received as a Guest into a regular meeting of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons (e.g. as a guest speaker).

For guidance on protocol, see pages 10/11.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The *Constitution* specifies the procedures Chapters are required to follow in annual election of officers.

The subject most often discussed, but clearly answered in the *Constitution*, is the requirement that nominations for Chapter office be made by written ballot, one office at a time. A further election ballot is not necessary if all nominees decline save the one who is then declared "elected by acclamation". It is also then not necessary to "cast one ballot in favour of ..." To repeat, there is no election ballot at all if there is no competition for the office.

Nomination of a member not present at the time must be supported by a satisfactory avouchment of that member's willingness to serve in the office for which he is nominated.

Scrutineers (who are appointed and take an appropriate group position before the ballot) assess the nomination ballots and, taking care not to give numbers or otherwise disclose information which might favour one among two or more nominees, announce the names of those nominated. The presiding officer allows any who wish to have their names withdrawn to say so, then asks each of those remaining, in turn, "Companion, if elected, will you be willing to serve?" Or, if only one name has emerged from the nomination ballot and withdrawals, "Companion, are you willing to serve?" When the Companion agrees, the presiding officer says, "Then I declare Companion elected by acclamation to serve in the office of for the ensuing year."

If more than one nominee is willing to serve, an election ballot is circulated. The procedure is given clearly in the *Constitution*.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

It is normal for each retiring High Priest to install the incoming officers of his Chapter and it is his prerogative to do so. He should at least take and learn a prominent part, and it is he who must begin the Installation Ceremony according to the approved ritual by calling for the reading of the election results and vouching for the accuracy of that report. His minimum role should also include administration of the Obligation to his successor. Other parts may be assigned to Past High Priests. If necessary, additional help may be sought from the High Priests of other Chapters in the District, the District Grand Superintendent, or from other Grand Chapters Officers, past or present, but such requests should be made well ahead as many Chapters hold their Installations around the same time of the year. Requests for the GHP, GK or GS to attend are to be sent to the Grand Secretary.

CHARGES

The Charges given at the end of each Degree, and the three Charges given at the end of the annual Ceremony of Installation, are among our most beautiful and effective lectures when delivered well, especially from memory but also when read with skill and feeling. If your Chapter has nobody who can do either, nor any able to learn, seek assistance from someone who can, through your District Grand Superintendent or through your local York Rite College. Our Jurisdiction includes many who are able and willing to help. Your Chapter will benefit most by developing its own talent, but on no account should such material ever be delivered poorly.

Similarly, use of all of a Chapter’s talented Past High Priests in the series of officer installations can have several benefits, including retention of their sense of involvement, encouragement of fraternal ties across generations, and maximizing attendance. But such a ceremony involving many people must be well organized in advance, to ensure that all are familiar with their roles. Nobody should be pressed into service who cannot impress his listeners.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHAPTER OFFICERS

MOST EXCELLENT HIGH PRIEST

(Representing Joshua, one of those “three ancient worthies who composed the first Grand Masonic Council at Jerusalem and held their meetings in the Tabernacle.”)

Extract from *The Work (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.)*: To preside over and govern his Chapter with fidelity, to officiate in the Tabernacle, to read and expound the Law to his Companions, and to offer up the incense of a pure and contrite heart to the Great I AM.

Extracts from the *Constitution*:

Section 55.(3): The High Priest is responsible for the due observance of the laws relating to Chapters, and that all returns are made, and fees and dues paid to Grand Chapter.

Section 55.(4): He shall see that a book or books be kept in which the Secretary shall enter the names of all Candidates, with the dates of their proposals, and the conferring of Degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and the Royal Arch, and their ages, residences, and professions, together with all other transactions of the Chapter as are proper to be written.

Section 56: Only an anointed High Priest shall confer the Royal Arch Degree.

Section 86.(1): No Candidate shall be exalted to the Holy Royal Arch Degree until he shall have passed a satisfactory examination in the preceding Capitular Degrees.

Section 87: Every Mark Master must select and record his mark in the Lodge Book of Marks, previous to his exaltation to the Royal Arch Degree.

Section 101,103: Apparel: A robe of blue, purple, scarlet, and white, decorated with breast plate and mitre. On the front of the mitre, upon a golden plate, is inscribed in Hebrew characters, ‘Holiness to the Lord’. Jewel: The square surmounted by a mitre.

Section 117.(1) & (6): Every High Priest who has not previously received the Degree of the Order of High Priesthood shall be required to attend the next regular Annual Convention of the Order held following his election and installation. No elected and installed High Priest lacking this qualification shall be entitled to rank as Past High Priest upon expiration of the term for which he was elected.

Some typical Chapter By-Laws affecting High Priests:

By-Law: The regular convocation shall be held at the Masonic Hall in the City of, on the first Thursday in each month at 8 p.m.; but the High Priest shall, if he deem it advisable, have power to dispense with the regular convocation in July and August.

By-Law: Special convocations may at any time be called by the authority of the High Priest. The reason shall be expressed in the notice, and no other business than that specified shall be entered upon at that convocation.

By-Law: The order of business at the regular convocations may be as follows: 1: Reading of the minutes. 2: Balloting. 3: Receiving petitions. 4: Reports of committees. 5: Unfinished business. 6: New business. 7: Work.

Your Duties, as described during your Installation:

Those Ancient Charges and Regulations which point out the duty of the High Priest of a Chapter:

You solemnly promise that you will observe and support the By-Laws of your Chapter, the *Constitution*, Laws and Edicts of the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia, and the general regulations of the Craft;

- that you will pay due respect and obedience to the instructions of the Grand Chapter officers, particularly relating to the several lectures and charges, and will resign the chair to them severally, when they may visit your Chapter;
- that you will undertake to attend the next Annual Convocation of the Grand Chapter and there receive the Order of High Priesthood in the regular Convention of the Order;
- that you will not acknowledge or have intercourse with any Chapter that does not work under a constitutional warrant or dispensation;
- that you will never suffer your Chapter to be opened unless there be present nine regular Royal Arch Masons;
- that you will never suffer either more or less than three Brethren to be exalted in your Chapter at one and the same time without a dispensation from the Most Excellent Grand High Priest;
- that you will not exalt anyone to this degree who has not shown a charitable and humane disposition; or who has not shown a considerable proficiency in the preceding degrees;
- that, to the utmost of your power, you will preserve the solemnity of our ceremonies, and behave in open Chapter with the most profound respect and reverence as an example to your Companions;

- that you will not admit any visitor into your Chapter who has not been exalted in a Chapter legally constituted, or who has not regularly received the degrees of Mark Master Mason, Past Master, and Most Excellent Master, without his being first formally healed;
- that you will redouble your endeavours to correct the vices, purify the morals, and promote the happiness of those of your Companions who have attained this sublime degree;
- that you will promote the general good of our Order, and, on all proper occasions, be ready to give and receive instruction, particularly from the Grand Chapter officers;
- that you will bind your successor in office to the observance of the same rules to which you have assented.

Your Obligation during Installation:

I do solemnly promise that I will serve this Chapter as High Priest for the time that I have been elected; that I will support and maintain the *Constitution*, Laws, Regulations and Edicts of the Most Excellent Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia; the General Regulations of the Craft, and the By-Laws of this Chapter; and that I will, to the utmost of my knowledge, skill and ability, discharge all the duties of the office to which I have been elected.

