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CALIFORNIA

# FREEMASON

LIGHTS ON

THE ILLUMINATION OF  
A WELL-TRAVELED PRACTICE



# MAY JUNE

2018 VOL 66 | NO 04



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2

### EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

Senior Grand Warden John E. Trauner found perspective on the global nature of the fraternity during a recent journey right here in the United States.

3

### THE THREE CALIFORNIAS

An annual Masonic conference unites California brethren with brothers south of the border to cement friendships and deepen understanding.

6

### A BIG SPARK

At a brand-new lodge in Southern California, brothers draw upon their enduring friendships, rich cultural heritage, and shared love for Freemasonry to create a meaningful impact within their community.



# 8

## LIGHTS ON:

### THE ILLUMINATION OF A WELL-TRAVELED PRACTICE

Masonry is at its heart collaborative. Brothers must practice it together to truly understand it. Those who experience Masonry within different cultures often discover new insights, surprising revelations, and lifelong friendships. Why leave home to practice Masonry? In short, it can be awakening.

- 14 TRADITIONS IN THE TRIMMING**  
Masonic attire varies from lodge to lodge and country to country. Far from stagnant, the material culture of the lodge elevates and defines the member experience.
- 18 WONDERS OF MASONIC AMERICA**  
These colorful Masonic destinations are on the must-see list of every Masonic traveler and admirer of the craft. Pack your bags and prepare for an adventure!
- 21 BROTHERHOOD IN A TIME OF CONQUEST**  
Freemasonry sometimes spread on the heels of Imperialists. In India, British Masons were forced to question their pledges of tolerance – especially relating to religious beliefs.



- 24 A DAY IN THE LIFE**  
How does Masonic Outreach Services (MOS) truly help members in need? Follow an MOS outreach manager on a day of bringing relief to Masonic families in need.
- 28 TO SAY THANKS**  
One lodge officer worked with his brothers to organize a monumental donation – supporting Masonic charities, bringing brothers together, and defining a culture of philanthropy.

# EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

## DWELLING IN UNITY

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity,” implores the inspirational Psalm 133. This saying applies everywhere in the world where Freemasonry exists.

Ours is a unique fraternity. It knows no boundaries or political impulses; it is a common ideal in the hearts of brothers wherever they may be. No matter where we travel, we need simply to find a Mason and lodge to be “home.”

Recently, I motorcycled to the Overland Expo in Flagstaff, Arizona. While camping amongst fellow outdoor enthusiasts, I was approached by a stranger who had noticed the Masonic emblem on my bike and Masonic ring. His name was Mike and he belonged to a small lodge in Southern Australia. We immediately bonded. I felt as though I had known Mike for a long time, and we spent a day sharing how Masonry has affected our lives. It was wonderful that although we came from thousands of miles away, we were linked as brothers through our shared beliefs and obligations.

Meeting Mike reminded me how powerful our bonds are with our brothers – from the Grand Lodge of Iran in Exile and the Grand Lodge of Baja; from the Philippines to Armenia, Panama, and beyond. I encourage all Masons to expand their perspectives by visiting a lodge of a different culture from your own. I assure you that you will be welcomed by the brothers there, and will leave a better Mason than when you walked in. Though our languages may differ, our core beliefs are always the same: to show respect, to be gracious in carriage, to be honest in character, and to build true friendships.

Our gentle craft knows no limits: All are golden opportunities to behold!



John E. Trauner, Senior Grand Warden



SENIOR GRAND WARDEN JOHN E. TRAUNER DISCOVERS CONNECTIONS AND A SENSE OF PEACE WHILE ADVENTURING ON HIS MOTORCYCLE IN CALIFORNIA AND BEYOND.

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# The Three Californias

FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS,  
THREE CALIFORNIA GRAND LODGES HAVE  
SHARED CROSS-CULTURAL FELLOWSHIP

*By Jay Kinney*

California boasts a distinct natural beauty – from its rolling golden hills to the cresting Pacific Ocean, and its diverse landscapes of forests, meadows, deserts, mountains, and beyond. This charm transcends the United States border, extending south down the Baja California Peninsula into the Mexican states of Baja California and Baja California Sur.

As California stretches south, so does Freemasonry. Every year since 1979, the Grand Lodge of California, the Grand Lodge of Baja California, and the Grand Lodge of Baja California Sur have held a two-day gathering. Known as the Conference of Three Californias, it is an annual opportunity to strengthen fraternal ties and assess the future of Masonry in California's three states.

## **HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

The statehood of the Baja California Peninsula has fluctuated since the 19th century. At times, it was a single territory of Mexico; at other times a dual territory. In 1952, the northern half became the state of Baja California. Baja California Sur (South) was granted Mexican statehood in 1974. While the Grand Lodge of Baja California, located in the border city of Tijuana, served the northern region, a new Grand Lodge of Baja California Sur arose in the wake of statehood, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pacifico.



California Past Grand Master Donald G. Ingalls (1978-1979) was instrumental in both granting official recognition to the Grand Lodge of Baja California Sur and in establishing what was then called the first Masonic Congress of Three Californias.

According to Bro. Arturo Sevilla, assistant grand secretary and secretary of international relations for the Grand Lodge of Baja California, the motivation for the annual gathering was the mutual realization that while adjacent to each other, the Masons of Baja California and those in the American state of California typically knew little of each others' rituals, customs, and Masonic culture.

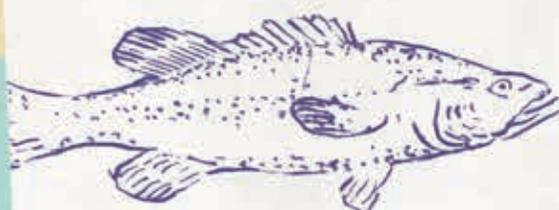
## **UNIQUE TRADITIONS**

One striking difference between the American and Mexican lodges is their ritual. The Grand Lodge of Baja California originally received its charter from the Grand Lodge of Valle de Mexico, which received its charter from the Grand Orient of New Granada – now present-day Columbia. That grand lodge worked the craft degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, which diverged considerably from the Preston-Webb ritual commonly used in the United States. Lodges in Baja California continue this practice today. Also unique to Baja California lodges are Masonic wedding celebrations, Masonic rituals that honor major wedding anniversaries and other occasions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Bienvenidos  
WELCOME  
Amigos  
FRIENDS  
Hermanos  
BROTHERS



Another significant difference between Masonry in the United States' California and in Baja California is the number of Masons involved. According to recent counts, there are roughly 48,000 Masons in California, which seems strikingly large when compared with approximately 800 Masons in Baja California and 300 or so brothers in Baja California Sur. The average size of a lodge below the border is just 25, but brethren are active and lodges often share weekly meetings and activities. Learning how smaller lodges can thrive is relevant for all jurisdictions, and both Baja California jurisdictions serve as examples.

