

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON INFORMATION FOR RECOGNITION

February 18, 2020

TO THE CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS OF MASONS IN NORTH AMERICA:

MOST WORSHIPFUL BROTHER CHAIRMAN:

MOST WORSHIPFUL AND RIGHT WORSHIPFUL BRETHREN:

I am Joe R. Manning, Jr. Past Grand Master of Oklahoma, Vice Chairman filling in for M.W. Raymond C. Lemons, Past Grand Master of Michigan, Chairman
It is my honor to present the 68th annual report of the Commission on Information for Recognition. At this time I am pleased to present the other members of this Commission in the order of length of service:

M.W. Raymond C. Lemons, Past Grand Master of Michigan, Chairman
M.W. Joe R. Manning, Jr, Past Grand Master of Oklahoma
M.W. Glen A. Cook, Past Grand Master of Utah
M.W. Jorge L. Aladro, Past Grand Master of Florida
M.W. Richard Stewart, Past Grand Master of Massachusetts
M.W. Richard A. H. Brown, Past Grand Master of Saskatchewan
M.W. David Worel, Past Grand Master of Alaska
M.W. Joe C. Harrison, Past Grand Master of Tennessee, Secretary-Treasurer

Since the delegates to this Conference change each year, I would like to repeat the standards for recognition adopted for our guidance when the Commission was formed in 1952. These are the guidelines used to evaluate the regularity of a Grand Lodge, and thereby determine whether it is worthy of consideration for recognition by our member Grand Lodges. This Commission provides this data for use by our Grand Lodges, and does not attempt to influence or recommend what action should be taken. The Commission serves you in an investigative and advisory capacity only.

The standards for recognition are summarized as follows:

1. Legitimacy of origin.
2. Exclusive territorial jurisdiction, except by mutual consent and/or treaty.
3. Adherence to the Ancient Landmarks - specifically, a Belief in God, the Volume of the Sacred Law as an indispensable part of the Furniture of the Lodge, and the prohibition of the discussion of politics and religion.

Applying these standards to the requests of several Grand Lodges during our deliberations, we now share the following information:

Brazil State Grand Orients

The Grande Orient of Rio De Janeiro, the Grand Oriente da Bahia and the Grand Orients Paulista were each recognized by and treaties signed with their respective State Grand Lodges in 2019 along with the Grand Orient of Brazil. Each of these bodies is also recognized by the CMI. It would be reasonable to assume that these grand orientes are practicing regular Masonry and recognition would be appropriate if you so desire.

Grand Lodge of the Republic of Georgia

Representatives of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Georgia contacted the Commission in a timely manner to pursue recognition in 2017. Due to the continued instability of government in this country, action on this matter was differed until the 2018-2019 conferences. No representative from this grand lodge was present at the 2019 Commission meeting. At this session, the Commission was presented with the following information. On March 14, 2015, representatives of the Grand Lodge of Russia, and three lodges regularly constituted by the Grand Lodge of Russia, met and formed the Grand Lodge of Georgia. In 2018 the Grand Lodges of Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and Armenia met and formed the United Grand Lodge of Georgia. At this time the Commission does not have adequate information to present findings on this matter.

Grand Lodge of Cuscatlan

A packet was received in a timely manner from representatives of the Grand Lodge of Cuscatlan. However, no representatives were present at the 2020 Conference to speak on behalf of this grand lodge. Therefore, no action was taken on this matter.

Grand Lodge of Ecuador

A packet was received in a timely manner from representatives of the Grand Lodge of Ecuador. However, no representatives from this grand lodge were present at the 2020 Conference to speak on behalf of this grand lodge. Therefore, no action was taken on this matter.

Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Louisiana

A packet was received in a timely manner from representatives of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Louisiana requesting information on how to obtain a seat at the table of this Conference. However, no representatives from this group were present at the 2020 Conference to speak on this matter. Therefore, no action was taken.