Your Charge during Installation:

The Square surmounted by the Mitre should remind you of the authority and dignity of the office you sustain. The High Priest of every Chapter has it in special charge to see that the By-Laws of his Chapter, the *Constitution*, Laws, Regulations and Edicts of the Grand Chapter, and the General Regulations of the Order, are duly observed; that all the officers of his Chapter perform the duties of their respective offices faithfully; that the Annual Return is made and the annual dues and fees are paid punctually to Grand Chapter.

It is his privilege and duty, together with the King and Scribe, to attend the Convocations of the Grand Chapter, and the well-being of the Order requires that this duty should on no occasion be omitted.

Let the Mitre which is worn during the ceremony of the Royal Arch Degree remind you of the dignity of the office you sustain, and the inscription upon it – *Holiness to the Lord* – impress upon your mind a sense of your dependence upon God; perfection is not given to man upon the earth, and perfect holiness belongeth alone unto the Lord.

Let the Royal Arch Banner, near you here in the East, remind you of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and teach you ever to bear in mind your responsibility to the laws and ordinances of the institution, and to bear in mind that the honour and interest of your Chapter and its members should be always near your heart.

The various colours of the banners of the Grand Masters of the Veils will always be in your sight. They are emblematical of every grace and virtue which can adorn and beautify the human mind, and each will be briefly illustrated in the several charges to be delivered to your subordinate officers.

I now point out to you the *Warrant* under which you are to work, and symbolically deliver it into your hands. You will receive it as a sacred deposit, and never permit it to be used for any other purposes than those expressed in it.

I present to you the Book of the Law, the Great Light in every degree of Masonry.

I present to you the *Constitution* of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia with jurisdiction over Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and the *By-Laws* of your Chapter. You will cause these to be frequently read and punctually obeyed.

Additional advice:

Plan ahead who you will appoint as officers and committee members. Obtain commitments from them. Brief them well. Hold a training session.

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you, please your Companions, and set the standard for your Chapter.

Plan your Chapter meetings to include content to attract attendance. Plan far ahead so you can include that content in each Summons, so every member can read about the attractions – not just those who attended each previous meeting. Your plan must include an Official Visit by your District Grand Superintendent, and one by your Grand High Priest, plus the annual Rededication Service, the annual Election, and the annual Installation of new officers.

Remember, you have an Assistant Grand Lecturer available, as well as many experienced Past High Priests.

Plan and promote special events such as visits to and from other Chapters. Encourage attendance at the Annual District Meeting, at which you must present a written report on your Chapter's statistics, activities and welfare.

Carefully supervise the work of your Secretary and Treasurer. Their records, your Chapter's financial health, and the sufficiency of your annual dues, are all crucial to the happiness of your members.

Provide the exact wording you want your Secretary to include in each Summons. It is an advertisement, not merely a meeting notice.

Above all, help attract new members, and then carefully plan to enjoy the benefits of the Chapter's most important and valuable activity – presentation of the Capitular Degrees.

EXCELLENT KING

(Representing Zerubbabel, one of “those three ancient worthies who composed the first Grand Masonic Council at Jerusalem and held their meetings in the Tabernacle.” Zerubbabel’s signet is Truth.)

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

To assist the Most Excellent High Priest in the discharge of his duties, and, in his absence, to preside over the Chapter.

Extracts from the *Constitution*:

Section 56: In the absence of the High Priest, the King, or, in his absence, the Scribe, or in the absence of all three, the junior Past High Priest present, shall assume the Chair, and perform all the duties of the High Priest except conferring the Royal Arch Degree. Only an anointed High Priest shall confer the Royal Arch Degree.

Section 55.(2): If the High Priest should die, be removed, or be incapable of discharging the duties of his office, the King, or in his absence, the Scribe, shall summon the Chapter, and a new High Priest shall be elected at the next regular Convocation.

Section 101: Apparel: A scarlet robe, with a crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand.

Section 103: Jewel: The level surmounted by a crown.

Your Obligation during Installation:

I do solemnly promise that I will serve this Chapter as Excellent King for the ensuing year, and will to the utmost of my knowledge, skill and ability, discharge all the duties of the office to which I have been elected. So help me, God.

Your Charge during Installation:

The Level surmounted by a Crown should remind you that, although you are the representative of a King, and exalted by office above your Companions, yet you remain upon a level with them, as respects your duty to God, your neighbour, and yourself; you are equally bound with them to be obedient to the laws and ordinances of the institution – to be charitable, humane and just – and to seek every occasion of doing good.

By placing the King in a situation subordinate to the High Priest, our usage teaches that our duty to God is paramount to all other duties, and that however strongly we may be bound to obey the laws of civil society, those laws – to be just – should never intermeddle with matters of conscience, nor dictate articles of faith.

The Scarlet Robe which you will wear during the ceremony of the Royal Arch Degree is an emblem of royal dignity, and should remind you of the paternal concern you should ever feel for the welfare of your Chapter, and the fervency and zeal with which you should endeavour to promote its prosperity.

You will also wear a Crown, an emblem of royalty. But I would remind you that to reign sovereign *in the hearts and affections of men* must be far more gratifying to a generous and benevolent mind than to rule over their lives and fortunes; and that, to enable you to enjoy this pre-eminence with honour and satisfaction, you must subject your own passions and prejudices to the domination of reason and charity.

The important station to which you are elected requires from you exemplary conduct; its duties demand your most assiduous attentions; you are to second and support your chief in all the requirements of his office; and, should casualties at any time prevent his attendance, you are to succeed him in the performance of his duties.

Companion, our Zerubbabel, like him, seek strength above; sustain the East, pay all her due, protect the weak, in love.

Additional advice:

As soon as you are elected, begin immediately to become prepared to preside over the Chapter in the absence of the High Priest. It is *your* Constitutional duty, not that of a Past High Priest. Your only good reason for not presiding in his absence is that you, too, are absent, and the duty then falls on the Scribe.

Memorize your own role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

Volunteer to organize Degree work, including casting, communications to obtain cast commitments, and assistance in preparation for and during rehearsals.

Begin planning for the probability that you will serve next year as High Priest. You won't have much time after the election, not if you are to have a good program ready for the whole year.

EXCELLENT SCRIBE

(Representing Haggai, one of “those three ancient worthies who composed the first Grand Masonic Council at Jerusalem and held their meetings in the Tabernacle.” Haggai was the author of the Bible Book that bears his name.)

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):
To assist the Most Excellent High Priest in the discharge of his duties, and, in his absence and that of the King, to preside over the Chapter.

Extracts from the Constitution:

Section 56: In the absence of the High Priest, the King, or, in his absence, the Scribe, or in the absence of all three, the junior Past High Priest present shall assume the Chair and perform all the duties of the High Priest except conferring the Royal Arch Degree. Only an anointed High Priest shall confer the Royal Arch Degree.

Section 55.(2): If the High Priest should die, be removed, or be incapable of discharging the duties of his office, the King, or in his absence, the Scribe, shall summon the Chapter, and a new High Priest shall be elected at the next regular Convocation.

Section 101: Apparel: A purple robe, and a turban of the same colour.

Section 103: Jewel: The plumb surmounted by a turban.

Your Obligation during Installation:

I do solemnly promise that I will serve this Chapter as Excellent Scribe for the ensuing year, and will to the utmost of my knowledge, skill and ability, discharge all the duties of the office to which I have been elected. So help me, God.

