

MARCH / APRIL 2017



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# FREEMASON



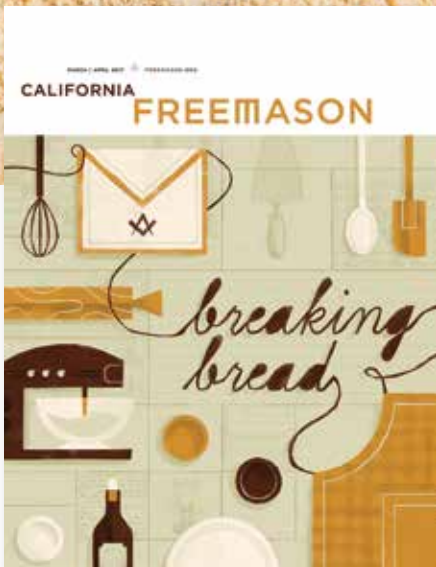
AROUND the

TABLE MASONIC

CALIFORNIA FREEMASON

# MARCH APRIL

2017 VOL 65 | NO 03



THIS ISSUE'S COVER COMBINES THE LITERAL AND METAPHORICAL MASONIC TABLE WITH ICONOGRAPHY OF FEASTING AND FREEMASONRY. THE CENTRAL VISUAL COMPONENT IS A PLATE WITH A SQUARE AND COMPASS SETTING. SHOWN HERE IS THE RUNNER-UP COVER, WHICH VISUALLY CONNECTS THE IDEA OF THE MASONIC APRON WITH A CULINARY ONE. THE TOOLS OF A BAKER'S KITCHEN ARE SHOWN IN THE FOREGROUND WITH MASONIC TOOLS POSITIONED AS A BACKDROP.

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## THE MORAL FEAST

Table lodge traditions in the 18th century offered more than a unique form of dining etiquette. Past Grand Master John L. Cooper III explains how Freemasons' dining traditions provided lessons in Masonic and social conduct.

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From early Freemasons' tavern-style dinners to elaborate mid-century feasts and the varied types of meals served today, the fraternity's culinary history adds a fascinating level of dimensionality to the member experience.



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## WHY WE BREAK BREAD

Every day, we witness how food can bring people together – from our own family tables, to community barbecues, celebratory banquets, and stated meeting dinners. From the beginning, Freemasonry has embraced this social spirit. Masonry, refreshment, and breaking bread with brothers has been an enduring and treasured fraternal practice. Learn how historic lodges helped this tradition grow, and how it has evolved today to reach lodge tables in communities far and wide.



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One brother's devotion to the culinary arts gave him the opportunity to create a successful and bountiful life in the United States.

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In Southern California, two lodges draw upon members' rich cultural traditions to strengthen fellowship connections through favorite foods.

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The Masonic toast has long been a favorite convivial tradition of brothers around the world. Discover how its origin and implementation can be traced back to a specific time in the fraternity's history.

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# EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

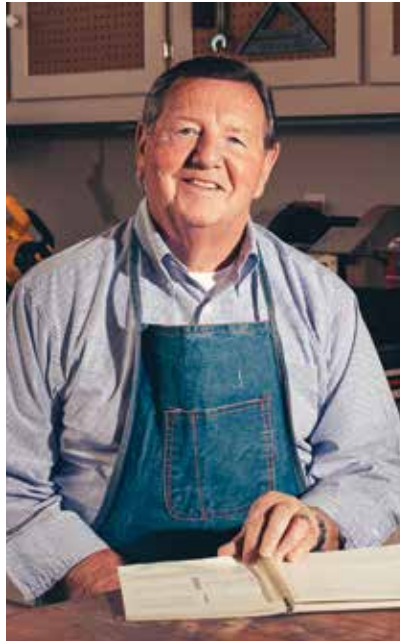
## WHAT WE DO BETWEEN MEALS

I have often heard a good friend and past grand master jokingly say, "Masonry is what we do between meals." Invariably he would say so after a wonderful meal at a welcoming lodge. In reality though, eating together is an important part of our brotherhood.

We enjoy sharing meals at stated meetings, festive boards, receptions, ceremonies, picnics, and purely social occasions. Trestleboard announcements, the lodge app, and formal invitations almost always state a time for social activity, a meal or refreshment, and the ceremony or event to take place. Whether the emphasis is on the meal or the event varies from lodge to lodge, but both contribute to a truly rewarding Masonic experience.

A lodge meal may be elaborately prepared by a fine chef or an excellent caterer, or it may be a potluck. It can even be as simple as ordering pizza. Regardless of what is served, the most important aspect of the meal is the time it allows for bonding and camaraderie, relaxing with old friends, and building new relationships. It is a chance to discuss ideas and share experiences in an informal setting. Breaking bread with a prospect and his family may be far more revealing than the formal investigation. He gets to know the lodge and the brothers learn of his interests and motivation to be a Mason.

Mealtime presents a chance to begin new relationships and to fortify existing bonds through understanding and respect. As stated by one lodge: *First a friend, then a brother.*



Bruce R. Galloway, Deputy Grand Master

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## MASONIC EDUCATION

# The Moral Feast

TABLE LODGES IN THE 18TH CENTURY DOUBLED  
AS SCHOOLS OF MORALS AND MANNERS

*By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master*

In recent years, students of Masonic history have been intrigued by table lodges and festive boards in Freemasonry, sparking a revival of interest. We know that most lodges in the earliest days of speculative Freemasonry held their lodge meetings around the dinner table. Eating and drinking were mixed in with the more serious business of conferring Masonic degrees in a unique fashion. Early minute books place great emphasis on procuring food and drink for the brethren, and some of the earliest lodge officers were stewards who saw to brothers' comfort by keeping their cups full of liquid refreshments and making sure that each brother had as much food as he could comfortably manage. What is less known, however, is the social etiquette that these "lodges at the dinner table" taught their members.

The number *seven* is prominent in our Masonic ceremonies. Today we are familiar with the seven virtues and principles (four cardinal virtues and three principal tenets), and the seven liberal arts and sciences. Prominent in the minds of our 18th century brethren were also the seven deadly sins: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath,

envy, and pride. Many Masonic rituals refer to Freemasonry as a place to "erect temples for virtue, and dig dungeons for vices." So if a Mason were to "dig dungeons for vices," what would he imprison therein? The answer is in the list of deadly sins. Each vice is a negative of a positive virtue: Lust is the opposite of love;

gluttony is the opposite of moderate eating and drinking; greed is the opposite of careful shepherding of our resources; sloth is the opposite of energetic activity; wrath is the opposite of concerned engagement; envy is the opposite of appreciation of the