Additional Information

1. A communication from the GLNF was received concerning the Grand Lodge of Tahiti. Nothing contained in that communication would cause the Commission to change its position published on page 6 of the 2012 Commission report.
2. In 2004 the Commission reported that the Confederation of Mexican Grand Lodges (Confederacion de Grandes Logias Regulares de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos) had undertaken an extensive study to identify those grand lodges in Mexico which were practicing regular Masonry and could reasonably be considered for recognition. Additional grand lodges have been added to that list since 2004. A complete list of those grand lodges recognized by the Confederation of Mexican Grand Lodges will be included in the 2020 report of the Commission on Information for Recognition book.

REMINDER: The deadline for reports filed with the Commission is December 1. We will not accept any new material for consideration after this date.

I now call on M/W Joe C. Harrison for the Secretary/Tres report.

As some of you have already heard, due to the bankruptcy of our mailing agent in Memphis, the initial mailing of the Commission report was incomplete. We discovered this in the late fall of 2019 when I started receiving inquiries about the report. A second mailing was begun in January. All members should have their 2019 reports or will have them very shortly.

TREASURER'S REPORT

TO: THE CONFERENCE OF GRAND MASTERS OF
MASONS IN NORTH AMERICA

This report is an accounting of the funds of the Commission on Information for the period just past, ending January 31, 2020. Since January 1, 2019, no Grand Lodges have contributed to the Commission due to the failure of the first mailing of the report. Checks are beginning to arrive now as a result of the second mailing. Those donations will be identified as 2019 donations and itemized along with the 2020 donations at the 2021 conference.

BALANCE ON JANUARY 31, 2019:..... \$ 3,070.05

Expenses between January 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020:

Conference and Travel Expense	\$1,142.94
Printing Annual Report	355.00
Postage and Stamps	252.90
Secretarial Services	00.00
Website	00.00
Office Supplies / Photo Copies	<u>43.30</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,794.14

BALANCE AS OF January 31, 2020 \$1,275.91

Respectfully submitted,

Joe C. Harrison, Past Grand Master
Secretary-Treasurer

M. W. Bro. Harrison, thank you for the report.

Upon the retirement of M/W Bro. Raymond C. Lemons a vacancy exists on the Commission from the Mid-West Conference. The Commission recommends that M/W Bro. Anthony Cracco, Past Grand Master of Ill be elected to fill the vacancy. The normal term of service for a new Commission member is seven years.

The organization of the Commission for the year 2020 will be:

CHAIRMAN

M.W. Joe R. Manning, Jr.
Past Grand Master of Oklahoma

VICE-CHAIRMAN

M.W. Glen A. Cook
Past Grand Master of Utah

SECRETARY-TREASURER

M.W. Joe C. Harrison
Past Grand Master of Tennessee

Most Worshipful and Right Worshipful Brethren, my sincere thanks for your attention and for the opportunity to serve this Conference. This concludes the 68th annual report of this Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond C. Lemons, PGM, Chairman
Joe R. Manning, Jr, PGM
Glen A. Cook, PGM
Jorge L. Aladro, PGM
Richard Stewart, PGM
Richard A. H. Brown, PGM
David Worel, PGM
Joe C. Harrison, PGM, Sec/Treas.

I move the acceptance of the report.

2004 Commission Report

Bulgaria

Some confusion still exists within the Grand Lodge AF&AM of Bulgaria. The Grand Lodge practices Regular Masonry, and meets the standards of Recognition; however two sets of Brethren claim to be the legitimate Officers of this Grand Lodge. The latest information is that a large majority of the members have agreed to come together and recognition Bro. Boris Saredev as the Grand Master. To date, the other Grand Master, Bro. Roumen Raltchev, has not accepted this and continues to send correspondence to our Grand Lodges, this perpetuating the confusion.

To the best of our knowledge, a majority of the Regular Grand Lodges in Europe consider M·W· Bro Saredev the legitimate Grand Master. The Grand Secretary is: Nikola Belopitov, and the address of the Grand Lodge is

11 Karegi Street
1142 Sofia
Bulgaria

It is sincerely hoped that all members of the Grand Lodge AF&AM of Bulgaria will make a determined effort this year to resolve their differences and end this confusion.

