

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2016



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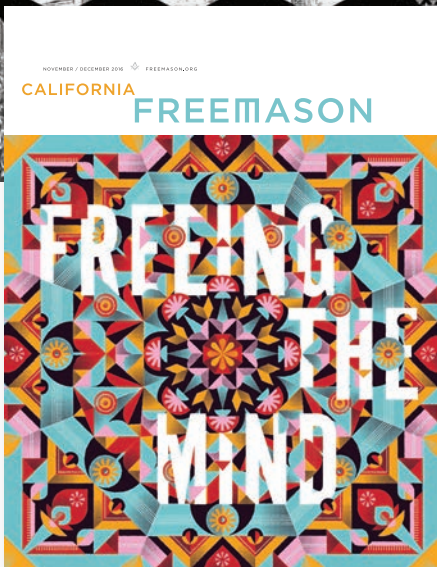
freeing
the
mind



CALIFORNIA FREEMASON

NOVEMBER DECEMBER

2016 VOL 65 | NO 01



THIS ISSUE'S COVER CALLS TO MIND THE THOUGHTFUL CONTEMPLATION REQUIRED BY EACH MASON IN ORDER TO FULLY ABSORB THE LESSONS OF THE CRAFT AND TO CONSCIOUSLY FREE HIS MIND FROM SOCIAL, CULTURAL, SUBCONSCIOUS, AND OTHER INFLUENCES. SHOWN HERE IS THE RUNNER-UP COVER. REMINISCENT OF A KALEIDOSCOPE, IT REPRESENTS THE CHAOTIC BEAUTY OF INNER LIFE AND THE EMERGING SENSE OF CALM THAT CAN BE ATTAINED WHEN ONE'S MIND IS FREED.

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

Grand Master John R. Heisner explores how the ideal of freedom requires an ongoing search for deeper meaning in life and in Masonry.

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CONSPIRATORS OR PATRIOTS?

Connections between Freemasonry and the outbreak of the French Revolution might be quite different than contemporary historians have believed.

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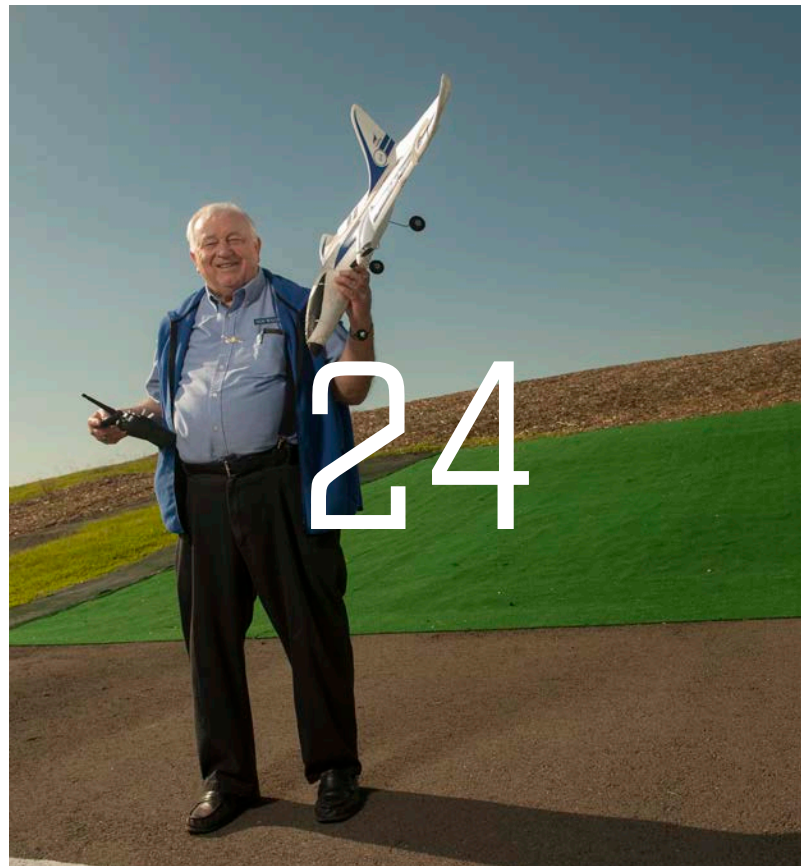
TO SERVE AND PROTECT

Melvin S. Clark joined the military, and then Freemasonry, for the same reason: to give back.

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FREEING THE MIND

The desire for freedom calls to every man. Yet the ability to harness true freedom and fully commit oneself to leading an unfettered existence has remained a challenge throughout the centuries. With today's modern, media-influenced lifestyle, what does "freedom" mean for the modern man? And, how does Freemasonry fit in?