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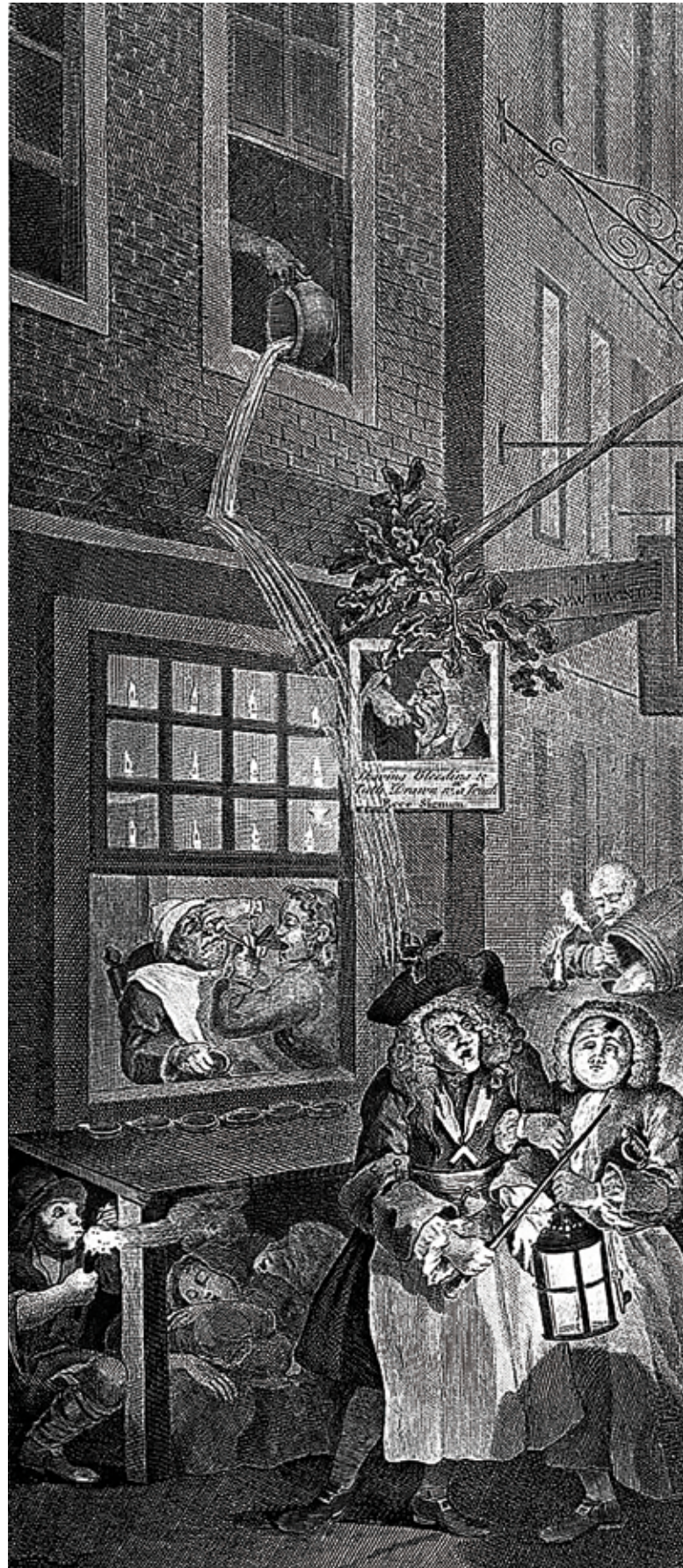
good fortune of others; and pride is the opposite of humility. And, what better place to practice virtues and imprison vices than the dinner table?

In the beginning, Freemasonry blended convivial and ethical societies, with teachings intended to shape members' behavior. The sociable atmosphere of the festive board, and its cousin, the table lodge, offered an ideal place to practice the virtues that a Mason was expected to imitate. Brothers learned that there were proper times to eat and drink, to conduct ritual, and to listen to lectures on the symbolism of Freemasonry. Masonic customs arose in response to this need, and they are still a part of our ritual and customs today.

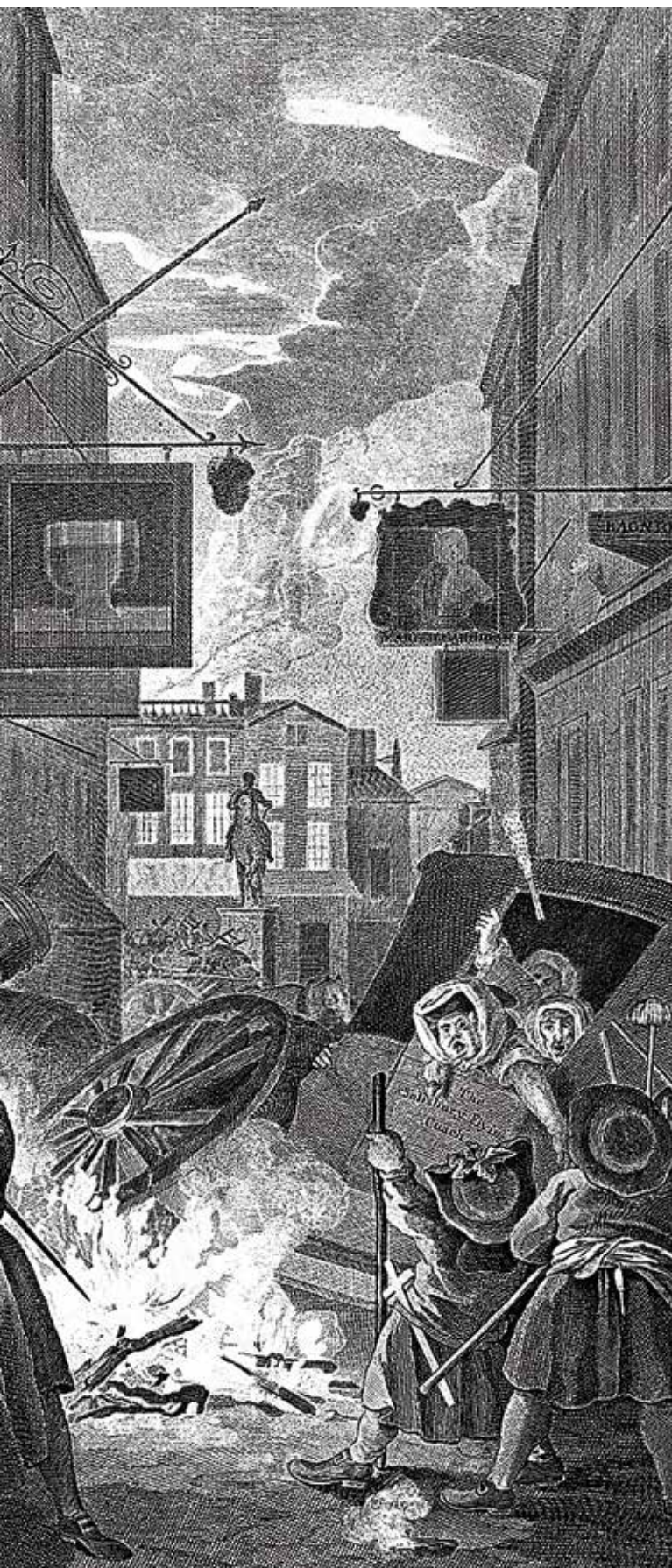
***Lodges frowned upon those Masons who did not understand that they were supposed to be “digging dungeons for vices,” rather than parading them around the lodge room.***

The two most prominent items on the table at Masonic banquets in the 18th century were the wardens' columns. When the senior warden's column was upright, the brethren were symbolically informed that the lodge was at labor and that eating and drinking must cease. When that column was lowered, and the junior warden's column raised, it indicated to the brethren that the lodge was “at refreshment,” and that eating and drinking could proceed apace. To further emphasize that indulging inclinations and desires must be subject to good manners and respect for the needs and wishes of others, when the junior warden was installed in his office, he was reminded:

*To you is committed the superintendence of the craft during the hours of refreshment; it is necessary therefore,*







*that you should practice moderation and discretion in the indulgence of your own inclinations, and that you carefully observe that the means of refreshment are not converted to improper or excessive use.*

We still tell the junior warden this when he is installed in his office today.

Additionally, every Entered Apprentice is told:

*Temperance is that due restraint upon the affections and passions which renders the body tame and governable, and frees the mind from the allurements of vice. This virtue should be your constant practice...*

It is well to remember that in the 18th century, when an Entered Apprentice heard these words, he would have been in the lodge's banquet room, with feasting and drinking going on all around him. It is probable that this explanation to the candidate was also intended to remind the Masons present that they, too, should exercise "that due restraint upon the affections and passions" that was being impressed upon the new Mason before them.