Estonia

The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Estonia submitted documentation for the Commission to consider concerning its Regularity. This Grand Lodge was consecrated on May 18, 1999, by the Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons of Finland, and consisted of four warranted Lodges formerly on the register of the [Grand Lodge of Finland](#). The Grand Lodge of Estonia now has six subordinate Lodges and Research Lodge on its register. The Grand Lodge adopted the "Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition" accepted by the [United Grand Lodge of England](#), and adopted the Ritual Book and Constitution of the [Grand Lodge of Finland](#). The Grand Master is Arbe Kaasik and the Grand Secretary is Jaak Rataspepp. The address of the Grand Lodge is:

Box 3992
10509 Tallin
Estonia

The Commission is of the opinion that the Grand Lodge of Estonia meets the standards for Regularity and Recognition.

Confederation of Mexican Grand Lodges

An extensive study was undertaken this year to understand the situation and relationships with the Mexican Grand Lodges. One source estimated there are or were some 130 Grand Lodges in Mexico. Of these, there appear to be only 30 state Grand Lodges and the York Grand Lodge that are considered to be practicing Regular Masonry and observing accepted and expected relationships among each other and with foreign Grand Lodges. Those state Grand Lodges are members of the "Confederacion de Grandes Logias Regulares de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos", and include the following:

- Estado de Aguascalientes
- Estado de Baja California
- Estado de Baja California Sur

- Estado de Campeche
- Estado de Chiapas
- Estado de Colima
- Estado de Coahuila
- Estado de Durango
- Estado de Guanajuato
- Estado de Guerrero
- Estado de Hidalgo
- Estado de Jalisco
- Estado de Mexico
- Estado de Michoacan
- Estado de Morales
- Estado de Nayarit
- Estado de Nuevo Leon
- Estado de Oaxaca
- Estado de Puebla
- Estado de Queretaro
- Estado de Quintana Roo
- Estado de San Luis Potosi
- Estado de Sinaloa
- Estado de Sonora
- Estado de Tabasco
- Estado de Tamaulipas
- Estado de Veracruz
- Estado de Yucatan
- Estado de Zacatecas

In November 2002, the Confederation adopted a protocol for membership, which is a set of eight fundamental standards and requirements that a Grand Lodge must meet to be a member of the organization. The current members all meet those standards, which includes the [Standards](#) adopted by this Conference of Grand Masters for Recognition. Detailed information about each of these Grand Lodges is included in an [Appendix](#) of this report.

Valle De Mexico

The Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico has been the center of much controversy in North American Masonry. Most notably, this Grand Lodge has been accused of establishing lodges in the Mexican state of Baja California and in the state of Texas. Conversely, the Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico maintains that some of the state Grand Lodges in Mexico were chartered in territories where Valle de Mexico had established Lodges, and it was done without their permission. As a result of these problems, the member Grand Lodges of the Confederation of Mexican Grand Lodges and the Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico have terminated Masonic Relations with each other. Recently, the Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico issued a decree withdrawing the charter of the Grand Lodge Baja California, issued in 1933, and is proceeding to establish a District Grand Lodge there. Valle de Mexico also withdrew Recognition from the Grand Lodge of California because of its Recognition of the Grand Lodge Baja California. Although the Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico shows evidence of being Regular in its basic practice of Masonry, it appears from the recent data presented to this Commission that they have apparently violated the [Standards of Recognition](#) concerning exclusive territorial jurisdiction except by mutual consent. It is obvious that contentions exist within the family of Mexican Masonry; however it is not the intention, nor does this Commission have the authority to interfere in these problems. Such matters can and must be resolved by Mexican Masons themselves. There are indications that this will occur.

San Marino

The "Serenissima Gran Loggia di San Marino" was constituted on March 13, 2003 and consecrated on April 6, 2003, in San Marino, by the [Grand Oriente d'Italia](#) and the [Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia](#). It consists of three warranted Lodges formerly on the register of the Grand Oriente d'Italia. The Grand Lodge adopted the Ritual and the Book of Constitutions of its parent Grand Lodge, as well as the "Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition". The Grand Master is M.:W.: Bro. Federico Micheloni, and the Grand Secretary is Manuel Micheloni. The address of the Grand Lodge is:

Strada Cangiola
21-47890
San Marino

The Commission is of the opinion that this Grand Lodge meets the [Standards of Recognition](#).

