


CALIFORNIA 

# FREEMASON

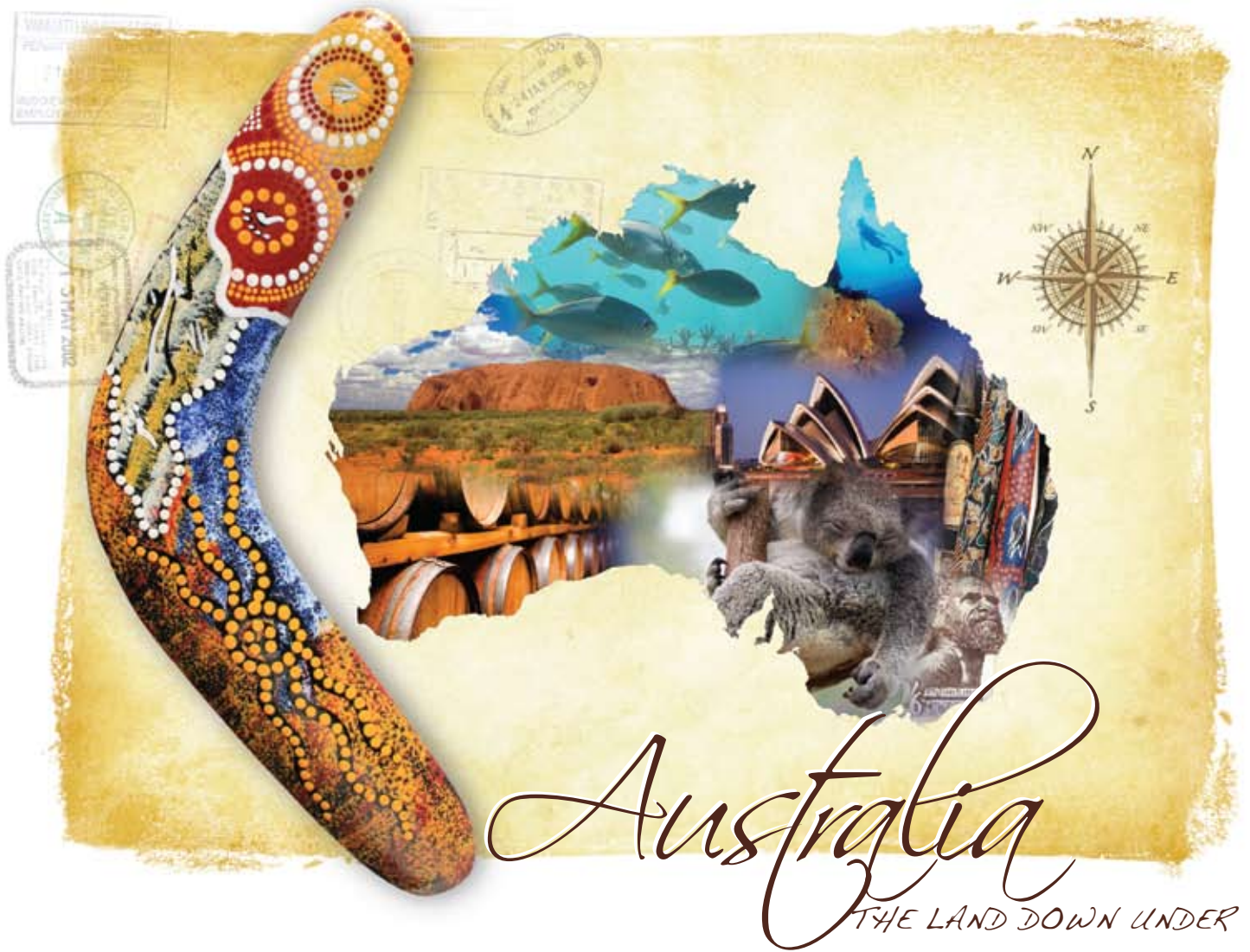
Summer 2008



## A Winding Staircase

John L. Cooper's lifetime of learning and teaching

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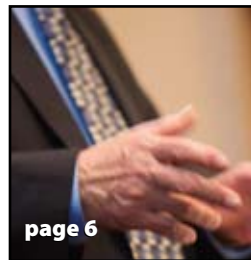
Phone: 800/831-8170 or  
415/776-7000;  
fax: 415/776-7170;  
e-mail: [editor@freemason.org](mailto:editor@freemason.org).



# 12 Feature Story

When John L. Cooper III left his career in education to become Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of California 17 years ago, Freemasonry became his new classroom. Advocating the idea that a Mason should learn throughout his entire life, Cooper became a champion of applied Freemasonry. During his tenure, Cooper made many significant contributions to Masonry in California, from developing the education components of Masonic Formation to launching the Annual Symposium to establishing a robust administrative infrastructure.

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page 6



page 8



page 16

5

**In California** Want a deeper, richer understanding of Freemasonry? The Institute for Masonic Studies offers lectures, historical materials, and other education resources.

6

**Lodge Spotlight** From discussion groups to public lectures, two lodges offer meaningful approaches to Masonic Formation and inspire further learning.

8

**Around the World** The confusing lineage of several Masonic rites (York, Scottish and Swedish) gets untangled and sorted out, thanks to John L. Cooper III.

10

**Masonic Education** The California Masonic Symposium provides a place each year for Masons to experience the cutting edge of "Masonic light" in the form of contemporary scholarship.

16

**History** Since the days when lodges met in taverns and inns, symbols have been used to aid Masonic instruction. Read how these teaching aids evolved from being drawn on the floor to being projected on a screen.

19

**Masonic Homes** Founders tell about the appeal and peace of mind offered by the Acacia Creek Masonic Senior Living Communities, slated for construction at the Covina and Union City campuses.

20

**Masonic Homes** The new lodge at the Masonic Home at Union City continues lifelong learning for Master Mason residents.