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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

ASCENDING THE WINDING STAIRCASE

Three hundred years after the formation of the first grand lodge, true freedom remains the foremost quest of Freemasonry. Within our democratic society, it can be easy for us to take freedom for granted – and yet it is threatened daily by cravings for power. Our forefathers recognized long ago that most men, Masons or not, are incapable of exercising the self-discipline that real freedom demands; to take the time required to *ascend the winding staircase*.

Striving towards freedom is an endless journey. We ascend by developing ourselves spiritually and materially; building a solid foundation of knowledge. Each step of the way, new truths are revealed to us. We work to diffuse our own ignorance because we understand that personal freedom is only attained by embracing others whose ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, or political views differ from our own.

Freemasonry teaches us that the condition of the human heart is more valuable than material accomplishments. In order to advance freedom, we must challenge our souls with divine intentions beyond our corporeal selves.

In the year ahead, I challenge each of us to study our past, embrace present opportunities, and plan for our future. We must remember the root of our Masonic goal: the advancement of human freedom. Speaking our own truths and practicing in accordance with our beliefs must never be taken for granted. Ascending the winding staircase is our privilege and our obligation.




John R. Heisner, Grand Master

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Conspirators or Patriots?

FREEMASONRY'S ROLE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
HAS LONG BEEN A TOPIC OF CURIOSITY,
BUT TODAY'S SCHOLARS OFFER NEW INSIGHTS

By Kenneth Loiselle

Conspiracy theories connecting Freemasonry to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 have enjoyed widespread appeal since the very moment Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette fell from power. Pamphleteers in the 1790s, like Sourdats de Troyes in France and John Robison in Scotland, conjured the paranoid vision that Masonic lodges had carefully orchestrated the collapse of Christianity and the monarchy. This idea continues to weave its way into today's best sellers, like Umberto Eco's 2010 *"The Prague Cemetery,"* where one protagonist makes the grandiose claim that Freemasonry's purpose in the Revolution was "not only to destroy the throne and the altar, but also to create a society without laws and without morality."

Of course, historians must move beyond axe-grinding and fiction to discern the facts: What were Masonic lodges doing during the Revolution? Was the revolutionary call for social equality mirrored in lodges by an increase in socio-economic diversification between members? Can traces of the Revolution be found in members' speeches, banquet toasts, and the like?

An answer to these questions may be found in Paris, within the Grand Orient of France's massive "Moscow Archives," which migrated

to the former Soviet Union in 1940 and returned to France only in 2000. Here, one finds 27,000 dossiers containing lodge minutes, administrative correspondence, and membership lists covering the most chaotic years of the Revolution.

One of the most thoroughly documented lodges is *Anglaise* (the English lodge) in the bustling port city of Bordeaux. In the 1770s and 1780s, members were mostly merchants and ship captains, and these commercial classes continued to comprise the membership majority

during the Revolution. Reviewing membership records from the summer of 1789, when the Revolution began, to the summer of 1794 reveals that absolutely no social levelling had occurred. In fact, in order to ensure that *Anglaise* remained financially inaccessible to most of Bordeaux's residents, initiation fees and annual dues were consistently increased during this period in response to the massive inflation. At one point, these membership fees

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

LIBERTA
.....
PROCOS.
n argent



Anglaise. ÉGALITÉ



surpassed 10,000 *livres*, which was the equivalent of several months' income for a craftsman in the city!

Anglaise met in a set of rooms just a stone's throw away from the public gardens where large political rallies had been frequently held since 1789, but true to Freemasonry's prohibition of discussing politics within the lodge, meeting minutes remained silent regarding political matters. The first mention of politics does not occur until a Saint John's Day banquet in the summer of 1790, when the second warden offered a toast to "virtuous French citizens" and to Louis XVI who was affectionately referred to as the "dignified father of the French" and a "good and sensible monarch." Like much of the general public during the Revolution's early years, Masons perceived the king positively because of his public support for the political reforms under way.

Everything changed, however, when the royal family attempted to flee France on June 20, 1791. The king was speeding in a carriage to reach the border with the Austrian army when he was apprehended and brought back to Paris. Upon his return, Parisians expressed surprise, anger, and hurt – the monarch who had publically pledged support of the Revolution had tried to join France's enemies. This momentous event had an immediate impact on the political opinion of *Anglaise*: References to Louis XVI and his family in banquet toasts disappeared. The following year, they were replaced with well-wishes to "the prosperity and perpetuation of the sublime French Republic," as well as "representatives of the French Republic in the Convention."