Lodge minute books from the 18th century frequently refer to fines levied on brethren who "forgot themselves," and engaged in behavior around the table that was not befitting of a Mason. Many of these fines relate to the abuse of Masonic courtesy toward others, and to behaviors that are clearly associated with eating and drinking too much. Lodges frowned upon those Masons who did not understand that they were supposed to be "digging dungeons for vices," rather than parading them around the lodge room.

Of course not all Masons, and all lodges, consistently understood this. One of the most famous engravings of the 18th century was created by Bro. James Hogarth, a member of the Hand and Apple Tree Lodge in Little Queen Street, London, and a grand steward for the Grand Lodge of England in 1735. This engraving, "Night," tells a story about one lodge, its worshipful master, and its tiler. I will leave it to you to study the engraving shown here and to figure out whether this lodge, and these Masons, understood the seven deadly sins that all Masons want to avoid. ✧

BRO. JAMES HOGARTH CREATED THIS ENGRAVING, "NIGHT," IN THE 18TH CENTURY. IT SERVES AS A WARNING TO MASONS WHO MAY WISH TO INDULGE IN THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

# CALLED FROM LABOR

## EXPLORING THE ENDURING CULTURAL TRADITION OF MASONIC BANQUETS

By Aimee E. Newell

In November 1910, San Francisco's California Lodge No. 1 held its 61st annual banquet and ball. The program, which included remarks by several lodge members, as well as music, was accompanied by a mouth-watering four-course meal. Each guest received a printed program and menu card listing the courses. Presented in French, the menu suggests a high level of elegance.

Guests feasted upon appetizers of olives, celery and oysters, then *supreme de sole Joinville*, sole surrounded by small shrimp, with *potatos fondantes*, potato balls fried in butter and then simmered in stock. Other meats included *Baron d'Agneaux bourgeoise*, a lamb dish, followed by *poulet potis* with *demi-glace* and *petite pois an beurre* – rotisserie chicken with a rich brown sauce and peas with butter. This was rounded out with a healthy lettuce salad *aux fines herbes*, and finished with a dessert consisting of *biscuit glace*, *petite foures assorties*, and *café noir*; in English, molded ices covered with merengue and served with small sweets and black coffee.

Menu cards are found in many Masonic archival collections, suggesting two things: that food and drink have accompanied Masonic ceremonies and celebrations for centuries, and that both the food and its presentation changed as American dining evolved. In the 1700s, early lodges in England and colonial America often met at local taverns. Accordingly, members ate

and drank tavern food – generally a set menu with few choices but plenty of beer and ale. By the 1910s, banquets like the one described, offered far more elegant fare. And today, American lodges are known for their eclectic meals ranging from pancake breakfasts and cookouts to formal, multicourse meals.

From Freemasonry's very start, food and drink were intertwined with the fraternity. When English Freemasons came together during the early 1700s to form the Grand Lodge of England in London, they met at the Goose and Gridiron tavern in St. Paul's churchyard. Undoubtedly, the men toasted their endeavor afterwards. In 1723, when James Anderson published his "Constitutions of the Freemasons," he noted that the Grand Lodge of England resolved to hold an annual feast.

English Masonic records suggest that these early "feasts" were not always orderly. In 1724,

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 8





California Lodge, No. 1,  
F. & A. M.



Sixty-first Annual Banquet and Ball  
Fairmont Hotel  
November 15<sup>th</sup> 1910

Menu

BLUE POINT IMPERIAL

OLIVES CELERY PERAUS SELEES

*Crème de Vaseline à la Reine*

SUPREME DE SOLE JOINVILLE  
POTATOS FONDANTES

BARON D'AGNEAUX BOURGEOISE

*Sorbet au Kirsch*

POULET ROTIS DEMI GLACE  
PETITE POIS AN BEURRE

LETTUCE SALAD AUX FINES HERBS

BISCUIT GLACE  
PETITE FOURES ASSORTIES  
CAFE NOIR

*Appolineux*

*Champaigne Cider*

Program

1 OUR ANNIVERSARY

W. C. HASSLER, WORSHIPFUL MASTER

2 PROLOGUE "IL PAGLIACCI"

BRO. LOUIS A. LARSEN

ACCOMPANIST, MRS. L. A. LARSEN

3 MASONRY

CHAS. L. PATTON, PAST GRAND MASTER  
PAST MASTER CALIFORNIA LODGE

4 ARIA, "AS THRU THE STREET"

MRS. GRACE ELEANORE DUTCHER  
ACCOMPANIST, BRO. SAM D. MAYER

5 THE LADIES

E. PEABODY, SEC'Y & PAST MASTER

Selections by George W. Bennett's  
Orchestra

- 1 March—Flag of Victory . Von Blum
- 2 Waltz—Beautiful Spring . . . Lincke
- 3 Selection—Carmen . . . . . Bizet
- 4 Song—Every Little Movement Koshna
- 5 Baccarolle—Love Tales of Hoffman  
Offenbach
- 6 Selection—Sextet from Lucia Donizetti
- 7 Intermezzo—Dutch Kiddies Trimhaus
- 8 Spanish Dance—La Paloma . Yradier
- 9 Song—Call Me Up Some Rainy  
Afternoon
- 10 Song—Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet



## WEB EXTRA

View archival international  
Masonic menus at  
[freemason.org/March17Menus](http://freemason.org/March17Menus)

rules for feasting were laid down: "The Stewards shall open no wine till dinner be laid on the tables... after eight o'clock at night, the Stewards shall not be oblig'd to furnish any wine or other liquors." By 1784, the English Grand Lodge's annual feast served 249 brethren at a cost of 271 pounds sterling. The men consumed 549 bottles of wine (champagne, burgundy, claret, madeira, sherry, and port) with their meal.

American Masonic groups followed the British lead. In 1733, when the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was founded, it was directed to keep the annual December feast day of one of Freemasonry's patron saints, St. John the Evangelist. Like other lodge activities, the feasts and banquets built Masonic brotherhood. As one Masonic historian explained, "the convocation of the Craft together at an annual feast, for the laudable purpose of promoting social feelings, and cementing the bonds of brotherly love by the interchange of courtesies, is a time-honored custom..."

A study of Masonic sources suggests that banquets, feasts, and table lodges had specific definitions. Feasts were associated with the days of the two Masonic saints – St. John the Baptist on June 24 and St. John the

Evangelist on December 27, while banquets were held on other celebratory occasions – anniversaries, honors, etc. A table lodge was an actual lodge meeting held while brothers were seated around the table. A series of toasts was offered as part of the table lodge, complete with a special vocabulary, owing to their military roots. The toasts are "charges" and the glasses – which have heavy bottoms – are "cannons." To drink a toast was to "fire a cannon." After, the glass was slammed down on the table. (*Read the article "Fire!" on page 22 for more about Masonic toasts.*)

The records of the early years of the Grand Lodge of California show a surprising lack of information about banquets or feasts. After the Grand Lodge was organized in April 1850 in Sacramento, it met in May and November each year. The meeting would start at 10 a.m., adjourn around noon, start again at 2 p.m. and adjourn before dinner, sometimes reconvening again at 7 or 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. While this schedule suggests that the Grand Lodge was breaking to eat and drink, there is no formal description of these meals in the official Proceedings, nor is there any mention of special meetings held on the feast days of either Saint John.

But, by 1950, when the Grand Lodge of California celebrated its centennial anniversary, more attention was paid to the food. The Proceedings report that a "buffet supper" was served to the visiting "distinguished guests" on the night before the festivities began. And, on the next night, a "fellowship dinner" was offered to 2,200 delegates at the Palace Hotel, while more than 600 wives ate dinner at the St. Francis

Hotel. By this time, many American lodges had their own dishware marked with the lodge name and Masonic symbols, which they used to serve their members and guests. Panoramic photographs from the first half of the 1900s show long tables packed with diners, often dressed in their best clothes.

