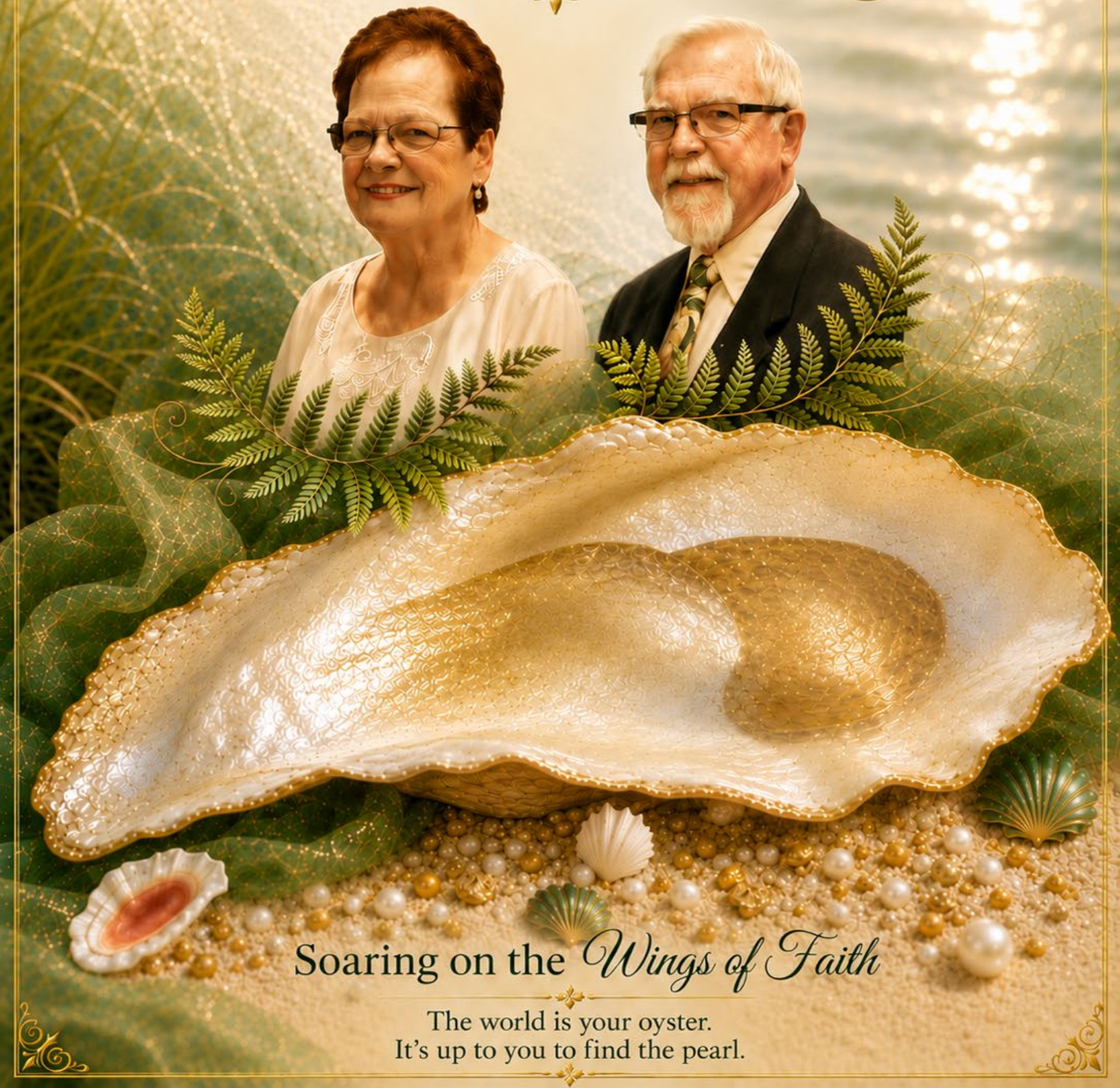
Volume 24 Grand Family Special Edition
September 2026

Stargazer
of Florida

Holt-Keepin Grand Family



Soaring on the *Wings of Faith*

The world is your oyster.
It's up to you to find the pearl.

A Message From the Worthy Grand Matron and Worthy Grand Patron

The Grand Chapter of Florida
Order of the Eastern Star, Inc.

Mary Ann Holt
Worthy Grand Matron

April 16, 2026

To: Subordinate Chapters of Florida

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

As Brother Rich and I step into the roles of Worthy Grand Matron and Worthy Grand Patron, we are filled with gratitude for the trust you have placed in us and excitement for all that lies ahead. We sincerely thank you for the love and support you have shown over the past three years. The friendships we have formed during this time have enriched our lives and strengthened our Order in countless ways. Your kindness and encouragement have been a true blessing, and we cherish each connection made along this journey.

I have chosen for the Worthy Grand Matron's Special Project this year, the Miami Heart Institute, a leading medical center specializing in cardiovascular care, research, and education. Cardiovascular Disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States affecting millions of people each year including our own families and members. The Miami Heart Institute is a leading medical center specializing in cardiovascular care, research, and education. Its programs address a wide range of heart-related conditions, from prevention and early detection to advanced treatment and rehabilitation. We encourage our chapters to support this meaningful endeavor through fundraising efforts, awareness campaigns, and acts of service. Our Itinerary includes the dates of the special events that have been planned to benefit our Special Project. We invite all members to support these events and we truly hope to see you there joining us in fellowship and service.

We are blessed to have a dedicated group of members serving on various committees, each playing a vital role in the success of our work. These committees ensure that our mission is carried out with care and excellence. We ask that you continue to promote ESTARL, R.E.S.T., S.H.E.A.F. and Youth, our other fundraising committees.

Our Community Service/Membership Committee is represented this year in each of our Districts and our Chairman is excited to have the opportunity to work with each of them to create a united approach toward growth and visibility. Let us all work to strengthen our bonds internally while showcasing our commitment externally. Together, we can build a vibrant, welcoming presence that inspires interest, fosters pride, and reflects the heart of Eastern Star in every community we touch.

Sisters and Brothers, let us move forward with unwavering faith, confident that our shared values and steadfast commitment will guide us through every challenge and triumph. It is with genuine enthusiasm that we encourage each of you to embrace new opportunities, support one another, and continue to keep the spirit of the Order of the Eastern Star shining brightly in every chapter and every heart.

Star Love,

Mary Ann Holt

Mary Ann Holt
Worthy Grand Matron

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Meet the Holt -Keepin Grand Family



Soaring on the *Wings of Faith* Session

Scriptures
Matthew 21:22
And whatever you ask in prayer,
you receive it, if you have faith.

Watchwords
Faith – Peace – Friendship - Enthusiasm

Motto
The world is your oyster: embrace its opportunities with an Eastern Star heart and remember that each day is a pearl to cherish on your journey.

Honor Station	Martha
Emblems	Broken Column, Pearls, Doves
Flowers	Magnolias & Ferns
Colors	Green, Gold, Ivory
Songs	On the Wings of a Dove, Precious Memories, Take Me Home Country Roads, West Virginia Hills, Here Comes Santa Claus

Worthy Grand Matron's Special Project

Miami Heart Research Institute



Mary Ann Holt

Worthy Grand Matron

Congratulations on your election as Worthy Grand Matron! I know you are excited. Tell me, now that are finally the WGM, what was the first thought that crossed your mind when you realized "The buck stops here?"

My first thought at being elected Worthy Grand Matron was "my goodness, this is real!" I have the responsibility for our Grand Chapter in my hands.

"Tell us a little about your journey to Eastern Star.

When I joined my local Chapter in 1984, I was younger than most of the currently active members. I was very fortunate to have mentors who encouraged me to take an active part, and I was very soon on a journey that has led me to seek new and exciting experiences from my membership. I learned that to get something positive from joining an organization, you must also be willing to contribute to it. Receiving the telephone call in December 1995 from Sister Helen Westmoreland asking me to serve as one of her Grand Officers was something I thought could never happen to me. By that time in my OES life, I had been a Grand Instructor and a Grand Representative and was serving as Secretary of my Chapter and was very active in my District. Having formed life-long friendships is the most precious gift I could ever receive as a member of our beautiful Order.

Every office has its hidden challenges. Which challenge are you already strategizing for?

