

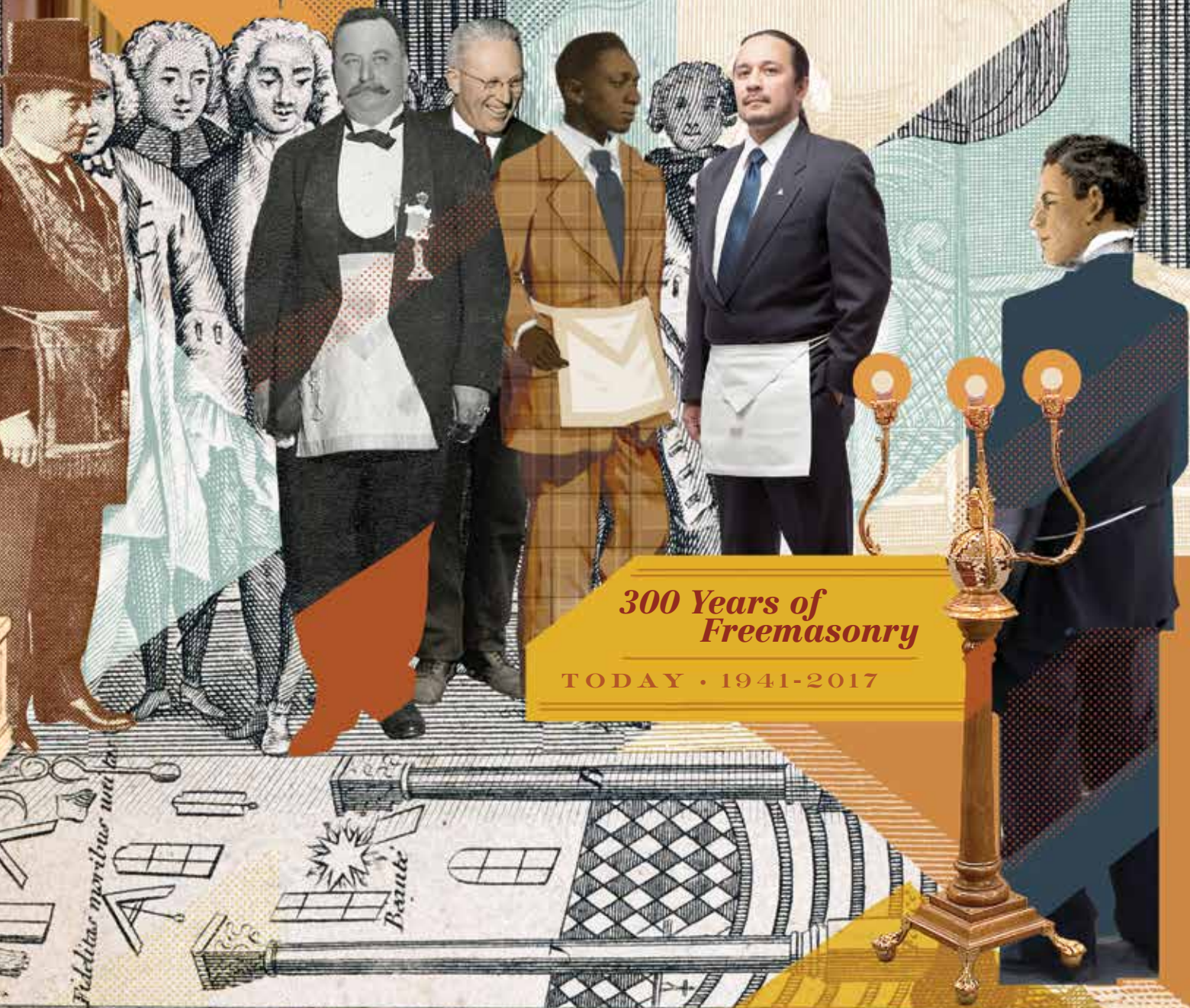
JULY / AUGUST 2017



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**300 Years of
Freemasonry**

TODAY • 1941-2017

JULY
AUGUST
2017 VOL 65 NO 05



THE CALIFORNIA MASONIC MEMORIAL TEMPLE WAS DEDICATED AT THE 109TH ANNUAL COMMUNICATION IN 1958. SHOWN HERE IS ITS CONSTRUCTION ON THE TOP OF NOB HILL IN SAN FRANCISCO.

SEE MORE HISTORIC PHOTOS AT FREEMASON.ORG/JULY17CMMT.

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THE ANCHOR AND THE ARK

Our connections to each other play a crucial role in our communities, and in our own fulfillment and happiness. In modern society, Masonry offers an increasingly rare way to build these connections. Here's a look at the path the fraternity has been on since World War II, and the reasons it endures today.

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

THE FUTURE IS IN OUR FOUNDATION

Riding fertile winds that have blown Masonic seeds from the past, contemporary Masons are witnessing the sprouting of new growth and a promising future. We pass our pride of fraternity to good men in our communities, and to our sons. We stand ready to help the most vulnerable in our society. And, we share our aspirations, both for ourselves and our brotherhood.

Following World War II, Masons were among the stunned citizens who struggled to comprehend the catastrophic repercussions. The horrors of human lives consumed by battles, gas chambers, and the atomic bomb were common knowledge. Man's cruelty seemed impossible to escape – but so, too, was the desire to carry on. Those dark days became a call to action to create a better society; to be better men. In 1948, the United Nations issued a very Masonic message in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognized that “the inherent dignity of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.”

During this time, returning soldiers flocked to Masonic lodges, reassured by Freemasonry's commitment to preserving human freedoms. Within their lodges, they found like-minded men and the sense of peace they were seeking. This “Greatest Generation” continues to impact our fraternity today. The lessons that they brought with them – including deep appreciation for the dignity of mankind – are our privilege to inherit today, and to share with those who follow.


John R. Heisner, Grand Master



GRAND MASTER JOHN R. HEISNER IS CELEBRATING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF FREEMASONRY THIS YEAR WITH FORMAL BANQUETS IN LONDON AND SAN FRANCISCO.

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MASONIC EDUCATION

Freemasonry's Workshops Evolve

IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, LODGES' COLLABORATION YIELDED UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

While the tools and symbols of Freemasonry have remained constant since 1717, Masons' perception of the lodge as a workshop of Freemasonry has evolved. This is the second in a three-part series exploring this progression.

This public 20th century charity showed the world that the principles inculcated inside Masonic lodges could and would result in greater things for all of society.

From 1717 to the mid-1800s, lodges evolved from social and dining organizations with ritual and old traditions into stylized Masonic business organizations that also conferred degrees. Lodges held monthly stated meetings to carry out required business. On separate occasions, they conferred degrees through memorized lectures, along with extemporaneous instruction and discussions about the meaning of the symbols and stories of Freemasonry.

Although this turn towards formality signaled a decline in fellowship and mirth, it was not without its merits. One of the most defining characteristics of this transformation was lodges' increasing partnership with each other

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY, MASONS BEGAN EXTENDING CHARITY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC THROUGH HOSPITALS, COLLEGES, AND OTHER NEEDED SERVICES. SHOWN HERE IS THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN IN SACRAMENTO.

through their respective grand lodges, an alliance that allowed them to accomplish collectively what they could not have achieved individually. Defining a Masonic lodge as a “workshop of Freemasonry” thus continued in a different context: It expanded to become an organization that, in addition to supporting its own members, sought to enact Masonic values at a community and societal level.

FREEMASONRY’S EXPANDING IMPACT

As a product of the Enlightenment, Freemasonry and educated society were inextricably connected. This ideal became even more important after the establishment of the new American Republic in 1776, as the concept of democracy relied upon an enlightened citizenry. As America expanded into the western frontier, several grand lodges created “Masonic colleges,” unique at their time because citizens were welcomed regardless of religious creed. (Most East Coast colleges were established by churches, and only served their members.) These colleges, although short-lived, introduced the idea of providing public college-level education to all. Soon, public, state-sponsored colleges and universities became the American norm in higher education.

