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**GENERAL GRAND CHAPTER**  
Order of the Eastern Star  
Established November 1876

**To be shared with OES Membership**  
**CLARIFICATION – Installations; Closed Meetings**

April 6, 2020

My Sisters and Brothers,

I am writing to provide clarification regarding two issues in my earlier letters. Thank you for your inquiries for clarification. I sincerely appreciate your desire to follow my directives. It is important to understand that **ONLY** the Most Worthy Grand Matron has authority over the contents of the Ritual and its application as per the GGC Constitution, Article VII., Powers of General Grand Chapter, (a), page 14 and GGC Bylaws, Chapter II., Officers, Committees, Deputies and Ambassadors, (1), (f) and (g), pages 32 and 33.

1. Suspension of using a full Ritualistic Installation Ceremony, letter dated March 18, 2020. This letter stated my proclamation of the suspension of a full Ritualistic ceremony until May 31, 2020, for the GRAND OFFICERS of a Grand Chapter. I did **not** give a blanket suspension of a full ceremony for both Grand Chapters AND Subordinate Chapters. In either case, a **“ceremony” must be performed** that includes at a minimum the Installation Prayer, the Obligation of Officers and the Proclamation of the Officers being duly **INSTALLED**. This portion of the Ritual **must** be accomplished. This can be done by conference call or video conferencing (please see #2), but it *cannot be accomplished in person* in order to safeguard the health and safety of our members until the COVID-19 pandemic is over.
2. Using Skype or Zoom to conduct *closed meetings*, letter dated March 31, 2020. A "closed meeting" is an OES meeting opened with the proper opening ceremony in Ritualistic form from the Ritual and closed in proper Ritualistic form from the Ritual. These are the meetings that would be unacceptable and illegal to conduct using Skype, Zoom, or *any* other type of video conferencing.
  - An “open” installation does not include the ceremonies of Ritualistically opening and closing a Chapter; therefore, using a conference call or video conferencing would be acceptable as a **one-time occurrence** during these unprecedented times.
  - I am not saying that video conferencing cannot be used to stay connected to each other. I think using this medium to stay connected is wonderful! Many members are checking in with each other, socializing and checking to be sure everyone is okay. Using video conferencing is permissible as long as no ritualistic work or any work that would be done at a closed Chapter meeting is being performed. Please work within the guidelines of safety to stay connected and supportive of each other—telephone, email, snail mail, and/or video conferencing.

3. I have been asked what needs to happen to allow video conferencing of a regular stated meeting, which is a closed meeting. This would take a properly submitted Resolution to change the rules in the Red Book of General Grand Chapter in order to bring the matter before the membership at a General Grand Chapter Triennial Assembly to be voted on by the delegates.

A brief summary of the process. The following are those who are voting delegates and can submit Resolutions: all officers of the GGC when present in person; the WGM, WGP, AGM and AGP of Grand Chapters or their legally appointed proxies; the three Worthy Matrons elected and installed during the current Triennial of each Subordinate Chapter directly under General Grand Chapter; all Past Grand Matrons and Past Grand Patrons of Grand Chapters that are members of the GGC when present in person; and the Deputies of the MWGM and MWGP appointed for the current Triennial when present in person (GGC Constitution, Article VI., pages 12, 13 and 14). These are the voting delegates at a Triennial Assembly who can write and submit the Resolutions to be brought to the floor to be discussed, followed by a vote by the voting delegates.

Jurisdictions each handle differently the process they use to write and submit Resolutions. If you are not a voting delegate and you are interested in this option, please work with those who are voting delegates in your Jurisdiction to explore the possibilities of preparing a Resolution to be submitted by them. Sister Alma Bane, RW Grand Secretary, has the guidelines and timelines associated with submission of resolutions that will be presented at the 2018-2021 Triennial Assembly. Her email address is [rwgsecretary@easternstar.org](mailto:rwgsecretary@easternstar.org).

I hope this additional information is helpful to you, especially in these unsettling times.

There is one other matter I would like to address. In my letter of March 31, 2020, I referenced "...the President's announcement...". While this was a familiar choice of words, it was an error on my part. My letters to all of you are always meant for all Eastern Stars *worldwide*, regardless of the title of government leaders. I think of us as one big family no matter where we live in the world. I apologize for my misstatement.

Thank you for all your loving-kindness and acts of caring in a world that truly needs the tenets of our Order shown to everyone, every day. "How beautiful a day can be when kindness touches it!" --George Elliston

Please take care. Stay well, Stay safe and Stay in!

In friendship and love,

*Marianne Shenefelt*  
Marianne R. Shenefelt  
Most Worthy Grand Matron

copy: Henry S. Martin, MWGP  
Alma Bane, RW Grand Secretary  
RW Grand Trustees  
GGC Jurisprudence Committee