Membership is a topic that plagues every leader of our Order – whether you are a leader in your Chapter, Grand Chapter or even our General Grand Chapter, an optimistic and enthusiastic future is what we all desire for the Order of the Eastern Star. First and foremost, we must all be active in our subordinate Chapters by making and carrying out plans to rejuvenate and revive our Order. Many tend to blame COVID for the decline in our membership and, while I do believe it played a part, complacency in our Chapters has played a bigger part. I have faith in our members that we ***can*** *see growth in our jurisdiction. It's not going to be an easy task but if we work diligently and actively toward increasing our membership numbers, we can accomplish great things. Let's stop talking about the decline in membership and let's do something about it!*

Outside the Chapter room, where might we find you on a perfect Saturday?

Most of my Saturdays are spent doing paperwork and working on plans for the 2026 – 2027 year, but I do take a break when I get a message that my great-grandson, Archie, is coming to town! He just turned 6 years old – I know, I'm not old enough to be a Gigi – and is now in kindergarten. He is of course, still the smartest in the class and has already been labeled the "class clown." Being a widow, I no longer cook a lot of meals. Baking is probably my favorite hobby. I love baking treats and sweets – cakes, breads, brownies – and sharing these and other culinary creations with family and friends. I do have a few that tend to be favorites and are most often requested.

Fast forward five years: how do you hope the Order will have evolved?

It is my sincere desire that in five years, we will have seen a vast growth in membership in our Order. That our subordinate Chapters have sidelines full of visitors for not only special events, but also for regular Chapter meetings. That we all work in harmony with our Sisters and Brothers and that we are all joined firmly together in a golden chain of unity, one aim, one hope for the future.

Thank you, Sister Mary Ann, for sharing with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Worthy Grand Matron and look forward supporting your leadership guiding our Grand Chapter. Blessings on your continuing journey in the Order of the Eastern Star.

Thank you, Sister Carla, for the opportunity to share my story with our members. As I have traveled throughout our beautiful state, I have made many new friends, I have renewed old friendships, and I have tried to serve at the will of our members. I sincerely thank the members of the Grand Chapter of Florida for the faith they have placed in me and my ability to serve. May God continue to shower his blessings down on you, my Sisters and Brothers, and may love, peace and joy abide with you.



Rich Keepin

Worthy Grand Patron

Congratulations on your election as Worthy Grand Patron! I know you are excited. Tell me, when you were elected to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?
I was blessed to be partnered with Sister Mary Ann Holt. We help each other and I couldn't ask for a better person to be with for this journey.

Tell us a little about your journey to Eastern Star—who or what first inspired you to join?
It all began about 47 years ago. I was stationed at Pensacola Naval Station when I met Brenda. As it turned out I was her military supervisor, and we finally got married. She and her parents were members of OES. (I was clueless of what this was!) After retiring, we lived with her parents while our house was being built,. Every couple of weeks they had their meetings at Wewahitchka No. 229. After a couple of months, her father said, son we sure hate to leave you sitting at home while we go to Chapter meetings and asked if I had thought about becoming a Mason. He sponsored me and was my mentor. Eventually I became a Master Mason. Then he said you should join our Wewahitchka Chapter, which I did, and the rest is history.

Which previous Chapter or Grand Chapter role has shaped you the most, and how?
Wewahitchka Chapter No 229 pretty much shaped me. The Lodge members and Star work well together. I enjoy helping people so everything the Masons and Star do is pleasing to me. My oldest grandson had Acute T-cell leukemia and at the age of 16 passed. When we visited Wake Forest labs, I was impressed. I have been able to visit Wake Forest for the last three years. I call it Star Wars magic. I'm convinced they will be able to find a cure for cancer.

If you could accomplish only one major goal by the end of your term, what would it be and why?
My major goal is to reinforce traditional work. If you follow the Ritual and Green Book, you can't go wrong. We need to try and increase quality membership, not just cardholders.

Which OES tenet (Fidelity, Constancy, Loyalty, Faith, or Love) will guide your decisions most this year?
I would say have Faith in God and He will lead the way.

Thank you, Brother Rich, for sharing your thoughts with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Worthy Grand Patron and look forward to watching you continue your journey in the Order of the Eastern Star!
Thank you.



Jolene Goodwin

Associate Grand Matron

Congratulations on your election as Associate Grand Matron! I know you are excited.
Thank you. I sure am!

Tell us a little about your journey to Eastern Star—who or what first inspired you to join?
My father was instrumental in me joining Eastern Star. When I turned eighteen, he was very persistent, but I was not ready. I was a freshman at Florida State University and had no aspirations to join. His persistence finally paid off in 1988. I told him I would only join where I knew someone, since I was living in Tallahassee and did not know anyone in Eastern Star. I thought I had given him a reasonable answer, and he would relent. Boy, was I wrong! Being an Air Force retired Lieutenant Colonel pilot just sent him on a mission. He immediately contacted Myrtlene Baird who was a member at Miracle Chapter No. 306 in Panama City Beach and between the two of them, they got the ball rolling. Joel and Myrtlene Baird were military friends of my parents, who I am named after. Dad knew he could count on Myrtlene to accomplish this mission. He traveled to Tallahassee from Belleview to drive me to Seagrove Beach for my investigation. Myrtlene took care of the paperwork since I lived in a different district and their persistence paid off. I was initiated into Miracle Chapter No. 306 on December 20, 1988. My Mom was there for my initiation, but Dad never became an Eastern Star, so he could not attend. However, he was there afterwards to place my Eastern Star ring on my finger. Every first and third Tuesday he would drive me to Panama City Beach for meetings and drive me back to Tallahassee after the meeting so I could make it to work the next morning. In February 1990 I was elected as Associate Conductress, a few months after that I moved to Panama City to become an active member of the chapter. I am extremely grateful for his persistence. It has afforded me opportunities to grow and succeed.

If you could accomplish only one major goal by the end of your term, what would it be and why?
Membership growth. We need to reflect on our obligation and stop polarizing our Order. How can we attract new members when the actions of existing members are causing dissension in our chapters and members are leaving and not coming back? Unkind words and actions are all too often becoming the norm in our chapters, resulting in chapters surrendering their charters because feelings have been hurt and members are not attending. Why should they support their chapter when their chapter doesn't support them? We need to put aside our differences and agree to disagree. The chapter room should be a sanctuary for our members not a battleground. By correcting the internal turmoil, we can make Eastern Star a more inviting place for others to want to join. Sometimes you may not respect the person, but you should respect the title. We should all try to put aside our differences during a meeting and focus on how we can strengthen our chapters through loving kindness. We are all sisters and brothers; we should be depending upon one another not alienating one another. One positive gesture could be the turning point in saving your chapter, and our beautiful order.

Share a fun fact about yourself that most Sisters and Brothers don't know.
I was an FSU Marching Chief, oh the memories! I played the flute. One of the best memories was attending the 1984 Super Bowl in Tampa when FSU and UF did a combined band pre-game show. I still support the Marching Chiefs today. The football team may be struggling, but the Marching Chiefs have never lost a halftime show. The Hymn to the Garnet and The Gold still bring tears to my eyes. Go Noles! MCATDT!

Fast-forward five years: how do you hope the Order will have evolved?
I hope our Order will see growth through positivity where peace and harmony will prevail over hurtful negativity.

What advice would future-you give to today-you about serving in this office?
Stay true to your convictions, don't give up, there will be struggles but it will be worth it in the end. Take advice from your mentors and peers, and make your decisions based on what you think is the best option. Continue to work for the good of the order. Focus on the positive and remember to do something today to make somebody smile because you never know it might just change the world.

Thank you, Sister Jolene, for sharing with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Associate Grand Matron and look forward to watching you continue your journey in the Order of the Eastern Star!
It was my pleasure sharing with you. I look forward to serving the Grand Chapter and making wonderful memories with the Holt-Keepin Grand Family. Carla, thank you for your dedication as Stargazer Editor.

Thank you for your kind words!



Mickey Brown

Associate Grand Patron

Congratulations on your election as Associate Grand Patron! I know you are excited. Tell me, when you elected to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?
First of all, I was excited to be elected. It has been a long journey. I have been running off and on since 2011. I campaigned with Sandy some when she was running and Dayle and I were Grand Spouses together in 2004-2005. Our wives were Grand Officers for Past Grand Matron Joy Feit. It was like I was already a member of their family in a different manner. It is also special because many of the other Grand Officers have been a special part of my life in other capacities.