Lodges had always cared for their own – a heritage from the operative stonemason days when they provided the only social safety net available. But in the 19th century, grand lodges began to create homes for aged and indigent members, members’ wives and widows, and orphaned Masonic children. Growing out of the success of these

enterprises, one of the greatest Masonic charities of all time was born: In 1922, the first of many Shriners’ hospitals came into existence to provide medical treatment for children at no cost to the patients or their families. As with the founding of colleges in the 19th century, this public 20th century charity showed the world that the principles inculcated inside Masonic lodges could and would result in greater things for all of society. And, this was possible because lodges worked through their grand lodges to accomplish things that no one lodge could have ever done alone.

It is doubtful that a Mason of 1723 would initially have found familiarity within a lodge 200 years later; however, the idea of a lodge as a “workshop” of the ideals of Freemasonry was unchanged. The roots of Masonic practices in the 20th century and beyond rested clearly in the lodges of 1723, and Freemasons’ enduring belief that “by the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one great family.” Freemasonry had changed, and yet it was the same. Its culture and activity were different, but a Mason from any era could be shown how the fraternity’s advancements came about. And so it is today: The more we change, the more we are the same. ♦

Learn about Shriners Hospitals for Children at shrinershospitalsforchildren.org

DONOR PROFILE

SYMBOLS AND ANSWERS

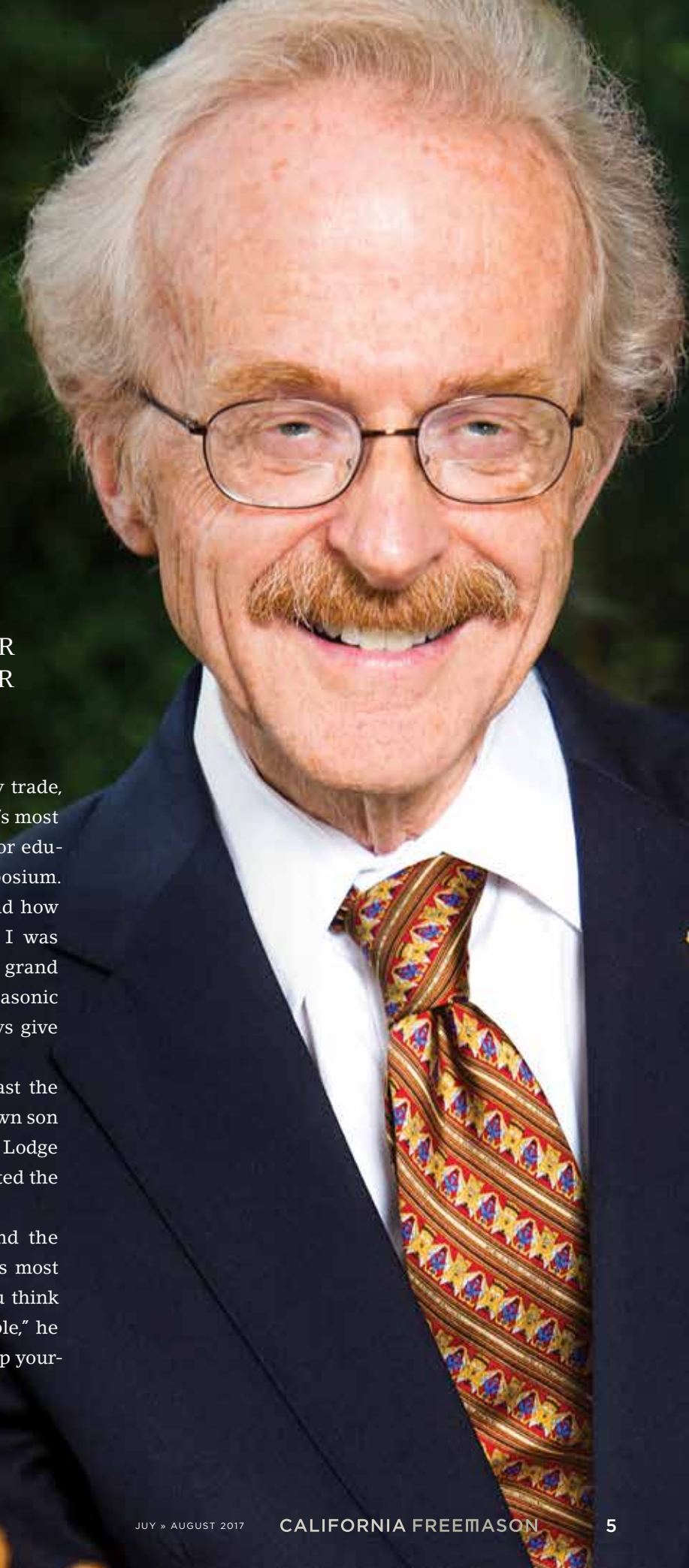
MEET R. STEPHEN DOAN
MASON FOR 46 YEARS
PAST GRAND MASTER
CORNERSTONE SOCIETY MEMBER
& GRAND MASTER CIRCLE DONOR

Past Grand Master R. Stephen Doan is a lawyer by trade, and a teacher by instinct. He is one of the fraternity’s most thought-provoking lecturers, and a key organizer for educational events like the California Masonic Symposium. One of his favorite themes is Masonic symbols, and how their meaning evolves with each brother. “What I was looking for at 21 is different from what I sought as grand master and different from my connection with Masonic symbols today,” Doan says. “But the symbols always give me an answer.”

Doan traces his Masonic heritage back to at least the early 1800s. That legacy sunk in when he made his own son a Mason, at his and his father’s original lodge, Sunset Lodge No. 369 in Santa Monica. His voice caught as he recited the same obligation his fourth great grandfather took.

As a member of the Grand Master’s Circle and the Cornerstone Society, Doan is among the fraternity’s most consistent and generous donors. “Giving makes you think about the wider world. It helps you see other people,” he says. “Go out and help others, and that’s how you help yourself. You’ll get love by helping to extend love.” ♦

Read an extended version of this article at freemason.org/July17Doan



AMERICAN MASONS WHO SHAPED THE WORLD

IN THE MID- TO LATE- 20TH CENTURY,
OUR COUNTRY'S MASONS LED THE
WAY FOR LASTING CHANGE

Following World War II, the final century of the second millennium heralded new technologies, communications platforms, and cross-cultural awareness. It was also a time of landmark political and social events, including rebuilding countries decimated by the war, a national movement for African-American civil rights, and the rise and fall of the Cold War. These are some of the American Masons who made an indelible imprint upon this period of time – and whose influence continues to resonate within our lives today.

DUKE ELLINGTON

1899-1974
Jazz Composer and Band Leader
Prince Hall



NORMAN VINCENT PEAL

1898-1993
Minister, Author of "The Power of Positive Thinking"
Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of New York

CECIL B. DEMILLE

1881-1959
Film Actor, Director,
and Producer
Prince of Orange
Lodge No. 16,
New York



JOHN GLENN

1921-2016
U.S. Senator and the First Man
to Orbit the Earth
Concord Lodge No. 688, Ohio