Miscellaneous Information

1. A communication was recently received from the Secretary of the Interamerican Masonic Conference (CMI) that they have suspended Recognition of the Grand Lodge of Ecuador due to anti-masonic behavior of its Grand Master. At the last meeting of CMI, two men asked to be accepted as the new representative of the Grand Lodge of Ecuador. One was the previous Grand Master and the other a new one claiming to be Regularly elected as Grand Master. The CMI gave them time to resolve the situation, and since that wasn't done, Recognition of the Grand Lodge of Ecuador is suspended until an agreement is reached.

2. The Grand Lodge of Latvia was constituted in Riga, Latvia on March 8, 2003, by the United Grand Lodge of Germany. The address of this Grand lodge is: J. Alunana iela 6-8b, LV-Riga 1010, Latvia. No requests have been received from this Grand Lodge.

3. The National Grand Lodge of Romania held elections in October 2003, and M.:W.: Bro. Eugen Ovidiu Chirovici was elected Grand Master, replacing Bro. Gheorghe Comanescu. The new Grand Master insists that peace and harmony will now reign without the previous problems.

4. The Grand Lodge of Russia continues to grow, with 21 Lodges now at work. M.:W.: Dmitry Denisov is the Grand Master, and Bro. Vladimir Nikitin is the Grand Secretary. Members of the breakaway group calling themselves the Regular Grand Lodge of Russia continue to make allegations of questionable practices of the GLOR; however all European Regular Grand Lodges Recognize the Grand Lodge of Russia as being the Regular Grand Lodge.

5. A group of Masons in Sao Paulo, Brazil have formed a new Grand Lodge called Grande Loja do Brasil GLOB. This Grand Lodge is considered a Clandestine Grand Lodge, and is in no way connected with the Regular Grand Loja Maconica do Estado Sao Paulo.

6. It should be noted that the Grand Lodge of Congo is nor part of the country of the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as the Belgian Congo. The Grand Lodge of Congo is located in Congo, whose capital is Brazzeville.

7. The Commission has determined that the creation of a website would be beneficial to the member Grand Lodges of this Conference, as well as Grand Lodges throughout the world who use our services. This will allow the Commission to communicate information concerning regularity and recognition during the year in a timely manner. The cost to establish the domain name and maintain the site will be minimal and within our budget. The Commission looks forward to this opportunity to more efficiently serve our Grand Lodges. The website is www.recognitioncommission.org.

8. My Brethren, I want to read to you some excerpts from an [article](#) that is being posted on the website hosted by the [Grand Lodge of Texas](#), titled [What Every Mason Should Know About Regular Masonry](#). Over the past decade, there have been increasing attempts by members of irregular Masonic bodies to contact Regular Freemasons and have informal communications with us. Many of these irregular organizations originated in Europe, and have spread rapidly to the East coast of the U.S. and Canada. This is due in large part to the increased availability of information about Freemasonry, and the use of internet bulletin boards and list servers. At the same time, some regular Masons in this country consider it fashionable or cosmopolitan to fraternize with these irregular Masons on the internet, and to invite them to informal Masonic social where ladies and non-Masons are invited, and where traditional Masonic customs are often abused. On occasion, they have been invited to attend meetings of appendant or a affiliated bodies and research organizations, and have even been admitted to membership in some of them. These practices can be very embarrassing and damaging to Regular Masonry, particularly when unsuspecting eligible candidates join one of these bodies without being aware they are an irregular organization. When they find they are not welcome in their hometown Lodge, vaying degrees of animosity against our fraternity will likely result from those who might have otherwise become Regular Masons and members of our Lodges. Our fraternity is being stolen by these irregular Masons. The day may not be too distant when these organizations will want to level cornerstones and gain the same stature and recognition as our own Grand Lodges. We should not, under any circumstances, grant them acknowledgement of legitimacy. To take the position that they are merely a different type of Freemasonry is not only misguided, it is factually wrong. When encountering these individuals, either in person, or on the internet, we should remember our obligation that is a violation to have communication with them.