Tell us a little about your journey to Eastern Star—who or what first inspired you to join?
Growing up I didn't know if any of my relatives were Masons. My dad was a member of the Lions Club. It wasn't until Covid hit that I learned that my great great-grandfather Nelson Mixon was a Mason. I found a picture of his grave in a cemetery in Alabama on Find-A-Grave. There was the Masonic symbol. My exposure to Masonry came through my wife Roberta and her family. Her father, mother and twin sister were Eastern Stars. After we got married, she moved her membership from her Alabama chapter to Jay Chapter No. 208. Past Grand Matron, Anita Atkins, took her under her wing. They traveled together everywhere. One time, they went on a bus trip to Miami to an honor night for Pat Williams. She told me some cockamamie story about how the bus broke down and they had to get another one which made them late getting there. So, I began asking questions about why this guy Pat Williams was so important that they would travel over six hundred miles to be there. She told me if I was so curious, I should become a Mason. I did and then immediately joined the Order of the Eastern Star. Never have I made so many new friends so fast. And then, on one of my first travels, I met Sister Patricia Williams the year before she became Worthy Grand Matron. I was relieved.

Which OES tenet (Fidelity, Constancy, Loyalty, Faith, or Love) will guide your decisions most this year?
My wife was Grand Adah, so think I will say Fidelity. I like to be referred to as a man of his word who will keep his promises. It's funny, I have a Merriam Webster dictionary app on my cell phone. When I looked up the word fidelity, it gave me synonyms of constancy, faith and loyalty.

Share a fun fact about yourself that most Sisters and Brothers don't know.
In 2005, I went on my first OES cruise which was for Past Grand Matron Joy Feit. As I was about to disembark the ship, two customs agents and a security guard came to arrest me on drug charges. I thought this was a "you're on candid camera" prank. It took some time to convince them that I was not the convicted felon named William Brown born on April 7, 1950 they were looking for. The only thing that saved me was one of the custom agents realized that I had just renewed my driver's license. This also gave me trouble buying a gun and getting my concealed weapons license. If they had only checked our middle names, they would have known I wasn't him.

Goodness, that is an interesting story!
(laughs) Sure is!

After your term wraps up, how would you like fellow members to describe your impact in one word?
Fun. There is a time when we must be serious. It is important that we do our ritualistic work without any clowning around, but we should be able to enjoy going to meetings and having a good time with our Sisters and Brothers.

Thank you, Brother Mickey, for sharing your thoughts with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Sentinel and look forward to watching you continue your journey in the Order of the Eastern Star!
It was my pleasure!



Brenda Keepin

Grand Secretary

Congratulations on your re-election as Grand Secretary! I know you are excited. Tell me when you were elected to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?
Thank you. I am looking forward to another year because it's going to be very busy!

Tell us aa little about your journey to Eastern Star. Who or what first inspired you to join?
My Dad wanted me to be a member. I joined right after I turned 18.

Every office has its hidden challenges. Which challenge are you already strategizing for?
Time management. There is always something to do. I have various deadlines that affect all the members. Making sure I meet all those deadlines is a big challenge.

Which OES tenet (Fidelity, Constancy, Loyalty, Faith, or Love) will guide your decisions most this year?
I try to use fidelity and love. I try to treat others like I want to be treated.

Give us a snapshot of who you are — family career, hobbies?
I have two daughters with five grandchildren (three girls and two boys) and one great-grandson. A day doesn't go by that the grandkids do not make me laugh.

I'm retired from Bay District Schools after 25 years. I grew up an Army brat and became a Navy wife, so home was where we were sent. You have two choices: you hate where you are and are miserable for two to three years or you accept where you are and find something good about it. I have made some very dear friends along the way and have seen some wonderful things.

Outside the Chapter room, where might we find you on a perfect Saturday?
In my sewing room, creating something, watching movies, or just napping.

Share a fun fact about yourself that most Sisters and Brothers don't know about.
I like to watch people. I can sit in a room full of people and pass the time watching how people interact with each other. We human beings are very interesting.

Fast-forward five years: how do you hope the Order will have evolved?
I'd like to see our members visiting other chapters. It's sad to sit in an Official and only have about five sideliners. We need to support each other.

What advice would future-you give to today-you about serving in this office?
Never stop learning.

Thank you, Sister Brenda, for sharing your thoughts with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Secretary and look forward to watching you continue your journey in the Order of the Eastern Star!
Thank you.



Margaret Nathurst

Grand Treasurer

Congratulations, Sister Margaret, on your reelection as Grand Treasurer! I know you are excited.
It is always wonderful to be reelected as Grand treasurer and an honor to continue to serve Grand Chapter in this capacity.

Tell me, when you elected to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?

This year is another opportunity to be with my Sisters and Brothers and to enjoy getting to know the appointed officers in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family. I remember being so excited 35 years ago when I was installed as Grand Marshal in the Walsingham-Erickson Grand Family. That year is one of my special memories and the love we all shared is still with me.

Tell us a little about your journey to Eastern Star—who or what first inspired you to join?
I was a majority Rainbow Girl and had no Masonic relationship on which to join the Order of the Eastern Star as at that time you had to be the wife, mother, daughter, sister or widow of a Master Mason. When my husband became a Master Mason, my mother, Minnie Lee Peek, was serving as Grand Martha, and she made sure that I received a petition to join Fort Myers Chapter No. 31. Six of us were initiated on November 4, 1963 and three of us have remained life-long friends ever since.

Which previous Chapter or Grand Chapter role has shaped you the most, and how?
With the guidance of the members of Fort Myers Chapter No. 31, I studied and learned all I possibly could about our Ritual and Floor Work. My first station was that of Martha, then I served as Adah and was elected the next year as Associate Conductress. Our chapter was fortunate to have several Past Grand Officers who guided and inspired me to be the best I could be at any given moment. I was honored to be appointed Grand Representative of Kentucky in Florida, serve as Grand Instructor, serve as District Chairman ESTARL, WGM Special Fund and as R.E.S.T. Sub-Committee Chairman. I have also served on Revisions, Finance, OES Grand Chapter Endowment, Heart and Star Search committees. These appointments have given me the opportunity to grow and serve Grand Chapter in many different ways and by doing so I have gain valuable experience in our fraternal endeavors.

What makes the Order special to you personally?
The lasting friendships shared over the last 62 years have filled my life with joy and happiness. The members of my chapter have always been there for me…in the good times, the bad times, the happy times and the sad times of my life. I will always be eternally grateful for their love and support each and every day.

Every office has its hidden challenges. Which challenge are you already strategizing for?
The office of Grand Treasurer requires a thorough knowledge of accounting and business procedures and applications. To be able to perform my duties properly, I have to allow sufficient time to fulfill my duties on a daily basis. There is no "I will wait and do it tomorrow" as financial matters do not wait until tomorrow.

If you could accomplish only one major goal by the end of your term, what would it be and why?
I would like to inspire members to serve as officers in their chapters, especially the office of Secretary and Treasurer. It is my goal to assist all members of the Order to fulfill their potential and to enjoy performing the duties of their office.

Which OES tenet (Fidelity, Constancy, Loyalty, Faith, or Love) will guide your decisions most this year?
I am guided by all five of our tenets as Fidelity, Constancy, Loyalty, Faith and Love are all necessary to be an active and effective member.

Give us a snapshot of who you are—family, career, hobbies.
I was the baby in our family with two older brothers. My father died when I was five and my mother worked hard to raise us three children. She was an inspiration of faithfulness in every aspect of her life. I had three children, Sheryl, Chris and Karen. Unfortunately, Chris died in an automobile accident at the age of 22 and Karen passed away from breast cancer when she was 43. Sheryl is my oldest daughter and is a blessing in my life as is my only grandson, Logan. Our family is small now but filled with lots of love.

Outside the Chapter room, where might we find you on a perfect Saturday?
On some days, I just kick back and relax, enjoy a little TV, read, visit with friends and play with Simba, a 5-year-old Pomeranian.

Share a fun fact about yourself that most Sisters and Brothers don't know?
We once had an African lion for a pet. I also earned my private pilot's license in 1969 while I served as Worthy Matron. My nickname was "the Flying WM."

Fast-forward five years: how do you hope the Order will have evolved?
I look forward to a resurgence in membership and a better understanding of he precepts of our order.

What advice would the "future-you" give the "today-you" about serving as Grand Treasurer?
Always be willing to devote the time it takes to fulfilling your duties as an officer. It is not an easy task, but beach task is important and deserves your best efforts.

After your term wraps up, how would you like fellow members to describe your impact in one word?
Dedication

Thank you so very much, Sister Margaret, for sharing your thoughts with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Treasurer and look forward to watching you continue your journey in the Order of the Eastern Star!
Thank you for all you do for our Order. It is an honor for me to serve Grand Chapter and the members in every way possible and I appreciate all the confidence, love and support I have received over these many years.

I appreciate your kind words!