### BRIDGING BORDERS

Sevilla notes that the Conference of Three Californias is more like an annual reunion than a formal conference. There are no bylaws, commissions, or official programs; rather, the event consists of public and private meetings. "Public" meetings are typically oriented toward Masons, but open to anyone, and "private" meetings are informal gatherings during which Grand Lodge representatives hold frank discussions about mutual topics of interest.

Meetings cycle between the three jurisdictions, but most often take place in San Diego, Tijuana, and Los Cabos County. Highlights typically include a local lodge exemplification of one of the three degrees, as practiced in the host jurisdiction. During a recent gathering in Tijuana, participants joined together to place a memorial wreath for Benito Juarez, former president of Mexico and an honorary 33rd° Mason in the Supreme Council of Mexico.

The spirit of international brotherhood shared by the grand lodges of California, Baja California, and Baja California Sur is poised to expand in the coming year. Two other regular jurisdictions that meet within California – the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California and the Grand Lodge of Iran in Exile – have been invited by the Grand Lodge of Baja California to participate in the 2018 Conference of Three Californias. Sevilla describes this as an effort "to foster recognition between all of the regular Grand Lodges in the three jurisdictions."

While this conference might be dismissed as "just Grand Lodge business" by some brothers, it is a valuable opportunity to build cross-jurisdictional fellowship. Masons from all over Baja California travel to the conferences to enjoy the fellowship of meeting brethren from all three jurisdictions. As California Grand Master Bruce R. Galloway says, "While we do not necessarily share a common language, we do share a very common love for our fraternity. We have built close relationships and have been able to share best practices." These practices are ways in which Masons have found success in their individual lodges and in the fraternity at large.

Sevilla sees the annual conference as an opportunity for Masonic leaders and members to gain a better understanding of how Masonry works in other jurisdictions. "California has listened and learned from our achievements and mistakes, and vice versa," he says.

*Masons from all over Baja California travel to the conferences to enjoy the fellowship of meeting brethren from all three jurisdictions.*

From its humble beginnings in 1979, the Conference of Three Californias has become a landmark event on the annual Masonic calendar. As Grand Master Galloway notes, "It is an event we look forward to each year to renew friendships, meet new friends, and continue a long standing tradition."

Sevilla likens the differences between the three Masonic jurisdictions to "flavors of Masonry." The underlying ideals and values are the same, but how they are expressed, both ritually and socially, may vary. Learning about those differences and embracing them is one way in which Masons near and far can actualize the ideals of universal brotherhood. The Conference of Three Californias is an initiative close at hand, which furthers that effort within our home state and those that share its name. ♦



# A Big Spark

A NEW LODGE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BLENDS A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE WITH LOVE FOR COMMUNITY

*By Drea Muldavin-Roemer*



The idea for Raven's Rock Lodge, U.D. came about when Alfred Isagulyan sat down to lunch with his good friend Jordan Yelinek, a fellow Mason. Right then a spark was ignited. "It was exciting knowing we could go through the steps and create something beautiful," Isagulyan says. "A big light opened up in my mind."

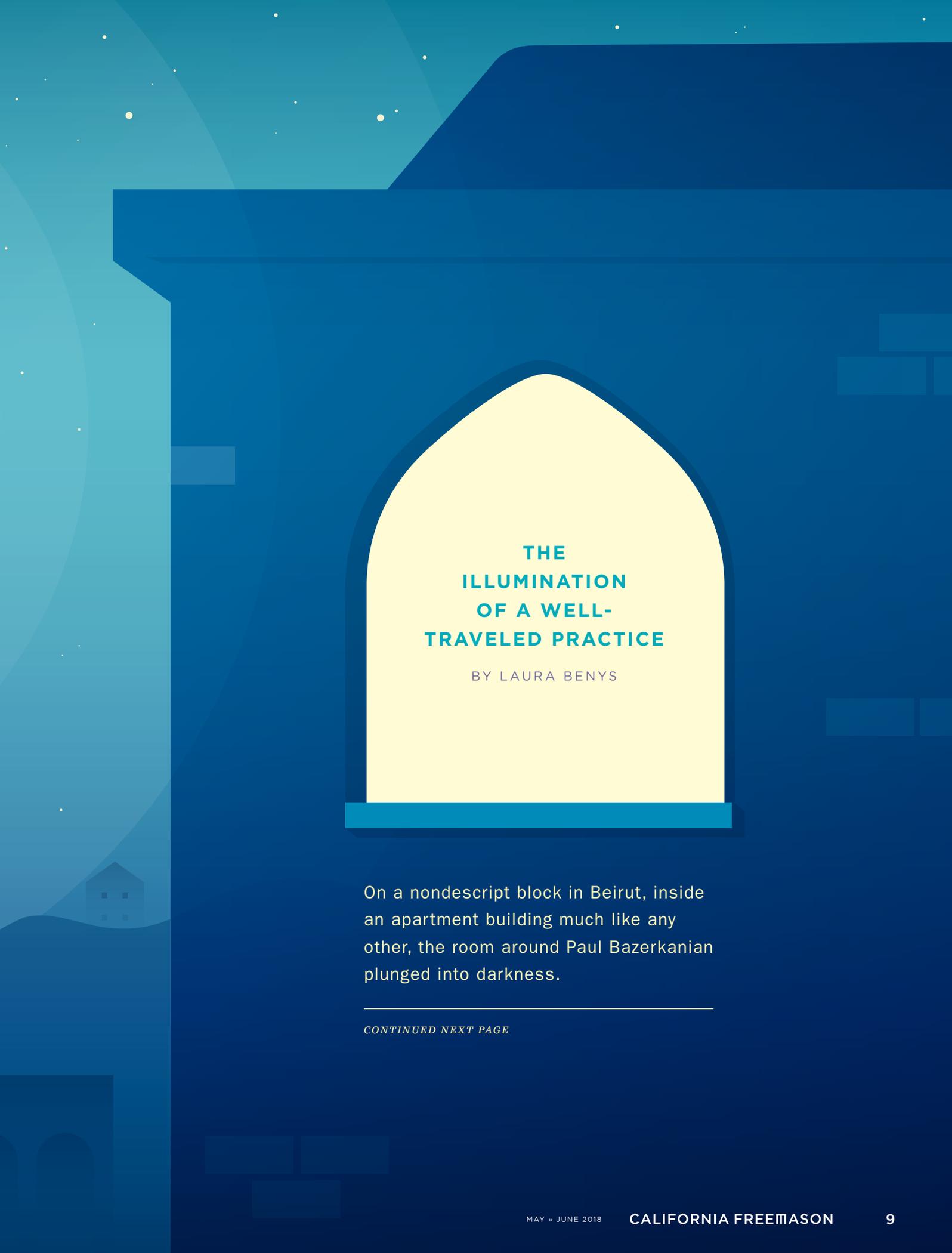
One of the lodge's main goals is to engage their local community, creating sparks of positivity that will effect change on a local level and in the world beyond. Today, explains Isagulyan – now senior warden – that light is still burning brightly. "Our approach to Masonry is not about titles or positions," he says. "We are friends trying to create a change and keep this fire burning in our community."