# TEACHING FREEMASONRY

## TO THOSE WHO FOLLOW

Probably like many of you coming into Masonry, I had questions about what I would find and what the experience would be. Being in DeMolay gave me many clues. I realized early on that the more I learned, the more there was to learn.

When I reached age 21, I asked my father for a petition to his lodge. Although the degrees were different from what I expected, the experience of focused Masonic education being an integral part of my proficiency process did not surprise me. I quickly learned that Masonry would be a lifelong education class in history, sociology, ritual, and many other life topics.

That first experience with the Masonic education process was 35 years ago. My coach, a past master, lived next door to my parents. Assigned the task of getting me through my proficiency work, he spent tireless hours not only on the ritual but he also mentored me through the customs, history and protocols on how to navigate through the lodge. Those many nights spent sitting in his living room and backyard, intently going through my work, are still vivid memories.

Many of our lodges continue this experience with quality education and mentoring programs that ensure a candidate has the ability to progress and to understand what he is being taught. Some, however, have become degree mills with short-form proficiencies that don't allow the candidate time to absorb the vast knowledge of our craft. Are we doing enough to ensure that our candidates experience everything that



Masonry has to offer rather than focusing on how fast we can get the candidate progressed and how quickly we can fill an officer's chair?

Training and education have always been integral to our Grand Lodge strategic plan. Numerous certification programs and leadership retreats have been fully developed over the years and more are being planned, such as the Inspector's Leadership Academy. New resources and tools, such as the *Member's Guide to Masonry in California* and a guide to member engagement and retention, are being produced by the membership development committee.

But we have only scratched the surface. With today's fast-paced society, time is a commodity we cannot waste. We must be even more efficient in our training, and that training must deliver more to ensure the health of our lodges.

To address this need we will offer our management courses online as well as in

seminars. Two of the courses are available now, four more will be online by the end of December, and four more by the end of 2009. In addition, we are producing DVDs on the teachings and meanings of the degrees.

A discussion on teaching Freemasonry would not be complete without talking about our duty to mentor those who come behind us. As I look back to my DeMolay days, every man I consider to have had an influence on my life was a Mason. Each of us can make a difference in the lives of brothers who follow us, but we must engage in the process. Our lodges will be stronger for our efforts.

At one time or another, we all have been asked to explain Masonry and why it exists. There are many definitions and varied explanations on what we do. I think that a discussion regarding the lifelong learning path that leads to "Making Good Men Better" is a good place to begin.

Our craft was blessed in having one of the finest teachers within our Grand Lodge leadership, past Grand Secretary John Cooper. John was the guiding force in developing most of the training programs we use today. Because of his willingness to teach others and to be the epitome of a mentor, he leaves a legacy of strength within our Grand Lodge office. Thank you, John. ✦

**Kenneth G. Nagel**  
Senior Grand Warden



by Cason Lane

# Tools of the Trade

Learning from the Institute for Masonic Studies

Could the stonemasons of yore have built grand castles and cathedrals without their tools? Probably not. Likewise, modern Masons need tools—albeit a different variety—to guide them on their journey. Today’s tools help Masons build strong relationships with their families, their communities, and themselves.

To better equip California Masons with such tools and knowledge, the Grand Lodge established the Institute for Masonic Studies as a resource for Masonic education.

*“The Institute is a vehicle through which we all can better understand and appreciate why we became Masons.”*

Through a variety of symposiums, lectures, historical materials, and Masonic Formation programs, the Institute aims to provide Masons with a deeper, richer understanding of Freemasonry.

“The goal of the Institute is to teach candidates and brothers how to be better Masons and how to use the tools and philosophy of Masonry, not only in the lodge room, but more importantly, out in the world,” says Richard Pierce, board member of the Institute and past master of Culver City-Foshay Lodge No. 467.

Currently, the Institute is developing a series of DVDs to help Masons new and old apply the principles of Freemasonry in their daily lives. It’s also preparing to host the annual California Masonic Symposium in August; the theme is “Freemasonry and Women”, which will focus on the role of women in the fraternity.

“The Institute is responsible for telling the story of Freemasonry to Masons and non-Masons and providing a more accurate picture of what it is,” says Gene Goldman, board member of the Institute and past master of Amity Lodge No. 442 and Black Mountain Lodge No. 845, both in San Diego. “We want to be a resource and a motivator for Masons. Kind of like a muse for their Masonic journey.”

Board President and Past Grand Master Frederick Sorsabal, of Placerville Lodge No. 26, encourages Masons to take advantage of the Institute’s programs. “We must always attempt to better ourselves through Masonry,” he says. “The Institute is a vehicle through which we all can better understand and appreciate why we became Masons.” ✦



## ACCESSING THE INSTITUTE

For more information, contact James Banta, Program Manager, Grand Lodge, at (415) 292-9118 or [jbanta@freemason.org](mailto:jbanta@freemason.org).

by Cason Lane

# Teaching Applied Freemasonry

Two lodges offer meaningful approaches to Masonic Formation

**A**cademia Lodge No. 847 in Oakland was established in 2004 as a place to learn about Masonry in depth. And one way the lodge is living up to its founding principle is by offering a full spectrum of Masonic Formation activities.

In addition to individual mentoring sessions and essay presentations, the lodge offers monthly discussion groups about specific degrees. These groups are based on the Socratic method, which uses questions—not answers—to fully engage members in a topic.

“The monthly Masonic Formation discussion groups are the cornerstone of our mentoring process,” says Shawn Eyer, past master of the lodge. “They give candidates and others the opportunity to openly discuss any

“As my year as master began, it was one of my main priorities to create an environment where Masonic education evolved and stimulated the minds and spirits of our members.”

aspect of Freemasonry’s meaning. The facilitator is not a teacher in the common sense, but is there to keep the group in focus and to suggest avenues for further exploration.”

The lodge’s discussion groups and other formation activities have proven very beneficial for members. Just ask Brian Hodges, who credits the lodge’s programs for helping him apply the principles of Freemasonry to overcome issues in his work and personal life.