Karen Sargent-Rankl

Grand Conductress

Congratulations on your election as Grand Conductress and welcome to the Holt-Keepin Grand Family! I know you are excited.
Thank you. I sure am!

Give us a snapshot about you and your family.
I grew up on a farm in Kentucky. The first of seven children, born to Millard and Louise Bradford Sargent, began the fifth generation, in my masonic family. It was expected that I be a dedicated and faithful Rainbow Girl, then a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. I don't really remember it being a choice, just the way we grew up. Always involved in Lodge, Rainbow and Eastern Star functions. After graduating from college, I returned to Kentucky to work at a local hospital and my home chapter.

My professional career, spanning 54-years, included managerial positions as a Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Manager of Medical Develop, Sr. Clinical Research Associate, a Trainer, Global Project Manager, and Director of Quality Assurance in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries (Bristol Myers Squibb, GE Medical Systems, Polaris Compliance Consultants). A lot of travel, willingness to learn, and no fear of doing the riskier jobs others were afraid to take on.

How did you meet your spouse?
Being a career oriented and independent woman, everyone was surprised when Ray and I met at work and eventually married. None more surprised than me. It was all about a career. Marriage and family were not on my radar. But meeting Ray with two wonderful daughters, Erica and Christi, melted the heart and changed my life forever. Becoming a mom to two beautiful and smart stepdaughters, whom we encouraged to become well-educated, strong, self-sufficient, and independent career women, has been most rewarding. I'm very proud of my daughters.

What brought you to Florida?
We relocated to Florida in 2001 for Ray's work. Since my job was all travel-related it didn't matter where we lived as long as there was an airport.

Grandkids? Fur-kids?
Our lovely 12-year-old granddaughter, Alex, is our shining star. She excels in everything from competitive dance to academics. At age two she told us she was going to be a "betinarian" as she cuddled and cared for her puppy, George. As Alex has grown, her goal has not waivered. She has always wanted to be a veterinarian, and we wholeheartedly support her goal. She will be a very compassionate and dedicated veterinarian.

Can you share a fun fact about yourself that most Sisters and Brothers don't know about you?
I was lucky to have a traveling job since 1980 and have been to all 50 states, all Canadian providences five of the seven continents. With so much international travel, I had banked over a million Delta frequent flier miles to use for a retirement trip to Australia and New Zealand, When we were thirty-six hours in Australia, the pandemic happened! The tour company cancelled the trip, and we were back on the plane to the US. Within 12 hours of returning home, we received a text message and an email from the U.S. State Department informing us we were under quarantine for two weeks. Our daughter would place groceries at the garage door and send a text that our food was delivered. Technically, I've visited six of seven continents, but I don't count that as a true visit. I just want my retirement trip back!

What makes Eastern Star special to you?
Rainbow was a launching pad for public speaking and leadership skills. Leaning to conquer fear when speaking to a group was probably the biggest help, and it taught essential career skills like cooperation, teamwork, flexibility to lead or follow depending on the committee or the task at hand. I was initiated in March 1971 into Electa Chapter No. 3 Greenup, Kentucky.

Eastern Star has always been a part of my life. With my active parents, the Lodge, Eastern Star, and Rainbow Girls, I didn't know there was another way to live. My vision for OES is 4-fold: Promote loving kindness, peace and harmony; focus on the community outreach to build OES name recognition; and promote aid and education for the needy and homeless children in our communities.

Do you have any thoughts for newer members?
Don't be intimidated by the ritualistic work during the opening or initiation. It will come with repetition. Don't be afraid to ask for help from other members. They will feel complimented that you asked.

Thank you, Sister Karen, for sharing your story with our readers. We look forward to seeing you continue your journey to the East!
My pleasure and thank you!



Jane Stewart

Associate Grand Conductress

Welcome to the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, Sister Jane! Congratulations on your election as Associate Grand Conductress! What went through your mind when your name was announced?

Three time's a charm, I guess! Wow! I was just thrilled, and thankful of all my sisters and brothers having so much faith in me.

Tell our readers what makes you "you."

My parents helped mold me in my younger years, and my two brothers ...brotherly love and all! My school mates, church friends and Rainbow/DeMolay sisters and brothers added more to that equation with all that those organizations and friendships teach. Seven years of piano lessons and high school visits to the Boston Pops increased my appreciation for all avenues of music. And then work experiences adding the work equation, being so complex at times. So much learned over these years, good and bad, joys and sorrows, all help to change that beginning mold into what I am today. But then, life is a series of learning experiences, it never really ends, does it? (smiles)

You are so right! How did life bring you to Florida?

I moved to Florida in 1988 after a snowstorm the previous winter in Massachusetts that left my house inaccessible. Had to climb out the kitchen window to shovel the snow away from all doors so we could get out. That was it, not staying there anymore. My girlfriend had moved to Venice several years before that, so I contacted her for information, and here I am.

Do you have any hobbies?

Oh, yes. Love playing the piano and organ. And when having a bad day, I'll sit down and play until my mood changes and that could be a couple of hours.....a great release. I also love to swim, walk and crochet when there is time, and Netflix when nothing is on the TV.

What Star offices have you held, and which one was your favorite?

I've held several offices over the years: Adah being my first office, Martha, Chaplain, Organist (many times), Treasurer, Secretary, Associate Conductress, Conductress, Associate Matron and Worthy Matron (4 times). Each one has its own message and lesson, all extremely important, but Adah and Conductress are my favorites.

Tell us how you became involved in the Order of the Eastern Star.

My mom was a majority member of Rainbow and brought me to an installation once. I loved it and wanted to join. But I had no Masonic affiliation that I knew of, so my uncle sponsored me. Back then you needed a Masonic affiliation to join. We had about 200 active girls in the assembly every meeting. We had to sit in the choir for two terms before trying out for any office. My first office was Historian for the Worthy Advisor, writing a report about the WA events during her term. I then had Service, Religion, Drill Leader, and Faith. Then to Hope, Charity, Worthy Associate Advisor and Worthy Advisor. My dad joined Masons somewhere in there and attended every meeting I had after that. We even had a father and daughter dinner, where my dad sat next to me at the head table. I joined OES when my daughter was in Rainbow, just didn't want to get up and say that secret word anymore. She was WA, too, Grand Representative to Vermont, and Installing Grand Officer for the Grand Assembly of Massachusetts. Then the snowstorm and my move to Florida, and the rest is history!

Any closing thoughts?

Don't ever give up. You never know what is just around the corner.

I appreciate you taking time out of your day to share something about yourself with our readers. Again, congratulations and good luck being part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!

Thank you for this opportunity. I can't thank you all enough for your encouragement and love. Being a part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family is an honor and a thrill and am looking forward to many rewarding visits.



Daniel Allen

Grand Sentinel

Congratulations on your election as Grand Sentinel to the Holt-Keepin Grand Family. I know you are excited.
Thank you. I am so excited!

Can you tell your readers a little bit about you and your family life?
I come from a family that is deeply rooted in the Seffner, Florida area since 1923. My dad started calling me Goofy when I was 2 yrs old as a joke, however, it never ended. I have had the nickname for 45 years now. I will actually answer faster to Goofy/Goof than I do my real name.

I am a father of three kids, and I own my own company, DMA Services Corporation. There are several divisions within the company: water, fire, mold restoration, rebuild, monthly handyman services, and distribution for cabinets and luxury vinyl plank flooring.

Family is the most important thing in my life, and I cherish it above everything else. Working is a balance but rewarding.

So, what makes you "you?"
My love for God, my goofy sense of humor, and the ability to always find the positive in life. I live by the Latin phrase "Carpe Diem. Seize the day." I love to travel, be outdoors, and enjoy anything that brings me happiness. I have a love for classic cars, and county living. However, I would be nothing without my faith in God.

Share a fun fact about yourself that most Sisters and Brothers don't know.
I have hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, not all at once. Professionally I am a Triple Master Restorer, which is less than 1% of restoration professionals in the world.

What do you like to do when you are not serving OES and your community?
Spending time with family, building things with my hands, and being outdoors.

Tell us about your Masonic life and how you became involved in the Order of the Eastern Star.
I joined Masons while I was with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, because several of the CISM Deputies were Masons. Several of my uncles sat me down and explained more about the Masonic side of the family to me too. I learned we had very deep Masonic roots in North Carolina and Florida.

I learned about my mom's journey in Rainbow from my grandmother and aunts who were in OES. I joined Eastern Star around 2020.

What is your vision for the Order of Eastern Star?
I would love to see more Masons get involved in OES.