Raven's Rock Lodge brothers often combine their personal and charitable interests. Last October, they produced a popular cultural performance during which a string quartet played Armenian music while a local ballet performed alongside. In May, their classic car show will benefit a local elementary school. Recently, they also planted 70 trees in Armenia, which will someday become a Masonic garden. This act is emblematic of members' intentions: to plant seeds and encourage growth, all over the world. "We're trying to make a real impact," Isagulyan says. ❖

*Read more: [freemason.org/May18Ravens](http://freemason.org/May18Ravens)*

# LIGHTS ON

The image features a dark blue background with a night sky filled with small white stars. A large, glowing yellow sun or moon is positioned in the upper right quadrant, casting a soft, circular glow. The lower portion of the image shows a silhouette of a cityscape with various buildings and hills. Some windows in the buildings are lit up with a small yellow light, suggesting a city at night.



**THE  
ILLUMINATION  
OF A WELL-  
TRAVELED PRACTICE**

BY LAURA BENYS

On a nondescript block in Beirut, inside an apartment building much like any other, the room around Paul Bazerkanian plunged into darkness.

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*CONTINUED NEXT PAGE*

He was gathered with a score of brothers in a makeshift lodge room, which had been shoehorned into the apartment. The outside bore no square and compass. All the windows were shut, and the shades were drawn. A tiler, posted in an entry area, kept nervous guard. In Lebanon, the political relationship with Masonry is as strained and unpredictable as the electrical grid.

Bazerkanian lives in Glendale, California, where he is an inspector for the Grand Lodge of California and a past master of San Marino Lodge No. 408, but he was born in Beirut. He visits at least once a year, and attends lodge. He'd become accustomed to the humble space and strict secrecy of lodge meetings. He was accustomed, too, to the multi-course feast that followed – *tabbouleh*, *baba ghanouj*, *sanboussek* to start; then *kofta*, *shish taouk*, and *shawarma*; *baklava* and *oum ali* for dessert. But this was the first time he'd experienced a blackout during a meeting. The air conditioning had gone out with the electricity, and in his suit and tie, Bazerkanian began to sweat. In the cramped room, the air became stifling. "It was like we were in a sauna," he says.

Around him, the brothers reached for their cigarette lighters. They had run this drill before. With practiced efficiency, candles blazed to life beside the master's station, then the wardens'. The altar was illuminated in flickering candlelight. Another candle was lit by the secretary's station, enough to read, write, and work by.

As the meeting went on, and the temperature continued to rise, Bazerkanian began to feel the

significance of the moment. "Nobody cared about the lights. Nobody cared about the A/C. Nobody stopped," he says. As he watched the brothers work together in this oppressively hot room, hidden away from the rest of their country, he thought about how different this was from his experiences in California. He was struck, he says, by the "dedication and love of Masonry."

In the end, his memory wasn't so much about the lights that went out, but the lights that stayed on.

## INTO THE UNKNOWN

To appreciate the full force of Masonry, the best advice might be this: Get out of town. Way out.

Freemasonry was designed as a global experience – a traveling guild, uniting members from disparate cultures. Fast-forward to today, and that spirit lives on. Every new Mason receives, essentially, an invitation to visit the rest of the world. Anywhere he goes, he has a family.

Those who have practiced Masonry in foreign places usually find it contagious, inevitably urging their brothers to try it for themselves. Go, they'll say, to experience the scope of the fraternity. Go to prove the bonds of brotherhood. Go in search of empathy for other people. Go in search of yourself.

"The ability to engage with people from different backgrounds than yourself, and the ability to get out of your own social comfort zone, is helping you to build a strong and acculturated sense of your own self," explained one researcher, interviewed by The Atlantic on the link between foreign experiences and personal development. "Our ability to differentiate our

own beliefs and values... is tied up in the richness of the cultural experiences that we have had."

In other words, by gaining a better understanding of others, we can draw the lines of "self" more clearly. We also become more tolerant. (Mark Twain, who sailed around the coast of the Mediterranean in 1869, wrote that travel is "fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.") Maybe this is why Freemasonry, with its melting pot of cultures, arrived at equality and brotherly love as its most important tenets. Practicing them on home turf is one thing. Practicing them on someone else's can be even more powerful. Distanced from our usual assumptions and cultural biases, we are more open, attentive, and curious. We are primed for enlightenment.

## OUT OF DARKNESS

Thomas Jackson, past grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, likely logs more air miles than any other brother for the purpose of Masonry. Last year alone he traveled to 18 countries – and that was fewer than in previous years.

Jackson is honorary president and past executive secretary of the World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges, which unites Masonic leaders from hundreds of jurisdictions worldwide on a different continent every 18 months. (In November 2015, the Grand Lodge of California hosted the conference at the California Masonic Memorial Temple in San Francisco.) As part of his Masonic visits, he has been received by presidents of eight countries – among them, Chad, Portugal, Romania, and Chile – and a couple of prime ministers. In Greece,

he was personally escorted between events by the country's most prominent surgeon. In Mali, he's been attended to by the president's personal Marine guard. In the Ivory Coast, he was invited to the home of the ambassador to the United Nations. He has ridden in a limousine through the streets of Gabon beside the presidents of four African countries.

"Traveling outside of the U.S., we begin to comprehend that Freemasons

are still the movers and shakers in much of the world," he says.

But one of Jackson's most poignant cross-cultural experiences wasn't a matter of prestige. It took place in 2000, barely more than a decade after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. Jackson had traveled to Bulgaria's capital city, Sofia, to visit the Grand Lodge of Bulgaria. He was in a piano bar one evening with the grand masters of Bulgaria and Romania, and several

other international Masons. Bulgaria's grand master was a great singer: "He sounded like Louis Armstrong, but with a soft voice," Jackson says. "Anywhere we'd go, he'd find a piano." When they walked into the piano bar that evening, the patrons started chanting his name.

At some point in the night, amid the music and merriment, Jackson noticed that the grand master of Romania had tears in his eyes. "I asked him what was wrong," Jackson says. "His response was, 'I cannot believe that I am sitting here in a piano bar in Bulgaria with you.'" Freemasonry had only just returned to Romania after half a century in exile; such a public display of fraternity had been inconceivable even a few years ago. "It was a revealing moment," Jackson says. "The appreciation of being a Freemason is not lost on those who were denied that privilege for so many decades."