ALEX HALEY

1921-1992
Journalist,
Author of
"Roots"
Prince Hall



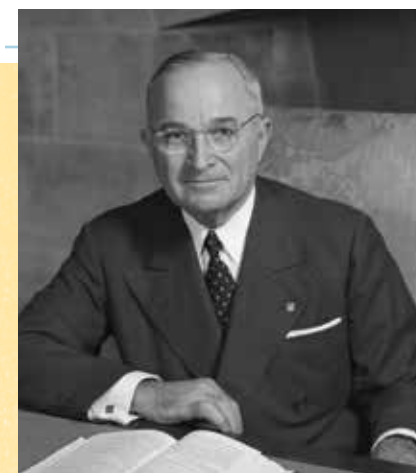
IRVING BERLIN

1888-1989
Composer and Songwriter
Munn Lodge No. 190, New York



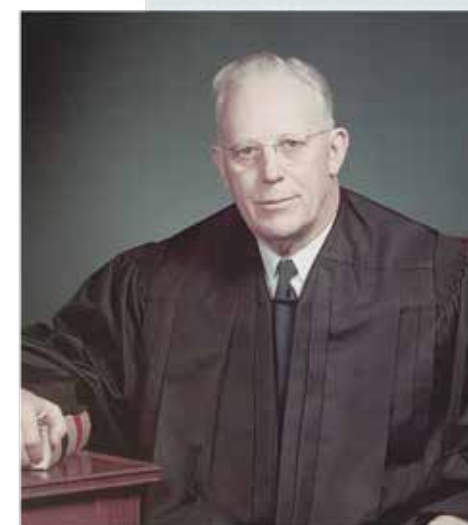
THURGOOD MARSHALL

1908-1993
First African-American U.S. Supreme
Court Justice
Prince Hall



HARRY S. TRUMAN

1884-1972
33rd U.S. President
Past Grand Master of the
Grand Lodge of Missouri



REV. JESSE JACKSON

1941-
U.S. Senator, Civil Rights Leader
Prince Hall



BUZZ ALDRIN

1930 -
Astronaut, Second Man to
Walk on the Moon.
Montclair Lodge No. 144, New Jersey



EARL WARREN

1891-1974
U.S. Supreme Court
Chief Justice,
California Governor
Past Grand Master of the
Grand Lodge of California

Read more about Earl Warren at
freemason.org/July17Warren



DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

1880-1964
Famed U.S. Military General
Manila Lodge No. 1, Philippines

AUDIE MURPHY

1925-1971
Actor, Most
Decorated Soldier
of World War II
Heritage Lodge No. 764,
California



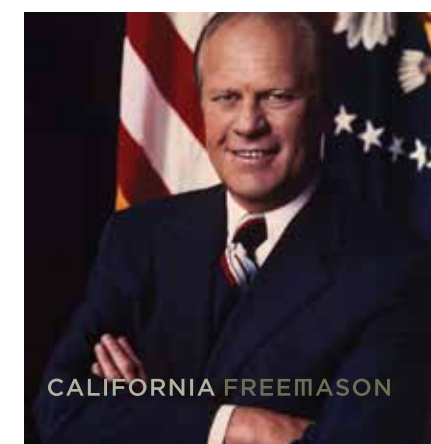
JOHN WAYNE

1907-1979
Actor,
Congressional Gold
Medal Recipient
Marion McDaniel
Lodge No. 56,
Arizona



GERALD FORD

1913-2006
38th U.S. President
Malta Lodge No. 465, Michigan



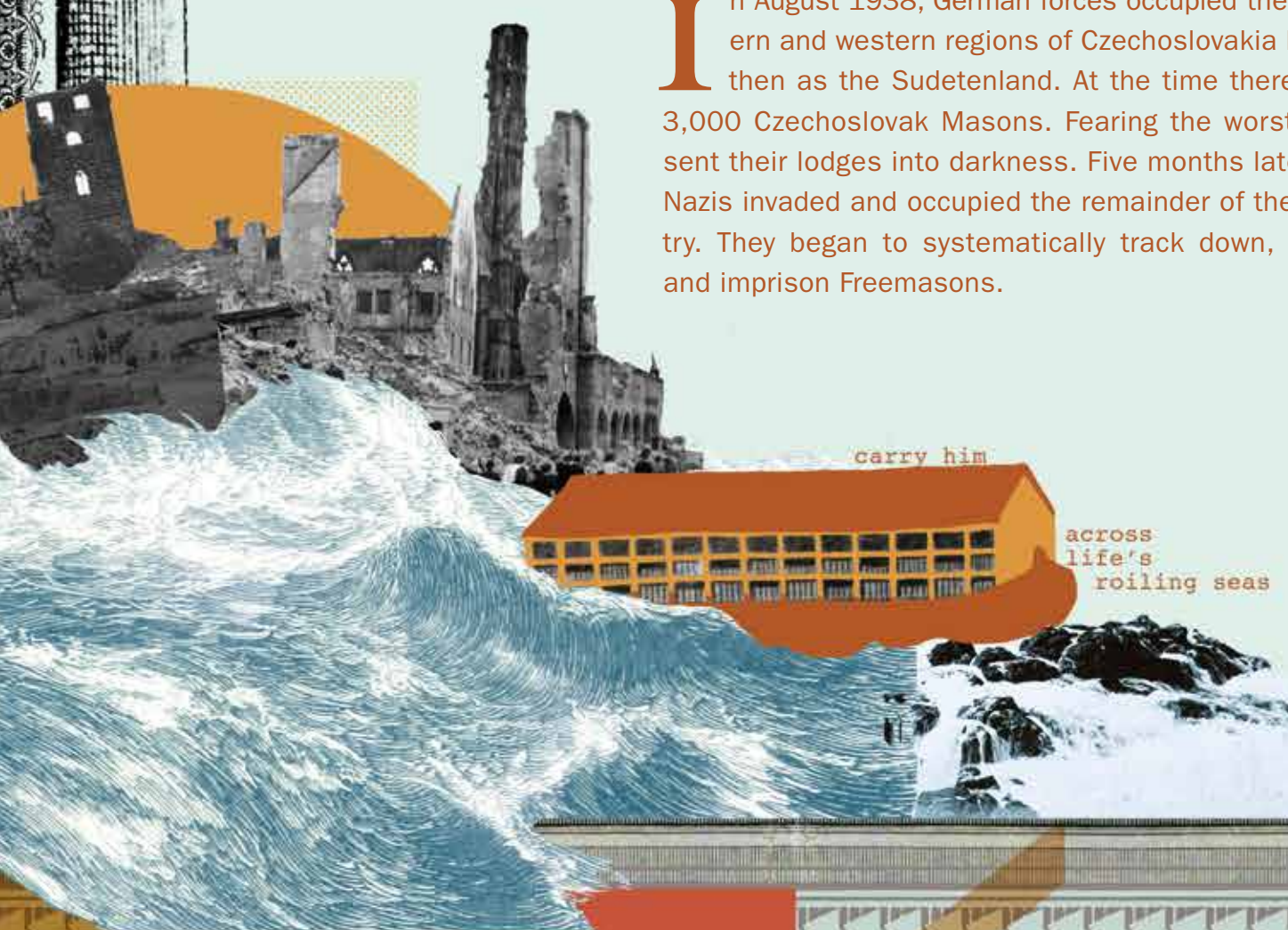


The ANCHOR

— and
the —

by
Laura Benys

..... ARK



In August 1938, German forces occupied the northern and western regions of Czechoslovakia known then as the Sudetenland. At the time there were 3,000 Czechoslovak Masons. Fearing the worst, they sent their lodges into darkness. Five months later, the Nazis invaded and occupied the remainder of the country. They began to systematically track down, arrest, and imprison Freemasons.