What makes Eastern Star special to you?
The deep roots it has and the fact that the organization is built upon faith. Over the years, Eastern Star has come to mean "family" to me. My favorite memories are the times spent traveling around the state and being part of the fellowship with all the members.

Do you have any words of advice to give our readers?
Remember that everything is possible if you build it upon a foundation of Faith, and that we get nowhere in life by tearing others down to build ourselves up.

Love each other like you would want to be loved and find a way to put a smile on someone's face. You never know the day someone has had, so try to make your interaction with them a positive one. It might be the only good thing that happened to them that day.

Any closing thoughts?
Carpe Diem! Never end your day with any regrets. Live your life to the fullest.

Thank you, Brother Daniel, for sharing your thoughts with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Sentinel and look forward to watching you continue your journey in the Order of the Eastern Star!
It was my pleasure!

Appointed Officers





Pamela Sanderson

Grand Chaplain

Congratulations, Sister Pamela, on your appointment as Grand Chaplain! I know you are excited. when you were asked to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?
I was thrilled, surprised, and a little giddy when Mary Ann asked me to join her Grand Family. I had just started a new business about 6 weeks prior and was glad to have the flexibility in scheduling that would allow me to travel to participate in more of our events around the state.

Can you tell your readers a little bit about you and your family life?
I've been widowed since 2002 and raised three sons who are now adults. I have one adorable 2-year-old granddaughter, Isla. Both Isla's parents work jobs that start earlier than daycare is open, so she comes to Gigi's house around 6:00am and we spend a couple of hours together Mon-Fri before I take her to school.

Can you give the readers some nuggets about yourself, some kind of special story?
I'm a self-named "Word Nerd" and love language, word games, and game shows. I was lucky to be a contestant on Wheel of Fortune in 2011 and even hit the Million Dollar Wedge on my first spin!

Tell us about your work life.
I LOVE my job! I've worked in the Senior Healthcare field for over 25 years. For the past eight years I've worked in Senior Placement Advising, helping seniors and their families choose the right community for Independent Living, Assisted Living, or Memory Care. I make this process of comparing and selecting much easier for families and help to ensure they will love where they live.

What things do you do in your spare time?
I usher for a beautiful historic theatre in Jacksonville and serve in music ministry at my church.

What do you do for fun?
I love fashion and have a lot of fun bargain hunting, whether on the clearance racks at TJ Maxx or in thrift stores.

What activities have you done with Eastern Star?
My chapter has supported families in our community who have struggled financially by providing holiday meals and gifts. We have served at our Ronald McDonald house and hosted a Trunk or Treat event. Our yard sale fundraisers benefit our community as well and we often give away remaining items to local residents in need.

What Star offices have you held, and which one was your favorite?
I'm currently my chapter's Treasurer which I really enjoy. My favorite office was Associate Matron, but I also love Adah. Now Chaplain is my favorite!

Were you in the International Order of Rainbow for Girls growing up?
Yes! I was a Rainbow Girl in the late 1970s in New Jersey. I served two consecutive terms as Worthy Advisor of my assembly and was proud to be appointed as Grand Choir Director. I was a DeMolay Sweetheart and also Past Mother's Club President in New Jersey.

Any closing thoughts?
I'm so eager to meet as many of my sisters and brothers as possible! Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself as we travel the state.

I appreciate you taking time out of your day to share something about yourself with our readers. Again, congratulations and good luck being part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!
Thank you to anyone who has taken the time to read this. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this Grand Family and look forward to the year ahead!

Sister Pamela, thank you for sharing your story. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Chaplain with the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!

It's been my pleasure!



Valerie Tooma-Gray

Grand Marshal

Sister Valerie, Congratulations and welcome to the Holt—Keepin Grand Family! What went through your mind when you were appointed Grand Marshal?
Oh my gosh! I can't believe it! I have finally been asked to be a Grand Officer! My dreams and hope have been answered! Thank you, Lord!

Can you tell everyone about your family, career, hobbies?
I live with my husband and furry children: a dog and three cats. I first met my husband in 2010 at an installation for the Grand Court of the Order of the Amaranth. We were introduced and stayed in touch, becoming good friends. In 2022, he asked me to go on a date, but not as a friend. I accepted and a few months later we were married. I have four daughters who are all members of the Eastern Star. I have eleven grandchildren: eight grandsons and three granddaughters.

I am retired. I worked mostly in Customer Services and Human Resources. I love to crochet in my spare time. After retiring in 2023, I spend most of my time keeping busy with the Eastern Star meeting, fundraisers, and Social Events.

Have you always lived in Florida?
I was born and raised in Florida. I have lived in other states but have always returned to Florida. After receiving my degrees at Penn State University as a single parent, I returned to Florida to take care of my parents and have retired here.

So, what makes you "you?"
I was raised with what may be considered "old-fashioned" values: believing and trusting in God; telling the truth; being faithful to yourself, your family, and your friends; not lieing. I believe in these values and try to live them every day. I know that I do not always succeed, but I pray to God for forgiveness and work earnestly not to violate these values I hold dear to my heart going forward. As an adult returning to college, I became active in the student government representing the adult population. I received two baccalaureate degrees and tutored adults in Math; guided my children with their homework and school activities; and was active in my church, sang in the choir and assisted in Vacation Bible School in the summer.

What do you do for fun when you are not serving OES or your community?
Spending time with my husband, gardening in the yard or doing things around the house. Occasionally, I go to lunch with friends I have not seen in a while. Periodically my husband and I will go on a cruise, but mostly we are "home bodies" when we are not at an Eastern Star or Masonic meeting, event, or convention.

When did you join Eastern Star and what activities have you been involved with?
My parents were both members of the Eastern Star. I was 19 when joined Eastern Star on April 25, 1977, at Temple Terrace Chapter #277, in Temple Terrace, Florida. My father was Worthy Patron of the Chapter. I have served as a Worthy Matron 11 times; I have been awarded my "Excellence in Proficiency"Gold Card; I have served as Grand Instructor for my District twice; a Grand Representative twice; and I served as the Secretary of the Florida Grand Representatives Association where I am currently the Vice President.

What has made Eastern Star special to you?
Eastern Star principles and values have not changed since it was founded is special to me. I was raised with these principles and values and believe in them. It is so rewarding to know I can go to any Eastern Star Chapter anywhere and be welcomed with open arms and know they are as sincere as I am about these values and beliefs.

As a Rainbow Girl, I admired my advisory Board Members, all of which were Eastern Star Members, including the men. I was proud to serve as a Mother Advisor in Pennsylvania because I was an Eastern Star member. As a member, I find it rewarding and fulfilling to serve my community and am honored to be a part of this Great Organization.

Do you have a favorite memory of Eastern Star?
My favorite memories of Eastern Star was first, receiving our obligation at the Altar from my father, and then watching all four of my daughters being initiated into the Order.

What is your vision for the Order of Eastern Star?
Like many of our members and leaders, I would like to see the Order continue to "grow" its membership. I believe that we need to show a greater presence in our communities and let "the outside world" know who we are and what we do. We are proud of our organization and believe in a Supreme Being. I believe we need to do a better job collectively and individually to promote our Order, telling others what we actually do and why we do it.

What words of advice can you give our readers?
Be active in your chapter and your community. Remember to share a smile; it might make someone's day a little brighter.

Thank you, Sister Valerie, for sharing your story with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Marshal and look forward to watching you shine in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!
It was my pleasure!



Doug Matthews

Grand Organist

Welcome to the Holt-Keepin Grand Family! What went through your mind when you were selected as Grand Organist?
My first thought was, "Are you sure you've got the right Douglas?"

I was genuinely honored, but also a little surprised. I had never thought of myself as someone headed toward becoming Grand Organist. I mostly played piano for my own enjoyment, didn't read music particularly well, and had somehow gotten by for years believing that most of the notes printed on sheet music were really more suggestions than requirements.

Then I was told several people had recommended me. At that point, I figured either they saw something in me that I didn't see—or they were having an exceptionally difficult time filling the position. Either way, here I am.

Tell our readers a little about yourself.
I was born in Jacksonville, Florida, and apparently started making unconventional decisions fairly early because I joined the United States Air Force at 17. I served for 20 years and retired from the military at the ripe old age of 37.

Later I became a registered nurse in 2005 and spent much of my nursing career working in areas where you have to think quickly, adapt and deal with whatever situation appears in front of you. Military service taught me discipline. Nursing taught me to remain calm when things don't go according to plan. And playing for Eastern Star has taught me that if all else fails, keep smiling and find the next chord.

Come to think of it, those skills have been surprisingly useful as Grand Organist.