Throughout Masonic history, lodge members have looked forward to enjoying a fine meal together. While ritual and symbols inside the lodge remain the same, the meals have changed with the times, offering evidence of how American food and its preparation has evolved over the decades. As the description of the Scottish Rite Northern Masonic Jurisdiction's 1917 "Jubilee Banquet" explained, after a "triumph of gastro-nomic art" (including no less than 20 menu items from "breast of chicken, California style" to "fancy ice creams") the attendees turned their attention to "an intellectual feast never surpassed in the history of the Rite."

A toast to enduring Masonic feasting – may it continue to sate the appetite and foster fellowship! ♦

*Aimee E. Newell, Ph.D., is executive director of the Luzerne County Historical Society in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. She is the former director of collections at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library and the author of "The Badge of a Freemason: Masonic Aprons from the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library." She writes and lectures frequently about Masonic history and material culture.*



# FOOD FOR FELLOWSHIP

When it comes to Freemasonry, breaking bread with brothers is an enduring and treasured tradition. Followers of the Masons of California Facebook and Instagram pages reflected on the question:

**When has sharing meals with your brothers been most meaningful to you?**

**MAX  
SCHELL**



***La Mesa Lodge No. 407***

My mother lodge, La Mesa Lodge No. 407, has a tradition following each degree conferral. We gather around the table for a meal (food choice is not the key, but the fellowship and sharing). The candidate sits at the head of the table, and the junior warden acts as host, introducing every brother around the table. Each brother offers congratulations, greetings, encouragement, or his own words of wisdom on Masonry. Following the master's comments and presentation of the degree pamphlets, the candidate has a chance to thank the brethren and share his feelings about the evening and his Masonic experience to date.

**DAVID  
COSS**



***Sanger Lodge No. 316***

Sanger Lodge No. 316 is known throughout the Central Valley for its meals. Brother Ron Manfredi cooks according to the season. During wintertime, we have comfort foods like chile verde, beef stroganoff, spaghetti, and other classics. Guests are known to drive in just for dinner and to socialize. We are small, but well fed.

**LON MILO  
DU QUETTE**



***Long Beach Lodge No. 327***

Dinners prior to stated meeting at Long Beach Lodge No. 327 are always a delight, but the real feast is the opportunity for casual fellowship with our more senior brothers. One evening I was asked by an octogenarian past master, who was hard of hearing, what I was reading. I explained that I was reading a terrible book by a non-Mason who said Masons were alien reptiles who ruled the world. He said, "What?" I answered louder, but once again he asked, "What?" Then I shouted, "MASONS ARE ALIEN REPTILES AND WE RULE THE WORLD!" The room fell silent because everyone heard that.



## WEB EXTRA

Read even more responses  
in the online edition:

[freemason.org/March17Fellowship](http://freemason.org/March17Fellowship)





## MEMBER PROFILE

# EMBODYING THE AMERICAN DREAM

### MEET UGO MAMOLO BAKER MASON FOR 36 YEARS

*By Antone R.E. Pierucci*

At 14 years old, Ugo Mamolo wanted to live in America. This dream grew in his young mind with each care package and photograph that arrived in his hometown of Trieste, Italy, from his aunt in Los Angeles.

Unfortunately, the reality of immigration in post-war Europe posed a formidable roadblock. "Italy had a quota of how many people it could send to America," Mamolo recalls. "I was told the wait could be as long as nine years." Unwilling to be dissuaded, he researched his options and learned that his application might be more successful if he could offer a skill that was needed in America. And that's when he first took up baking.

Five decades later, he is the owner of Viktor Benès Bakery, and his creations can be found in 15 Los Angeles locations of Gelson's Markets. Mamolo's success, which one of his daughters describes as *l'incarnazione del sogno Americano* – the embodiment of the American

dream – is born from persistent hard work. It wasn't until age 26 that he finally reached America. Then, just after achieving citizenship, while still learning English, he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

After two years of service, Mamolo returned to Los Angeles – and that was when he discovered the fraternity. "One of my friends was a Mason and I decided to join him," he says. Now a member of both Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge No. 307 and Riviera Lodge No. 780, Mamolo approaches his membership with the same persistent dedication through which he came to America and built a successful life. "Either you do something or you don't. I made a commitment because I like the organization. It feels good to do good." ✨

*View more photos of Ugo in his bakery at [freemason.org/March17Ugo](http://freemason.org/March17Ugo)*

A top-down illustration of a dining table with a dark, textured surface. The table is set with several white plates, each containing a piece of bread or a small cake, garnished with fresh herbs and drizzled with sauce. There are also small round containers with blue and purple liquids, a wooden cutting board with sliced bread, and a glass of water. A hand is shown holding a knife, and another hand is holding a fork. The overall style is artistic and detailed.

# WHY we BREAK BREAD



An artistic illustration of a dining table set for a meal. The table is dark, and various items are scattered across it: plates with food, glasses of wine, and hands using cutlery. The style is painterly and somewhat abstract, with a focus on the textures and colors of the food and drink. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a tablecloth or a wall. The overall mood is intimate and communal.

## *In a shared meal, BROTHERS FIND A SENSE OF UNITY with THEIR COMMUNITIES, LODGES, and HISTORY*

*By Laura Benys*

It is a joy for a town to watch its children grow up together. In the community of Twin Peaks, perched high in the San Bernardino Mountains, this opportunity is presented every year on the weekend after Labor Day, courtesy of Rim of the World Lodge No. 711. Since the 1950s, folks from Twin Peaks and neighboring mountain towns, from Crestline to Running Springs, gather for a homemade barbecue. Families who have moved off the mountain return for the occasion, eagerly scanning the crowd for familiar faces. Little ones, some decked out in white chef hats and aprons, run around legs and vendor booths, hunting down stray napkins and watching the bands in the parking lot. The teenagers keep an eye on them, or help with preparing the food and delivering coffee. Community kids, now grown and back home from their adventures, report on college classes or the working world or children of their own.

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At the first of these barbecues, held in 1953, John D. Williams was 20 years old. He was not yet a Mason, but he was integral to the event. The lodge was raising money for a building, and planned the barbecue as a fundraiser. Williams' father-in-law, who owned a grocery store, volunteered to supply the meat — and volunteered his son-in-law along with it, as the butcher who would cut and wrap everything. Sixty-three years later, the event is the longest-running barbecue in the state of California. Williams is 83. His children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren accompany him to the event, where his oldest son makes the bean sauce.

Williams, his two sons, and their children usually drive up to Twin Peaks from Apple Valley the week before the event, along with a handful of other lodge families and friends, to help prepare the site. An RV encampment sprouts in the backyard of the lodge building. By night, it fills with stories and campfire smoke; by day, it buzzes with activity. By the time the weekend has arrived, the homemade barbecue pit — dug into the ground and perfected over the years — has been cleaned and prepared. The oak fire has long been burning, and the coals are smoldering. Hundreds of pounds of pork and beef are set to cook overnight. "We have fellows that have been doing this for years, taught by the men ahead of them," says Williams. The next day, the crowd starts lining up. At its peak, a few decades back, attendance reached 2,000.

"All our little communities up here are pretty well woven together," says Williams. Community members tend to clear their schedules for barbecue day every year. "People who are not Masons come too because the food is good and the menu is simple — it's the type of thing they can relate to."

Williams is quick to point out that it's a family affair. Once a year, the barbecue overrides busy schedules and even geographic distance, pulling people back together for the sake of simple home-cooked food. "It's held the town together," he says.