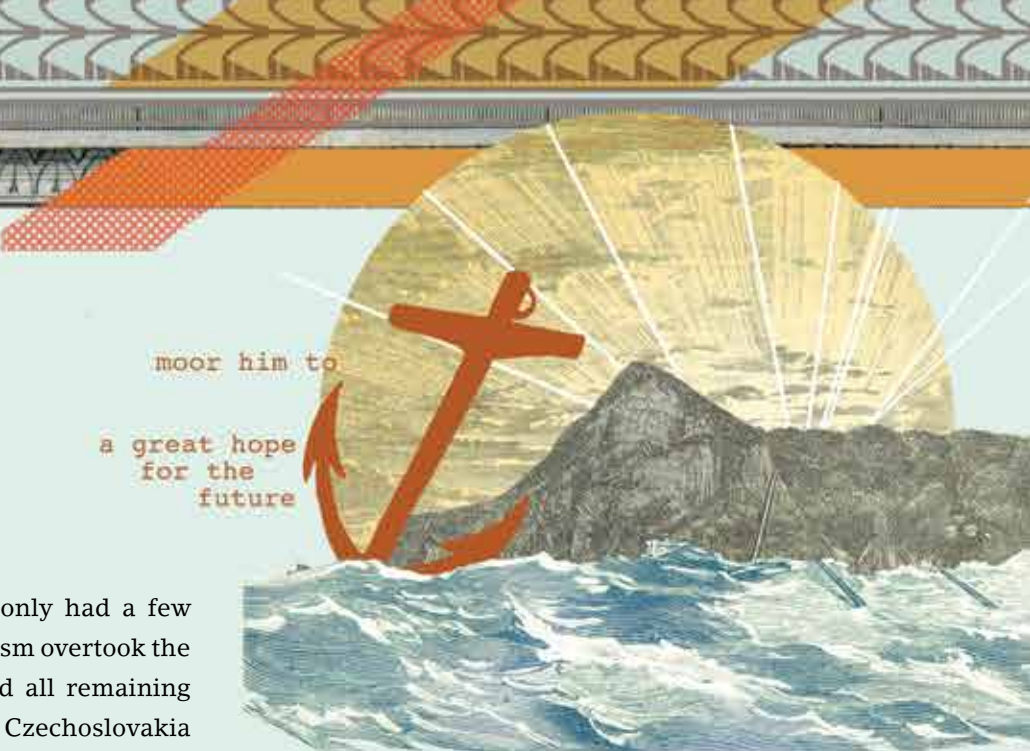
After World War II's end, the fraternity only had a few years to attempt a revival before Communism overtook the country. In 1951, the government ordered all remaining lodges to close, and the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia was declared dormant. By the time the regime collapsed and it was safe for lodges to meet, only 28 Czechoslovak Masons remained in the country. Twenty-eight was enough. They continued onward.

Rip Currents

Every candidate, in the third degree, learns about the ark and the anchor: the ark to carry him across life's roiling seas; the anchor to moor him to a great hope for the future. Freemasonry is on its own journey, navigating an ocean of historical and social forces that are at times favorable and clear, and at times churned by violent gales. How has it come through the past three-quarters of a century, from World War II to the present? In what shape is it heading into the future?

World War II had powerful and immediate effects on the fraternity's membership. In countries like Czechoslovakia, Freemasonry was decimated. The period after the war was spent picking up the pieces.

In the United States, Masonry boomed in the years following the war – growing by more than a million members between 1945 and its all-time peak, in 1959, of 4.1 million members. Almost every other American community organization, from parent-teacher associations to women's



moor him to
a great hope
for the
future

groups, experienced a similar boom. In "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community," political scientist Robert D. Putnam describes the post-war phenomenon: "World War II occasioned a massive outpouring of patriotism and collective solidarity. At war's end those energies were redirected into community life." He describes the two decades following 1945 as "one of the most vital periods of community involvement in American history."

But by the 1960s, this trend abruptly halted, and by the mid-1970s, "silently, without warning – that tide reversed and we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current," Putnam writes. In the mid-1970s, nearly two-thirds of all Americans attended club meetings. By the late 1990s, nearly two-thirds of Americans never did. As Putnam puts it, Americans began "dropping out in droves." They haven't recovered. It's not only the number of card-carrying members that has declined; it's actual hands-on involvement. Over the last 25 years, club meeting attendance has plummeted by 58 percent. "Each generation that has reached adulthood since the 1950s has been less engaged in community affairs than its immediate predecessor," Putnam says.

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In comparison, Masonry seems to be faring remarkably well. In Continental Europe and Latin America, Freemasonry has steadily grown since the end of World War II. In many Eastern European countries, where the fraternity was dark for as long as half a century, it's been regaining stability. The Grand Lodge of Hungary was revived in 1992. The National Grand Lodge of Romania, reactivated in 1993, today has 10,000 Masons in 331 lodges. The Grand Lodge of Serbia was reestablished in June 1990 – and today, the numbers have exceeded their pre-World War II heyday.

In the last third of the 20th century, Masonry also found a new foothold in Africa, forming grand lodges in Cameroon, Togo, the Ivory Coast, and other countries. Mauritius, an island nation about 1,200 miles off Africa's southeast coast, was under British colonial rule from 1810 until 1968, and British Masonic lodges held a monopoly. After independence, Mauritian Masons decided to explore new systems of Freemasonry, and with the support of the Grande Loge Nationale Française, instituted their

own Grand Lodge of Mauritius in 2005. "Masonic independence... was a means to turn a new leaf over the history of 'colonial' Freemasonry," writes Past Grand Master Lindsay Descombes. "The Grand Lodge of Mauritius ... has forged an identity which reflects the Mauritian society: multicultural and multilingual."

It's important to return to the U.S. and note the cyclical nature of Masonry's numbers here. The post-World War II membership boom has been followed by a tapering off as that generation passes away. While this group's sheer size has etched a dramatic path in U.S. membership charts, the usual cycle of rising, falling, and rising again continues. In California and many other jurisdictions, true membership

growth is projected to be just a few years away.

This isn't just good news for Masonry; according to Putnam's research, it's good news for society. "Bowling Alone" draws a cause-and-effect relationship between the health of social institutions and such factors as educational performance (decades of research show that community involvement is crucial to schools' success), safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, and democratic responsiveness. There is also compelling research into individual fulfillment: "Happiness is best predicted by the breadth and depth of one's social connections," Putnam writes.

Although strong social ties play a crucial role in our communities, and in our own fulfillment and happiness, modern society offers few ways to make them. In Putnam's feared future – a society where community organizations do not recover, and people are increasingly disconnected – Masonry's resilience seems more important than ever.

Widening Horizons

Masonry will always be affected by the society it exists in; this is the sea through which its great ark sails. Over the past half century, it's even stayed upright when other organizations have not. What is it that still draws men to Masonry?

Past Grand Master Jacques Huyghebaert of the Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic offers an explanation. "Trends, environment, and conditions change – but the deep mental and emotional nature of the human being does not," he says. Masonry, in other words, is timeless. Its lessons, rites, and rituals transcend ages and cultures. It taps into the part of man that is timeless too. In subtle and sometimes inexplicable channels, it helps each man make sense of the world, and his place in it.

"Many people these days are dissatisfied with the routine and shallowness of modern life and are looking to connect with deeper, more fundamental truths," Huyghebaert says. Masonry widens horizons and broadens perspectives. It feeds mankind's innate thirst for knowledge and exploration. It creates friendships. It instills values. It "offers a unique chance to reflect on our life, to analyze where we stand, and to decide where we want to go in the future."

In Southern California, Mark Nielsen, founder and current master of Novus Veteris Lodge, U.D., puts it another way: "Men want to give back but they don't know how. They're looking for something bigger than themselves, something to inspire them."

As a new and remarkably active lodge, Novus Veteris is a case study of why men are still drawn to Masonry. Inspiration is a common theme. When Nielsen got the idea for a new lodge, he mapped it out with the help of Fred Burkhardt, now fellowship officer at Novus Veteris Lodge and master of Oceanside-San Dieguito Lodge No. 381. With every decision they asked: Does this inspire us? "That's what it means to be a Freemason," Nielsen says, "to be

inspired to go out and affect change in society by affecting change in ourselves."

Using the inspiration test, they put a spotlight on education, self-improvement, and fellowship. They focused on how Masonry imparts its teachings, from formal education to the applied lessons of Masonic leadership. They established white-tie events and set high dues. They intend to keep their lodge small. Currently, they have 23 members; at 30 or 40, they expect to split or more actively assist other local brothers in creating new impactful lodges.