I'm single and have one brother, two nieces and one nephew. I've always enjoyed staying active. Running, cycling and swimming have been a big part of my life, and I've completed three Ironman triathlons. For reasons that probably deserve professional evaluation, I'm currently considering training for another one.

I also enjoy music, genealogy, traveling, technology and learning about practically anything that catches my attention. Boredom has never really been one of my problems.

Tell us about your family and your Eastern Star roots.
Eastern Star is definitely a family affair for me. My father was a Mason, and my mother was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star for more than 70 years. Mom was absolutely the person responsible for getting me involved in both Masonry and Eastern Star. I joined Eastern Star approximately ten years ago through Callahan Chapter.

Mom and I were extremely close. We traveled together, went on all sorts of adventures and shared a lot of life together. One of the greatest privileges Eastern Star gave me was the opportunity to serve as Worthy Patron while my mother served as Worthy Matron. Of all the titles and positions I've had in my life, that is one experience I wouldn't trade for anything.

What has Eastern Star meant to you personally?
For me, this is where the joking stops for a minute. Eastern Star gave me something very special to share with my mother. Mom was an Eastern Star member for more than 70 years. We traveled together, had countless adventures and made a lifetime of memories. But having the opportunity to stand beside her as her Worthy Patron while she served as Worthy Matron is one of those memories that has become even more precious with time. My father was a Mason, Mom was Eastern Star for more than seven decades, and now I'm serving as Grand Organist. I suppose you could say I didn't exactly escape the family business.

I'm glad I didn't.

What do you think Eastern Star needs for the future?
We need to protect our traditions without becoming afraid of change. There's a difference between preserving tradition and simply doing something a certain way because that's the way we've always done it. If we want Eastern Star to be here for future generations, we must give those generations a reason to want to join us. That means being welcoming. It means having fun. It means serving our communities. It means allowing people to bring their own talents and personalities into the Order. Our traditions give us roots. But occasionally you've got to grow a new branch. And every once in a while, somebody may even play Elvis. We'll survive.

What advice would you give someone coming into Eastern Star?
Participate. Don't wait until you think you know everything, because that day isn't coming. Volunteer for something. Learn some ritual. Try an office. Make a mistake. Laugh about it. Learn from somebody who knows more than you do. And when somebody else makes a mistake, give them the same grace you hope they'll give you. I've learned that lesson at the piano.

Nobody expects perfection, but they do appreciate effort. And sometimes the person who's willing to fill in "just this once" ends up Grand Organist. So, actually, you might want to be careful about volunteering.

Any final thoughts for the members of Florida Eastern Star?
I'm grateful that people had enough confidence in me to recommend me for Grand Organist, and especially grateful to our Worthy Grand Matron, Mary Ann Holt, for allowing me to be myself. I hope I can contribute something worthwhile during this Grand Chapter year. I hope people enjoy the music. I hope we laugh occasionally. And I hope that when the year is over, people remember that we had some fun together. As for what I'm going to play next? I have absolutely no idea. And neither does Mary Ann.

That's probably the way it should be.

Thank, you Brother Doug, for sharing your story with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Organist and look forward to watching you shine in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!

It's my pleasure.



Vicki Armstrong

Grand Adah

Welcome to the Holt-Keepin Grand Family! What went through your mind when you were selected as one of the Grand Officers?
What where they thinking? It was breathtaking to be asked and for sure it's an honor.

Tell your readers what makes you "you?"
Well, at 4 foot 10 and one quarter inches, I just missed being a midget by a quarter inch. I have lived in Wewahitchka since 1969. I have known Kenny, my husband, from high school, practically my whole life. It is a small town, you know. We've been married for 40 years.

I have two daughters and six grandchildren — and you have to include my three dogs, mini schnauzers. I keep my grandkids 4-5 days a week while my girls go to work.

I like to farm and garden. Love to go hunting, fishing, and taking my grandkids mud bogging in side-by-side dune buggies. I volunteer at the local fire department.

I am a stage 4 cervical cancer survivor. I got a second chance at life when the cancer was discovered when I was working in West Virginia. Lord moves in mysterious ways.

Are you retired? What kind of work did you do?
I have made everything from making Dawn dish soap to working at Cape Canaveral. I helped build one of the launch pads. I retired after 20 years as a pipe fitter welder. In the early 80's it was hard for women to work in that industry. On top of being so short, the guys had it out for me, but I hung in there. A few years later, several of the guys came to me and apologized for treating me so badly and said I was one of the best pipe fitters they ever had and would have me on their team anytime.

Have you always lived in Florida?
Yes. I did a lot of traveling due to my job as a pipe fitter welder going all over the country. I worked at a power plant and gas refinery in West Virginia for about a year and a half. That's where I was diagnosed with my cancer. I still go back to Moundsville for my annual checkup.

When and where did you join the Order of the Eastern Star?
Here in Wewahitchka Chapter No. 229 about eight years ago. I also plural at Panama Chapter No. 102.

What about your family?
Funny story. One day I was visiting the cemetery where my grandparents are buried and found out he was a Mason and my grandmother was a Past Matron in the Eastern Star Parker Chapter No. 96. I never knew. The family just never talked about being in Star or the Masons.

What makes Eastern Star special to you?
All the charitable events and organizations they support. Mostly, it is the closeness of Eastern Star and the way they do for each other. They are family. Shortly after I had joined, I asked the chapter for prayers for my mother, who was never a drinker, was dying from cirrhosis of the liver. She died and was scheduled to be buried on the same Saturday Betty Beasley was having her proficiency class. had to reschedule her class because hardly anyone was there — they all came to my mother's funeral. I was so moved when I saw the number of Star and Masonic members attending my mother's service.

Any closing thoughts or last words for our readers?
Eastern Star has made me a better person. It showed me how strangers can become my extended family and always be there for me. The same can happen to you.

Thank you, Sister Vicki, for sharing your story with us. Good luck in your year as Grand Adah and look forward in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!
It was pleasure. I never thought in a million years I would be a Grand Officer. But here I am, and I am having so much fun!



Dianna Carter

Grand Ruth

Congratulations Sister Dianna, on your appointment as Grand Ruth! When you were asked to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?
What went through my mind, was what, is Mary Ann actually asking me? Then having to act normal for the meeting, like you weren't concealing important happenings.

Tell our readers a little but about you. How you met your husband, children, work?
I had transferred to Denver with my friend Janice, met up with other girls from the little sleepy town of Salida, up in the mountains. First week there we all went out to a dance club. The place was crowded with no seats! we all went in different directions looking and planned to meet up by the ladies room. Betty came back, said she found a table that had four guys there. We blended in and I sat next to Mike.

55 years later I'm still sitting next to Mike.

My husband Mike and I are both retired and have lived in Florida for over 20 years. We have two girls and no grandchildren—just grand puppies and grand kitties.

Mike retired from the Air Force and we tended to move about all over the country. Deciding where to retire too was easily figured out, I grew up in Colorado, so cold was out; Mike grew up in Maryland—also cold. Thought about Texas where my brother lives, but decided no. So Florida became the winner.

I worked at doctor offices and hospitals for a long time. Then went on to work at United Airlines for 24 years. Mike and I used to do lots of day trips with the airline, New York, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans places like that. Just go down in the morning and back on the late flight.

What keeps you busy now that you are retired?
What keeps me busy, I belong to United Women in Faith at my church. I'm the unit treasurer, which gets busy when we have Granny's Attic, the craft fair, Wonder Walk, and a few other big events. I am also treasurer for Daughters of Mokana that meet once a month.

Hobbies are on the back burner this year, but I usually do a little knitting or crocheting. My main focus this year is trying to keep my schedule correct.

I used to call myself the cruise queen, but I have not been able to go as much as I would like; Mike just can't do long walks. We do go to all the local festivals, try to get a Rays game, and a Lightning game or more each year.

What are your Eastern Star roots? Your favorite station?
My Mom was Eastern Star, her mom and my grandad both were Eastern Star. Mom told me years ago to join, but with the family moving all the time put it off for a long time. I always say if I had joined when my mom told me I'd be close to 50 years. I joined Linsley Chapter in Brandon; which is no longer there, then transferred to DeSoto where I am now serving as Conductress. Conductress is actually my favorite station. For me it made everything click once you learned the part.

Any favorite memories?
Last February was my first Star cruise, and I can stay that was, THE BEST. Dozens of friends all over the ship, side trips, meals together, learning to dance and other silly stuff.

What's your vision for Eastern Star?
I would like to see the Eastern Star still going strong, bringing in new members. But we unfortunately only bring in a few new members, and we lose to many older members due to illness or unable to drive.

