



□ *Editor's note: This is one in a series of feature stories concerning organizations that benefit the Imperial area. Volunteering in a community, through organizations, is a way to pay back for the benefits that the community offers an individual.*

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Chapter #279 Order of the Eastern Star is part of the largest fraternal organization in the world to which both men and women may belong. Eastern Star is open to anyone over age 18 with a Masonic affiliation, be it a father, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle or brother.

According to Worthy Matron Barbara Wood, the organization is not a religion. However, the lessons taught within the meetings are based on heroines whose stories are told in the Bible.

“As members, we try to exemplify the noble principles and high moral conduct which the stories of those heroines portray,” she said.

The Imperial chapter was instituted Dec. 29, 1920 and constituted May 11, 1921. The first Worthy Matron was Mary Johnson, while E.F. Oswald was the first Worthy Patron.

Eastern Star sponsors an annual couples golf tournament in June at Enders Lake Golf Course. Proceeds fund scholarships for graduating seniors in Chase County.

Chapters in Nebraska also support the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont. They also assist with many Nebraska Masonic Lodge projects, including the Nebraska Masonic Home in Plattsmouth, the Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic and the Child Identification Program.

The local chapter donates to the Chase County Food Pantry, has painted street signs and planted a tree in the city park.

Members also visit nursing homes, hand out fruit and have supported Imperial Rainbow for Girls and Nebraska Job Daughters and DeMolay for Boys.

Eastern Star also shares a Christmas dinner with the Masons.

The local chapter has seen members Cindy Norman and Ola Schuerich become Worthy Grand Matrons, a state officer position, and Les Smith as Worthy Grand Patron.

Smith also was appointed General Grand Chapter Committee Member on Distribution, while Wood was an Assembly Grand Page in Tulsa, Okla. in 2009.

Wauneta #295 Order of the Eastern Star consolidated with the Imperial chapter in 1995.

There are 95 chapters of the Order of the Eastern Star in Nebraska, with over 8,000 members.

Persons interested in joining Eastern Star may contact Wood at (308) 882-5725.