To sharpen their focus, they steered away from practices that felt cumbersome or distracting. Rather than managing the logistics of building ownership, they rent private rooms in restaurants and hotels for events. (The institution took place at the Green Dragon Tavern & Museum in Carlsbad, an enhanced replica of the original tavern by the same name in Boston, which was owned in the 18th century by John Hancock's Masonic lodge and served as a meeting place for the Sons of Liberty.) Although any brother is welcome

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to attend stated meetings, only the Executive Committee is required to meet monthly for lodge business. Quarterly “reunions” are festive events that members make a priority to attend. The first reunion incorporated three hours of Masonic education, including study of the trivium and quadrivium of the seven liberal arts and sciences. Afterward, brothers told Nielsen that the night underscored why they had become Masons. This was what Nielsen wanted to hear: “If brothers are not inspired by doing what we’re doing, then we’re doing it wrong.”

In many ways, Novus Veteris Lodge doesn’t look like most California lodges – from its size (the state average is 170 members), to its lack of a generally attended stated meeting and lodge building. Nor does it follow the parameters of Traditional Observance or European Concept lodges, models that are gaining in popularity throughout the world. It is its own model, customized to its members.

As Nielsen was creating the lodge, 19 men wanted officer roles. He had to research ancient officer positions to create positions for everyone. He remembers one brother saying, “I don’t want to show up to lodge and sit in a seat. I want to do work.” It is Nielsen’s goal to accommodate and encourage this desire.

There is a growing trend in California toward smaller lodges, which supports this desire for a highly engaged Masonic experience. It reflects a standard that has long existed elsewhere in the world: In Europe, there are on average 34 Masons per lodge, and officer positions are coveted. There’s good reason for it.

“Just by going up the officer line, another whole door of Masonry opens up to you,” says Burkhardt. “When I tell guys, ‘Get into the line, get active in your lodge,’ it’s not just because we need them. It’s because there are lessons there that they can apply to their lives.”

“There was a mentality in Masonry for a little while, that we should make it easier for guys,” Burkhardt adds. “But

then what are brothers getting out of it? If it’s hard, that means they’re learning, they’re growing.”

“If you’re not allowing your members to get the experience they need, then what’s the point?” says Nielsen. “Make your own checklist. Create experiences that are relevant to your members. I want to be a ‘member experience lodge.’ That’s what I aim for.”

In “Bowling Alone,” as Putnam maps out a way to renew America’s social engagement, he writes about the need for this approach. “Leaders and activists in every sphere of American life must seek innovative ways to respond to the eroding effectiveness of the civic institutions and practices that we inherited.”

“You have to continuously reinvent yourself, while still maintaining your core values,” Nielsen says. “That’s what’s going to keep this fraternity going.”



Moving Forward

A few years ago, in the publication of international research lodge Quatuor Coronati No. 2076, the grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Ireland asks if Masonry is headed for another period of success. “Will our time come again?” he writes. “I think it will – not perhaps an exact replica of the past, for we cannot turn back the clock, but a slimmer, trimmer version with new vigour and enthusiasm.”

By the time the Communist regime collapsed in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and it was again safe for lodges to meet, there were only 28 surviving Masons in the country. But they persevered. After more than 40 years of oppression and being brought, twice, to the brink of extinction, those 28 members continued forward. With the support of grand lodges around the world, the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia was officially revived in November 1990. Jiří Syllaba, a Mason who spent the duration of World War II in Nazi camps, was elected grand master. Today, the Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic has 571 members. In the words of Past Grand Master Jacques Huyghebaert: “There is still a long way to go, and hard work to be done.”

Here in California, for the inaugural year of Novus Veteris Lodge, this sentiment holds true. Mark Nielsen’s theme as master is the anchor – the great hope to which we each hold fast. He gets emotional when he talks about why. “Masonry is consistency in an inconsistent world,” Nielsen says. “In this fast-paced, ever-changing world, Masonry keeps me grounded.”

There will always be a long way to go, and hard work to be done. The strength of Masonry is that it is not positioned at the mercy of this reality, but rather, as a set of tools for embracing it – an ark for sailing through it. As life moves forward, Masonry will continue to be the ark, and it will also be the anchor. ♦

California Freemasonry’s Growth

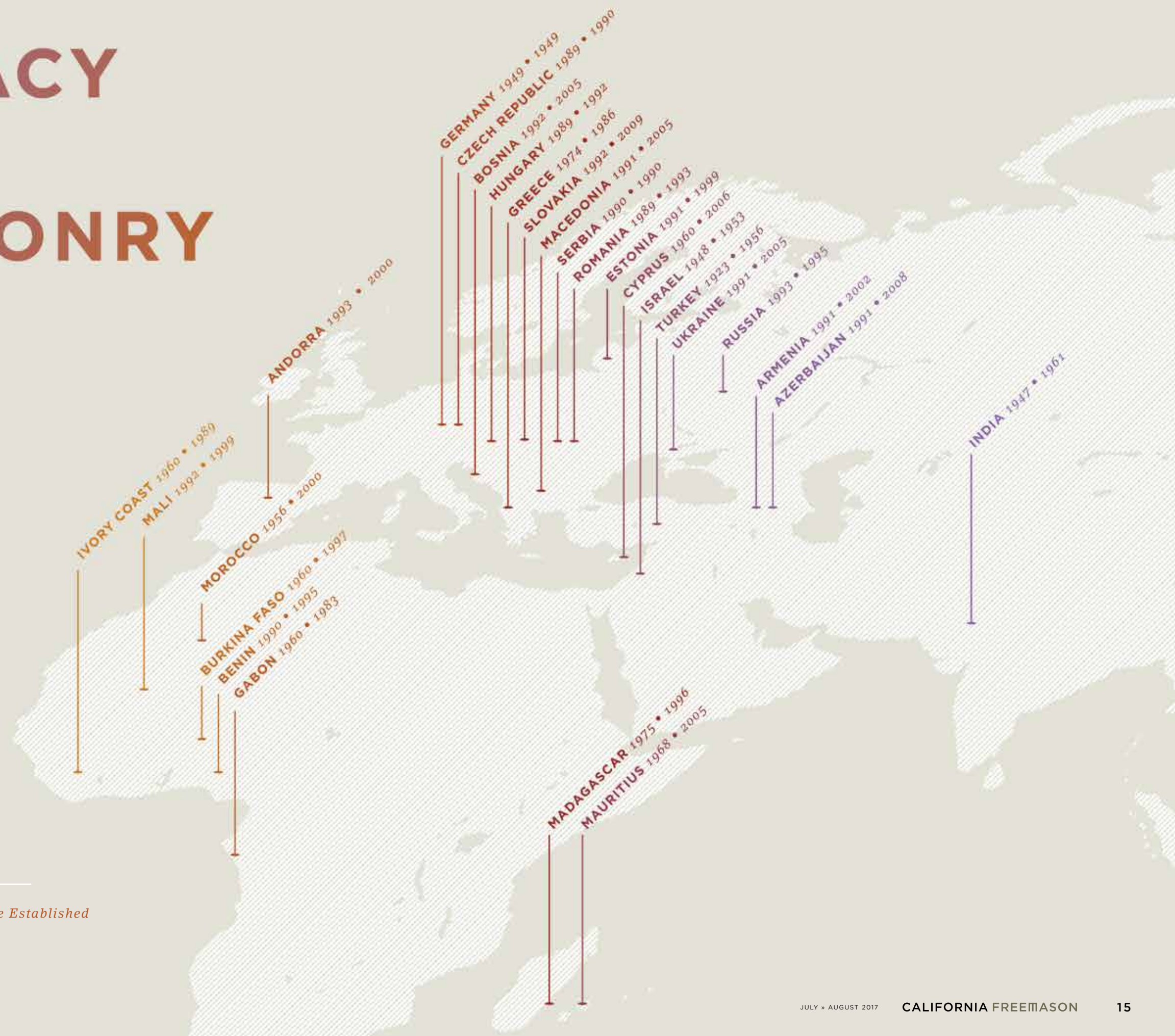
**SINCE 2015, THE FRATERNITY HAS
FOUNDED 13 NEW LODGES!**

- Aquila, U.D.
- Benicia, U.D.
- Carquinez, U.D.
- Clarence F. Smith Daylight, U.D.
- Fraternidad de las Americas, U.D.
- Green Dragon Masonic Fellowship No. 857
- Logos, U.D.
- Novus Veteris, U.D.
- Pythagoras, U.D.
- Raven’s Rock, U.D.
- Regius University, U.D.
- Sempervirens, U.D.
- Templum Rosae, U.D.
- The Downtown Masonic, U.D.