“To me, the formation meetings are like a study group,” Hodges says. “You have the opportunity to

ask questions and interact with others who have different levels of understanding and experience. There are Masons involved who have been doing this for years, who deliver pertinent information to the group, and who bring out layers of meaning in what we do.”

When a recent work project caused him stress and sleeplessness, Hodges turned to the principles discussed in the Formation meetings.

“One night I had a sort of epiphany on how to approach my situation in a different way,” he says. “I was more like a builder or a craftsman working



Masonic Education Night at Santa Monica – Palisades lodge

on a noble pursuit instead of just another business project. It changed my perspective on the problem and suggested a new course of action.”

A few years ago, Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge No. 307 had an influx of young, new members who were seeking a deeper, more substantive Masonic experience. To help them better understand the philosophies and principles

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“The series has been very popular and very interactive.”  
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of Masonry, then-Master Saul Alvarado established two pillars of Masonic education—Masonic Education Nights and Masonic

Research & Reflection.

“As my year as master began, it was one of my main priorities to create an environment where Masonic education evolved and stimulated the minds and spirits of our members,” Alvarado says. “If we as a fraternity are to retain the title of an institution of leaders with prepared and enlightened gentlemen, then education is key.”

For Masonic Education Nights, which are held once a quarter, the lodge invites such speakers as university professors, scholars, and, most recently, lodge members to discuss topics related to Masonry. The popular lectures, which are open to the public, typically draw more than 100 attendees, and Alvarado hopes that continued lectures by non-

Mason presenters will attract more people who want to know what the organization is really about.

The lodge’s second education pillar, Masonic Research & Reflection, is a lecture series offered by Masons for Masons. The lectures are small, intimate events where members can delve deeply into such topics as “The Lodge as a Symbol for the Soul” and “The 47th Problem of Euclid.”

“The series has been very popular and very interactive,” Alvarado says. “Not only have these lectures given the brothers an opportunity to ask questions, but they’ve also inspired further learning and research from the participants.” ✨

by Richard Berman

# Getting it RITE!

**B**elgian ales are from Belgium, the Canadian Brass are from Canada, so, of course, the Scottish Rite traces its roots to ... England? And the York Rite was actually developed in France? No wonder that a large number of Masons—even those who have been brothers for many years—are confused

about the origins of the two most common rituals of the craft. Add into the mix the perception that one has to be Christian to be a York Rite Mason (false) or a Swedish Rite Mason (true), and the fact that many Masons today are involved with multiple rites, and it's a sure-fire recipe for misunderstanding.



The good news is that John Cooper III, who recently retired as grand secretary, has written a paper entitled “The History and Development of the Masonic Ritual” that explores many of the myths and misconceptions about the origins of modern Masonic rites. According to Dr. Cooper (based on his examination of original source materials and previous scholarship), most American Masons practice the York Rite, named for the old lodge at York, England, which he notes “is characterized by its austere character, by the use of questions and answers as a means of delivering the ritual, and by the use of a lecture at the end of a degree to explain the ceremonies.”

Today the York Rite and the Scottish Rite are systems of additional degrees beyond those of the craft, but before the names were used for additional degrees and organizations they actually referred to the type of ritual in use. “Today you can see a Scottish Rite ritual for the Entered Apprentice degree if you visit one of our two French lodges,” Cooper says. “They use the Scottish Rite ritual for their first degree instead of the York Rite ritual, and if you have seen the degree you will readily understand the difference.”

Interestingly enough, Scotland has nothing to do with it! In fact, the Scottish Rite is called the Ancient and Accepted Rite in the British Isles, and it is open only to Christian Masons. To add to the source of the confusion, the York Rite does not exist in England even though the degrees which comprise the York Rite in the United States do. The most popular of the additional degrees in England is the Royal Arch, which, unlike its counterpart here, does not confer any degrees other than the Royal Arch. That’s why the three degrees which are prerequisites for the Royal Arch in the United States require Masons to belong to three additional organizations. Cooper notes that because of this muddle, “you will find that some Masons believe the most outlandish things concerning the York Rite, such as the erroneous idea that you

have to be a Royal Arch Mason to visit a craft lodge in England.” Another common misconception is that the York Rite is Christian. This is incorrect: While the “top” of the organization is the Knights Templar, which is a Christian Masonic organization, Royal Arch Masonry and the Cryptic Rite are open to all Masons.

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“Scotland has nothing to do with the Scottish Rite and the York Rite does not exist in England.”

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So far, it makes sense, right? After all, just about every American Mason follows the York and/or Scottish Rite. But it’s not quite that simple. There are many other rituals that developed in Europe but never became popular in this country. The Swedish Rite, which is commonly used in Scandinavia, is an 11-degree system that requires its members to be Christian and not just believe in a supreme being. Other rites—such as Germany’s Schroeder Rite and the Rectified Scottish Rite in use in Europe—are also commonly followed in Europe. Then there are the rites of Mizraim and of Memphis, which use Egyptian symbolism for their illustrations in existence.

Fortunately, most California Masons today need only concern themselves with the York and Scottish Rites for their own involvement with the craft. However, an exploration of the history of other rites may be a valuable exercise for any brother wishing to explore how the rites developed—and how they affect Masonry today. ✧

# EXPLORE

## Important Issues in Freemasonry Today

### The California Masonic Symposium

by John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Secretary

Master Masons are told at a critical moment in the third degree that the search for further light in Masonry should be a distinguishing characteristic of all Masons. The California Masonic Symposium provides a place each year for Masons to experience the cutting edge of “Masonic light” in the form of contemporary scholarship.

It also has offered young Masonic scholars a place to speak. In 2007, two prominent young men—one a Mason and one not yet a Mason—presented papers on the impact of Freemasonry in Mexico and its cultural and political history. Both papers were very well received, and symposium participants learned something about Freemasonry “south of the border” that they could never have experienced in any other forum.