**GO. THEY'LL SAY,  
TO EXPERIENCE  
THE SCOPE OF THE  
FRATERNITY.**

**GO TO PROVE  
THE BONDS OF  
BROTHERHOOD.**

**GO IN SEARCH  
OF EMPATHY FOR  
OTHER PEOPLE.**

**GO IN SEARCH OF  
YOURSELF.**

### **A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY**

Perhaps you've had the experience of pulling into your driveway, arriving home from work or some other well-traversed route, and not being able to recall a single stoplight along the way. The experience is so familiar that you can drift through it without noticing much at all.

By comparison, navigating a foreign place often feels like your senses have been dialed up to their maximum. You read road signs as if your life depended upon them. You scrutinize social cues from the people around you. You register more of what you're seeing, hearing, smelling, and feeling.

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Because of this, there's a good chance that when you return home, you will register more, too. It's almost as if you've reawakened your awareness. As Marcel Proust wrote, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes." Jackson has long implored fraternal leaders, particularly those in North America (who, he says, tend to travel less than Masons from other countries), to break out of their cultural bubbles. One of his reasons is simply to appreciate what other brothers, like his friend from Romania, have gone through to keep the fraternity alive. Another is to look at Masonry with, as Proust put it, "new eyes."

Jackson encourages leaders to study what sets the craft apart in other countries, and learn from it. Like wine absorbing nuances from the soil conditions of its grapes, Masonry takes on different styles from its surroundings and their history, culture,

and sociopolitical climate. Jackson has identified five of these styles: the philosophical style of Western Europe, the social style of the British Isles, the sociological style of South and Central America, the political style of Mexico, and the charitable style of the U.S. He believes that fraternal leaders can find lessons within each of these styles.

It's also important, he says, to notice how Freemasonry has remained relevant in different countries, often despite great challenges.

One of his favorite examples is Latin America. It's a region where the fraternity has a long history of oppression and opposition. Yet, today, the craft is thriving. Its charitable record is impressive – Freemasons there sponsor schools and even provide students with lunch and dinner; they operate hospitals and institutes of higher education. They are a respected and influential voice in the country's affairs. "It shows the strength of Latin

American Freemasonry. I think it's the result of the continuing struggle there," Jackson says. "They're more idealistic about Freemasonry than elsewhere in the world. As a result, they set higher goals."

By experiencing Masonry far from home, brothers get a broader perspective of what Masonry can mean to its communities. In Latin America, that may take the form of a Grand Lodge-sponsored hospital. In California it includes our partnership with Raising A Reader to improve child literacy.

On one of Bazerkanian's recent visits to Beirut, a brother shared with the lodge that he knew a family of Syrian refugees who were living on the streets. The father had been killed. The mother was caring for their three children. They were waiting for the government to sort out the details of their aid, but in the meantime, they were without shelter or money. The

**"MASONRY IS THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WHEN WE GET TOGETHER, WE HAVE AN INSTANT BOND. OUR LANGUAGES MIGHT BE DIFFERENT BUT WE'RE REALLY SAYING THE SAME THINGS."**

**BRUCE R. GALLOWAY, GRAND MASTER**

brother didn't know the last time they had eaten.

An hour and four phone calls later, the lodge had found a Mason who offered to put the family up for free. On the table in the middle of the room, \$200 had been collected to buy food and clothing. "I'm sure the family never knew it was the Masons who helped them," Bazerkanian says. "It was done all secretly."

This experienced illustrated the truth of his Masonic vows. "Masonic charity is evident anywhere you go," he says. "Masons are always ready to help out. They're always ready to lend a hand."

## "MY BROTHER" IN ANY LANGUAGE

In the conversation about practicing Freemasonry abroad, this underscores the most important point of all: For all the differences in style and custom that a brother may encounter, he will find in common truth, relief, and brotherly love. The Masonic tenets are first learned in the home lodge. But they are proven abroad.

In October, Bruce R. Galloway, grand master of Masons in California, sat in London's historic Royal Albert Hall among 4,000 other Masons, including the Duke of Kent, grand master of the United Grand Lodge of England. It was the finale banquet of celebrations commemorating the 300th anniversary of Freemasonry. The anniversary events, which culminated over several days in England, represented history's largest gathering of grand masters – 136 in total – from around the world. Besides the attendees in Royal Albert Hall, thousands more brothers watched the proceedings

on screen from spill-over satellite spaces. At the dinner after, Galloway sat with the grand master of Monaco, the grand master of Belgium, the chancellor of the United Grand Lodge of England, and the deputy grand master of Scotland. Throughout the festivities, he met and spoke with Freemasons from China, Japan, Russia, the Philippines, and all over Europe. "The conclusion I came to," Galloway says, "is that quite frankly, Masonry is the same throughout the world. When we get together, we have an instant bond. Our languages might be different but we're really saying the same things. That's what struck me the most."

Bazerkanian agrees. In addition to Beirut, he has attended lodge meetings in Cypress and Greece, and has visited lodges in numerous other countries, including Canada and Germany. He says that bar none, the common thread between his experiences is a palpable sense of unity, and of caring for one another. The fact that this can occur across cultures, sometimes without even a common language, is the truest form of Freemasonry.

"The man seated next to you is referring to you as 'my brother'; you are referring to him as 'brother,'" Bazerkanian says. "The culture is obviously different, but the similarity is that we are all Masons – and that bond is so strong. Every Mason who I've sat with, ate and drank with, smoked cigars with, has been so happy to meet another brother from another country. Anything you need, they go out of their way to take care of. You actually feel the genuine, sincere brotherly love that we talk to candidates about in lodge."

"I bet you anything," he adds: "Any Mason who travels to a foreign country to visit another lodge will want to do it again and again. They will look for a reason to travel."

## RETURNING HOME. EVERYWHERE

Bazerkanian was part of the California contingent that traveled to the United Kingdom for Masonry's 300th anniversary. When they pulled up to the United Grand Lodge of England, the Widows Sons, a Masonic bikers association, greeted them. It was an impressive display, and not just for the rows of gleaming motorcycles and bone-vibrating motors.

"The way they greeted us was like we had known them for many, many years – like we'd just been gone awhile," Bazerkanian says. "They greeted us, asking, 'Where have you been?'"

As the British and California Masons mingled, comparing notes on bikes and exchanging handshakes and invitations to each other's home lodges, he felt a familiar twinge: He could tell already that he would never forget this moment. He thought about his lodge's degree candidates back in California. Here were their Masonic tenets at work.