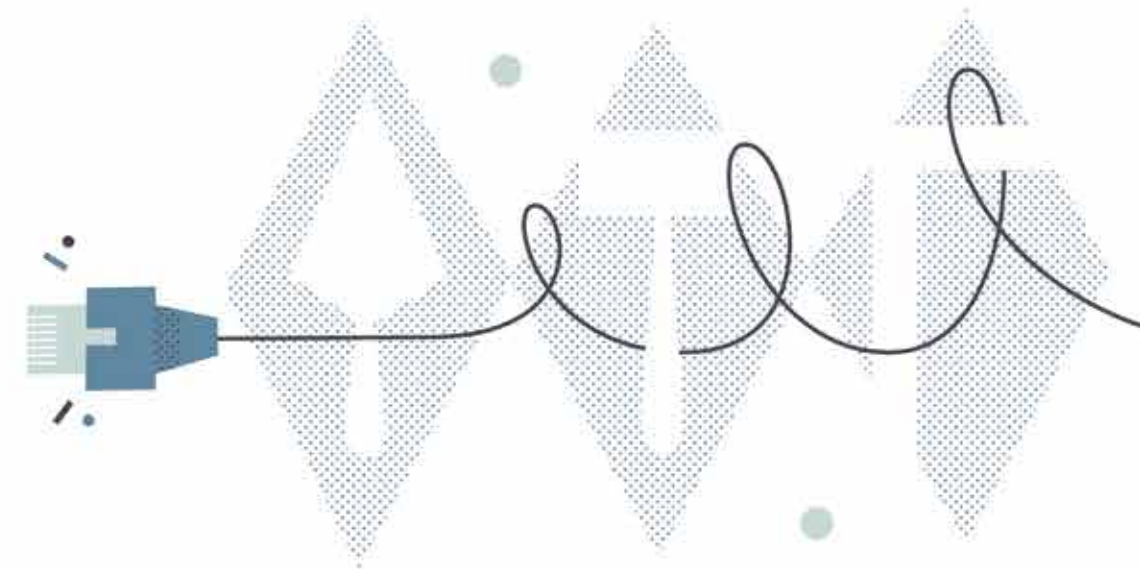
DEMOCRACY BRINGS FREEMASONRY TO LIGHT

Throughout the mid-late 20th century, countries throughout the world regained democracy – or experienced it for the first time. At the same time, Freemasonry, which was often banned by regimes and totalitarian governments, rose anew or was revived. This map shows countries that fairly recently gained (or regained) independence. The first date is the date that democracy was established or regained; the second is when a grand lodge was established (or reestablished).

COUNTRY Year Democracy Established • Year Grand Lodge Established



A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE



from ANCIENT ENGLAND *to* MODERN CUBA, California Freemasons GO GLOBAL

By Mark Frauenfelder

There's a whole wide world of Masonry out there, and California Masons are embracing it with gusto. In some cases, they're using the vast historical treasure troves available through the Internet to explore the ancient roots of Freemasonry and incorporate them into the customs of their home lodges. In others, they're hopping on planes to meet fellow Freemasons in foreign countries, sharing ideas, gaining inspiration, and building friendships. By expanding their horizons, California Masons are experiencing first-hand the joy of an international brotherhood.

THE BEAUTIFUL RITUALS OF THE ANTIENTS

The world's first Masonic grand lodge was founded 300 years ago in England. It came to be known as the Premier Grand Lodge of England, and remained the sole grand lodge until 1851, when a rival organization named the Antient (pronounced "ancient") Grand Lodge arose. The founding Antients were Freemasons who "accused the Premier Lodge of altering the ritual, removing forms of instruction, removing symbolism, and turning it more into a glorified dining club," explains Mike Ramos, lodge master of

Templum Rosae Lodge, U.D. in Oakland. That isn't to say that the social aspects of the fraternity aren't important. "A lot of lodges want to be social, family-oriented institutions," says Ramos, "and that's excellent when it works perfectly for the lodge."

But for Ramos and his Templum Rosae Lodge brethren, the "instruction and the solemnity and the seriousness" that the Antients applied to the craft inspired them to form

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a new lodge. They view Freemasonry “very much in the same vein as the Antients viewed Masonry, in that it is an institution of men who come together with a beautiful ritual and beautiful teachings that convey moral, spiritual, and philosophical lessons, which are to be treated with seriousness.”

The seed for Templum Rosae Lodge was germinated at Crow Canyon Lodge No. 551 in Castro Valley. This is where Ramos and likeminded brothers began “talking about books we had been reading, our shared passion for Masonic history and symbolism, and what we really believed the craft to be.” Ramos began holding educational nights at Crow Canyon Lodge, and it attracted others who shared the same interest. “We started talking seriously about creating the lodge in late 2015. The plans truly came together during 2016 and we had our ceremony of institution on December 8, 2016.”

Ramos has advice for other Masons interested in learning about historic traditions and integrating them into their lodge’s customs: Go online. “Read old English lodge minute books. You can acquire old histories, like specific lodge histories, on eBay, Amazon, almost anywhere.” The key, he says, is in finding “reputable sources of information of craft lodge customs that are congruent with the Preston-Webb ritual” (the basis of California ritual that is used by most American grand lodges). Don’t simply adopt customs because they have a history, he cautions. “Make sure that they’re resonating with your members. Every lodge needs to function within its own culture – and that’s based on its membership.”

THE CUBA CONNECTION

While Templum Rosae Lodge is inspired by the experiences of international brothers in the past, members of Downey United Lodge No. 220 are forging contemporary connections. They have been to Mexico several times, and most recently became the first blue lodge in California to visit the Grand Lodge of Cuba.

“We met the grand master of Cuba in 2015 at the XIV World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges in San Francisco,” says Aleksey Duplinsky, master of Downey United Lodge, located in a southeast Los Angeles suburb. At the conference, the Angelenos and the Habaneros hit it off, and the Cuban grand master invited Duplinsky and his brothers to pay a visit to his country sometime.

“You can go to China, to Egypt, to any country and knock on the lodge door and you’ll be received like an equal, like a brother.”

ALEKSEY DUPLINSKY

“That December, we were flying to Florida to visit another Mason’s family whose daughter was getting married,” says Duplinsky. “We heard on TV that an airline was starting to fly to Cuba, and that it was only a 45-minute flight from Florida.”

Fifteen members boarded a plane for the short hop, and stepped off into another world. When they landed, a contingent of Cuban Freemasons were there to greet them. “They gave us a great reception and a private tour of the grand lodge building,” says Duplinsky. “They have a beautiful museum. There’s quite a bit of American Masonic regalia there. There’s a statue of FDR. It was amazing. Apparently, Masons from the United States had a great influence on Cuban Masonry.”

Duplinsky and his brothers also saw a great deal of historical records, dating back to the early 1800s. Downey United Lodge brothers were in the process of scanning and digitizing their own paper records, and it got them thinking: Could they help the Cuban brothers do the same? In March, Duplinsky and a few of his brothers returned with a computer and scanner and showed the Cuban Masons how to scan and archive the documents. “They sent us a letter showing their appreciation,” he says, “and how much it meant to them that we were participating in their well-being.”