The annual symposium began in 2001 as a means of bringing Masonic scholars and speakers to California. Seven symposiums have been held, with a truly impressive list of prominent Masons and Masonic scholars who have participated. A partial list of the scholars who have shared their expertise and knowledge includes:

**REX HUTCHENS**, author of “A Bridge to Light,” and other books. He was the first person to deliver the coveted Henry Wilson Coil Masonic Lecture—a feature of each symposium since 2001.

**S. BRENT MORRIS**, who wrote “The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Freemasonry”—a best-seller—and many other well-known Masonic books.

**DR. MARGARET JACOB**, perhaps the best-known academic historian of Freemasonry alive today, who participated in the 2003 symposium at UCLA.

**ROBERT L. D. COOPER**, Librarian of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and world-famous speaker on Freemasonry. His lecture on Rosslyn Chapel brought out a crowd of almost 150 participants at Stanford University.

**ROBERT DAVIS**, General Secretary of the Scottish Rite at Guthrie, Oklahoma, who spoke on Freemasonry and the American Indian in 2004 in San Diego. He will be the featured speaker again in August 2008, on the impact of fraternalism on men in American society. He is the author of “Understanding Manhood in America: Freemasonry’s Enduring Path to the Mature Masculine.”

**DR. GARY LEAZER**, prominent religious scholar and Freemason.

**LEON ZELDIS**, former Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite for the State of Israel.

**DR. PAUL RICH**, professor of international relations at the University of Puebla, Mexico, and a Fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

# ING

The California Masonic Symposium is designed not only to showcase prominent Masonic scholars, but also to provide a forum for the exploration of ideas important to Freemasons today. In 2003, the symposium at UCLA looked at Freemasonry and the Enlightenment—the 18th-century cradle of social and political freedom to which the United States is so deeply indebted. That particular symposium also saw prominent scholars from France share the stage with well-known American scholars—and an opportunity for understanding the impact of Freemasonry on modern history.

The California Masonic Symposium has won wide acclaim for the breadth of its topics, and for the depth of its exploration of important issues in Freemasonry today. It is—in the words of the lecture of the third degree—“well calculated to increase knowledge and promote virtue.” ✦

FREEMASONRY AND THE

*Victorian Era*

AUGUST 27, 2005  
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Sponsored by the Grand Lodge of California and the California Masonic Foundation

AUGUST 25-26, 2006  
GARDEN GROVE

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Eight Annual California Masonic Symposium  
FREEMASONRY  
AND WOMEN

by Cason Lane

# A WINDING STAIRCASE

## John L. Cooper's lifetime of learning and teaching

**FROM** the moment a man approaches the door of Freemasonry, he is given a guide who will lead him in and around the lodge and provide instruction. This is most evident in the Fellow Craft degree when the senior deacon takes the candidate by the arm and conducts him through a symbolic winding staircase of information on architecture and the liberal arts and sciences. This very act is symbolic of the importance Freemasonry places on learning and teaching.

In 1991 John L. Cooper III closed the book on his thriving career as an educator – but he opened a new one as grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of California. Though he didn't know it at the time, his passion for teaching would continue.

“You don't have to wear a pin or a ring. People are going to know you're a Mason because you're living it.”

Over the next 17 years, Freemasonry would become his new classroom. Advocating the idea that a Mason should learn throughout his entire life, Cooper would become a champion of Applied Freemasonry, soaking up the world around him and putting the teachings of the craft into practice. He would become known as someone who is always learning and passing his knowledge on to others.

“I gave up my career as an educator to become grand secretary, not knowing what it would lead to,” says Cooper, 66, who retired as grand secretary in April. “And it has led to some great things.”

### Masonic Formation

In his early professional life, Cooper was a star educator in Southern California. Climbing from high school teacher to school administrator to a district superintendent in San Diego County, he helped create a vision for strong schools – and then build them. Under his leadership, one of those schools was named among the state's most distinguished.

It's no wonder that Cooper helped launch another kind of educational vision: Masonic Formation.

“From my background as an educator, I know that education has to have scope and sequence,” says Cooper, who has a Ph.D. in education. “You have to know what you want to teach, and you have to do it in an orderly fashion.”



There's a reason, after all, that school students don't go from first grade directly to 12th. But Cooper realized that in California Freemasonry, some of the scope – such as ritual, history and principles – could benefit from more organization and order. So he helped recruit a statewide Masonic Formation taskforce that developed a set of educational materials for California's lodges, while enticing longtime Masons to get involved in educating their younger counterparts.

With applied Freemasonry at its core, Masonic Formation today incorporates candidate education, Masonic education and non-Mason education – all of which can help a man shape and transform his life.

"It's about a lifelong commitment to learn more about Freemasonry and how it interacts with the world out there," Cooper says. "You don't have to wear a pin or a ring. People are going to know you're a Mason because you're living it."

### Bringing out the best in others

As a teacher at heart, Cooper has strived to bring out the best in others. And to hear it from those who know him best, he has succeeded.

Allan Casalou, for example, worked under Cooper for nine years before taking over as grand secretary in April, and he says Cooper's success lies in



"We've moved from being a mere clerical office to an integrated part of the leadership."

his unique ability to talk about Freemasonry in a relevant, easy-to-understand way.

"As Masons, it's our obligation to learn and grow, and I've learned more about Masonry from John than anyone I know," Casalou says. "He has helped me understand the type of person I want to be. It's because he can talk about Masonic ideas in a way that's meaningful for me."

For example, Casalou says he is a much more patient person and a better leader as a result of working with Cooper, who uses compassion and understanding to lead others. Casalou recalls the Masonic writing that prescribes in so many words, "When we find a brother forgetting his teachings, we should remember to whisper good counsel in his ear, gently admonish him of his errors, and endeavor in a friendly way to bring about true and lasting reformation."

"John lives that," he says. "It's sometimes hard to have the patience to exercise compassion and restraint – especially in the business world where everything has to be done right now – but he does so and it has been a good example for me to emulate. He

will ask questions and lead a discussion, and by the end of the conversation, you're convinced that you need to do something differently."