"We lecture our candidates that it doesn't matter what color you are, what sect you are, what kind of political inclinations or religious beliefs you have – that it doesn't matter your position in life, or if you're rich or poor. We're all the same. We are one family. You really feel that when you go out of the country," he says. "I think the only way to really experience that is to travel." ❖

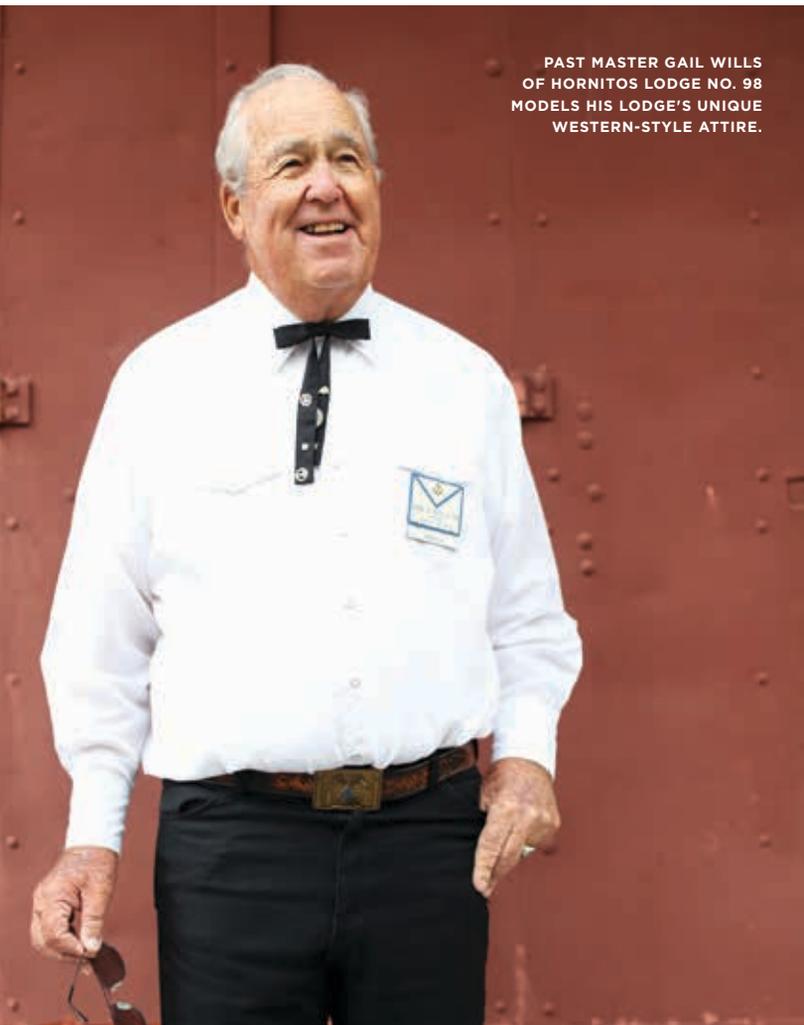


ABOVE AND RIGHT (TOP AND BOTTOM): GAUNTLETS, COLLAR, AND APRONS FROM MALTA. THE COLLAR AND APRONS DEPICT THE UNIQUE, EIGHT-POINTED "MALTESE CROSS."

# Traditions in the Trimming

EXPLORING THE RICH CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF GLOBAL MASONIC ATTIRE

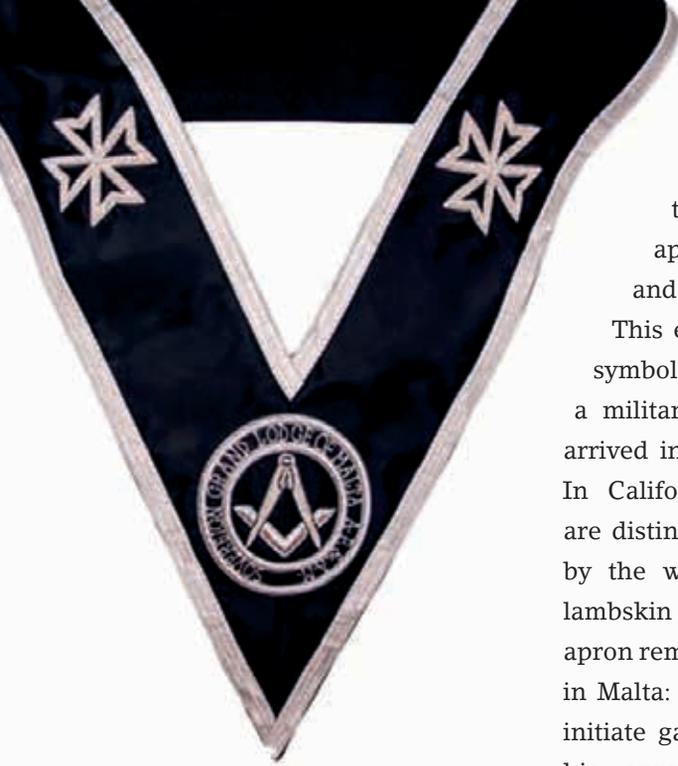
*By Antone R.E. Pierucci*



PAST MASTER GAIL WILLIS OF HORNITOS LODGE NO. 98 MODELS HIS LODGE'S UNIQUE WESTERN-STYLE ATTIRE.

During a regular tiled meeting in a California lodge, one can expect to find an array of officers, sometimes in tuxedos, always girded in their lambskin aprons, with jewels specific to their office about their necks. At their head, on a raised dais, presides the Worshipful Master, likewise outfitted, with the exception of a black silk top hat on his head. For the most part, a visitor could go from one lodge to the next in this state and at the end of the journey, he would be forgiven for thinking that Masons the world over wear the same attire. After all, we as a fraternity pride ourselves in our tradition, and by its very definition, tradition does not change. Right? The answer, like most things about Freemasonry, is a bit more complicated.

As it turns out, the notion of uniformity falls apart before we even leave our own state. Brothers in some California lodges have replaced the tuxedo altogether, preferring instead a more casual culture. Hornitos Lodge No. 98, near Mariposa in northern California, has been bucking tradition for half a century. In place of a formal bowtie and stiff white shirt with French cuffs, members of this small lodge sport a loose Western-style white shirt, dark trousers, and Western-style



bolo ties around their neck. According to Past Master Gail Wills, this unique attire was inspired by a lodge master in the '50s who had a penchant for square dancing.

Leave California and this trend continues. In Massachusetts, for instance, the grand master is distinguished not by a top hat, but rather with an unusual tricorn hat. "It is widely suggested that Paul Revere first wore the tricorn as grand master," explains Walter H. Hunt, librarian at the Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library in Boston. Aside from a few gaps in the centuries, the grand master of Massachusetts has been wearing this symbol of American patriotism since 1794.

Outside of the United States, there seems to be as many different types of Masonic dress as there are countries with lodges. In the island nation of Malta, for instance, grand lodge

officers proudly display the "Maltese Cross" on their aprons, their chains of office, and anywhere else they can find.