The fellowship Duplinsky and his lodge brothers have gained from their international visits has been immensely rewarding, and he highly recommends it to other Masons. “You can go to China, to Egypt, to any country and knock on the lodge door and you’ll be received like an equal, like a brother. I think it’s the greatest thing, the greatest feeling, having a home in any country that you may go to. It’s up to us to travel and erase these geographic borders and political borders. Everything’s up to us.” ♦

DONOR PROFILE

BLAZING NEW PATHWAYS

MEET DAVID OKAMOTO
MASON FOR SIX YEARS
MASTER OF MOUNT OSO LODGE NO. 460
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“Stupendous.” Ask David Okamoto how he’s doing, and this is his answer more often than not. You can verify with the team he leads as director of information technology for a direct-to-consumer wine fulfillment company in Napa, or the brothers he inspires as master of Mount Oso Lodge No. 460 in Tracy: He is a force of positive energy.

The son of Japanese immigrants, Okamoto grew up in Eagle Rock, Alaska, where he was introduced to Masonry by a childhood friend’s family. “They were more of a unit than other families,” he says. He learned that the difference was involvement in Masonry, and he soon joined DeMolay.

Okamoto is driven by innovation and connection, but he equally embraces introspection and reflection. He’s most at peace in the respite of his garden. His perspective on technology and Masonry is also about balance. “Our traditions give us focus, and make us disciplined and strong. But we need to share knowledge and experiences. Technology can be a bridge, clearing new pathways for that sharing.”

Okamoto is a donor to the Annual Fund, motivated by the fraternity’s impact on individuals, families, and the world. He believes that every brother must continue it. “I am surrounded by Masons who give of themselves in every way they can,” he says. “I see that, and give back by supporting the bigger picture through Grand Lodge.” ♦

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

TURNING A LODGE'S SENTIMENTAL VALUE INTO REAL ESTATE VALUE

By Antone R.E. Pierucci

“A lodge has a Masonic meaning,” says Shay Maghame. “It is a place where Masons come together to perform their rituals and share in brotherly love. But,” he adds wryly, “it also has a real estate meaning.” Over the last 160+ years, with lodges in California accumulating a remarkable amount of property, the implications of a Masonic hall’s value and its upkeep responsibilities can sometimes take on a life of their own.

EXPERT ADVICE

As chairman of the Masonic Properties Committee, Maghame – a past master of Sunset Lodge No. 369 as well as a licensed engineer, real estate broker, contractor, and attorney – helps hall associations navigate the complexities of property ownership and maintenance. All property improvements of \$25,000 or more must be pre-approved by the committee, whose members help hall association managers make well-informed decisions. Committee members offer a wealth of professional experience in real estate-related fields, and unlike private-sector advisors, their professional advice comes at no cost.

The Masonic Properties Committee helps mitigate one of the most common challenges of hall improvements: More often than not, the brothers who serve their hall association don’t have formal property management experience. The committee is a resource to help well-intentioned lodges meet their goals.

“The committee is a source of knowledge for lodges to dig into,” says Maghame. “Last year we dealt with over 40 cases – from selling property, rentals, dealing with repair ordinances, and everything in between.”

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Last year, Grand Lodge extended the Masonic Properties Committee by introducing new real estate services to help lodges better prepare their property improvement proposals before submitting them to the committee for approval. Lodges can leverage the expertise of Director of Real Estate Services Burt Hirschfeld, who has more than 25 years of experience in real estate services such as these. Peter Cloven, a member of Live Oak Lodge No. 61 and president of the Oakland Masonic Center recently worked with Hirschfeld regarding a complicated lease negotiation. “Burt knew the process,” he says. “He came in with open eyes, a clear heart, and no bias. It was really helpful to have a third party come in and give us input. His real estate background was extremely beneficial.”

“My value comes from serving as a resource for a hall association to utilize as it sees fit,” Hirschfeld says. “In some cases, my involvement starts before a plan is developed; in others, I help facilitate applications to the Masonic Properties Committee.” Now a year into his role, Hirschfeld has helped many lodges maximize their building’s potential while minimizing risk – acting as a source of guidance and wisdom.

ASSETS OR BURDENS

Masonic halls have become lodges’ most financially important asset and the future of real estate in California looks bright. In Sacramento and Pasadena alone, today’s Masonic halls have an estimated value well into the millions. Even in rural California, the appreciation is notable. Hartley Lodge No. 199 in Lakeport, for

instance, built their modest two-story hall in 1907 for less than \$20,000 (a price that would have been significantly less, had the 1906 earthquake not destroyed the half-built structure). In the 1980s, the building was estimated to be worth over \$125,000, and today, if the local commercial real estate market is any indication, it is worth closer to \$500,000.

Despite the long-term value offered by property appreciation, the cost of maintaining a hall has led some lodges to question the need for owning an actual building. When The Downtown Masonic, U.D. opened in Los Angeles, members chose to meet at the L.A. Athletic Club, rather than purchasing a building. Master Chris Holme explains that the fledgling lodge sought “a less burdened approach” to Freemasonry, one in which brothers could focus on the more meaningful aspects of their membership.

Holme is not alone. In 2016, Grand Lodge issued dispensations for eight new lodges – the most created in a single year since 1958. Not one of those lodges purchased a building in which to meet. “They are all renters, either from existing Masonic halls or other venues,” says Jordan Yelinek, director of member services and lodge development.

Still, not many lodges that currently own a hall plan to part with it; the hall experience still looms large in our idea of Freemasonry. “A lodge is not just a building, but the building can be an integral part of a lodge. Sales typically only happen when two lodges merge and sell off the extra building,” says Maghame. He and the Masonic Properties Committee are helping lodges that struggle with

their hall’s expenses to come up with creative solutions to reduce costs. One is collaborating with another lodge to share the responsibility of owning a building. For lodges with buildings that have been standing for a century or more, it can be very difficult to give up a landmark structure that has long been an integral thread in the fabric of their neighborhood. Registering these halls as historic landmarks is a solution that can yield tax benefits and a sense of security for the building’s future.

Ultimately, there is not a “one-size fits all” solution for lodges to determine whether to rent or own the building in which they meet. But, through it all, the Masonic Properties Committee and Grand Lodge real estate services will remain valuable tools for lodges as they navigate the road ahead. What is certain is that wherever good men continue to meet – in familiar circumstances or new ones – the vitality of the Masonic fraternity will endure. ♦

WEB EXTRA



BEST PRACTICE

Learn more about how the Oakland Masonic Center worked with Grand Lodge real estate services to finalize their strategic real estate plan at freemason.org/July17RealEstate.



NADINE YOTHER FINDS FULFILLMENT IN CREATING BEAUTIFUL HANDCRAFTS, MANY OF WHICH SUPPORT LOCAL CHARITABLE CAUSES.

“Fairytale can come true, it can happen to you, if you’re young at heart,” Frank Sinatra crooned in his 1953 best-selling single, “Young at Heart.” These lyrics seem to ring especially true at Acacia Creek, a bustling community of older adults living life to the fullest. The vitality of residents here is inspiring: No matter what one’s age in number, life can be filled with possibility and meaning.

OF BODY AND MIND

Nadine Yother found her niche at Acacia Creek by sharing her passion for handcrafts. She leads The Studio, where three mornings a week ladies work on current projects, from needle arts to beading. Many of the crafts created at The Studio are donated or sold to benefit charitable causes. This meaningful work has brought Yother great joy and strong friendships. “Most people are involved on campus. We enjoy keeping our bodies and minds active,” she says. “We embrace the community of Acacia Creek like a family.”

One place the Acacia Creek family loves to gather is the Turkey Roost Bar, where Roger Baird, a member of Siminoff Daylight Lodge No. 850, is known as the “bar czar.” “Our Masonic connection is a big factor in fellowship and camaraderie,” Baird says. “Everybody here is our friend and everyone has a story to tell.” This sense of fellowship extends to Acacia Creek’s team and community. In lieu of tips, Turkey Roost patrons keep a staff appreciation fund.

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YOUNG AT HEART

ACACIA CREEK RESIDENTS REDEFINE RETIREMENT

By Julie Bifano Boe



“BAR CZAR” ROGER BAIRD BELIEVES MASONIC VALUES ARE AT THE HEART OF ACACIA CREEK’S VIBRANT COMMUNITY CULTURE.