Your Charge during Installation:

The Plumb-Rule surmounted by a Turban is an emblem of rectitude and vigilance; and – while you stand as watchman upon the tower to guard your Companions against the approach of those enemies of human felicity, intemperance and excess – let this faithful monitor ever remind you to walk uprightly in your station, admonishing and animating your Companions to fidelity and industry while at labour, and to temperance and moderation while at refreshment.

The Purple Robe which you will wear during the ceremony of the Royal Arch Degree is an emblem of union, and is calculated to remind you that the harmony and unanimity of the Chapter should be your constant aim; and, to this end, you are studiously to avoid all occasions of giving offence, or countenancing anything that may create divisions.

You are, by all means in your power, to endeavour to establish a permanent union and good understanding among all orders and degrees of Masonry; and, as the glorious sun, at meridian height, dispels the mists and clouds that obscure the horizon, so may your exertions tend to dissipate the gloom of jealousy and discord whenever they may appear.

The office of Scribe to which you have been elected is very important and honourable. In the absence of your superior officers, you are bound to succeed them and perform their duties, so you will perceive the necessity of mastering those duties appropriate to your station, and also those which may devolve upon you by the absence of your superiors.

Additional advice:

You are two steps away from becoming High Priest. Prepare now! Even this year, you might be called upon to preside in the absence of both the High Priest and King. Prepare now for that possibility, which is your Constitutional duty.

Memorize your own role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

TREASURER

A typical By-Law:

The Treasurer shall receive all monies from the Secretary; shall pay the same out only by vote of the Chapter and on an order signed by the High Priest and countersigned by the Secretary. The Chapter may at any time cause him to present an account of his receipts and disbursements, and the amount of the funds on hand.

Your Charge during Installation:

The qualities which should recommend a Treasurer are accuracy and fidelity.

Your respect for the institution, your attachment to the interests of your Chapter, and your regard for a good name – which is better than a precious ointment – will prompt you to the faithful discharge of the duties of your office.

Additional advice:

Your Chapter’s financial health depends firstly on the accuracy of your reporting, and on your alertness to present and future needs and the ability of projected revenues to meet those needs. Levels of dues and fees must be based on careful projections of revenues and expenses. Ask others if you need help, but expect your Companions to want to see and hear such projections, not just to be told how much money is in the bank account.

SECRETARY

Extracts from the Constitution:

Section 51.(4): The Secretary ... is required to mail to the Grand High Priest, Grand King, Grand Scribe, Grand Secretary, and District Grand Superintendent a copy of the summons calling each Convocation of the Chapter, whether regular or emergent. (It is suggested that the Grand Historian also be sent a copy of all Chapter summonses.)

Section 53.(2): A register shall be kept by each Chapter of all companions who shall be installed as High Priest, King, or Scribe. (See also Section 46.(3).)

Section 70.(1): Reporting Membership Changes - The secretary of every Chapter chartered by this Grand Chapter shall report to the Grand Secretary all additions to the membership, i.e. exaltations, affiliations, re-affiliations, re-instatements, and all deletions to the membership, i.e. deaths, suspensions and withdrawals, as they occur during each year, on the appropriate ‘Change of Membership’ form. Changes made in December to be reported to the Grand Secretary not later than January 15th in the next year.

Section 70.(2): Annual Returns - An Annual Return showing the Chapter Membership as of December 31st each year, along with all changes reported during the year and a list of the Past High Priests of the Chapter, will be prepared by the Grand Secretary and forwarded to Chapter Secretaries by the end of February each year, along with an invoice for the Chapter’s annual assessment. This return is to be reviewed by the Chapter Secretary to verify its accuracy and then returned to the Grand Secretary, bearing the signatures of the High Priest and Secretary and the Chapter seal along with payment of the Chapter’s Annual Assessment, to be received by the Grand Secretary not later than March 31st.

Section 70.(3): Return of Officers - Every Chapter shall make a return to the Grand Secretary of the elected and appointed officers of the Chapter and of members eligible to vote in Grand Chapter not later than thirty days after the annual election of officers.

Section 92: Every Candidate on his exaltation to the Royal Arch Degree and every Royal Arch Companion affiliating with this Chapter shall be presented with (a) a copy of the *Constitution* of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia and (b) a copy of the *By-Laws* of the Chapter.

Section 94.(1): At least once a year and that not later than the regular convocation in September, the Secretary shall submit in open Chapter a report in writing of every member over one year in arrears for dues. (See also other related sections.)

A typical By-Law:

The Secretary shall keep a faithful record of all proceedings proper to be written; keep a separate account for each member of the Chapter; report at the regular Convocation in January the amount due by each; receive all monies due the Chapter and pay the same to the Treasurer forthwith; issue all notices of all Convocations so that they be received in advance of the day appointed for the Convocation, and perform all such other duties as may properly appertain to his office.

Your Charge during Installation:

The qualities which should recommend a Secretary are:

- promptness in issuing the notifications and orders of his superior officers;
- punctuality in attending the Convocations of the Chapter;
- correctness in recording its proceedings;
- judgement in discriminating between what is proper and what improper, to be committed to writing;
- regularity in making his Annual Return to Grand Chapter;
- integrity in accounting for all monies passing through his hands;
- and fidelity in paying the same into the hands of the Treasurer.

Additional advice to the Secretary:

Read your minutes as if to the Companion sitting farthest away, and assume he has a hearing aid with a weak battery. You might laugh, but laughter is far from the minds of most Companions who can barely hear most Secretaries.

Write your Minutes as if for a future Chapter Historian. Will he praise your Minutes; your attentiveness; your sense of history? Or will he say “apparently nobody did or said anything interesting back then”?

Your knowledge, continuity, and access to Grand Chapter resources, make you potentially the most influential and valuable member of your Chapter. Although the High Priest, King, Scribe and Treasurer are your superiors, they depend on your experience and advice. Serve them well, and every year you will make more friends and find your job ever more rewarding.

ARCHIVIST AND HISTORIAN

The Grand Chapter *Constitution* was amended in AD 2000 to include a Grand Historian, ranking immediately after the Grand Archivist. It was intended that the two should divide duties previously assigned totally to the Grand Archivist. It was also expected that Chapters would follow suit, and that there would be amendments, in due course, to the following:

Constitution Section 57:

Each Chapter shall annually appoint a companion as Archivist, whose duty it shall be to collect and preserve all records, minutes, and documents concerning the history of the Chapter and to cause a proper history of the Chapter to be compiled, which history it shall be the duty of a committee to revise from time to time. A copy of every history so compiled shall be filed with the Grand Secretary.

Your Charge during Installation:

The care and preservation of the records and muniments of the Chapter, and the compilation of the story of its growth, its achievements and its good works, devolve upon you. No task requires more zeal and enthusiasm, more care and perseverance.

Additional advice:

Whoever writes or updates the Chapter’s history needs access to more than just the Minute Book, and it is your responsibility to know where those additional resources are, and how to access them easily. More, a future Historian won’t necessarily know what might be interesting in your Chapter’s archives if he doesn’t even know it exists.

CHAPLAIN

Your Charge during Installation:

The jewel of your office is emblematical of eternity, and reminds us that here is not our abiding place.