This eight-pointed cross was the symbol of the Knights of St. John, a military order of crusaders who arrived in Malta in the 16th century. In California, Entered Apprentices are distinguished from Fellow Crafts by the way they wear their white lambskin aprons. But in each case, the apron remains the same. This is not so in Malta: In Maltese Masonry, as the initiate gains more light in Masonry, his apron gains more trimming. Beginning with the plain white lambskin, candidates' aprons progressively become more ornate.

Even in the United Kingdom – the very epicenter of Masonry and home to the oldest lodges in the world – unique designs push their way to the surface. In fact, the only rule for Scottish Masonic regalia is that there aren't any rules. "All Scottish lodges can choose which color or colors to use for their regalia," explains Robert Cooper, curator of the Grand Lodge of Scotland Museum and Library.

"A lodge in one part of the country may use red for its aprons and other regalia, whereas a lodge on the other side of the country may choose blue and orange." Frequently, you will also see Scottish lodges proudly wearing that most Scottish of designs: the tartan.

And the reason behind those colors or designs? Well, that too varies. "The reasons might be obscure," admits Cooper. "More often than not though, there was a conscious decision taken by the founding members when choosing a particular color or combination of colors." For instance, The Celtic Lodge, Edinburgh and Leith No. 291, founded in 1821, chose Royal Stewart Tartan. Their reason, explicitly stated, was to "promote the wearing of tartan within the Scottish Craft." Cooper explains that this was "a romantic reaction to the repeal of the Act of Proscription of 1746." Among other things, that act had banned wearing tartan and playing bagpipes.

Like the history of wearing the tricorn hat in the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, the origin of varied

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



attire in the Scottish tradition goes all the way back to the beginning. "When the Grand Lodge of Scotland was founded in 1736 there were [already] approximately 100 lodges in existence, scattered across Scotland," says Cooper. Only 33 of those lodges attended the first inaugural meeting of the Grand Lodge. It seems most didn't like the idea of a central authority dictating to them what they could and could not do. In order to make the idea more palatable, the Grand Lodge "granted" each lodge, among other things,

the right to choose their own regalia. It's been that way ever since.

As the Grand Lodge of Scotland established sister lodges throughout the world, they exported this treasured sense of individuality. Today, visitors will find members of Lodge Tullibardine in the East No. 1118 S.C., in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, sporting Murray Tartan. This was the clan tartan of the Grand Master of Scotland at the time Lodge Tullibardine in the East was established in 1913.

Historically, Freemasonry traveled from England and Scotland and went on to establish roots in virtually every continent in the world. Today, from Massachusetts to Malta, Scotland to Malaysia, Masons regularly gather together in brotherhood and mutual respect. In our fraternity's international ranks are men of all colors and creeds, each one bringing with him his own heritage and beliefs. Is it any wonder that the trappings of Masonry are subject to cultural appropriation? After all, no organization, no matter how timeless its tenets or deep its traditions, comes through

**LEFT: A MASTER MASON APRON'S FROM A LODGE OPERATING UNDER THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND SHOWS ITS TRADEMARK TARTAN.**

**BELOW: SCOTTISH GRAND LODGE OFFICERS STAND IN CEREMONIAL REGALIA.**



a journey of time and distance unchanged. Freemasonry is no exception.

Contemplating the heritage underlying his own Masonic experience, Brother Hunt in Boston remarks, "There is nothing quite like the procession of Grand Lodge officers in their regalia."

Across the ocean, in Scotland, Brother Cooper agrees. For him, seeing the parade of colors and designs in Scottish lodges, reminds him of "why Scottish Freemasonry remains unique in the world," and he is inspired to add: "Long may it remain so."

An observer might believe that the power of Masonry lies in its stability, its unvarying continuity over the centuries and across continents. And yet, in reality its strengths also lie elsewhere. Rather than dilute the member experience, or otherwise undermine the stability of the fraternity, the malleability of Masonry appears to be one of its strongest characteristics. We all look for a reflection of ourselves in the organizations with which we associate. If its different traditions of dress are any indication, Masonry is an organization with a thousand faces. And in the words of Brother Cooper, "long may it remain so." ❖



IN THIS HISTORIC IMAGE, AN OFFICER OF THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND WEARS HIS CEREMONIAL ATTIRE - INCLUDING TRADEMARK TARTAN.



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# WONDERS OF MASONIC AMERICA

If you've been seeking an excuse to see the country, there's no better time than the present. The lens of Freemasonry offers a fascinating perspective!



1

## GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC NATIONAL MEMORIAL

*Alexandria, Virginia*

Come for the Masonic history and incredible architecture, stay for the amazing view. Brother Harvey Wiley Corbett, the building's architect, drew upon the Lighthouse of Alexandria in Egypt, one of the Ancient Seven Wonders of the World, as his inspiration. In addition to employing many Greco-Roman architectural styles, the building includes Replica Lodge Room – duplicating the design of Alexandria Lodge No. 22's first permanent lodge room built in 1801. Preservation of this stunning Masonic building is funded by Masons around the United States (a donation to the memorial is included in California Masons' per capita). [gwmemorial.org](http://gwmemorial.org)



2

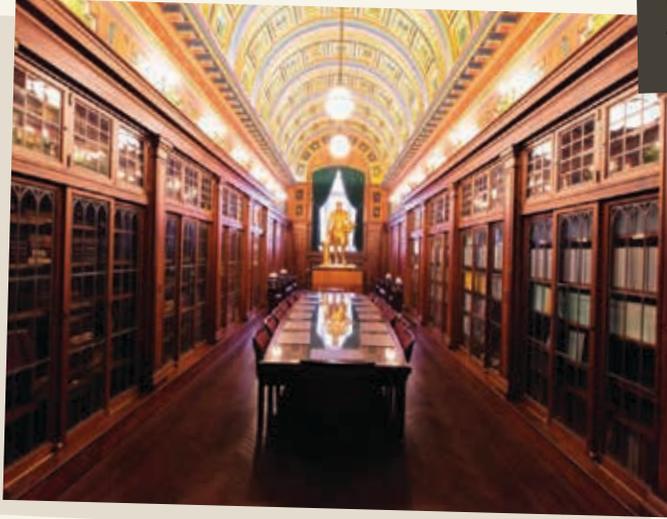
## THE HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE

*Washington, District of Columbia*

Located in our nation's capital, the House of the Temple is the headquarters of the Supreme Council, 33°, Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA. Modeled after the famous Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, in Turkey – recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World – the House of the Temple has been open to the public since its 1915 construction. Take an awe-inspiring tour of John Russell Pope's breathtaking architecture, including the two 17-ton sphinxes that adorn the building's entrance and the magnificent dome ceiling of the Temple Room, which soars 100 feet above the altar. You'll also be dazzled by a good amount of Masonic memorabilia in the mini-exhibits throughout the interior.