Just as Cooper is known for teaching others, he also learns from them. He says he learned a lot, for example, from Doug Ismail, chief philanthropy officer and executive vice president of the California Masonic Foundation, who helped make charitable giving a priority – not just something you do with your extra money.

"Those who know him say he's always learning something, always teaching something, always growing."

"Doug changed the culture of the organization, and now we have Masons who look for opportunities to help others," Cooper says. "Freemasonry teaches us to sharpen our ability to look around ... and you learn from others as much as they learn from you."

## Improving society

The way Cooper sees it, the very purpose of Freemasonry is to create great individuals who help improve society. And to aid California's lodges in that goal, Cooper as grand secretary helped install a robust administrative support system.

"We've moved from being a mere clerical office to an integrated part of the leadership," says Cooper, explaining that the grand secretary is the Masonic equivalent of a chief administration officer. "We've provided a supportive infrastructure for the lodges' community activities."

Among his many contributions to that infrastructure, Cooper helped create a budget that allocates scarce resources to the Grand Lodge's many programs. He helped integrate several strategic plans into one unified mission. He worked with others to institute leadership training programs for lodges throughout the state. And he helped modernize the Grand Lodge's communications, including a contemporary public Web site and an administrative Intranet. It's all designed to help California's lodges find innovative ways to help their communities.

For Masons, such community activities go way back. And Cooper, living up to his reputation as a veritable trove of Masonic knowledge, cites several historic examples. Among them: Lodges in 18th-century France created some of the first laboratories to explore physics and chemistry; those in

19th-century America helped launch the first colleges without a religious requirement for admission; and those in 20th-century America helped create the country's inaugural public school system.

Throughout his tenure as grand secretary, Cooper wanted California to continue in the tradition, and he participated in several large, collective efforts that have improved society. One is the Masonic Student Assistance Program, a free workshop that trains educators to identify at-risk students and help redirect their lives. This program, launched in 1995, is now very established in the California education system. The other is the Annual California Masonic Symposium, which started in 2001 and is now a mainstay for California Masons. One of Cooper's favorite symposiums was in 2004 at the University of California-Los Angeles, where professor Margaret Jacob discussed Freemasonry and The Enlightenment. He recalls her showing from an academic standpoint how Freemasonry shaped democracy and freedom of speech, which helped attendees better understand the linkage between 18th-century Freemasonry and modern life.

## Lifelong learning

Cooper's focus on education and lifelong learning doesn't end in California. He's participated on the national board of directors for the Masonic Restoration Foundation, a research and educational organization that strives to capture and communicate the quintessence

of Freemasonry – some of which, he says, has been lost in the U.S. Through the concept of Traditional Observance Lodges, the Foundation is educating lodges nationwide about historic Masonic rituals and initiation practices.

You might say that researching the quintessence of Freemasonry is quintessential Cooper. Those who know him say he's always learning something, always teaching something, always growing.

"We've provided a supportive infrastructure for the lodges' community activities."

"Some people now view the grand secretary as the 'grand historian' and 'grand philosopher' – but you won't find that in the job description," Casalou says. "It's what John has brought to the job in the past 17 years."

As for the future, Cooper plans to remain active in Freemasonry during his retirement. As a sought-out speaker on a range of Masonic topics, he plans to continue lecturing about Masonic history, philosophy and symbolism. He'll stay involved in local lodges and in various Masonic activities. He'll continue his membership in the York Rite and Scottish Rite. And he'll continue immersing himself in as much research, history and discussion as possible.

Learning, after all, is a lifelong endeavor and the journey through the winding staircase is never-ending. ✧

By Adam G. Kendall, Collections Manager, Henry Wilson Coil Library & Museum

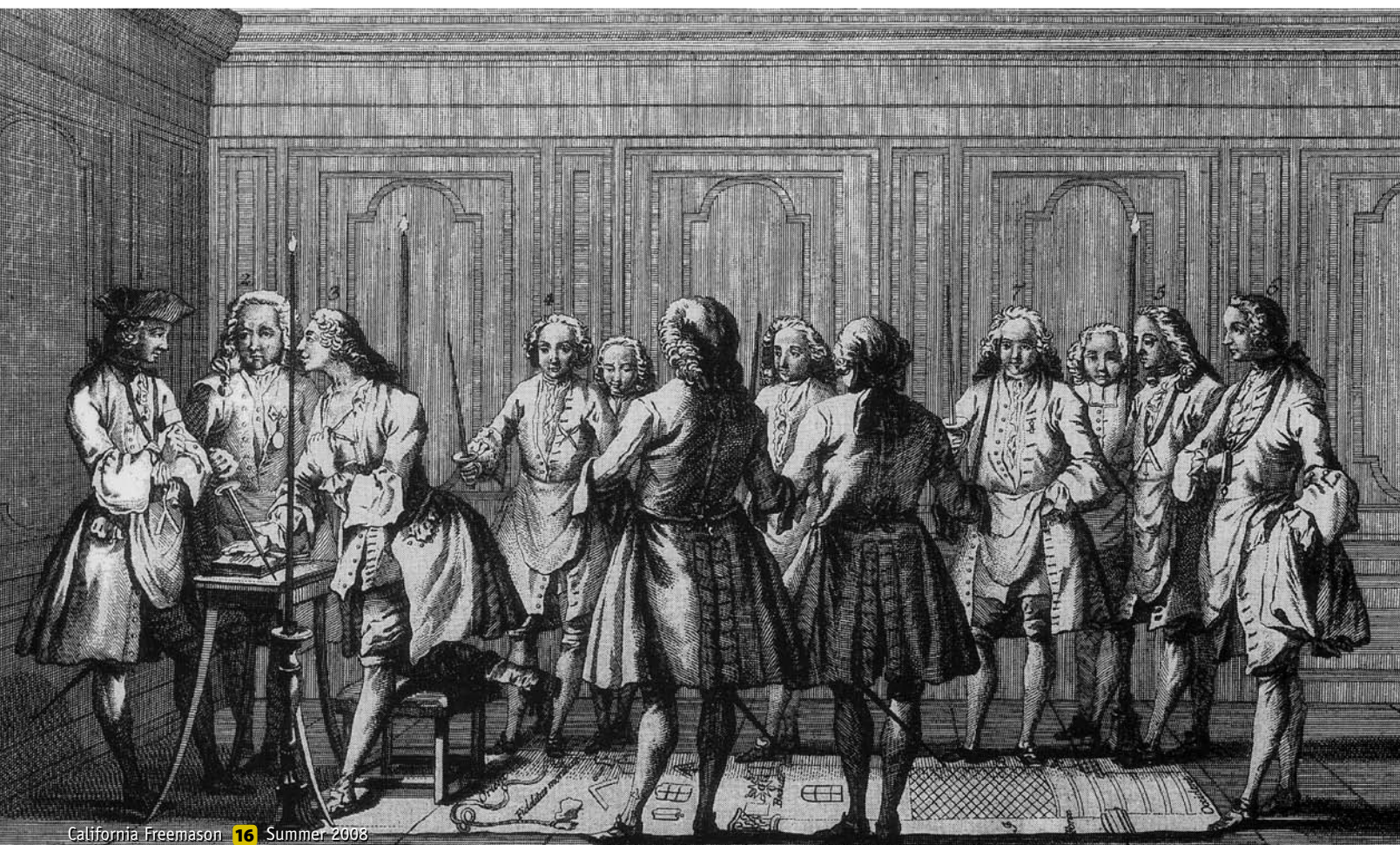
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# CHALK, CHARCOAL, AND PROJECTORS