As the Revolution progressed, the records of *Anglaise* reveal frightening times for lodge members. During the infamous Reign of Terror overseen by Maximilien de Robespierre, from autumn 1793 to the summer of 1794, the Bordeaux city government was in the hands of Parisian officials. *Anglaise* met only twice throughout the entire autumn and one meeting attracted a paltry three Masons. It was a tense atmosphere. A surveillance committee had declared political indifference to be a crime, and association with an organization that was suspected to be anti-Revolutionary often led to execution – without trial. Freemasons judiciously responded by incorporating revolutionary political symbols into their meetings in an unprecedented manner.

Similar to streets and public spaces in the city, lodges adopted names perceived to be more in line with the values of the Jacobin-controlled municipal government: *Anglaise* became "Equality," and other lodges adopted names like "Unity" and "Liberty." *Anglaise* placed the national tricolor of blue, white, and red on all its official correspondence and decorations. It was hoped that these measures would shield brothers from unwanted attention from the newly formed municipal council, which was already arresting, condemning, and executing perceived dissidents.

Once Robespierre fell and the Convention's representatives departed from Bordeaux, there was no more reason for *Anglaise* to maintain its façade. Brethren abandoned the name "Equality" and explicitly repudiated the lodge's conduct during the Terror, writing: "We will conduct ourselves as did



California Masonic Symposium:
The Moscow Archives

June 3: San Francisco

June 4: Pasadena

freemason.org/symposium

our fathers who preceded us and who honored Freemasonry, for in the lodge, the brother is neither a civic man nor a political man; he is a Mason. Masonry has its old ways, its old practices, its old rites and we cannot change anything."

The case study of *Anglaise* helps us to better understand what it was like for brothers to live through the French Revolution and encourages us to invert the classic approach towards relating Freemasonry and the Revolution. Rather than seeking the origins of revolutionary behavior or attitudes within 18th-century lodges, we can instead view Masonic lodges as historical laboratories where an institution of the Enlightenment encountered and adapted to a new political and cultural landscape. ♦

Editor's note: Kenneth Loiselle, Ph.D. is associate professor of history at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. He specializes in 18th-century France and its colonies, early modern Europe, the Enlightenment, the French Empire, the history of Paris, the French Revolution, and modern Europe. He is the author of "Brotherly Love: Freemasonry and Male Friendship in Enlightenment France."



DONOR PROFILE

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

MEET MELVIN CLARK
ANNUAL FUND DONOR
MASON FOR 12 YEARS

Maybe it was growing up with 12 brothers – always sharing; always feeling, acutely, the importance of looking out for others. Maybe it was the steady kindness given by teachers and neighbors. Certainly it was his parents, who, through the church and their own example, taught him to be charitable. For all of these reasons, says Melvin S. Clark, “One of my main goals in life has always been to give back.”

At age 19, propelled by this feeling, Clark enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was the first in his family to join the military. “I wanted to give back to my country,” he says. As a military policeman, he served two tours of duty in Germany, and endured 90 days of subzero training in Antarctica. “We used to say it was colder than a father-in-law’s heart,” he laughs. He re-enlisted in 1979 and served in Korea, then Japan. He returned to the United States in 1986, after a decade of service.

Throughout his travels, Clark often noticed rings with mysterious symbols on the hands of men he respected.

After becoming a Mason himself, he realized how many brothers he had served beside. “I saw more of the world by age 30 than most people see in a lifetime,” he says. “And I saw Masons everywhere.”

Clark became a Mason in 2005 at Island City Lodge No. 215 in Alameda. These days he lives in San Francisco and is a member of three blue lodges and a long list of Masonic organizations – including the Scottish Rite, where he proudly serves as Master of Kadosh. He’s also a loyal donor to the Annual Fund.

“I always tell brothers: When you get that letter from Grand Lodge, give what you can. That money makes its way back to your brothers, your sisters, your children, and friends. You never know when they’ll be in need. You are helping someone down the road.”

“I became a military policeman to serve and protect,” Clark says. “That’s what we do in Masonry, too.” ♦

MASONIC EDUCATION

THE LIMITS OF FREEDOM

FREEMASONRY'S RELIGIOUS ETHOS IS FOUND WITHIN ANDERSON'S FIRST CHARGE

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 – especially its First Charge – is one of the most foundational documents of Freemasonry. Here it is (with somewhat updated spelling and language):

1. **Concerning God and Religion:** *A Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law; if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. But though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was, it is 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, men of honor and honesty, by whatever denominations*

or persuasions they may be distinguished. In this way, Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons who must else have remained at a perpetual distance.