Your inclination will undoubtedly conspire with your duty, when you perform in the Chapter those solemn services which created beings should constantly render to their infinite Creator, and which may, by refining our morals, strengthening our virtues, and purifying our minds, prepare us for admission into the society of those above, whose happiness will be as endless as it is perfect.

Additional advice:

Become familiar with the Chapter’s Charter Draping Ceremony, and know where to find copies whenever needed.

Be the peacemaker; set the example of graceful, gentle speech; watch for opportunities to say the right thing at the right time, especially encouragement and praise. Never let a sick or infirm Companion go unvisited or, worse, unremembered.

CAPTAIN OF THE HOST

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

To obey the commands of my chief and to be near at hand to see them duly executed, to take charge of the Chapter during the hours of labour and see to the introduction of strangers among the workmen.

Constitution Section 101:

Apparel: A white robe and a helmet, and armed with a sword.

Your Charge during Installation:

The preservation of our ancient customs, usages and landmarks, is within your province, and it is necessary that the part assigned to you in the practice of our rites and ceremonies should be perfectly understood and correctly conducted, particularly during the introduction of strangers among the workmen.

Your office corresponds to that of Marshal, or Director of Ceremonies. You are to superintend all processions of your Chapter, either in public or in private.

Additional advice to the Captain of the Host:

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

Attend at the Altar as you would in a Lodge: First give the Sign of Fidelity, then light the Six Lights, retrieve the Square & Compasses, open the Bible to the correct place, centre it on the Altar, place the Square & Compasses, open any other Volumes of Sacred Law similarly, then step back and give the Due Guard and Sign of the correct Degree.

Be prepared to close in the reverse order, if the High Priest does not call upon a Past High Priest to do so. Learn the ritual Closing Words that the PHP would use.

If your Chapter presents the Royal Arch Degree during your year in this Office, demand the right to play the role of Captain of the Host during that Degree – and then play it very well. The rewards are big.

PRINCIPAL SOJOURNER

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

To bring the blind by a way that they know not, to lead them in paths that they have not known, to make darkness light before them and crooked things straight; these things to do unto them and not forsake them.

Constitution Section 101:

Apparel: Black robe (rose coloured border); slouched hat; pilgrim’s staff.

Your Charge during Installation:

The office confided to you, though subordinate in degree, is equal in importance to any in the Chapter, that of your chief alone excepted.

Your office corresponds to that of Senior Deacon in the preparatory degrees. Among your duties, the preparation and introduction of Candidates are not the least. As, in our intercourse with the world, experience teaches that first impressions are often the most durable, and the most difficult to eradicate, so it is of great importance that those impressions should be correct and just; hence, it is essential that the officer who brings the blind by a way that they know not, and leads them in paths that they have not known, should always be qualified to make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.

Additional advice:

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

If your Chapter presents Degrees during your year in this Office, demand the right to play the roles of Senior Deacon and Principal Sojourner during those Degrees – then memorize and play them very well. The rewards are big.

ROYAL ARCH CAPTAIN

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

Guard the Fourth Veil or Sanctuary and admit none without the Words, Sign, Words of Explanation and Signet of the Master of the Third Veil.

Constitution Section 101:

Apparel: A white robe, with a cap or helmet, and armed with a sword.

Your Charge during Installation:

I entrust the White Banner to your care. It is emblematical of that purity of heart and rectitude of conduct which should ever actuate all those who pass the white veil of the sanctuary.

Your office corresponds to that of Junior Deacon in the preparatory degrees.

Conjointly with the Captain of the Host, you will examine all visitors, and take care that none are permitted to enter the Chapter but such as have travelled the rugged path of trial, and evinced their title to our favour and friendship.

You will obey the commands of the Captain of the Host during the introduction of strangers among the workmen; that, should they be permitted to pass your post, they may by him be introduced into the presence of the Grand Council.

Additional advice:

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

If your Chapter presents Degrees during your year in this Office, demand the right to play the roles of Junior Deacon and Royal Arch Captain during those Degrees – then memorize and play them very well. The rewards are big.

MASTER OF THE THIRD VEIL

(Representing one of those three of our ancient brethren who discovered and brought to light the principal secrets of this degree after they had lain buried in darkness from the death of our Grand Master, Hiram Abif, until the erection of the Second Temple and, as a reward for their valuable discoveries, were exalted to be Grand Masters of the Veils.)

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

Guard the Third Veil and admit none without the Words, Sign and Words of Explanation of the Master of the Second Veil.

Constitution Section 101:

Apparel: A scarlet robe and turban.

Your Charge during Installation:

I present you with the Scarlet Banner, the ensign of your office.

I arm you with a sword to defend and protect the same.

The rich and beautiful colour of your banner is emblematical of fervency and zeal; it is the appropriate colour of the Royal Arch Degree. It admonishes us that we should be fervent in the exercise of our devotion to God, and zealous in our endeavours to promote the happiness of man.

Additional advice:

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

Study the Words, Signs and Words of Explanation of all the Veil Masters. There's more significance in them than you might think. Locate a copy of a talk on this subject.

MASTER OF THE SECOND VEIL

(Representing one of those three of our ancient brethren who discovered and brought to light the principal secrets of this degree after they had lain buried in darkness from the death of our Grand Master, Hiram Abif, until the erection of the Second Temple and, as a reward for their valuable discoveries, were exalted to be Grand Masters of the Veils.)

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

Guard the Second Veil and admit none without the Words, Sign and Words of Explanation of the Master of the First Veil.

Constitution Section 101:

Apparel: A purple robe and turban.

Your Charge during Installation:

I present you with the Purple Banner, the ensign of your office.

I arm you with a sword to enable you to maintain its honour.

The colour of your banner is produced by a due mixture of blue and scarlet – the former is the characteristic colour of the symbolic or first three degrees of Masonry – and the latter is that of the Royal Arch Degree.

It is an emblem of unity, and is the characteristic colour of the intermediate degrees. It admonishes us to cultivate and improve that spirit of union and harmony, between the Brethren of the symbolic degrees and the Companions of the sublime degrees, which should ever distinguish the members of a society founded upon the principles of everlasting truth and universal philanthropy.

Additional advice:

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions. And study the Words, Signs and Words of Explanation of all the Veil Masters. There's more significance in them than you might think. Locate a copy of a talk on this subject.

MASTER OF THE FIRST VEIL

(Representing one of those three of our ancient brethren who discovered and brought to light the principal secrets of this degree after they had lain buried in darkness from the death of our Grand Master, Hiram Abif, until the erection of the Second Temple and, as a reward for their valuable discoveries, were exalted to be Grand Masters of the Veils.)

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

Guard the First Veil and admit none without the Pass.

Constitution Section 101:

Apparel: A blue robe and turban.

Your Charge during Installation:

I present you with the Blue Banner, the ensign of your office.

I arm you with a sword for its defence and protection.

The colour of your banner is one of the most durable and beautiful in nature. It is the appropriate colour adopted by our ancient Brethren of the three symbolic degrees, and is the peculiar characteristic of an institution which has stood the test of ages, and which is as much distinguished by the durability of its materials, or principles, as by the beauty of its superstructure.

It is an emblem of universal friendship and benevolence, and instructs us that – in the mind of a Mason – those virtues should be as expansive as the blue arch of Heaven itself.

Additional advice:

Memorize your role in the Opening and Closing of the Chapter. The effort will reward you and please all your Companions.