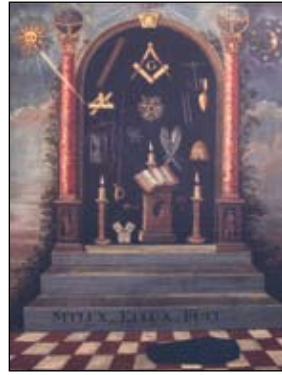
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— The Development of Visual Aids for Masonic Instruction —

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**Since** the days when lodges met in taverns and inns, symbols have been used to illustrate portions of degree lectures to help a candidate remember what he is being taught about Freemasonry.

Over the centuries the method of displaying these teaching aids has evolved with technology, and the symbols have become distinct art forms.

Masonic lodges in the 17th and 18th centuries often met in buildings used for some other purpose. To symbolize that the Masons were inside the lodge, a rectangle was drawn on the floor with chalk, charcoal, or clay. Instructional symbols appropriate to the degree being worked were drawn inside the rectangle, and were wiped away with a mop after the degree.

The process of drawing and erasing was replaced by the more convenient use of symbols made of tin.

By the mid-18th century, the practice was to paint the symbols on cloth, which was rolled onto the floor for the degree, then rolled up and saved for the next use. These floor cloths were either simple or very complex, and sometimes employed stunning imagery of the finest skill. Mass production of these cloths became possible and a burgeoning cottage industry grew around them.

The next step in the evolution to more consistent and convenient display of the symbols was to secure the cloth to a board that was supported by trestles, which led to painting right on the boards. These large boards became known as tracing boards, popular as teaching aids in the 19th century because they were smaller than the trestles and could be easily stored.

Floor cloths and trestle boards are still in use, often by lodges that have kept them for centuries.

Tracing boards are also still in widespread use and display fascinating hieroglyphs, from very simple

with a rudimentary placement of certain key symbols to elaborate individual works of art. Certain artistic styles gained popularity throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries, and most producers of these boards were freely borrowing from each other. Certain styles gained wider acceptance, such as the designs of Brother John Harris.

By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, American Freemasons were using hand-colored glass slides and a lantern projector, known as the magic lantern. In the 20th century the symbols were projected on a wall or screen by a slide projector.

Lithographed wall charts were mass produced and hung in lodge rooms. These large charts were usually divided into the three degrees and packed with complex symbolism. Because some images are numbered in the order they're recited, it appears that the charts were used not only as a visual guide for the candidate, but also as an aid to memory for the lecturer.

Despite modern formats, the traditional artistry of painted boards and canvases remains a useful and beautiful way to illustrate degree lectures. ✧

## References

Dring, E. H. "The Evolution and Development of the Lodge or Tracing Board," A.Q.C., Vol. 29 (1916)

Haunch, T. O. "Tracing Boards—Their Development and Their Designers," A.Q.C., Vol. 75 (1962)

Millar, Angel. "Draftsmanship and the Tracing Board," The Transactions of the American Lodge of Research (2007)

# Book Reviews

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## Candidate Guides

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The Candidate Guides for all three degrees have been revised and are in stock.

Each guide is designed specifically for the degree the candidate most recently completed and includes a proficiency section. The latest editions include a substantial amount of information that will enhance the candidate's Masonic education and understanding of the degree.

The guides may be ordered from lodge supplies or downloaded from the Masonic Education page of [freemason.org](http://freemason.org).



# All-around Appeal with Peace of Mind

by Cason Lane

## Retirees attracted to full-service Acacia Creek communities

For more than 45 years, Russ and Alice Clark have lived just blocks from the Covina campus of the Masonic Homes. They've watched the homes grow up, serving children and seniors and becoming a valued resource in the community. And soon, the Clarks will become part of it.

That's because the couple has already reserved their new home at the soon-to-be-built Acacia Creek at Covina, the new continuing care Masonic senior living community slated for the campus.

"We can stay in the community we know," says Russ Clark, 75, hailing from nearby Arcadia Lodge No. 278. "We can be close to our children, our church, and the community we love. That's a win-win."