Whether at a community barbecue, in the halls of diplomacy, or around the family table, every day we witness the ability of food to bring people together. As James Beard, icon



of American cuisine, famously said, "Food is our common ground." Sharing a meal connects us to each other, and to the memories of those who came before us. It keeps family recipes alive, taking us back to the smells and tastes of our childhood home. It's a pause in a distracted day. It's a reminder to reflect upon how lucky we are, and to consider those who are not so fortunate. Perhaps most of all, a meal is a reason to get together. The word "companion," from its Latin roots, literally means "one who breaks bread with another." When shared, food is a potent symbol of unity, friendship, and togetherness. It nourishes the spirit as much as the body. Sharing it is an act of fellowship.

So it's appropriate that organized Freemasonry began around a dining table. The first grand lodge was formed in 1717 in the Goose and Gridiron tavern, in a room just 20 feet long and 15 feet wide. It grew out of an annual St. John's Day feast held by four London lodges. In those early days of the fraternity, the social and the ceremonial were entwined. Degree conferrals were interspersed with





food, drink, and song. According to The Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London, this may have reached its peak with the “table lodge,” a ritual supposedly originating in France that turned the meal into a full Masonic degree ceremony. Today, California lodges have an opportunity to reenact this history with a table lodge degree conferral. (See sidebar, page 17.)

Beginning around the time that the United Grand Lodge of England was formed in 1813, the ritual and the meal were separated. The meal became known as the “festive board,” a multi-course banquet punctuated by songs and traditional toasts. In many parts of the world, including England, formal festive boards have remained common to the Masonic experience, occurring after nearly every lodge meeting. This is not the case in the United States, where the stated meeting dinner is usually regarded as a precursor, and the tiled meeting as the main event. Even so, in California, some lodges have embraced their own versions of the festive board for special occasions, and the trend seems to be growing.

American lodges are renowned for their community work, and in California, Masons throughout the state use food to solidify and strengthen their relationships within their communities. The annual barbecue isn't the only community meal hosted by Rim of the World Lodge; they also host Thanksgiving: fundraising, preparing, delivering, and serving more than 300 meals for the elderly and less fortunate in the community. For the past 10 years, they've invited the town to a St. John's Feast to celebrate their installation of officers – an opportunity for neighbors, local newspapers, and civic organizations to get to know the brothers who'll be working with them throughout the year. In the foothills of Central California, Hornitos Lodge No. 98 cooks for the town's annual flea market; shifts of lodge volunteers use “a dinner bell and the smell of frying bacon” to draw in the crowd, serving 400 to 500 breakfasts each year. In San Gabriel Valley, Arcadia Lodge No. 278 hosted its 50th annual public schools luncheon last spring, a community standby that honors local teachers and 30 to 40 students. The entire school district attends, as well as the mayor. In a very small town in Monterey county, Santa Lucia Lodge No. 302 has recently come back to success after having its charter suspended; a major reason, they say, is the friendships they've built through a

community Thanksgiving meal and twice-annual dinners for civil servants.

A meal prepared for others is an act of service, and a gesture of goodwill. For many lodges, it's a natural extension of Masonry. Whether brothers are flipping pancakes for a town charity or planning a dinner for local students, food can bring them closer to their communities.



It also brings them closer to history.

The festive board at San Dimas Lodge No. 428 follows the format of an Edwardian dinner, with seven courses in the English manner. Last year, it yielded 850 plates and 935 pieces of flatware. (The local DeMolay does the washing up, for donations.) This year, themed for the fraternity's 300th anniversary, the menu will feature foods similar to those prepared in 1717 England. The eight toasts, each presented by a different brother and then repeated by all assembled, follow a traditional hierarchy, progressing from flag and country to the grand master, then lodge, through visiting brethren and ladies and, last, the departed. It is a recreation of the festive boards as they were first experienced 300 years ago.


“Today's festive board participants are reminded that they are one group, in a very rich history of many groups,” says Raymond E. Foster, a past master of San Dimas Lodge. “At the opening, the participants are told that they are being taken back in time. They are dining and celebrating as their forefathers did several centuries ago.”

Grand Lecturer Jack Rose sees this as part of the reason festive boards are growing in popularity in California. “Members yearn to connect with our ancient history. Many wish they could have been around when our craft began, to experience the great fellowship that occurred around degree conferrals as well as other social endeavors,” Rose says. “The festive boards fill that need.”

The sense of history, and the formal attire and place settings, lend a glow of grandeur to the night. But the event is also approachable, even for guests who are not

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## SHARING a meal, no matter HOW SIMPLE, gives us a SENSE OF BELONGING.



Masons. The proceedings are grounded in food, jokes, and familiar songs to accompany each toast. Standbys include a modified version of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow,” sung as a thank-you to all who helped orchestrate the evening, and “Auld Lang Syne,” the last song of the night. It is a heartily inclusive experience, with lots of crowd participation. Plus, points out San Dimas Lodge Secretary Glenn Johnson, never underestimate the camaraderie of mutual bewilderment: “Being faced with maybe a dozen pieces of flatware is something that not everyone has experienced,” he says. “It’s a discussion starter.”

It takes a devoted crew to carry off the festive board, from organizing to serving to the mountain of dishes at the end of the night. This is part of the resulting fellowship, says Johnson (who also leads the cooking each year). Each task “builds a commonality of experience,” he says, “not unlike the degrees of Masonry.” Other lodges contribute to the experience, too: Over the years San Dimas Lodge has traded off serving responsibilities with Pomona Lodge and Glendora Lodge, each calling upon the others for help at their events.

A three-hour drive westward, Conejo Valley Lodge No. 807 in Thousand Oaks celebrated its 20th annual festive board last summer. Over the years, Art Weiss, from his vantage point as master of ceremonies, has led the packed room of 80 to 90 Masons, dressed in tuxedos, in the singing of songs, the synchronous downing of wine or sparkling cider, and the crash

of empty glasses returning to the table in unison — or attempted unison. This is part of the fun of a traditional festive board, which includes weighty drinking glasses called “cannons,” designed for giddy ceremonial slamming. By the fourth toast of the night, the assembled company usually hits their stride, Weiss says. By the eighth and final, many have wandered offbeat again. Toasts are accompanied by an elaborate series of gestures, derived from military maneuvers and reminiscent of Masonic symbols. Like the degree ritual, the toasts offer a physical, kinetic connection to the brothers who performed those motions 300 years ago. Toasting is also, as Weiss will attest, a mighty good time.

The whole evening is a long crescendo — the toasts, the jokes, the food, the standing and sitting, and of course, the singing. Everyone has their part to play. When the final strains of “Auld Lang Syne” have tapered off, the group disperses, wrapped in new memories of warmth and friendship.

Sharing a meal, no matter how simple, gives us a sense of belonging. We feel that we are part of the community

that surrounds us. We feel connected to the heritage that provided the tastes, smells, and traditions we are experiencing. Perhaps most poignant, we feel a strong sense of kinship with each other. When we break bread with others, we have a visceral reminder that we are all in this together. Life moves ever forward. Around the Masonic table, brothers share nourishment for the journey, and the promise that they will not go alone.



The festive board, a formal multi-course meal punctuated by traditional Masonic toasts, is growing in popularity among California lodges. View a list of lodges that have recently hosted festive boards at [freemason.org/March17Feature](http://freemason.org/March17Feature)



Several times a year, Prometheus Lodge No. 851 gathers for their version of the festive board, held in the University Club where they meet in downtown San Francisco. They refer to it as the *Agape*, a Greek word for love that also refers to the feasts of primitive Christians, a precursor to Masonic festive boards. The event, which is for Masons only, is usually held in celebration of a degree conferral, and the dress code is white tie. Like the lodge, it is formal and intimate by design. The lodge's founders always intended for the festive board to be part of the lodge's identity, says Master David Giannini.