Study the Words, Signs and Words of Explanation of all the Veil Masters. There's more significance in them than you might think. Locate a copy of a talk on this subject.

TYLER

Extract from *The Work* (Ritual of the Grand Chapter of RAM of N.S.):

To see that the outer courts of the Tabernacle are securely guarded and the Chapter duly tyled.

Your Charge during Installation:

I present you with this implement of your office.

As the sword is placed in the hands of the Tyler to enable him effectually to guard against the approach of cowans and eavesdroppers, and suffer none to pass or re-pass but such as are duly qualified, so it should morally serve as a constant admonition to us, to set a guard at the entrance to our thoughts, to place a watch at the door of our lips, to post a sentinel at the avenue of our actions, thereby excluding every unqualified and unworthy thought, word and deed, and preserving consciences void of offence toward God and toward man.

Additional advice:

Your words of welcome as each Companion approaches your door are the building blocks of mutual happiness.

If you ever feel a High Priest is forgetting to invite you to “tyle with an open door”, quietly speak to him about it during a refreshment period. If he agrees, but after an Opening again appears to have forgotten, either quietly open the door at an opportune moment or before the next meeting ask the Royal Arch Captain to raise the question: “Most Excellent High Priest, would it be your pleasure to have the Tyler tyle with an open door?”

CONSTITUENT CHAPTERS

REGALIA

The standard regalia of every companion Royal Arch Mason, to be worn at every regular convocation, from Opening through Closing, and throughout the course of every Capitular Degree, is the Sash and Apron – *both*.

If he has been installed or inducted into an office for that year, he adds the Collar and pendant Jewel of that office, which all except the Most Excellent High Priest remove upon instruction when the Chapter is called to Refreshment for the purpose of opening a Lodge of Mark Master Masons, Virtual Past Masters or Most Excellent Masters, and put back on when the Chapter is called back to Labour for the purpose of Closing the Chapter.

The Hat and Blue Collar of a Worshipful Master, to be worn by the presiding officer during the Virtual Past Master Degree, is the only Craft Lodge regalia ever worn by any companion during any Capitular Degree.

Past High Priests may apply to the Grand Secretary to purchase a Sash and Apron appropriate to that rank, and may wear that regalia at any Chapter convocation as their own property. But they may don a Collar and pendant Jewel of office only when serving again in that office (either temporarily or by reelection).

A companion who is asked to step off the sidelines to fill an office temporarily vacant due to absence may wear the Collar and pendant Jewel of that office on that occasion only.

Authorized Jewels and Medals to be worn on the left breast, including those awarded by other Grand Chapters, should be ordered in one or two rows according to the sequence given in *Constitution* Section 105(1).

(See also *Regalia and dress code* in Grand Chapter section.)

SIGNS

Until the Tyler has been informed that the Chapter is Open (or returned from Labour to Refreshment), no Sign except the Sign of Fidelity should be given by anyone (other than during the rehearsal of all Signs during the Opening). The preferred form for the Sign of Fidelity (mandatory in some Jurisdictions such as England) is with the thumb raised to form a square, so that the thumb can be lowered at times of mourning (perhaps to allude to the Broken Column).

All other Signs should always be given clearly and separately, with the arms being lowered to the sides after the Due Guard of each of the Craft Degrees and a slight pause being given after the first in each pair of Signs of the Capitular Degrees. The final part of the Sign of a Royal Arch Mason should be given with the hand remaining stretched flat; never with the fingers curved or closed.

ADDRESSING A COMPANION

The normal protocol at any Chapter meeting is for all comments, questions and answers to be made to or through the presiding officer. No member should address his remarks directly to another member or expect the other to reply directly to him. A question requiring a response from another member should be directed to that member by the High Priest and the answer returned through the High Priest.

One often hears: “Most Excellent High Priest, through you to Companion Blank ...”. There is nothing wrong with this, as the other member is not being addressed directly. However, the named Companion should wait for the High Priest to invite him to respond, and he should then respond to the High Priest.

Such discipline can, however, be somewhat relaxed by the High Priest’s prior decision to put the Chapter ‘At Ease’ so that a topic can be more freely discussed or debated – although still guided by other Masonic rules of order. But this should occur only during a period of instruction or similar activity when repetitive referrals to and through the High Priest would be cumbersome.

‘REFRESHMENT’ vs. ‘AT EASE’

When wishing to cease Labour but not go through the ritual of lowering to Refreshment (which sometimes relaxes discipline too much), most Lodges and Chapters make use of another description for the condition they wish to be in when there is to be a short lull or when Guests are to be present. Various forms of the usage have become widespread. But most Bodies use the term ‘At Ease’.

The accepted conventions appear to be that ‘At Refreshment’ means that the Square & Compasses are disarranged but the Bible is left open and the Lesser (in Lodge) or Six Lights (in Chapter) left on, the Tyler is informed, and members may leave the Room; whereas being ‘At Ease’ means that nothing needs to be disarranged, the Tyler is informed, and members may talk but not leave the Room or even move around without specific permission. The presiding officer simply says: “I declare the Chapter at Ease, to return to Labour at the sound of the Gavel. Companion Royal Arch Captain, inform the Tyler.” If a non-Royal Arch Mason is to enter, the presiding officer adds a warning to use only the Sign of Fidelity until the Chapter returns to Labour. When the RAC reports back, the presiding officer gives one rap. When calling the Chapter back to Labour, the presiding officer gives one loud rap, and says: “I declare this Chapter returned to Labour. Companion Royal Arch Captain, inform the Tyler.”

ALTAR AND LIGHTS – POSITIONS

The Altar of Royal Arch Masonry is the Altar of the Craft Lodge, and during Openings and Closings in all Degrees should be in the same position.

But the Lesser Lights of the Craft Lodge are symbols of the Craft Rite only, and should not be used in any Degree of the Capitular Rite.

Included in the essential furniture of every Royal Arch Chapter is an arrangement of Six Lights as described in the Royal Arch Degree: “three greater and three lesser ... These lights [three greater] are placed in the form of an equilateral triangle, each of the lesser [placed between two greater] intersecting the line formed by the two greater, thus geometrically dividing the greater into three lesser triangles at its extremities, and by their union forming a fourth triangle in the centre – all of them equal and equilateral.”

No Chapter is completely or correctly furnished without such an arrangement of Six Lights (which, despite use of the terms ‘greater’ and ‘lesser’ should not be confused with ‘Great Lights’ and ‘Lesser Lights’ – ‘greater’ here simply meaning ‘taller’).

The Six Lights are not an item for use only during the Royal Arch Degree, but for use during every Chapter convocation. And just as with the Lesser Lights in a Craft Lodge, they should be lit prior to the opening of the Great Lights and extinguished after the closing of the Great Lights.

Most Chapters now possess (or purchase, or have built for them) a triangular unit bearing six projections akin to candlesticks, the taller placed at the outer points of the triangular formation, and the shorter placed in the middle of the three outer lines, all topped with electric bulbs, the whole connected to the same power source as used for the Craft Lodge Lesser Lights. Bulbs are preferably coloured red, not blue. For Chapter Openings and Closings, the unit is usually placed against the East side of the Altar, or immediately adjacent to that side, not far removed from it. Prior to the Opening of a Lodge of Mark Master Masons, Virtual Past Masters, or Most Excellent Masters, and prior to any repositioning of the Altar during the Royal Arch Degree itself (see below), the unit is usually moved to one side of the Room, where there is another electrical socket, because *the Six Lights should remain lit during all Degrees of the Capitular Rite*.