Do you have any advice to our readers?
Words to our readers, be active, be involved, be eager to try new challenges, visit all the chapters you can, go to their special events, let them know you are a visible member, not one that just shows up for meetings and doesn't socialize. Meeting and knowing all the sisters and brothers all over the state, to me, is truly special. The stories they tell are always one of a kind. Some positions seem overwhelming at first, like being WM for the first time, but we do our best. Then, next thing you know, your year is over and you have a better understanding of how the chapter works, and how you can keep it working.

One of my favorite quotes is from Mother Theresa: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

Thank you, Sister Dianna! it has been a pleasure to have you share your story with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Ruth in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family.
It's been my pleasure!



Diana Pence

Grand Esther

Congratulations Sister Diana, on your appointment as Grand Esther! When you were asked to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind?
I was in complete disbelief. I actually had to ask her to clarify that she was asking me to serve as a Grand Officer. I hope Sister Mary Ann found my reaction amusing, because I was truly stunned and deeply honored.

Give us a snapshot of who you are—family, career, hobbies.
My family consists of my two sons and my parents. My older son is an attorney in Miami who specializes in corporate bankruptcy and financial restructuring. My younger son lives in Melbourne and works for a tech company building custom computers for clients. My parents live in West Virginia, so I travel there as often as I can to spend time with them.

I am now retired after a rewarding career as a school nurse. I always thought of school nursing not only as my profession, but also as my mission field. I had the privilege of watching children grow from age three into adulthood.

During my nursing career, I also spent a great deal of time counseling children and teens who had experienced trauma. Because of that, the service dog charity we support is also very close to my heart, as are the many other charitable efforts of our organization.

Because I worked with elementary, middle, and high school students within the same community, I especially valued the opportunity to advise and support both students and their families as their needs and personalities evolved over the years. Quite often, these "consultations" happened unexpectedly in the aisles of the local grocery store!

Today, I still keep in touch with some of those students, now adults themselves, and it is incredibly rewarding to see the lives they have built.

Now that you are retired, what do you do to stay busy?
I enjoy staying busy, but I always need a sense of purpose in what I do. One of my favorite hobbies is crocheting, and I make blankets and toys for foster children to comfort them when they are removed from their homes, as well as gifts for others.

I also love being outdoors and am happiest when I am growing flowers and vegetables or walking along the beach. I rescued a dog who certainly keeps me active and entertained.

I used to do a bit of baking, though not often for my family. My true motivation was earning the bright orange ribbons at the West Virginia Pumpkin Festival. I would arrive with a toddler in tow and unintentionally frustrate all the little grannies competing alongside me!

What Are Your Eastern Star Roots/Rainbow Girls?
I really cannot separate my Eastern Star roots from my years as a Rainbow Girl. My parents were active in our local OES chapter and Masonic Lodge for as long as I can remember. I often joke that I have been in the chapter room since I was in diapers.

As soon as I was old enough to join Rainbow, I did. Through Rainbow, I formed friendships that remain among the most meaningful in my life. Advancing to the Grand West allowed me to meet people from across West Virginia. I reached the age of Majority shortly before the election for Grand Worthy Advisor, but at that time I was spending nearly every hour outside of class at the hospital writing nursing care plans, so even then I knew it was for the best.

My experiences in Rainbow transformed me from a very shy preteen to someone comfortable speaking and making presentations in a professional setting. Rainbow taught me discipline through memory work, but more importantly, it taught me how to truly care for others. The lessons I learned in Rainbow, along with the teachings of our Eastern Star heroines, continue to shape my life every day. All those experiences carry over into what makes OES so special to me. I have gained so much from the Masonic organizations, and I am honored to have the opportunity to give back. Serving as a Grand Officer allows me to fulfill that desire.

What has OES meant to you over the years?
At this stage of my life, I have come to fully appreciate the tremendous impact the Masonic organizations have on both public institutions and individual lives. I deeply value the charities we support and the people we help.

Our Worthy Grand Matron has selected a charity that is especially meaningful to me as a nurse. I am grateful that our efforts will support research into cardiac disease, particularly because I have always been a strong advocate for preventative medicine.

Now, as the daughter of aging parents, I stand in profound gratitude for my parents' Sisters and Brothers of the Eastern Star and my father's Masonic brothers, both locally and throughout the state. They have shown up for my parents in such meaningful ways, and their support allows me the peace of mind to be here in Florida while knowing my parents are surrounded by love.

Any last words?
In closing, I want to express my gratitude to Sister Mary Ann and Brother Rich for choosing me and for the time it took to thoughtfully put together a Grand Family of individuals who genuinely enjoy each other's company. We are already having so much fun and I am making life-long friends.

Thank you, Sister Diana! it has been a pleasure to have you share your story with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Esther in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family.
Thank you for all you do for our membership.

Thank you for your kind words.



Crystal Runyan

Grand Martha

Congratulations Sister Crystal, on your appointment as Grand Martha! What went through your mind when you were selected as one of the Grand Officers?
I was very surprised, honored and unsure of the responsibilities, time commitment and cost. Very quickly, I went with the honor and said yes and haven't regretted it.

Can you tell our readers something about yourself: family, work life, hobbies?
I am Christian, Mom, Mimi, Boss, Friend, Photographer, Poet, Traveler, and want-to-be author. I don't care for gossip and try to always treat others with the compassion and grace.

I am the mom of three and Mimi to four grandchildren with another on the way. All of my kids live close by which is a blessing.

I am an Assistant Registrar at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, where I have worked 27 years in all aspects of Registrar operations. I am also currently serving as President of FACRAO (Florida Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission's Officers.)

Have you always been in Florida?
No. I was born in Louisville, Kentucky and grew up in Salem, West Virginia and moved here in 1987 after graduation.

So, what makes you "you?"
Keeping God in all things and always looking for moments of joy. Life is so much easier when the small stuff is kept in perspective.

What do you like to do when you are not serving OES and your community? Spend time with family and friends. Traveling, discovering new places and taking photographs of moments, places and things that bring me joy.

In addition to photography, I love discovering new music and going to concerts. I always say, "Any day I can add a new artist to my playlist is a good day."

What are your Eastern Star roots?
I joined Rainbow when I finally turned 12. I got my majority from Rainbow but had moved to Florida. I waited to join Eastern Star as I was raising a family and actively involved as a Girl Scout leader.

I joined Eastern Star in Daytona Chapter No. 1 in 2008. I come from a long line of Masons and OES members. My grandmother was Grand Marshal in West Virginia, and my great-great aunt was Worthy Grand Matron of West Virginia Grand Chapter in the early 1900s. I grew up seeing my grandparents dressed up and going to OES functions. Although I joined OES after their passing, I have had the pleasure of sitting in chapters and Grand Chapters with my Aunt Christina who lives in West Virginia.

What is your favorite memory of Eastern Star?
Having my aunt come from West Virginia to be my Installing Chaplain when I was installed for the first time as Worthy Matron.

What Star offices have you held, and which one was your favorite?
Electa, Associate Conductress, Conductress, Associate Matron, Worthy Matron, Treasurer, Grand Representative to WV in FL, Grand Instructor and now Grand Martha. Each station came at the right time in my life.

I think Worthy Matron is my favorite in my chapter. Helping others grow and learn is dear to me.

Do you have any words of advice to give our readers?
Be open to the opportunities, friendships and growth afforded to us through Eastern Star. Avoid any drama as it only sours the experience. Don't stress the officials: everyone with a higher position has been right where you are and knows how you feel. Remember to love one another.

I appreciate you taking time out of your day to share something about yourself with our readers, Sister Crystal. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Martha with the Holt-Keepin Grand Family! Again, congratulations and good luck being part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!
You're welcome! I look forward to seeing everyone in the Grand travels this year!



Tina Ankeny

Grand Electa

Congratulations, Sister Tina, on your appointment as Grand Electa! Tell me, what was the very first thought that crossed your mind when you were asked to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family?
I was very surprised to be selected, especially being from the home District and Chapter of Sister Mary Ann. I was proud to serve last year as Grand Instructor and hope to bring the same honor, energy, and pride as a Grand Officer.

Can you tell your readers a little bit about you and your family life?
2026 has been an interesting year of change for our family. My mother, for whom we assisted, passed away just prior to me taking this Grand Office. Just after, in mid-June, I retired after 42 years of service from my company. So, it is a whole new world for my husband, Doug and me.

I have just returned from my Sorority Convention in Herndon, Virginia where I toured our nation's capital for the first time. We are now going to Europe for a month and have a long cruise planned in the fall.