The first grand lodge was founded in 1717, only a few years before it adopted this important statement. Masonic leaders wanted to make it clear that Freemasonry had certain fundamental principles that must be considered and adopted by all prospective members. Several concepts implied through the First Charge are of note:

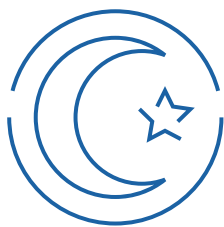
- » Freemasons have a moral law to which all members must adhere: Every Mason must be a “good man and true,” a man “of honor and honesty.”



✧

**The principles of
freedom of religion
and freedom of thought
became the most
distinguishing
characteristics of
Freemasonry.**

✧



- » Freemasonry requires a belief in God, but the meaning of “God” is left to the discretion of each individual Mason.
- » Freemasonry treats all religions alike; Masons are welcome “by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished.”
- » Because of its emphasis on religious tolerance, Freemasonry is expected to become a “Center of Union,” engendering friendships between brothers with divergent religious beliefs.

This foundational statement about the nature of Freemasonry came at the close of an ugly period in English history. The two centuries before had seen religious factions warring with one another, often killing one another over the slightest differences of opinion in religious matters. The culmination of the worst of this was the English Civil War (1642–1651), which resulted in the execution of the king, and the imposition of a military dictatorship under Oliver Cromwell. Although the monarchy was restored in 1661, the period’s tumultuous events were burned into the psyche of British society for several generations.

It was during the years after 1661 that Freemasonry as we know it came to the fore, with lodges that welcomed men of all religious persuasions into their midst. This movement came together in 1717 when a grand lodge

was formed, and the principles of freedom of religion and freedom of thought became the most distinguishing characteristics of Freemasonry.

We need to pay close attention to the language of the First Charge in order to truly understand what the Freemasons were saying in Anderson’s Constitutions in 1723. Rather than implying that Freemasonry was open to anyone and everyone, with little or no regard to the principles of morality or of religion, they emphasized that morality is at Freemasonry’s heart. They clarified that rather than the sectarian “morality” of warring religious sects, the Masonic system of morality was based on the concept of human behavior, with Masons regarded as “men of honor and honesty.”

Second, the First Charge emphasizes that Freemasonry has no quarrel with those who do not acknowledge the existence of God. That is their business, and theirs alone. But because a belief in God is fundamental to the nature of Freemasonry, anyone who does not, or cannot, acknowledge such a belief will find nothing in Freemasonry to be of any value. This is the meaning of the phrases “stupid atheist” and “irreligious libertine.” Freemasons do not believe that all atheists are “stupid”; rather, they believe that Freemasonry’s teaching will have nothing to offer those who do not believe in God.

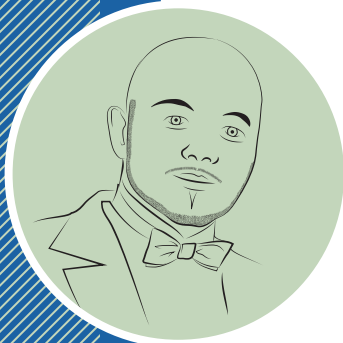
This position is further clarified by the phrase “If he rightly understands the art.” A Freemason must embrace the basic teachings of Freemasonry in order to remain a Mason. The freedom that we experience in lodge to have a “friend and brother” with religious and political opinions that differ from our own is a genuine freedom – but it does have limitations. We are not free as Masons to impose our religious or political beliefs on our brother Masons. And, we are not free to ignore the fundamental principles and teachings of Freemasonry in order to welcome everyone and anyone to our ranks. Our freedom is true freedom, but it is a limited freedom: It is tempered by our common moral standing as “good men and true,” and it is limited by a commitment to a belief in God, which is a fundamental teaching of our ancient and honorable Fraternity. ✧



READERS ANSWER

DEFINING FREEDOM

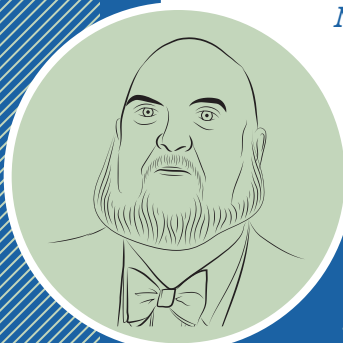
The word “freedom” has a profound and personal meaning for each individual. Members of the Masons of California online community reflected upon this complex concept when asked: **WHAT DOES “FREEDOM” MEAN TO YOU?** Here are a few examples from hundreds of thoughtful responses.