The Six Lights may be formed with candles instead of electric bulbs, and the ‘candlesticks’ may be separate, not part of a single unit. But three must be taller, and the six placed in the formation described in the Ritual.

During the Royal Arch Degree, if the Altar is moved to the North-west for use by the Captain of the Host and the Obligation, the Six Lights may be set to one side, but remain lit. It is not essential that they, or the Altar, be put back in the centre of the Room for the Closing. If the Lodge Altar is fixed, a second Altar may be set up for the Captain of the Host, with a second set of Great Lights (VOSL and Square & Compasses), or the Great Lights may be moved from one Altar to the other (in which case the Six Lights may remain undisturbed).

DRAPING OF THE WARRANT

(The HP, CH and Chaplain should each have a Manual open to this page, or other copy of the same text, if they have not memorized it. The Warrant should be draped during that meeting when the death of a Companion becomes known to the Chapter. The custom is to drape the Warrant for ninety days following the death of one of the five principal officers of Grand Chapter during his period of service; thirty days for all others.)

MEHP: Companion Captain of the Host, what is our first consideration on this occasion?

CH: To honour the memory of our late Companion

MEHP: Companions, from the beginning of history it has been a universal custom to honour, ceremonially, the memory of departed companions. Companion Captain of the Host, how stands the hour?

CH: Most Excellent High Priest, it is low twelve. The sun has set on the life of our Companion and he has laid down his working tools.

MEHP: *(Three raps ***)* Companions, let us remember our late Companion, now at rest from his labours. Companion Captain of the Host, you will drape the Warrant in memory of our departed Companion.

(The Captain of the Host does so, with solemnity.)

MEHP: Let us now observe a moment of silent tribute.

(After about ten seconds the High Priest from the East, or the Chaplain from the Altar, will offer the following prayer:)

Chap: Rest eternal grant unto him (them) O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon him (them). And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

Comps: So mote it be.

MEHP: *(One rap *)*

INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

Section 75 (2) (3) and (4) of the *Constitution* calls for every petition for the Capitular Degrees to be submitted to an Investigating Committee, and gives instructions for that Committee's work, which must include 'diligent enquiries' and result in any one of its members reporting at a subsequent regular convocation on behalf of the Committee "favourably" or "unfavourably".

The Committee does not have to make a home visit, but is required to verify the petitioner's status as a Master Mason in good standing.

BALLOTING – CHAPTER PETITIONS**Appropriate ritual**

MEHP: Companion Captain of the Host, please prepare the ballot box.

(CH obtains the box, checks that all balls and cubes are at the balloting end of the box, then stands ready for further instructions.)

MEHP: Please present the ballot box for inspection, first by the Excellent Scribe, then by the Excellent King, then by me.

(CH opens both ends of box, holds it with right hand, rests it on left arm, and presents it for inspection. When satisfied, the MEHP addresses the convocation:)

MEHP: A ballot will now be taken on the petition for membership of Brother, a member of Lodge Number ..., whose age is ..., occupation is, and residence is White balls elect, black balls or cubes reject. Vote for the good of the Order. Companion Captain of the Host, present the ballot box to me, then to the Excellent King, then to the Excellent Scribe, then place it upon the Altar to one side of the Great Lights, and stand on guard north-west of the Altar.

(Or, if the applicant is a Companion seeking affiliation, the MEHP says:)

A ballot will now be taken on the petition for affiliation of Companion, a member (or demitted member) of Chapter Number ..., whose age is ..., occupation is, and residence is White balls elect, black balls or cubes reject. Vote for the good of the Order. Companion Captain of the Host, you will present the ballot box to me, then to the Excellent King, then to the Excellent Scribe, then place it upon the Altar to one side of the Great Lights, and stand on guard north-west of the Altar.)

(When the ballot box has been placed correctly on the Altar, and the CH has taken position, the MEHP addresses the convocation:)

MEHP: Companions, you will approach the Altar in turn, give the Sign of a Royal Arch Mason, ballot, step back, give the Sign of Fidelity, and retire. Your Signs are not made to me, but are an affirmation that your ballot is in accord with your obligations.

(When all but the Tyler have balloted:)

MEHP: Companion Captain of the Host, please designate a Past High Priest to replace the Tyler temporarily, and conduct the Tyler to the Altar.

(Then:) Companion Tyler, a ballot is being taken on the petition for membership of Brother, a member of Lodge Number ..., whose age is ..., occupation is, and residence is White balls elect, black balls or cubes reject. Vote for the good of the Order.

(Then:)

MEHP: Companion Captain of the Host, please reconduct the Tyler to his place, and return.

(Then:) Companion Captain of the Host, have all present balloted, including the Tyler? (If so:) Then I declare the ballot closed. (One rap *)
Companion Captain of the Host, you will present the ballot box for inspection in turn by the Excellent Scribe, Excellent King, and me.

(CH closes the balloting end of the box, places the box upon his left arm so that the end with the ballots will be presented for inspection, and approaches each of the three officers, turning his head away during the inspection. After presentation to the MEHP, the CH stands in front of his seat in the north-east and awaits instructions.)

MEHP: Excellent Scribe, how found you the ballot?

ES (after saluting with Sign of a Royal Arch Mason): Favourable, Most Excellent High Priest (or, if two or more black balls or cubes have appeared: “Unfavourable”).

MEHP: Excellent King, how found you the ballot?

EK (after salute): Favourable, Most Excellent High Priest (or “Unfavourable”).

MEHP: And I, too, find the ballot favourable (or “unfavourable”). I declare Brother eligible to receive the Capitular Degrees (or “I declare the petition of Brother rejected”). Companion Secretary, please inform the applicant, and give him appropriate guidance. Companion Captain of the Host, destroy the ballot.

(CH returns all balls and cubes to the balloting end of the box, closes it, and sits.)

One black ball or cube:

If only one black ball or cube appears, the ballot is favourable.

Second ballot:

If two black balls or cubes appear, the presiding officer may, if he chooses, before any member leaves the room and before any declaration is made by the Scribe, order the ballot destroyed and a second vote taken. The result of a ballot, once announced, is final.

Collective ballot:

By motion, duly seconded, and the unanimous consent of the Companions present, and at the discretion of the MEHP, a ballot may be taken at the same time for two or more Candidates for Initiation, but if such ballot is unfavourable a ballot shall be taken on each separately immediately thereafter. In no case should ballots for initiation and affiliation be grouped together collectively.

MULTIPLE CANDIDATES

The Obligation of a Royal Arch Mason may never be given to more than one three-man team at the Altar at one and the same time. Nor, without a Dispensation, may more than one team at a time be exalted to be Masters of the Veils. When more than three Candidates are to be obligated and exalted at the same convocation, they must be divided into teams of three (which may include one substitute each – see *Constitution* 86(3)), and each team received into the Chapter Room separately, obligated separately, and exalted separately, with only one team continuing through other parts of the floor work while the others watch – except during explanations, Signs, etc., when all should be assembled in one group.

