

First, I want to thank the Worthy Grand Matron and Worthy Grand Patron for allowing me to include this letter in their Grand Chapter mailing and to post it on our Grand Chapter Web Site. I welcome the opportunity to address the subject of membership in Kansas, one of the six States in the South Region, which I am responsible for during this Triennium. Visionquest and membership go hand in hand and we cannot discuss the goals of one without including the other. I am convinced, beyond a doubt, that if we as members do not make a concerted effort to increase our membership numbers and likewise, increase the attendance and participation by our current members, Eastern Star in Kansas will cease to exist in ten years. Now, before you say, "Dean's not playing with a full deck," let it soak in for a few seconds. I don't make this statement based on magical powers invested in me by virtue of my General Grand Chapter appointment. I simply review the facts. We have lost approximately 20,000 members and over 100 Chapters in the past fifteen years! That amounts to a loss of approximately 1,300 members per year. With our current membership being approximately 14,500 and declining; you do the math. Do you realize that less than five percent of our members attend our Grand Chapter Sessions to conduct its business? Am I scaring you? Am I making you angry? Good! Do something about it. At this point, you're probably saying or thinking, "In all his infinite wisdom, what's he doing about it?"

Well, I am glad you asked. Here are more facts for you to consider. Of the approximately 14,500 members, only 3,300 are men. Whoa! With Grand Lodge membership being approximately 25,000, that means there are approximately 21,700 Masons in our great State that can join our beautiful Order TODAY! And, I'll assume that fifty percent of them are married; that's another 10,850; and assuming they have mothers, daughters, sisters, and on and on. Again, you do the math.

Here's what we're doing in our Chapter. We're giving "The Gift of Eastern Star" to our Masons and their ladies. Our Chapter pays the per-capita and International Temple fees, which totals a mere \$11.00 per new member. After they're initiated, our new members can see for themselves exactly what our beautiful Order is all about. At the end of their first year, they can then remit their own dues and remain a member or if they don't like what our Order has to offer, they can demit and they've lost nothing financially. If we, as members, work for the good of the Order and make our meetings interesting, I'll lay odds they remain members.

Remember, there is not anyone of us who has all the answers and I don't think we'll get back to the mid-fifties when we boasted 91,000 members; however, we can stop the decline, become more involved and increase our membership numbers. The solution lies with each of us. What are you willing to do? Get a couple of petitions and give The Gift of Eastern Star to one of those 21,700 Masons and his lady. I am interested in hearing from you by email, telephone or face-to-face. Submit **proven** solutions on what has worked for you and in your Chapters?

Try the following: At every meeting, spend time addressing the membership issue. As I visit various Chapters, I become quite concerned because seldom is the membership issue ever brought up for discussion. Why aren't the members bringing in petitions? Why aren't the current members attending, holding office(s) and participating? Are we, as a Chapter, doing all we can to resolve these membership problems? How much longer can we continue? How much longer will we have Eastern Star in Kansas? There is but one answer to these questions: It's up to YOU and ME!

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I urge you to contact the member of your District, serving on the Visionquest/Membership Committee for our Grand Chapter: See the 2008 - 2009 Itinerary for their contact information.

Membership Committee Chairperson: Year 2008--Kelly Herring, PGM; Year 2009--Patricia Lawrukiewicz
Year 2010--Joan Olga Hale

District 1: Eunice King District 2: George Bayless District 3: Marianne Masters
District 4: Sonny Peterson District 5: Claude Roswurm, PGP District 6: Bonnie Perkins
District 7: Cheryl Sowder District 8: Loren R. Harvey District 9: Doris Kammerer
District 10: Adreinne Blocker District 11: Sarah Orr District 12: Carol Middleton