Not wanting to burden their family with decisions about long-term care, the Clarks had started researching options, but they found that some plans wouldn't cover them because of pre-existing health conditions. Then they learned about the Acacia Creek concept, which offers multiple levels of care without the common restrictions. Even more, as founding members of Acacia Creek at Covina, the Clarks received the incentive

Home Care Certificate, entitling them to \$25,000 worth of in-home health care.

"In the past, we had the emotional and financial challenge of securing long-term care for an elderly parent, and we didn't want our own children to have to deal with that," Russ Clark says. "When we learned about Acacia Creek, it seemed like an answer to our prayer."

Alice Clark, 75, is drawn to the park-like community of the Covina campus. And even though their new Acacia Creek home will be smaller than their current house, she is excited about living in a brand new, lively, full-service environment.

"I'm looking forward to not having so much to take care of," she says, noting how nice it will be to take time for her hobbies. "It's a beautiful place. If you want to go for a walk, it's safe. And we won't be far from our family."

Ruth McGihon has also made a deposit on an Acacia Creek home at Union City. She made the decision because the campus is close to her current home in Fremont, and the full range of services—including the Home Care Certificate—gives her peace of mind.

"The older I get, the more I'll need to be in a place like that," says McGihon, 81. "If I need any help, it's right there. If I get sick, I'll be taken care of and I won't have to depend too much on the family. It's an all-around good thing."

As the widow of Robert McGihon of Alameda Lodge No. 167 in Fremont, McGihon looks forward to living in a Masonic community. And as a founder of Acacia Creek at Union City, she'll have opportunities to get to know her neighbors before she moves in.

"It's nice to have people around of the same thought," she says. "I'll have people to eat with. And it's going to be wonderful not to have to worry about dinner." ❖



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the value-based pricing and services of the Acacia Creek Masonic Senior Living Communities:

Acacia Creek at Covina  
800/801-9958

Acacia Creek at Union City  
888/553-7555

[www.acaciacreek.org](http://www.acaciacreek.org)

# NEW LODGE

By Richard Berman

## at Masonic Home Continues Lifelong Learning for Residents

Masonry is a lifetime commitment, and thanks to Siminoff-Daylight Lodge No. 850, more than 70 Master Masons living in the Masonic Home at Union City now have the opportunity to be active in the craft regardless of their age. All they need is a desire to pursue Masonic learning and participate in lodge activities.

Most new lodges start with a handful of Master Masons and grow over time as they welcome Entered Apprentices and attract existing brothers from other lodges. In contrast, Siminoff-Daylight started with 50 members, and has grown to 70 in less than a year. "We started under dispensation for a year, and received our charter in October 2007," according to Greg McGiboney, who serves as master. "One thing that's especially exciting for us is that lodges from all over California could come and perform degrees at the Home."

Although the lodge itself is new, brothers who live in the Home have always had access to Masonic resources. McGiboney says that several local lodges, including Alameda Lodge No. 167 in Fremont and Acacia Lodge No. 243 in Hayward, have worked closely with the Home, but that the ideal situation was to have a lodge on the grounds of the Home at Union City. "One advantage is that this is a daylight lodge, so our meetings are held at 1:00 PM. That is really important for many of the men who live in the Home. And there are a lot of Masons in the community who participate, so it's really a broad experience."

Even though Siminoff-Daylight No. 850 is one of California's newest lodges, there is a long tradition of residents of Masonic Homes forming lodges. The first of its kind was Masonic Home Lodge No. 940 in Kentucky, which was actually created by 21 men who had been raised in the Masonic Widows & Orphans' Home of Kentucky and in later life decided to "do unto others as had been done to us."

Siminoff-Daylight Lodge (named after a Mason named Morris Siminoff, who donated \$30,000

to build a chapel at the Home more than 70 years ago), not only holds regular meetings, but has expanded its activities to include many functions performed at other lodges in California. In April, George Turegano, a resident of the Masonic Home at Union City, received the first-

The creation of Siminoff-Daylight is making a huge difference for everyone because they can participate fully.

ever Hiram Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the lodge in its first year.

While the lodge caters to Masons who live in the Home, it came into existence thanks to a multifaceted effort involving several younger Masons who live in the community. McGiboney himself got involved in the effort thanks to his wife. "My wife, Pamela, has worked at the Home for the last seven years, and I had the privilege of meeting many of the men who live there. Most of them loved being Masons and missed the opportunity to participate in their lodges because they don't live in those communities. The creation of Siminoff-Daylight is making a huge difference for everyone because they can participate fully." ✦





Resident Virgil Land, left, and Home executive chief Hemant Surendran



Resident Alex Adorador



Resident Jack McClellan



# News you can use

## **FRATERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES** ▶

[communications@mhcuc.org](mailto:communications@mhcuc.org), 866/559-0444

## **MASONIC HOMES WEB SITE** ▶

Visit [www.masonichome.org](http://www.masonichome.org) to read about the latest developments concerning the Homes, initiate an application, download recent mailings, and learn all about the programs and services we provide.

## **MASONIC OUTREACH SERVICES (MOS)** ▶

We know that many of our constituents prefer to live out their lives in their own homes or home communities. Yet many need help coping with the challenges and issues associated with aging. In response, the Masonic Homes of California has expanded the Masonic Outreach Services (MOS) program to better meet the needs of our elderly constituents who wish to remain in their own home or community.

Our goal is to provide our fraternal family members access to the services and resources they need to stay healthy and safe in their own homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities.

### **Our services include:**

- Ongoing financial and care support for those with demonstrated need
- Interim financial and care support for those on the waiting list for the Masonic Homes of California
- Information and referrals to community-based senior services providers across California

For more information on MOS, please contact us at: 888/466-3642 or (888)HOME MHC or [intake@mhcuc.org](mailto:intake@mhcuc.org)

## **ACACIA CREEK COMMUNITIES** ▶

For those interested in learning more about the Acacia Creek communities, please visit our Web site at [www.acaciacreek.org](http://www.acaciacreek.org) or contact our offices:

**For Acacia Creek at Covina:**

**Call 626/646-2962 or 800/801-9958**

**For Acacia Creek at Union City:**

**Call 510/429-6479 or 888/553-7555**

Or e-mail us at [seniorhousing@mhcuc.org](mailto:seniorhousing@mhcuc.org).