If it is felt that presentation of the entire Obligation to every separate team would take too long, a Dispensation may be sought to permit the following:

- One team will receive the full Obligation at the Altar as usual.
- The other teams will first be placed in the West. At the conclusion of the Obligation, the Captain of the Host will enquire of them, “Have you heard the Obligation just given, and do you concur?” On receiving their assent, he will place each team at the Altar in turn and require the following abbreviated Obligation:
- “I,, of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God and this Most Excellent Chapter of Royal Arch Masons erected to Him and dedicated to Zerubbabel, do hereby and hereon most solemnly promise and swear the Obligation which I have just heard, all of which I most solemnly promise and swear with a firm and steadfast resolution to keep and perform the same, without the least equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion whatsoever, ever bearing in mind the ancient and traditional penalty of having the skull smote off and the brains exposed to the scorching rays of the meridian sun, should I, in the least knowingly or wittingly, violate or transgress this my Royal Arch Mason Obligation. So help me God and keep me steadfast.”
- One team will then continue through the work, the others watching. Care must be taken that all Candidates hear the Captain of the Host’s explanation of the change of character (usually given in the Preparation Room). Further, each team must be brought separately before the Council, through the process of passing the Veils, until all are greeted together and required to give the Signs of the preceding Degrees. Similarly, providing a Dispensation has been received to exalt more than three Candidates at the same time, all are gathered when the Ark is seated within the Sanctuary, before the High Priest says, “My Brethren, we exalt you to be Masters of the Veils ...”, and all then remain together to the end of the Degree.

But note that such a separate Dispensation, aside from that required for use of the short form of Obligation, is needed to permit actual exaltation of more than three Candidates at the same time. If no such Dispensation to exalt more than three at the same time has been sought and issued, each team of three must be exalted separately. Separate exaltation of separate teams is the preferred practice, but simultaneous requests for the two Dispensations are quite common.

SUBSTITUTES

Concerning exaltation to the Most Sublime Degree of Royal Arch Mason, the *Constitution* specifies that no team of three may include more than one substitute (non-Candidate) unless a Dispensation has been obtained. Thus it is not permissible to exalt only one Candidate without such a Dispensation.

However, four Candidates could be grouped into twos, plus one substitute each, to make two teams. But a Chapter may never give the full Obligation to all four at the Altar at the same time, nor use the Short Form Obligation without a Dispensation, nor exalt four or more Candidates at the same time without a Dispensation permitting these two procedures (see previous section, Multiple Candidates).

DISPENSATIONS

A Dispensation is a written permission from the Grand High Priest to do that which, without such permission, is forbidden by the *Constitution* and Usages of the Order (a clearly established and approved Usage is usually considered binding for the resolution of disputes).

A Dispensation is obtained by addressing a request to the Grand Secretary giving full particulars and reasons, who then consults with the Grand High Priest, the only Grand Chapter officer empowered to grant it.

The system of requiring Dispensations has several particular merits:

- To promote general conformity with the Jurisdiction's *Constitution*, Laws and Edicts, for the benefits of uniformity and good order.
- To enable members and visitors to attend meetings at expected places and times, and prompt the widest possible notice of any change.
- To enable Chapters and individual officers to receive contrary advice when necessary, or helpful guidance on unusual procedures along with their Dispensations.

Dispensations are required for the following (most frequently requested):

- To hold a regular or an emergent convocation elsewhere than at the Chapter's stated domicile.
- To hold a regular convocation at other than the stated date.

- To open Chapter at an hour other than specified in the By-Laws.
- To elect or install officers on other than the stated date.
- To hold a Joint installation.
- To appear in public wearing regalia – *especially* for parades to Divine Worship services.
- To receive a petition from a physically disabled Brother.
- To use two substitutes in the Royal Arch Degree in any one team.
- To use the approved shortened form of the Obligation during the exaltation of a large class (see section on Multiple Candidates).
- To exalt more than three Candidates at the same time.

EXAMINATIONS

Constitution 86(1) says: No Candidate shall be exalted to the Holy Royal Arch Degree until he shall have passed in open Chapter a satisfactory examination in the preceding Capitular Degrees.

What is 'satisfactory' has been left up to each Chapter to define. *The Work* includes a set of appropriate questions, but does not specify 'satisfactory' answers. However, some Chapters have ceased conducting any examination in open Chapter, perhaps fearful of an excessively long session that combines an over-long examination with subsequent presentation of the Royal Arch Degree.

Others have opted to use a regular convocation *between* those when the MEM and RA Degrees are conferred, at which to conduct the examination in open Chapter and add other 'mentoring' activities of benefit to both the Candidate and the general membership (the Candidate arriving after the Opening and leaving before the Closing).

One District has developed a complete set of answers, and has offered those as both an educational demonstration and as a helpful resource. That potentially helpful resource material is available through the Grand Secretary or Grand Lecturer, without any *new* requirement that Chapters do more than is presently required by the *Constitution* (that the Candidate pass "in open Chapter a satisfactory examination").

Similarly, a set of possible answers to the questions suggested in *The Work* for a Visitor's Examination is available through the same officers.

BY-LAW CHANGES

No Chapter may suspend or otherwise act as if it could give itself a temporary dispensation to ignore one of its own By-Laws. They exist precisely to prevent arbitrary and spur-of-the-moment decisions. Instead, if a specific incident has shown that a By-Law needs to be changed, the following steps must be taken as further examples of the rule of law:

- A motion to amend a By-Law cannot be presented and decided at a single meeting without having first appeared as a Notice of Motion in the summons for that regular convocation, but after due Notice having been thus provided the proposal can then be moved, seconded and discussed or amended (if such amendment does not destroy the meaning of the motion), and voted upon, all at the one meeting. To be adopted, such a motion requires a two-thirds majority of the Companions present. But note that the motion is to *propose* a change. The change itself is not officially adopted until approved by the Grand High Priest.
- The Secretary forwards the proposed change *in duplicate* to the Grand Secretary with a statement that following due notice the motion was carried by the requisite majority at a regular convocation on the date specified. The two copies of the statement are signed by the MEHP and Secretary and sealed with the Chapter seal.
- The Grand Secretary submits the proposed change to the Grand High Priest for approval. No By-law in conflict with the *Constitution* of the Grand Chapter can be approved.
- If the proposed change is approved by the Grand High Priest, the Grand Secretary returns one copy to the Secretary. The change becomes effective from the date of approval.
- Communication delays have caused some Chapters to presume approval, and to implement their *proposed* change without waiting for ‘formal’ approval by the Grand High Priest. This is understandable and in some cases may be deemed appropriate. But it must be understood that subsequent rejection or correction by the Grand High Priest could cause a reversal or negation of any decision made on the basis of the *proposed* By-Law change. If in doubt, ask the Grand Secretary for advice.

See also *Motions & Resolutions* in the Grand Chapter section of this Manual.

DIVINE WORSHIP SERVICES

If it is to reflect credit on the Order, attendance by Royal Arch Masons in a body at a Divine Worship service in a church, synagogue, or other place of worship, must be carefully planned. If the service is to be for the Craft and our families and guests, it is reasonable to ask that it be organized by us, including our own speaker. If attendance is to be at the church’s own regular service, we can offer much (service covers, ushers, readers, etc.), but must never forget that the service belongs first to the church, clergy and congregation.

In either case, if a public procession in regalia is desired a Dispensation to appear in public wearing regalia must be secured through the Grand Secretary by the Host Chapter.

