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May 26, 2020

IMPORTANT COVID-19 UPDATE: AMARANTH ACTIVITIES MOVING FORWARD

Dear Grand Royal Matrons, Royal Matrons (SCJ):

COVID-19 has truly changed our lives. Our inability to be with our family and friends over these last several months has put a strain on so many especially those who are working in the front lines to help combat this virus, our community business', and those who have lost their jobs due to the economical strain that has resulted from this pandemic. We are thankful for all the work our Nurses, Doctors, law enforcement, EMT, Fire Departments and all those working behind the scenes to help our communities move forward through this difficult time. No one knows how long this pandemic will last or if we will be facing another round of COVID-19. The most important effort we can make is to stay in touch and help one another where and when needed. Most importantly everyone needs to stay safe and stay healthy. Your welfare is the most important thing, so don't be afraid to reach out for help.

There are many jurisdictions where the governmental agencies and health agencies working collaboratively, are lifting restrictions in a phased approach. These phases are progressive steps in allowing more business' to open, getting people back to work, and allowing activities to take place, but would still be under strict guidelines. These guidelines are strongly encouraged and should be followed in order to protect each other. Many Grand Masters are planning to lift restrictions for use of the Masonic Temples, starting as early as June, 2020. Knowing this, many questions have been asked about how the Order of the Amaranth should conduct meetings while the restrictions are in place. Here are some ideas that each Grand Royal Matrons and Royal Matrons of SCJs might want to put in place. In many cases we need to use common sense and remember to keep the welfare of our members first and foremost. The adjustments we make in how we move forward are temporary and will eventually go back to following the ritual, Grand Court Bylaws, Supreme Constitution and Court Rules and Regulations. But for now we may see our court procedures to be slightly different.

Once the Masonic Temples reopen, the following are guidelines:

GENERAL:

- Abide by the restrictions set forth by the governmental agencies, health department, and Masters of the Lodges.
- If you are not feeling well stay at home.
- Wear masks and gloves.
- Avoid handshaking, and hugging.
- Keep social Distancing as much as possible.
- Furnish hand sanitizer, and Sanitizing wipes to be placed inside the entry to the court room for members to use.
- Use Sanitizing wipes for wiping chairs, podiums, staffs and jewels.
- Fund Raising and social events are essential to the wellbeing of our members, so think outside the box on how we can have events without gathering in large groups.
- Teleconferencing, Zoom Meetings, GO TO Meetings, etc., are not allowed for court meetings. These tools may only be used for Social connecting, Club meetings, committee meetings, etc.
- Current Dues cards **MUST** be shown when giving the password. This is required at all court meetings, Grand Court and Supreme Council Meetings. Many jurisdictions, especially subordinate courts, are becoming lax in showing dues cards. Just because you may know the member does not justify the lack of showing the dues card when entering the court room no matter who it may be.

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SUGGESTED GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19:

PASSWORD:

- Take the password at the door for all members and officers.
- The GRIP and Dues card will be required when entering the court room.
- Many members may feel uncomfortable giving the password close to the face of the other member. We need to try and respect that feeling. There are a couple ways you may want to do this:
 - a) Use a fan between the face of the member and the officer at the door of the court room. The member will talk into the fan, loud enough to be heard.
 - b) Stand a slight distance away and with slightly louder voice give the password.
 - c) If the member is still uncomfortable, The Dues Card and Grip may be used for those still uncomfortable with giving the password if they are a recognized member. The idea is to get our members out to our courts and to have them feel comfortable and safe.
 - d) Have hand sanitizer by the door for members to use after entering the court room.

PASSWORD DURING COURT MEETING:

- In order to eliminate the need to have hand sanitizer readily available when taking the password from the officers and members during opening, take the password from all members at the door.
- In lieu of the Royal Matron asking the Associate Matron, if all present are entitled to remain, the Royal Matron would ask the Associate Matron if she is satisfied that all present are entitled to remain. The Associate Matron would then scan the room and then reply, "I am satisfied that all present are entitled to remain." The Royal Matron would then continue the ritualistic opening of the court. This can only be done when all members show their dues card, give the grip, and password (if member is comfortable).

ENTRANCE OF OFFICERS – Entrance of officers is required as part of the Ritual. Social Distance as much as possible. Leave distance between each member as much as possible. When officers arrive at their stations spread out, to include sitting on the sidelines. If the officer has a part that uses marching lines they should remain in their station (i.e., Marshalls, prelate, Standard Bearer)

ESCORTING ROYAL MATRON AND ASSOCIATE MATRON: eliminate the conductresses escorting these officers.

ESCORTING MEMBERS: Escort is required and must be called on. Have the members step to the sidelines. The RM may present members from the floor giving titles and honors. This will eliminate congregating together on the floor and on the throne and will also eliminate risk for the Marshalls.

Most other floor work can be done by social distancing as much as possible. The most important thing when adjusting the ritual work is to keep the beauty of our work present. These steps do not allow for "opening or closing in short Form", there is no short form in Amaranth. We are only adjusting to protect the safety and welfare of our members. Keep in mind these are suggestions to be implemented by the Royal Matrons of SCJs and Grand Royal Matrons.

I hope these guidelines and suggestions help to encourage members returning to their courts. Every jurisdiction is different with different requirements. Since quorums are still required, you may not see as many members return to your courts right away. I will continue to set aside the requirement for courts to make up meetings if a quorum cannot be met during the pandemic. In addition, I will also continue setting aside the 10 meeting a year requirement if courts cannot hold their meetings during the pandemic. Many of our members are older and have underlying conditions and are afraid to come back. That is okay and they will eventually. I will readdress these guidelines in January, 2021 at which time a decision will be made to extend these guidelines further or return to our traditional ritualistic work.

Let us always keep the health and safety of our members first in all the decisions we make. Please stay safe and stay healthy.

In Amaranth Love and Service

Dorothy I. Kippie

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Supreme Royal Matron



C: Supreme Secretary

Supreme Lecturer

Past Supreme Royal Matrons

Grand Royal Matrons, Royal Matrons (SCJ)

Grand Secretaries, SCJ Court Secretary

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