[scottishrite.org/headquarters](http://scottishrite.org/headquarters)

## 3

**MASONIC HALL NYC***New York City, New York*

Foodies and historians unite in Manhattan's Flatiron District, where you can take in the beautiful turn-of-the-century Masonic architecture alongside food trucks and high-end cuisine alike. This impressive Masonic temple was built in 1873 and serves as the meeting place of the Grand Lodge of New York. Among its 15 immaculately restored event spaces are the fresco-embellished Renaissance Room and star-adorned Gothic Room. Its 14th floor houses the Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Library and Museum, which includes more than 60,000 volumes detailing Masonic history, philosophy, and symbolism. [masonichallnyc.org](http://masonichallnyc.org)

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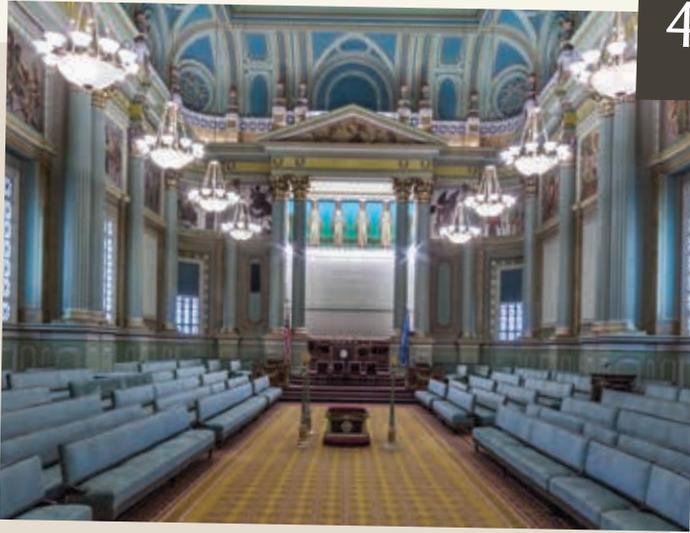
## PLAN THE MASONIC ADVENTURE OF YOUR DREAMS!

*Follow this simple checklist to make sure your trip is on the level.*

- ✔ **CONTACT MEMBER SERVICES:** Well in advance of your journey, contact Grand Lodge Member Services at (415) 292-9180 or [memberservices@freemason.org](mailto:memberservices@freemason.org). Share your dates and the places you'd like to visit.
 

Member Services will confirm that our jurisdictions share recognition, handle initial communications on your behalf, and let you know which lodge to visit (if you haven't already researched and specified one).
- ✔ **OBTAIN YOUR LETTER OF INTRODUCTION:** Member Services will send an official letter of introduction to you and to the grand lodge you would like to visit.
- ✔ **PACK YOUR CURRENT CALIFORNIA DUES CARD:** Be prepared to display your current dues card upon arrival.
- ✔ **PACK UNIVERSAL ATTIRE:** Unless you are certain that the lodge you will visit follows casual dress, you should prepare to wear a dark suit and tie, white gloves, and apron.
- ✔ **ARRIVE EARLY FOR THE EXAMINATION:** Give yourself at least 30 minutes before the stated meeting to present your credentials and take the oral exam to confirm your membership (usually conducted by three brothers).
- ✔ **FOLLOW THE RITUAL AS YOU KNOW IT:** Although ritual can vary between jurisdictions, it's best to follow that of your home lodge to ensure the least disturbance to your hosts. Afterwards, you can discuss any differences.

4

**THE PHILADELPHIA MASONIC TEMPLE***Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

A visit to the City of Brotherly Love isn't complete without a visit to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Considered to be one of the most beautiful Masonic buildings in the world, the temple that houses the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania boasts stunning rooms based on themes of the ancient architectural world, including Egyptian, Moorish, and Corinthian rooms. Constructed in 1873, it is filled with intricate ornamentation representing Masonic philosophy, symbolism, values, and history. Its museum counts among its many treasures the Masonic apron worn by United States President George Washington in the 18th century. Take a selfie with the bigger-than-life bronze statues of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin in front of the building.

[pamasonictemple.org/temple](http://pamasonictemple.org/temple)

5

**SANTA FE SCOTTISH RITE CENTER***Santa Fe, New Mexico*

Built in 1912, this pink Moorish-style building includes a mural of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella accepting the surrender of Boabdil, the last Islamic ruler of Granada, Spain, in 1492. It was listed with the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. You can't miss it – its architecture and interior garden sets it apart from its surroundings. Cool down from the hot sun with a tour of the lovely Alhambra Theater and more. ✦

[santafescottishrite.org](http://santafescottishrite.org)

MASONIC EDUCATION

# BROTHERHOOD IN A TIME OF CONQUEST

VICTORIAN INDIA CHALLENGED  
FREEMASONRY'S IDEAL OF TOLERANCE

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



Freemasonry as we know it originated in the British Isles in the 18th century. From there, it quickly spread to Europe and beyond, especially to all parts of the British Empire. Given its stated commitment to universality, one could imagine that non-European men would be welcome in the lodges that were established in these newly accessed parts of the world. Sadly, that was not always the case – and India is a typical example.

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The first lodge chartered in India was Lodge No. 72 at Bengal in 1728. That was just 11 years after the first Grand Lodge at London's 1717 founding, and just five years after that same Grand Lodge had declared that Freemasonry would accept all men regardless of their religious affiliation in these words:

### *I. Concerning GOD and RELIGION.*

*A Mason is oblig'd by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must else have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.*

Unfortunately, this ideal did not easily translate to lodges across the British Empire, especially to India. Despite the fact that a few members of the Indian aristocracy became Masons, most Indians were barred from Masonic membership. Some of the discrimination was undoubtedly based on race and nationality as much as religion, but membership denials based upon religious differences did exist.

One celebrated case involved a native of India named Manockje Cursetji, who was repeatedly rejected by English-speaking lodges in India. Even after he finally became a Mason in Paris, he was unable to join a local lodge in India. In 1843, Cursetji's plight came to the attention of Bro. Burnes, provincial grand master of the Indian lodges under the Grand Lodge of Scotland. He set about creating a lodge for native Indian Masons – the Star of Western India No. 343 – on the register of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. From this beginning, Freemasonry gradually spread to the native Indian classes.

There was, however, one more hurdle to overcome before the universality of Freemasonry could be truly realized in this new context. Unlike many native Indians, Cursetji was

a Parsee (as we would spell this today, a Parsi). The Parsi were descendants of Iranian Zoroastrians who fled to India beginning in the 8th century to avoid religious persecution. Zoroastrianism was a monotheistic religion, so no questions arose regarding Cursetji's religious qualification for becoming a Mason. But what about polytheistic Hindus, or Buddhists who did not ascribe to a human-divine relationship. Were they eligible to become Masons?

