

Grand Chapter of Nebraska



Order of the Eastern Star

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Dear Worthy Matrons of our Nebraska Chapters,

As the months of 2020 continue to quickly pass, we have several issues to address as we consider our law, ritual and the transaction of our business. The challenges being presented by the CDC guidelines partnered with our loving concern for our chapters impact the healthy balance that we must maintain in our chapters and for our members. We need to determine how we can properly practice our ritual, transact our business and follow the proper procedures of our Chapters while maintaining a healthy balance and adapting to low risk behaviors.

I trust you have received the Executive Order regarding how our Chapters are to elect their 2021 officers, accepting the potential challenges before us regarding our ability to have stated meetings in November. The risks of the Covid-19 spread are not yet declining and can impact us more dramatically at some times than at others. Please use your best judgement and care for your November meetings and allow the alternative plan provided in the Executive Order to guide your election of officers if needed.

This communication also addresses our Ritualistic work as defined in our Grand Chapter By-laws, specifically regarding the need to exemplify the Ceremony of Initiation at least once during the calendar year in addition to giving it during your School of Instruction as led by your District Grand Supervisor. **[GC By-Law Section 148. Ritualistic Work in Nebraska (3) The officers must perform the complete ritualistic initiation ceremony (with candidates or Chapter members) at least once during the year in addition to the time it is given for the District Grand Supervisor.]**

This is a very unusual year. A number of our Chapters have not had School of Instruction nor have they met more than once due to CDC guidelines and direction from the WGM. Also, we remain in Phase I of the guidelines to have Chapter meetings which does not include initiation. We are entering the last quarter of the calendar year and as I observe and interpret our current levels of the Covid-19 outbreak, I do not anticipate widespread reductions in these challenges during these next three months; therefore, it does not seem reasonable for chapters to be expected to initiate or host their School of Instruction before the end of the calendar year.

If we are able to move into Phase 2 during the calendar year and a chapter has candidates waiting to be initiated or it is feasible for a chapter to exemplify initiation with members serving as the candidates, then please do. However, if we remain in Phase I or if we enter Phase 2 guidelines and you do not have candidates waiting; please do not feel obligated to exemplify. The safety, health and comfort levels of our members is far more important than the important work of our Order.

As Worthy Grand Matron I prepare a report of irregularities within our chapters as observed during my term of office. I am prepared to report that not all of our Chapters were able to exemplify the ceremony of initiation. Chapters are not named individually in an irregularity. There is no shame if indeed initiating is not feasible for your chapter in 2020. We all strive for excellence, adherence, and exceeding expectations. However we are in an unusual year. I hope an irregularity can be viewed as an exception to your measure of success as a chapter during this term. We need to comfortably accept that in 2020 we will put our members' needs first and adapt to accept irregularities not as a critical measure but merely a circumstantial report.

It continues to be my honor and privilege to serve with you. Your diligence, thoughtfulness, and dedication are inspiring and the true measure of our great successes during 2020. Beloved, we will reach out in love each day.

Star love and gratitude,

Karan Birdsall
Worthy Grand Matron