DORIS CHOW BUILDS FRIENDSHIPS AND STAYS ACTIVE BY TEACHING QIGONG AND TAI CHI CLASSES, AS WELL AS OTHER MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES.

They regularly organize philanthropic events, such as “Tasting for Charity,” which benefits favorite charitable causes. Residents unite through this culture of giving.

A LOVE FOR ADVENTURE

Proximity to transportation was a key reason that Baird and his wife, Donna, chose to live at Acacia Creek. So it is no surprise that in addition to on-campus activities – including lively games of pickleball and daily swims – the Bairs enjoy sharing their love of travel. Recently, they organized a trip to Reno on a Zephyr train, with more than 30 residents adventuring through picturesque snow-covered mountains. A highlight of the trip was a lecture on the design and operation of slot machines, given by the Bairs’ daughter, who lives in Reno.

Residents hoping to experience new perspectives without leaving home turn to 90-year-old Doris Chow, head of Acacia Creek’s movie program. “I wondered how often we could watch

‘Cocoon,’ so I opened my big mouth and asked for more current movies,” Chow jokes. Soon, she was in charge. She selects films based on reviews in the San Francisco Chronicle, The New Yorker, People Magazine, and other publications, seeking something for everyone.

Chow is far from a couch potato, however. She enjoys off-campus excursions, including theater outings, shopping, and exploring gardens and museums. She is also a fitness enthusiast who exercises while connecting with friends. Each morning, she and her friends – nearly all in their 90s – walk about 45 minutes,



Watch Nadine, Roger, and Doris tell their successful aging stories at freemason.org/July17AC.

from the lobby down to the entrance gate and back up a staircase of 236 steps. Once a week, she co-teaches a Qigong and Tai Chi class with a good friend, and on the weekends she takes water aerobics. “When I came here, I wanted to maintain the lifestyle I came in with, and I have been able to meet my goal,” Chow says. “There aren’t enough hours in the day to do everything I want to do!”

Each one of these Acacia Creek residents lives an active life with a positive, cup-half-full attitude. Their optimism is contagious and benefits everyone who meets them. The lyrics to “Young at Heart,” conclude: “Look at all you’ll derive out of bein’ alive/ And here is the best part, you have a head start/If you are among the very young at heart.” Perhaps Sinatra envisioned a retirement like that of Acacia Creek residents’ – filled with close friendships, meaningful activities, and continued growth. ✦



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Home Where My Brothers Are

THE MASONIC HOME AT COVINA LAUNCHES NEW SHARED HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

By Michelle Simone

At the Masonic Home at Covina in sunny Southern California, lush green grass covers wide expanses of lawn, dotted with mid-century buildings and bejeweled with a sparkling turquoise swimming pool. Residents gather in common spaces and in the shade of centuries-old trees, catching up with neighbors on the news of the day. Life at the Masonic Home at Covina is truly beautiful. And, it will soon be accessible to even more Masonic family members, thanks to a new shared housing program through Masonic Outreach Services (MOS).

A NEW DIRECTION

Sabrina Montes, executive director of Masonic Outreach, loves her office. MOS staff is headquartered in a comfortable house on the Covina campus, with wide windows that let in sunlight and fresh air. Back when Covina included a

residential children’s program, this house and others like it allowed children to live as they may have before their time at the Home, surrounded by fellow children and house

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parents, with a living room and kitchen to gather in each evening after school and activities.

When the children's program concluded, the Masonic Homes Board of Directors and staff worked to find new ways to repurpose these houses. MOS moved into one; last year, one was rented to the Child Advocacy Center and another became the Masonic Center for Youth and Families' Southern California home. These few handpicked tenants advance the values of the Masonic Homes, while preserving Covina's intimate, homelike atmosphere.

Since then, Montes, Masonic Homes President and Chief Executive Officer Gary Charland, and the Masonic Homes Board of Directors have been imagining other creative ways to utilize the former children's homes – including new shared housing, which will welcome its first Masonic Senior Outreach clients later this year. The houses will be remodeled into group living situations where qualifying Masons and their wives or widows will settle into private bedrooms within a shared house, with communal living spaces. It is, as Montes describes it, "an out-of-the-box solution to communal aging."

BRINGING BROTHERS TOGETHER

According to the National Institute on Aging, as of 2010, 11.3 million older adults outside nursing homes or hospitals live alone. Demographic trends indicate that this

number is likely to grow. For seniors with strong ties to their community, independence is often important. But those who do not have a support network may experience loneliness and depression, which can impact mental and physical health.

From her viewpoint at the helm of Masonic Outreach, Montes has seen an increase in seniors who are physically able to live independently (with financial assistance from MOS), but who would rather not age alone. For these Masonic family members, the newly renovated houses may be a perfect fit. "Shared housing will decrease the social isolation that many people face as they age," Montes says. "Clients will be able to live with their peers, cook together, watch television together, play cards, or be active on campus. They will have an opportunity to be engaged in each other's lives."

ENVISIONING A SHARED LIFE

As is common amongst many Masonic Senior Outreach Services clients, Antoun "Tony" Khalil continues to work in his senior years. Khalil, junior deacon of Glendora Lodge No. 404,

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is a jeweler by trade, specializing in fine jewelry. "I'm slower than I used to be, but I do clean, neat work," he says with pride.

Khalil enjoys assisting three local jewelers. His friendships and interactions with clients and customers bring him happiness and a sense of well-being. A few years ago, he got sick and spent six months at home alone. It was an experience he doesn't intend to have again. "I can't just sit around, eat, and watch TV all day. I need to be out in the world, seeing people and working," he says. "It's who I am."

Khalil's social nature has piqued his interest in shared housing. In addition to maintaining his business, he looks forward to sharing a campus with Masonic Homes residents. "I've been a longtime Mason and officer, and the fraternity is a big part of my family. My dad and brother were Masons, too," he says. "It would be wonderful to spend more time with my brothers, both in shared housing and at the Masonic Home."

ACROSS THE LAWN

Though shared housing will be located on the Masonic Homes campus, the program falls under the purview of MOS. Clients, all over age 62, must demonstrate financial need and be capable of living independently, without the help of therapeutic staff or meal service. Ongoing MOS case management will ensure that the shared housing lifestyle continues to be a good fit for each client.

Montes imagines that the first shared housing clients will work closely with MOS staff to ensure each house's success. "A care manager for each client will have a vital role in developing a culture of support," she says. "Together, MOS and the clients will shape the culture of each home, allowing members with similar interests to reside together and develop camaraderie in a communal setting."

Co-housing has long been favored in university settings, giving young adults an opportunity to spend a new phase of their life with like-minded peers who are eager to learn more about the world by sharing experiences and building lasting friendships. It is this vision of coming together and growth that Montes hopes will give Masonic seniors a supportive beginning to the next phase of their lives. ✦

Read about the new Masonic Center for Youth and Families location on the Covina campus in the January/February issue of California Freemason, online at freemason.org/Jan17Covina.

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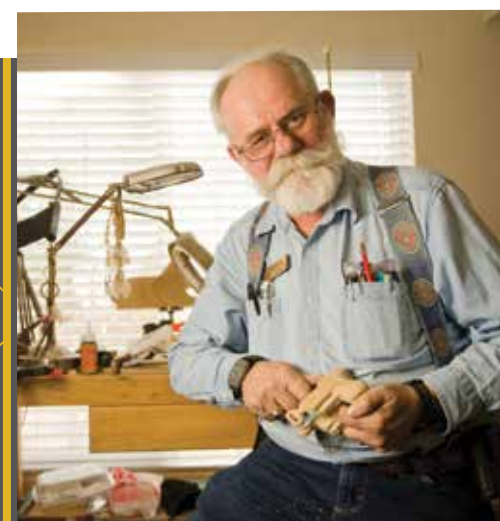


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