These pivotal questions were eventually resolved by acknowledging that religion is personal to each individual Mason, and that he must decide for himself how his own religious beliefs align with the Masonic requirement of a belief in a Supreme Being. For example, if someone followed an outwardly polytheistic religion, but believed that a Supreme Being was behind the outward forms of his religion, he had satisfied the Masonic requirement. After all, Christians believed in the Holy Trinity, but acknowledged that it was an expression of the "oneness" of God, or a singular God expressed as three entities. Other religions had to be allowed a similar approach.

This new open-mindedness led to the praise of Freemasonry's universality by the celebrated author and poet, Rudyard Kipling. Kipling was born in India in 1865, and in 1886 was made a Mason in the Lodge of Hope and Perseverance No. 782 in Lahore. (At that time, Lahore was in India; today, it is in Pakistan). Kipling later famously said that he was initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason by a Hindu, passed to the Fellow Craft degree by a Muslim, and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason by a Christian. He also noted that his lodge had a Jewish-Indian tiler. Kipling's diverse experience would not have been possible without Burnes' courage to apply the principles of Freemasonry to the society in which he lived.

Allowing each man to be individually responsible for aligning his religious beliefs with Freemasonry was a major breakthrough – and it directly resulted from its spread to foreign countries. Masons gained a new understanding of the old Masonic expression, "That I might travel in foreign countries, work and receive Master Mason wages!"

As a centuries-old organization, it can sometimes take a while for Freemasonry to evolve in order to fully align with the implications of its principles, but with time, it always does so. Freemasonry is truly universal. But it sometimes takes courageous Masons to call its biases to attention. ❖

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## BRINGING RELIEF TO FRATERNAL FAMILIES IN NEED

From her office at the Masonic Home at Union City, Outreach Manager Liz Tarzon supervises the Northern California region of Masonic Outreach Services (MOS) – south from the Oregon border to just north of the Grapevine. Every day, she and her devoted team of care managers work closely with Masonic Assistance to support brothers and Masonic widows of all ages, offering counsel and access to needed services. Here, we follow Liz on a typical day.

### 7:30 A.M.

Liz builds a budget for Fred\* and Brenda, clients in their early 40s who are struggling financially. “Oftentimes people just need help understanding where they are overspending,” she explains. In this case, Fred and Brenda can save money by taking in a renter or reducing scheduled expenses. Along with their budget, she shares options for discount internet and cable services.

*\*All names and identifying information have been changed to protect client privacy.*

### 8:17 A.M.

Liz provides back-up for Masonic Assistance staff, answering calls during a busy period. She explains Search Rx, a new prescription discount program offered through the Masonic Value Network, to Shirley, a 60-year-old Masonic widow in Chico. The program, available at [masonichome.org/valuenetwork](http://masonichome.org/valuenetwork), will help Shirley save hundreds of dollars each year through discounted medications.





Maria, a widow in her 70s, was denied her driver's license renewal and contacted Masonic Assistance for help accessing transportation. During the intake call, Masonic Assistance staff believed that Maria might need additional support. They referred her to Liz, who explains options for care management and arranges a home visit to meet with Maria.



**1:03 P.M.**

**11:20 A.M.**



**9:48 A.M.**

Bob, a longtime Mason, has been overwhelmed by his large house since his wife's death. After discussing different types of housing available to him, Liz researches senior communities in Bob's area. She contacts the management offices to understand their amenities, meal plans, pricing, and availability so that MOS can further help Bob evaluate his options.

Liz visits Nelson and Judy, a couple in their 80s, in Vallejo. They have been struggling to get around, and Liz needs to evaluate whether their home is safe. She brings them coffee and visits with them while she ensures that their house and property are well maintained and free from dangerous clutter. She helps them understand various MOS programs to determine whether any are a good fit.



Liz participates in a conference call with the lodge outreach manager about a Lodge Outreach Program meeting. Volunteer Masons will learn to conduct outreach – like how to check for a widow’s safety while visiting her home. During the call, the lodge outreach manager asks if Liz can speak with a nearby lodge next month. Liz will inform members about MOS and the Masonic Homes during their stated meeting.



**1:30 P.M.**

**2:25 P.M.**

Liz meets with Marlon, an elder Mason in Santa Rosa who is considering applying for the Masonic Homes or MOS. Marlon needs help understanding how the process would work, including how to sell his condo. Liz takes time to carefully explain Marlon's options. "Our role in Masonic Assistance and MOS in these cases is to help make sure clients can make an informed decision," says Liz.

**3:50 P.M.**

Liz receives a call from John, a client in his early 50s with an occupational injury. Liz has been working with John for two years, connecting him with a lawyer to appeal his valid disability claim, helping him reduce expenses, and providing information about discount programs and low-income housing waitlists. Thanks to help from his family, friends, and lodge, he has been able to stay afloat – and he's just received good news: His disability appeal was granted!



Liz contacts the Central California care manager who has been keeping a close eye on a longtime client in his 90s. The care manager has been helping Lou live at home for years with the support of reliable caregivers. In the past month, his health has declined, and he is preparing to move into the Masonic Homes long-term skilled nursing. “Even though Lou is leaving the Central Coast, he is looking forward to coming home to his brothers,” she explains. Liz serves as a liaison between Lou’s care manager and Masonic Homes admissions staff. “There are many steps involved in this process, so the care managers and I try to make it as simple as possible for each client,” she explains. ✧



**5:04 P.M.**

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DONOR PROFILE

# TO SAY THANKS

MEET MARK NIELSEN  
MASON FOR 11 YEARS  
GRAND MASTER CIRCLE DONOR



Mark Nielsen doesn't wait for inspiration to strike; he actively pursues it. Before his career in IT consulting, he inspired his church as a youth and music minister – in fact, he's still a professional guitarist and singer-songwriter. Today, he inspires his brothers at Novus Veteris Lodge No. 864, of which he's a founder, and Oceanside-San Dieguito Lodge No. 381, where he's master.

In late 2017, he and then-master Fred Burkhardt led Oceanside-San Dieguito Lodge to a \$32,000 donation to the California Masonic Foundation – the first gift in a three-year pledge. This was the first Pace Setter lodge gift in the “Let's Write the Future” campaign, and the largest lodge gift in Foundation history. It was also a defining moment for the lodge brothers who made it possible.

“Giving is how I say thank you,” says Nielsen, a Grand Master Circle donor. “When something profound happens – we raise a Master Mason; one of my children reaches a milestone – I celebrate by making a donation.”

“Everyone has some ability to give. I believe it comes down to how you continuously inspire yourself to do so.”

*Read more: [freemason.org/May18Nielsen](https://freemason.org/May18Nielsen)*

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## LET'S WRITE THE FUTURE