If the service is being arranged specifically “for the Masons”, a special speaker should be secured, and if the Grand High Priest is to be present he should be asked to read a scripture lesson.

The planning should be undertaken by a committee, which should secure the facility, and arrange the order of service, the music, the collection, the ushering, and the notices to the Chapters and the general public. These arrangements must be made, of course, in conference with the clergy, organist and choir director.

BANQUETS

A formal banquet by a Chapter, as a special event to attract members who have not been attending regular convocations, to attract potential petitioners, or to celebrate a special occasion, is a highly desirable event.

The format is basically that for an Annual District Meeting. See pages 27/28.

E-MAIL AND THE INTERNET

The Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia now maintains an Internet website at <http://www.grandchapterRAM.org>

The content at this site, and the methods used for accessing some of its special features, are under the control of officers appointed by the Board of General Purposes. Constituent Chapters may submit material about themselves for inclusion at the same site, subject to approval by those officers. No Chapter should open a separate site without specific authorization from the Board.

The practice of sending Summonses to Freemasons with e-mail addresses, by attachment to e-mail messages, has now become widespread, and has also been accepted by the Grand Chapter Board subject to each affected member indicating his willingness to receive his Summons in this form. Chapters are advised to be just as cautious with the content of e-mail messages and attachments as they would be with ‘snail mail’.

REPORTS BY CHAPTERS TO THE GRAND SECRETARY

Membership changes:

Each Chapter Secretary is provided with special forms for reporting membership changes. These should be completed *during* any convocation at which *any* change in membership takes place, and mailed at once to the Grand Secretary. This system is mandatory, to ensure that the Grand Chapter records are as up to date as possible.

Annual Elections:

The election process is completed only when an officer has been installed. Nonetheless, immediately following the annual election and announcement of officer appointments (which should be made on election night), the list of new officers should be mailed to the Grand Secretary using the *Return of Officers* form, and any changes thereafter sent promptly at that time.

The application for the Order of High Priesthood should accompany the *Return of Officers* form.

Annual Return:

The standard form of Annual Return must be filed with the Grand Secretary not later than the first day of March, unless otherwise advised by him.

The R. V. Harris Proficiency Trophy Return should accompany the Annual Return, but in any case must be received by no later than sixty days prior to the upcoming Grand Chapter Annual Convocation.

Payment of Grand Chapter fees and dues must be made to the Grand Secretary by no later than the first day of April. A Chapter Secretary does not need a Motion of approval from his Chapter to authorize this payment, as the Chapter is already obligated by the *Constitution* to make the payment.

If the Chapter's payment of fees and dues has not been made before the Annual Convocation of Grand Chapter, the Chapter will be in default and its officers and members will be denied a vote in Grand Chapter.

OTHER FORMS

Every Chapter should be encouraged every year to meet the standards which can earn it a Certificate of Achievement, and to apply for that Certificate using a copy of the form reproduced on the following pages. Those pages have been included here to provide for easy and frequent reference to the Certificate's criteria (which every Chapter can meet with effort, and many do). They can be copied for actual submission.

Each Chapter can also apply for other awards, using forms obtainable from the Grand Secretary, e.g. the Harris Proficiency Trophy, Long Service Awards, and the Secretary Long Service Medal, and attention should be given frequently to possible opportunities to present a Meritorious Service Medal according to the detailed criteria of *Constitution* section 97(5).

APPLICATION FOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

(Grand Chapter Certificate of Achievement)

Every Chapter can win:

It is possible for *every* Chapter to win the Grand Chapter Certificate of Achievement, *every* year. And each new High Priest and his officers can take justifiable pride in again meeting the standards set by their predecessors.

There are two requirements:

- Complete and submit the application form. It must be received by the Grand Secretary before March 15 following the calendar year reported on.
- Measure up well against the standards described on the form.

While many Chapters do measure up, some do not complete and submit the form. Yet the purpose of the Achievement Award is not only to serve as a challenge and incentive, but also as a guide that each new High Priest can use in setting goals for his Chapter, and assessing results.

It is recommended that each new High Priest, upon his election, study the following pages ("Report of Achievement") and determine what activities he should include in his Program for his year that might help his Chapter measure up well against the expected standards, and justify submission of the Report.

Similarly, it is recommended that every District Grand Superintendent focus on the standards, encourage each Chapter to plan accordingly, and help each Chapter to complete a copy of the following Report:

REPORT OF ACHIEVEMENT

Chapter name: Number:

Period: January 1 – December 31, 20.....

General Rules

- 1. The Award is named "The Grand Chapter Certificate of Achievement".
2. The Objective of the Award is to help improve the quality and welfare of every Chapter by setting basic standards against which results can be calculated; standards every Chapter is potentially capable of meeting.
3. Publicity is to be given this Award in material to be forwarded and read at the December and March meetings of each Chapter. This award is not to supersede or replace our valued R. V. Harris Proficiency Trophy.
4. Using this form, application for the Certificate is to be completed by the Chapter's Council, meeting jointly with its District Grand Superintendent (who shall be chairman of the meeting and final judge). The form is to be signed by the High Priest, King (who will thus become prepared to plan his own year's program accordingly), and Secretary of the Chapter, as well as the District Grand Superintendent.
5. The form questions or statements are to be simply completed with a Yes or No answer, with space for remarks and recommendations.
6. The number of Items required for accomplishment in order to receive the Certificate shall be determined each year by the Board of General Purposes, working through its Awards Committee, taking into account variables such as visits which did not take place.
7. The Application is to be forwarded by the District Grand Superintendent to the Grand Secretary by April 1st. The ratings are to be based on activities during the period January 1 to December 31 of the year preceding the next Grand Chapter Annual Convocation, thereby coinciding with the period covered by the Annual Returns.
8. The Award will be presented by the Grand High Priest or Grand King annually at the Grand Chapter Annual Convocation.

RESULTS

Accomplished with adequate proficiency:

Chapter's own Assessment Approved by District Grand Superintendent

1. There was at least one Candidate (not necessarily the same one) advanced, passed, received and exalted between January 1 and December 31 this past year.

yes or no yes or no

2.(a) The MMM degree was exemplified on the day of, 20, with acting as Presiding Officer, who is of the Chapter.

(b) The VPM degree was exemplified on the day of, 20, with acting as Presiding Officer, who is of the Chapter.

(c) The MEM degree was exemplified on the day of, 20, with acting as Presiding Officer, who is of the Chapter.

(d) The RA degree was exemplified on the day of, 20, with acting as Presiding Officer, who is of the Chapter.

In any two of these degrees the Presiding Officer was a Chapter Council officer (High Priest, King or Scribe).

yes or no yes or no

3. Out of the Chapter's ten regular meetings, its Minutes show the following attendance rates by its officers. (If an officer's Regrets with Reason for Absence were recorded, such reason being sickness, funeral or family-related problems, other Masonic duties, or work issues, the District Grand Superintendent may, upon seeing the Minute, adjust the Chapter's report to give the officer credit as if he had been present. However, the Chapter may not make the claim. "Regrets are not as good as attendance.")

Table with 6 columns: Officer, Rating, Title, Rating, Title, Rating. Rows include HP, K, Scr, Trea, Sec, CH, PS, RAC, M. 3rdV, M. 2ndV, M. 1stV, Tyl.

On the basis of these records, at least ten of the twelve officers attended at least nine of the ten meetings.

yes or no yes or no