So, what makes you "you?"
I enjoy reading, TV, movies, music, playing games, watching birds, spending time with family, and cooking with Doug.

What are your Eastern Star roots?
I was not in Rainbow Girls but did have a father in the Masons and Shrine. My husband is a 4th generation Mason from the same lodge, so it was just destiny for me! I also support my husband in his Masonic journey and look forward to what comes next!

I have been in OES about 15 years. In that time, I have served as multiple star points. My husband and I had the honor of working our way to chapter as Worthy Matron and Worthy Patron. I have proudly served as a Grand Instructor and now as a Grand Officer.

Any last words for our readers?
I look forward to growing with our Grand Family and being out and about, meeting new friends and seeing the ones I know. I am here to serve and willing to help or coach anyone as needed. I do hope to make you proud!

Thank you, Sister Tina, for sharing your story with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Electa and look forward to watching you shine in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family!
It has been my pleasure!



Donna Caswell

Grand Warder

Congratulations, Sister Donna, on your appointment as Grand Warder. What went through your mind when you were asked to be part of the Holt-Keepin Grand Family?
Wow! Is Sister Mary Ann really asking me to be one of her officers, got so excited, and shocked. I am so proud to be chosen by the Holt-Keepin family. I couldn't have asked for a better family. I will do my best not to disappoint them or Eastern Star.

Can you give us a snapshot of who you are? Family, career, hobbies?
My family comes first in all things. I have one daughter who blessed me with six grandchildren. I am also a great grandmother to Charlotte who is 1½ years old and Bodie who is six months.
I work as an office manager for four doctors (infectious disease). The doctors and staff are great. I keep pretty busy besides working. I go to most events the grandchildren are in such as volleyball, skateboarding, dog shows, and whatever activities they join.

What about your life with Eastern Star?
Eastern Star was my life saver after I lost my husband. I joined because of my daughter and granddaughter who thought it would be good for me to get to know people instead of just working and going home. Best decision I have ever made!

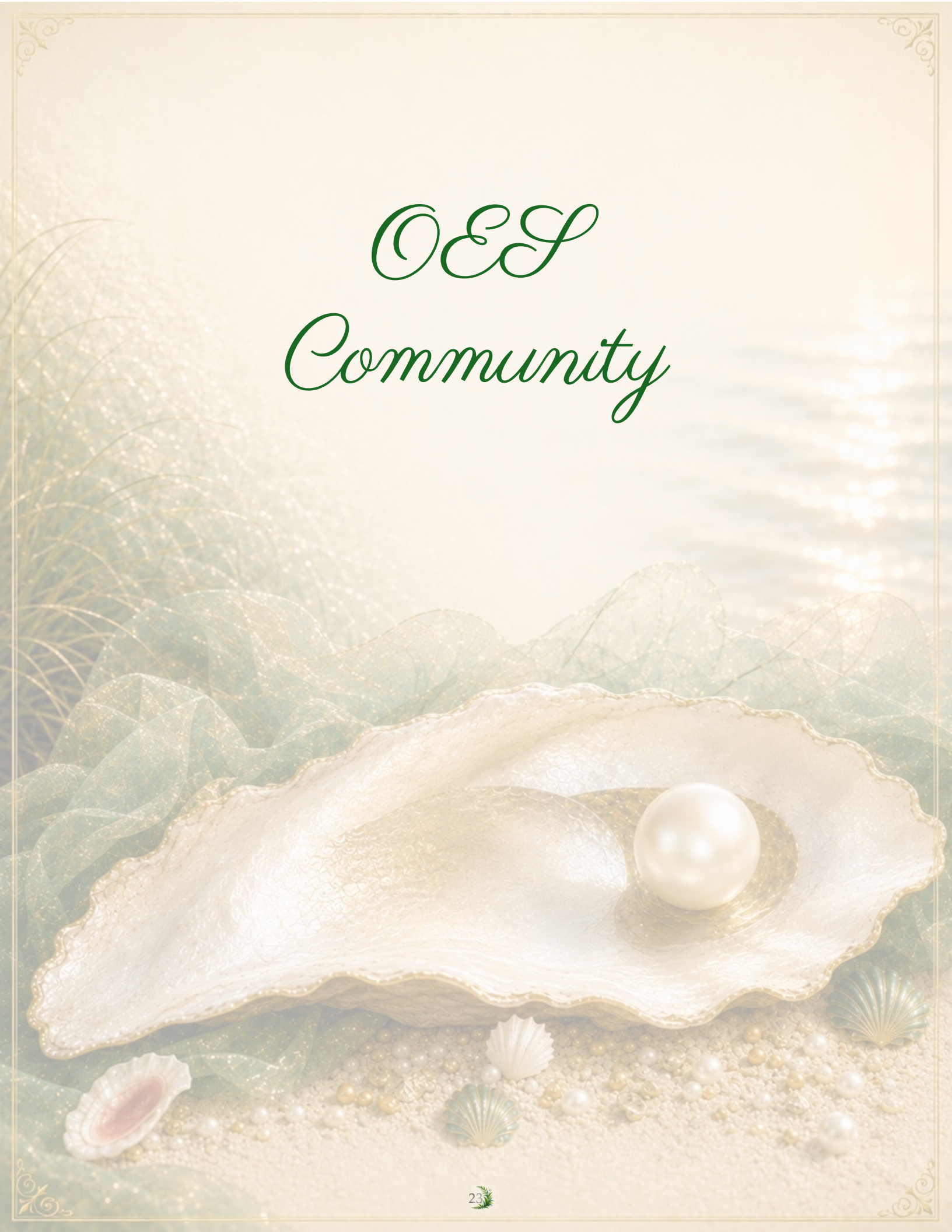
I can honestly say Eastern Star has kept me extremely busy. My primary chapter is Ocala where I started out as Ruth then Treasurer which I still am. My second chapter is Belleview where I have been Marshal, Warder, Associate Conductress, Conductress, Associate Matron and Worthy Matron twice. I like Associate Matron the best. Although I was never a Rainbow Girl, I did serve on the Board for four years.

As Worthy Matron, I did a lot for the community giving grills to the fire departments and snacks every month, snacks to the police and sheriff's departments. We donated material to the K–9 unit for obstacle training and visited shut-ins. I love helping people and doing something that counts.

Any last words?
I can only say you get out of anything as much as you put into it. Eastern Star is a great organization and has made my life full of new experiences and growth. I am so proud to be the Grand Warder!

Thank you, Sister Donna, for sharing some of your life with our readers. We wish you every success in your year as Grand Warder in the Holt-Keepin Grand Family.
It's been my pleasure!

OES Community



Mary Ann Holt, WGM and Rich Keepin, WGP Homecoming Honor Night













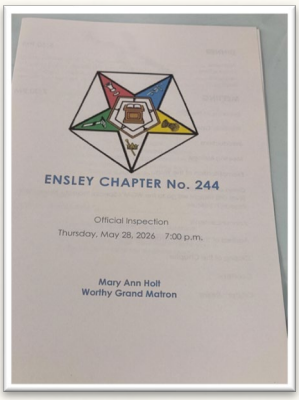






Photos Pat Cooper, Photography Committee

Ensley Chapter No. 244 Welcomes Worthy Grand Matron Mary Ann Holt For Official Visit



On Thursday, May 28th, it was a excellent evening for an Official Visit with Mary Ann Holt, WGM.

The evening started with a delicious home-cooked meal and fellowship in the dining room. The meeting at hand was wonderful with chairs filled with many out-of-town visitors as well as our own district members.

The courtesy was "Pearls of Wisdom" for Sister Mary Ann!

—Kathy Barlow, Photography Committee











Photos - Kathy Barlow, Photography Committee

Jolene Goodwin, AGM and Mickey Brown, AGP Jungle Safari Honor Night

On Saturday, May 30th, it was a Welcome to the Jungle Safari honoring Jolene Goodwin, Associate Grand Matron and Mickey Brown, Associate Grand Patron. Jungle Safari guide, Sister Debbie Whiteman, kept everyone safe and trued her best to keep everyone on track for the evening!

The Mistresses of Ceremony, the Hippopotamuses, kept all the guests guessing what was next! Everyone had a wonderful time in the Jungle with fun, laughter, and fellowship!

—Kathy Barlow, Photography Committee



Jolene Goodwin, AGM
escorted by Billy Williams, PGP



Mickey Brown AGP
escorted by Roberta Brown, PGA



Jungle Safari Guide
Sister Debbie Whiteman



Mistresses of Ceremony
Sisters Charlene Williams and Margaret Nathurst





Photos - Kathy Barlow, Photography Committee

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