"There's no better way to meet someone as an equal than by breaking bread together," Giannini says. "You're getting to know everyone when their guard is down. You get to chat on the side, share a joke in someone's ear, sit next to somebody that you might not know very well. That really binds our group together."

A cherished part of the evening is the passing of the "tig," a three-handled drinking cup made of sterling silver. It was discovered by a lodge brother at an estate sale, and originally belonged to a Massachusetts Mason in the early 1900s. One side is engraved with the names of the Prometheus brothers who financed its purchase. Another will soon be etched with the lodge coat of arms.

As the tig is passed around the table, each brother holding it responds to a question posed by the master of ceremonies, asked to encourage self-reflection. At one festive board a few years ago, the question was what each brother intended to achieve in the year ahead. Brendan Rhoan was 26 at the time, and his father was critically ill. When the tig came to him, he spoke about visiting him in the hospital the night before, and the advice his father had shared. "Honesty," his father told him, "is the universal currency. You must be honest in your dealings with people." At the table that night, Rhoan pledged to his brothers that he would follow his father's wishes. It was an emotional moment for everyone in the room.

In the six years that he's been a Mason, Rhoan has experienced heartbreak and loss; he has advanced in his career; he has ended relationships and started new ones. In many ways, festive boards have marked these milestones, he says. "They've helped to frame these life experiences with ritual," he says. "They have offered me support and hope, and assured me that no matter how much the other elements in my life might change, we will

## TABLE LODGE DEGREE CONFERRAL

In 2014, the Grand Lodge of California issued guidelines to help lodges "experience our heritage by temporarily returning to the days of old," recreating a unique dining and ritual experience from 18th-century table lodges. In these early table lodges, a degree would be conferred amid the brothers eating and drinking. The table was set in the shape of a horseshoe, with the master at the head and the wardens at the two ends. The meal would pause when the senior steward called the brothers to labor to observe the degree work. During a break or after the degree's conclusion, the meal would then resume with the junior warden calling the lodge back to refreshment.

Lodges can find the Table Lodge Degree Conferral guidelines in the Member Center on [freemason.org](http://freemason.org).

invoke the same blessings, raise our glasses to the same toasts, and depart with the same promise to practice Masonic ideals outside of the lodge."

These reflections are proof that the tradition is fulfilling its purpose. "The festive board is almost another initiatory rite," Giannini says. "It really lets you know you're part of the group. You combine the formality of the program with the off-the-cuff remarks that are coming from people's hearts, and it makes for a memorable experience. Over time, those experiences establish our lodge identity, cement our individual Masonic identities, and help us find our place in the vast expanse of Freemasonry." ♦



# RESPLENDENT CHIVALRY

## A BEAUTIFUL MASONIC ARTIFACT IS A REMINDER OF FREEMASONRY'S RICH CULTURE

By Adam G. Kendall

In the Henry Wilscon Coil Library and Museum of Freemasonry in San Francisco, on loan from California Commandery No. 1 Knights Templar, stands a stunning heirloom from Freemasonry's past. It is a commemorative silver and pewter punchbowl, measuring over two feet tall.

Today, such a trophy for a Masonic competition might be deemed extravagant, but at the time, it was par for the course. During the 19th century, the Masonic Knights Templar was one of the most exclusive and wealthy Masonic orders, requiring what would today be several thousand dollars for membership dues and regalia. Following the Civil War, commanderies became famous for their drill teams and mounted cavalry. They

participated in grand parades, resplendent in their silver- and gold-embroidered uniforms.

On July 27-31, 1925, Seattle hosted the lavish triennial meeting of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, U.S.A. Commanderies throughout the country participated, parading down a route lined with elaborate flower sculptures. Crowds were awed by their triumphal arches adorned with *trompe l'oeil* paintings – depictions of armored knights and Templar crosses that were designed to appear three-dimensional. As part of the celebration, a drill competition was held. Commanderies competed against each other to best perform military formation marching, taken directly from the Union Army manual.

California Commandery No. 1 of San Francisco won first place and was awarded the punchbowl shown here. Surrounding its base is a Templar cruciform platform, supporting silver cups engraved with the each competing commandery's name. A decorative etched band depicts scenes of Seattle and Mount Rainier, as well as enameled *Beaucéant* flags of the Grand Encampment. At each corner of the bowl, upon jutting platforms, armored medieval knights stand at guard.

Many Templar triennials awarded punchbowls as trophies, but – aside from an apocryphal story of this one being used for eggnog at a holiday party – it remains unknown how these bowls were used by commandery brothers. Still, the punchbowl is a lovely reminder of the rich material culture of our fraternity that we may still enjoy today. ♦

Explore Masonic collections online: [masonicheritage.org](http://masonicheritage.org)



# A FRATERNAL FEAST

AT TWO CALIFORNIA LODGES, BROTHERS ARE INSPIRED  
BY CUISINE THAT IS CLOSE TO THE HEART

*By Julie Bifano Boe*

“We don’t have to go very far to experience different cultures,” says Jason Scheneman of Gardena Moneta Lodge No. 372. Though not Filipino himself, he looks forward to gathering with his brothers for traditional Philippine foods, such as *pancit bihon*, very thin rice noodles mixed with seafood, beef, pork, or vegetables, and *kare-kare*, a stew made from beef, specifically oxtail, and vegetables. Brothers with a sweet tooth are drawn to *lechen flan*, a richer version of its traditional Spanish counterpart *flan de leche* that uses additional egg yolks and condensed milk.

Gardena Moneta Lodge meets in Southern California, halfway between Los Angeles and Long Beach. The nation’s second-largest metro area is a melting pot of nations, a truly global urban area. And in the lodges that serve this kaleidoscopic population, brothers enjoy opening their palate as well their hearts to the men who stand beside them in lodge.

## CONVERSATION STARTER

Across Los Angeles, at Ararat Lodge No. 848, brothers dine upon a Middle Eastern feast, beginning with *mante*, a lodge favorite. Golden-brown squares of dough, filled

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THE FLAVORS OF THE MIDDLE  
EAST COME ALIVE AT ARARAT LODGE.

with meat, are cooked in a pan, then oven-baked until crispy. Brothers dip them into a tempting yogurt-garlic sauce, flavored with chicken broth and sumac.

Ararat Lodge is known as an Armenian lodge, but its members hail from throughout the Middle East and the world. Their heritages include Armenia, Syria, Iran, and Lebanon. This geographic connection makes for conveniently complementary cuisines. "Lebanon has a lot of appetizers, whereas some of the other nearby countries do not," explains Vatche Sayegh, Lebanese native and master of Ararat Lodge. "Syrian and Lebanese foods are very similar, and use many of the same spices."

And, says Sayegh, this cultural connection is a starting point for dialogue, letting members better understand their similar experiences, as well as their unique ones. "Once the food hits the table, conversations begin. We have a chance to talk about our lives, including how we got where we are, and our goals for moving forward."

Conversation is also key to mealtime at Gardena Moneta Lodge. "Food is often associated with good or great experiences," says D. Dennis Ramos Viola, Gardena Moneta Lodge master. "The smell, the taste, the appearance, the preparation, the ingredients, the people involved, and the occasion all trigger our memory of something

endearing that happened. Sometimes the experience is so good and clear that we want to share the story with everyone."

Although Gardena Moneta Lodge serves primarily Philippine cuisine, one of their most treasured bonding experiences is that for each brother's birthday, he brings a personally meaningful dish to share with the lodge. Scheneman believes that sharing these diverse dishes binds the lodge together. "Brothers get a sense of what each others' home lives might be like," he says. This gives both the members sharing the food and those who taste it a vehicle for dialogue and personal connections.

ARARAT LODGE BROTHERS  
BELIEVE THAT SHARING MEALS  
TOGETHER STRENGTHENS  
BROTHERHOOD AND BONDING.





## CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Word of the lodges' appealing cuisine has spread. San Marino Lodge No. 408 and Maya Lodge No. 793 often attend Ararat Lodge barbecues, where guests feast on *urfa kebab* – steel skewers alternating chunks of eggplant and ground beef – served alongside equally delicious grilled beef, chicken, pork, and lamb liver. "Our secret is all the spices and how we marinate the meat," Seyegh says. "We use lots of garlic, cumin, paprika, black pepper, onion, red pepper paste, and olive oil."

At barbecues and other lodge events though, his favorite dishes to share are those that brothers from other cultures have likely never tried, such as *chi kofte*, a delicacy similar to steak tartare. Raw beef is ground down to a paste and spread thinly onto a plate. Cracked wheat and salt are mixed into the meat, then green onions and parsley are sprinkled on top or on the side. Olive oil is drizzled over the entire plate. Another is *lahmajune*. Also known as "Armenian pizza," it is thin dough topped with ground beef, tomatoes, mint, parsley, onion, and spices.

"I like to know if they want to try a certain dish again. We are always happy to share our culture with them," Sayegh says.

At Gardena Moneta Lodge, where mealtime is often cause for

celebration, brothers agree. As at Ararat Lodge, meals are more than simply sustenance for the body. They are a requirement for nourishing the soul, for cultivating community, and for strengthening brotherhood and bonding.

"We are big on family and gatherings. Our parties go late into the night!" says Sheneman. A favorite highlight for family and community celebrations is *lechon* – a whole-roasted pig, crispy on the outside with tender and juicy meat inside. "Everyone shows up if they know we're serving *lechon*," he says. ♦



(RIGHT) AT GARDENA MONETA LODGE, TRADITIONAL PHILIPPINE CUISINE IS OFTEN ON THE MENU.

(BELOW) GARDENA MONETA BROTHERS VIEW FOOD AS A VEHICLE FOR DIALOGUE AND PERSONAL CONNECTIONS.



## WEB EXTRA

View more photos from Gardena Moneta Lodge and Ararat Lodge at [freemason.org/March17FraternalFeast](http://freemason.org/March17FraternalFeast)



If one were to exclaim “Fire!” during a lodge event today, it would likely be cause for alarm rather than celebration. But “Masonic fire” is the traditional name for Masonic toasts, which came to be savored from an obscure drinking vessel known as a “firing glass” or “firing cannon.”

It is a tradition for Masons to share meals together following degrees, stated meetings, or celebrations – one that members of the craft have enjoyed, as they say, “since time immemorial.” But, the form and function of this Masonic breaking of bread has changed over the course of centuries and varies from county to country. In fact, in the United States, the traditional form of a Masonic dinner, or “festive board,” along with its toasts, has all but died out – with notably few exceptions.

What does this have to do with firing and cannons? Everything! But first, a little history.

The Grand Lodge of England, founded in 1717, was established at the beginning of the Georgian Period (1714 to 1830), when it was customary for the military to fire a volley honoring a person of distinction. In June 1741, the Dublin News Letter reported an open air celebration at Coleraine, which was attended by the mayor and army officers. Toasts were dedicated to the king and royal family,

## DECODING THE BELOVED TRADITION OF THE MASONIC TOAST

*By Patrick C. Craddock*





and it is noted that "... at each toast there was a volley from the Army."

Our ancient brothers' festive boards were private affairs, not conducive to actually firing guns, and so the glasses used to mimic their sound became known as "firing glasses" or "firing canons." The practice of rapping glasses upon the dinner table became the preferred form of acclamation to honor a toast. The earliest glasses used in this tradition, known as "thumping" or "hammering glasses," were designed to withstand the shock of being brought down heavily upon the table. When glasses struck the table, they emitted a loud and sharp report, quite similar to the crack of a rifle shot.

Distinctive rituals were developed accordingly. Filling the glasses with wine was known as "charging the canons with powder." Once each glass was filled, the lodge master would command, "Present arms. Take aim. FIRE!" A practiced effort would be made for everyone to drink simultaneously and then bring their glasses down hard upon the table in an attempt to create the sound of rifle fire. This would be followed by a clapping of hands, similar to our current public display of grand honors.

It is important to remember that the convivial and customary practice of toasting became a part of Masonic culture because it was practiced in the broader society at the time of the fraternity's founding. There is no Masonic symbolism or hidden, esoteric meaning in the description or actions associated with "Masonic fire."

### REVIVING A LOST TRADITION

In some parts of the world, ceremonial Masonic toasting has changed

little over the past 300 years, yet in others – most U.S. jurisdictions among them – it has been nearly forgotten or was never practiced. But now, brothers wishing to reconnect to the practices of our ancient brethren are revitalizing this tradition.

To begin, all that is needed are "firing glasses," jovial and eager brethren, a proper dinner, and a director of ceremonies. And, of course, an appropriate amount of wine (usually red) for dinner and toasts!

The first toast takes place after the meal is complete. Before then, the master may request for the director of ceremonies to call for the "taking of wine" to acknowledge special guests, such as lodge officers, visitors, a new initiate, etc. These honors *are not* toasts and only require the recognized brother to respond by standing and taking wine in a manner of mutual respect.

Once dinner is complete, toasts can begin. In Britain, traditional Masonic toasts honor the queen, grand master, grand lodge, provincial grand master, provincial grand lodge, lodge master, initiates, and guests, followed by the tyler's toast. In the United States, toasts typically honor the office of president of the United States, the founding fathers of our nation and the craft, the Holy Saints John, grand master, grand lodge, worshipful master, and visitors, followed by the tyler's toast.

To begin each toast, the director of ceremonies stands and announces the toast; for example, "Brothers, please rise and join me in a toast to Most Worshipful Brother John Heisner, the grand master!" Silently, each brother stands, holding a charged firing



**WEB EXTRA**

View traditional Masonic toasts at  
[freemason.org/March17Toasts](http://freemason.org/March17Toasts)

glass judiciously to his front. Then, the brothers raise their glasses and reply, in unison, "The grand master!" They drain their glasses and again, in unison, bring the glasses down hard upon the table creating the "Masonic fire." If the recipient of the toast is present, etiquette dictates that he remain seated rather than drinking to his own health. In some jurisdictions, like England, Scotland, and Wales, firing the glass is often followed by a series of hand gestures (pointing and clapping) of which the director of ceremonies instructs the proper form.

This basic form and function of the toasting and firing tradition is just an introduction. Lodge customs follow their own pattern – and must be allowed to do so. Each lodge may have different suggestions for toasting and firing, and there should never be any criticism of the manner in which each lodge conducts its festive board or the toasts it chooses to give. As ever, each lodge should observe its own customs and traditions, and most importantly await instruction from its ever-present director of ceremonies. ♦





# LONGEVITY FOR LUNCH

A NEW CAFÉ AT THE MASONIC  
HOMES WILL FOCUS ON FOODS  
FOR COGNITIVE HEALTH

*By Michelle Simone*

What do the Barbagia region of Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Loma Linda, California; Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula; and Ikaria, Greece have in common? According to author Dan Buettner, they're all Blue Zones – in his words, “cultures where the proportion of healthy 90- or 100-year-olds to the overall population is unusually high.” Drawing together a team of demographers, scientists, and longevity experts, Buettner, a National Geographic writer and competitive cyclist, led a multiyear study of these cultures, revealing dietary and lifestyle choices that have enabled elders to thrive. His book, “The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who’ve Lived the Longest,” was a New York Times bestseller.





### PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

As praise spread, so did the book's reach. And, among those impressed by its results-driven research was gerontologist Nancy Schier Anzelmo, founder and principal of Alzheimer's Care Associates, LLC and professor of gerontology at California State University, Sacramento (among other accolades).