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES** ▶

For information on our children's program or to find out how to sponsor a child in need, please contact:

**Masonic Home for Children**

**1650 Old Badillo Street**


**Covina, CA 91722**

**626/251-2227**

[hramirez@mhccov.org](mailto:hramirez@mhccov.org)

## **SPEAKERS AVAILABLE** ▶

The Masonic Homes has speakers available to come to your lodge or function to speak about the services available through the Homes and other issues related to aging. For more information, please contact the communications office at 866/559-0444 or [communications@mhcuc.org](mailto:communications@mhcuc.org). We look forward to hearing from you!



Meet James Ocon  
Financial advisor  
Mason since 2004

## *Faces of Masonry*

James Ocon values being a Mason because it “allows me to expand on my love for learning on a level which one could not obtain outside” the craft.

He says the biggest impact Masonry has had on his life is the privilege of becoming friends with individuals who truly are gentlemen and from whom he has learned a great deal.

His most memorable Masonic experience occurred in London at Freemason’s Arms, a pub across the street from the Grand Lodge of England. He met some English brothers who invited him to attend their meetings,

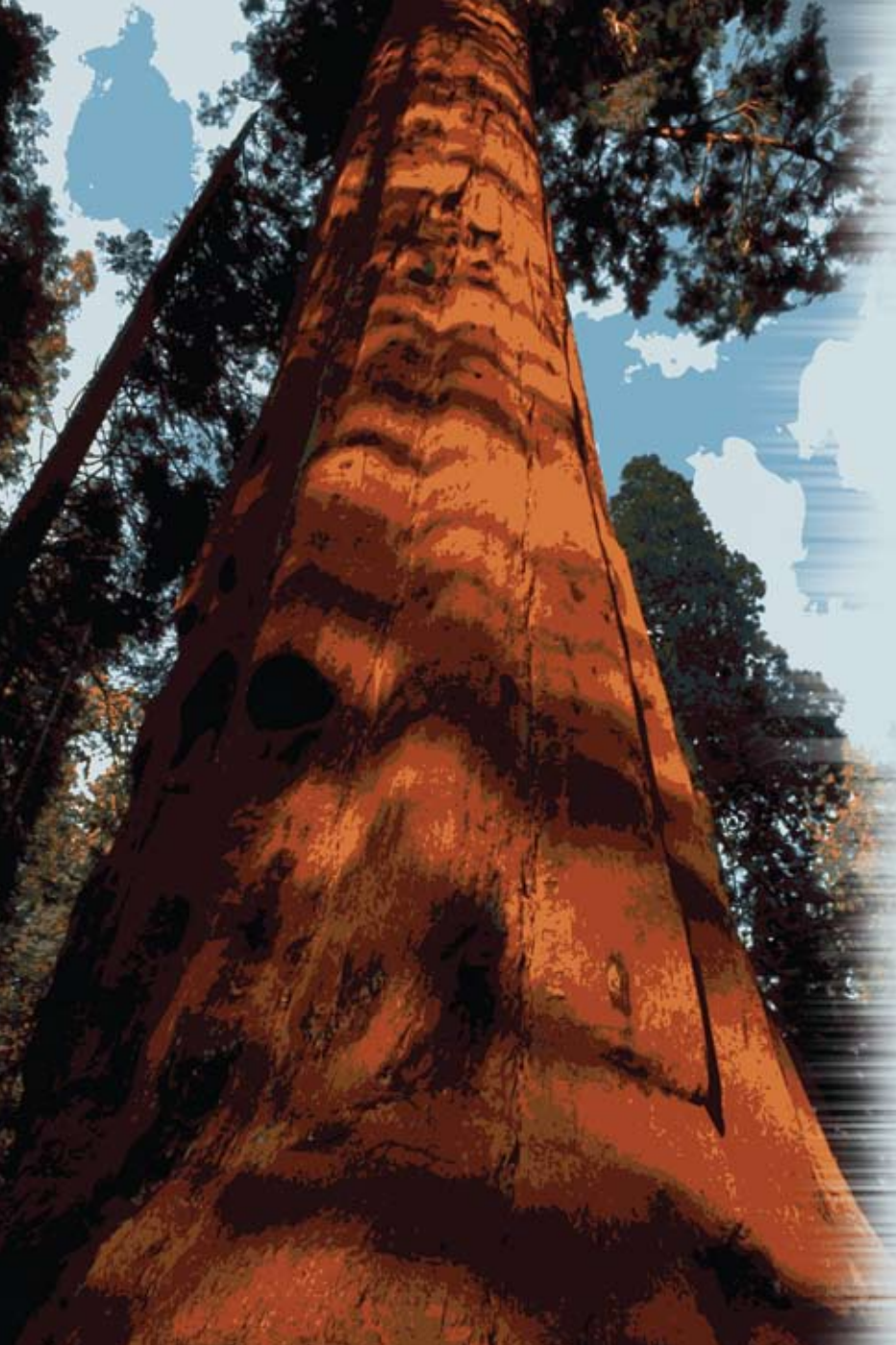
provided their contact information in case he needed anything during his stay, and gave him a tour of the Grand Lodge.

James, an investment officer with a Fortune 500 company, was marshal of Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge No. 307 last year.

He lives in Woodland Hills with his wife and two children.



**Masons of California**




# 159th Annual Communication

**September 26-28, 2008  
San Francisco, California**

**Grand Lodge Opening  
Friday, 1:00 p.m.**

- ◆ Rededication of the California Masonic Memorial Temple
- ◆ Celebration brunch for ladies and families
- ◆ Grand Master's banquet
- ◆ Public ceremonies
- ◆ Hotel packages available

**Go to [www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org)  
for more information and  
registration.**

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San Francisco, California 94108

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