"I've worked in dementia care for 25 years, and I'm not waiting for a 'magic pill' to conquer memory loss," Anzelmo says. "Science shows that outcomes are based one-third on genetics and two-thirds on lifestyle choices – what you eat, how you live, what you do. When I work with senior populations, I take what I've learned through research and find practical ways to put it into practice."

This proactive approach is highly regarded at the Masonic Homes, where Anzelmo has been a longtime consultant. Members of the Masonic Homes Board of Directors have been inspired by her ideas, particularly that of the Blue Zones, and were eager to partner with her to incorporate the book's findings into life at the Masonic Homes residential communities.

At the Board's suggestion, Anzelmo has been working closely with Director of Memory Care Joseph Pritchard, M.D. – another Blue Zones enthusiast. For Pritchard, Buettner's accessible logic and easy-to-follow guidelines around Blue Zones have been a valuable resource for his efforts in improving residents' understanding of factors that influence cognitive health. He uses the book's narrative approach and compelling statistics to inform and connect with residents. Recently, he introduced a brain health education program, giving interested residents an opportunity to learn about foods and lifestyle changes that may increase their cognitive and overall health.

### MINDFUL, DELICIOUS, AND FUN

Healthy eating may not initially seem appealing to everyone, but as Pritchard and Anzelmo point out, that's OK. They both shun the "cold

turkey approach" to ditching less nutritious foods. "I tell residents, 'Don't feel bad if you opt out of the healthy choice once in a while. It doesn't mean you've failed; sometimes you just want a hamburger!'" Pritchard says.

Anzelmo adds, "Dietary changes have the highest success rate when they're both easy and tasty. Our goal is not only to help residents access healthy choices, but even more so, to enjoy them. Healthy choices should feel *and* taste good."

*"Our goal is not only to help residents access healthy choices, but even more so, to enjoy them. Healthy choices should feel and taste good."*

NANCY SCHIER ANZELMO

One day, as Anzelmo was on the Union City campus, walking past the Grider Gym on her way to the Brain Gym (where residents practice cognition-enhancing games), she had an epiphany: The smoothie bar, which had been largely abandoned during the chilly winter months, would be a perfect place to start a grab-and-go café. Her vision was to provide quick and tasty snacks and small meals – similar to those available at Starbucks and other cafes, but based on the guidelines outlined in the Blue Zones.

When she shared her vision with the Masonic Homes Board of Directors and Gary Charland, president and chief executive

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officer of the Masonic Homes of California, they immediately decided to implement it. As Pritchard points out, even the location is ideal. "Residents who are coming from a workout can have a healthy snack, 'brain food,' and then come into the Brain Gym to work on their cognition. It's a win-win-win. Together, these three facilities will become the 'Brain Fitness area.'" He also stresses the importance of access. "If residents want a salad in the afternoon, they won't have to leave campus – they'll just walk another 30 steps."

The café is now under construction, and Pritchard and Anzelmo are already eagerly anticipating the menu. One idea is to focus each month on a different Blue Zone – perhaps one in the Mediterranean since those cuisines tend to be familiar. They plan to use culturally specific foods to help tell that region's longevity story, including healthy lifestyle factors. Upon opening, the café will offer post-workout snacks, like hummus with veggies.

## CHANGING TRENDS

Although Anzelmo has been studying gerontology for years, she's recently begun to notice an increased acceptance of lifestyle-related causes and preventive actions for dementia in the scientific and senior care industries. "Brain fitness is a big craze. In hard science, they say that it can't prevent Alzheimer's if you're carrying the gene, but it can slow the progression – by as much as five years. Eight years is the normal course, so that's a huge difference," she says. "Historically, this information hasn't really been picked up by retirement communities. But at the Masonic Homes, the Board and leadership wants a proactive approach to everything we do. It's incredibly refreshing."

Part of this proactive approach involved a 2014 partnership with Dr. T.J. McCallum of Case Western University, founder of the Brain Emporium, which pioneered much of the current research around how the "brain gym" can



boost residents' cognitive health. Focusing next on food, says Pritchard, is a natural progression. "Exercise and healthful eating are the most important ways that we can help combat dementia," he explains. But, he says, the food itself isn't the only important component. "Getting together in a room and eating is a social experience that is irreplaceable. Social interaction is a key part of brain fitness. Mealtime is an important component of our Compass Club program, which serves residents experiencing advanced dementia. When they get together for meals rather than sitting in their rooms, they can talk with their friends and neighbors and feel like they're part of a community. Even simply listening to conversations around them can make a big difference."

This perspective is echoed by Buettner, who writes, "Slowing down [to eat] ties together so many of the other lessons – eating right, appreciating friends, finding time for spirituality, making family a priority, creating things that bring purpose." Masons will recall that this guidance for life closely mirrors the fraternity's values as well. At the end of the day, for both California Masons, and the residents the Masonic Homes serves, a life lived well remains the end goal.

Pritchard, Anzelmo, Charland, and the Board of Directors are still collaborating on what's next at the Masonic Homes, but a "brain healthy menu" is gaining popularity amongst residents and staff. "When residents see 'heart healthy' on the menu and know they are at risk for heart disease, they're likely to choose that option to stay healthy," Pritchard says. "Soon, they'll be able to apply this choice to 'brain food' as well."

The only catch? "We're not sure dining services will agree to let us place little brain graphics on the menu," jokes Pritchard. "It might not be so appetizing." ❖

*Learn more about the Masonic Homes active lifestyle and resident-first philosophy of care at [masonichome.org](http://masonichome.org).*

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# CHOICE IS ON THE MENU

THE COLLABORATIVE CULINARY  
CULTURE OF ACACIA CREEK

*By Tyler Ash*

In the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area, atop the Mission Hills, rests Acacia Creek Retirement Community. On a beautiful campus set upon more than 300 acres of open space, residents pursue ongoing growth, personal fulfillment, and a proactive approach to creating the lifestyle they desire.

Acacia Creek is a Certified Center for Successful Aging, and residents embody best practices in all categories of wellness – physical, mental, social, and spiritual. Food plays an important role. Each day, they choose from a wide selection of flavorful, nourishing meals prepared with fresh, local produce, designed by a professional chef and reviewed by staff nutritionists.

“Eating well is an important part of the Acacia Creek resident experience,” says Executive Chef Fernando Gaeta.





ACACIA CREEK'S CULINARY COMMITTEE GATHERS TO SAMPLE NEW MEAL OPTIONS. SHOWN HERE (LEFT TO RIGHT) ARE: CLARICE HILL, HERMANN ATTINGER, TAMMY POTTER, CHEF FERNANDO GAETA, CAROL HOUGH, WILMA GRICE, AND SALLY WARD.



ACACIA CREEK'S DELICIOUS MEALS ARE MADE WITH FRESH, LOCALLY SOURCED INGREDIENTS.



## WEB EXTRA

View video footage from this  
Acacia Creek photo shoot at  
[freemason.org/March17AcaciaCreek](http://freemason.org/March17AcaciaCreek)

"I walk around the dining room during meals. I get to know the diners; to talk to them and encourage feedback," he says.

A key aspect of this dining experience is participation. Acacia Creek

resident Wilma Grice is an active member of the Culinary Committee, a group of 12 residents who meet monthly with Gaeta, Dining Room Manager Madelane Ramos, and Administrator Martin Herter. Together, the committee and staff review menus, share ideas, and brainstorm solutions to any challenges.

Sally Ward, Culinary Committee chairperson, explains that part of their role is to identify and meet people's needs outside their own. For example, when they learned that foil butter packets were difficult for

residents with arthritis to unwrap, they switched to butter balls.

"There's always a gradual change for the better," Grice says. "It's a wonderful part of our community here." ♦

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