WILHELM ADOREMOS

***Granada Hills Lodge
No. 378***

To be free of guilt, with a clear mind and conscience. And, to have the confidence to voice out and speak with courage and without fear.



WILLIAM HEMS III

Naval Lodge No. 87

To act without restraint and to choose restraints for guiding our moral behavior.



JASON ESTRADA

***Reading Lodge
No. 254***

Freedom empowers me to make up my own mind about what I do, how I do it, and why. The freedom I experience comes with the responsibility to do the best good that I can for myself and my family. Freedom is empowerment to evoke change: We are free to do good or not.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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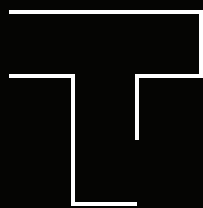


freeing the mind

FREEMASONRY'S KEY TO A MORE CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE

by | Ronald J. Watkins

**“The secret of
happiness is
freedom.
The secret of
freedom is
courage.”
– Thucydides**



hroughout history, most of humanity has existed in a state of bondage. When we consider this concept, we tend to envision the past – tyrants, kings, emperors, oligarchs, and juntas who ruled and oppressed their nations and subjects. Yet it is no different today. In the first decades of the 21st century, just 40 percent of the world's population can be said to be free; 60 percent are either not free or are only partially so. Many nations suffer from intolerance, controlled and limited economies, corruption, and an absence of free expression. But although life today is, as it has been throughout history for most of mankind, marked by oppression and misery, the desire for freedom calls to every individual.

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THE COMMANDING SELF

Greek philosophers appreciated the necessity of freedom for a happy life, and studied its nature and practices in society. They understood that personal freedom could only exist within a society that permitted it; that the power of the state was capable of destroying freedom, and often did. Their desire was for a state that respected freedom of the individual, allowing for personal evolution and improvement. But the state is not the only mechanism that denies men their freedom. There is another mechanism, one universal among all humanity, even in those nations that are considered to be free. It is another form of slavery, one so well disguised that it is all but unrecognizable: the bondage each man imposes upon himself. Freedom depends as much on the individual as it does upon the society in which he lives.

Never has the glitter of existence been brighter or more ubiquitous than for those of us living in those nations identified as *free*. On a daily basis, we are presented with a material existence and social interactions that indicate that we are free – that we can do whatever we want, and that anyone or any institution that seeks to limit our behavior is bad. But behind this florid façade lies our enslavement. Plato recognized this even in his time. Individual freedom, he cautioned, is the ability of the individual to reason and learn without impediment from the materialism rampant in society.

Idries Shah, author and teacher of the Sufi tradition, writes of a personal “commanding self,” in his book of the same name. “The grafting of emotion-based ideas on

**True freedom
is one that each
man must define
for himself.**

top of the primitive, without maturing the latter, produces the ‘commanding self,’ which affects much of everyone’s daily thinking.” He describes the commanding self as the part of our undeveloped, base personality that dictates our immediate response and often our sustained reactions to life situations. The commanding self is the product of our upbringing, of both our families and culture, and it compels our reactions to specific events without requiring conscious thought. It may even guide the course of our lives without our ever realizing it. This commanding self is a form of implanted tyranny – and if left in control, it withholds from us the knowledge of our true selves. If we cannot contain it, we may pass through life reacting to and facing unpleasant consequences, never acting as our own masters and ignorant of our potential. It can deny us individual freedom and personal happiness.

Though most men claim to admire individuality and free thought, their practice in life is very often quite different. Men tend to gravitate towards conformity, yielding to their natural inclination to emulate one another, to seek the approval of others who they view as more powerful. David Riesman, a sociologist and educator, commented on this behavior, stating that, “Men are created different; they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other.” The desire for likeness

**To preserve freedom
is one of our greatest
callings as brothers.**

holds a powerful attraction, one that our increasingly interconnected digital world makes more and more difficult to resist. The consequence is that too few choose to exercise their free will, to be truly free. Men are as shackled today by upbringing, habit, custom, conformity, and expectations as they have always been. In fact, the enslavement of today's humanity is all the greater because it exists within the illusion of freedom.

MEN AS AGENTS

As the pervasive influence of church and the nuclear family have largely vanished from society, the concept of freedom has become distorted from its traditional meaning. It is taken by a large portion of society to mean unbridled license, freedom from consequences. But to those who side with Plato's logic, believing that freedom necessitates a triumph over materialism, a wholly unfettered life is clearly not the right path.



If freedom then is not the right to do whatever one wants, what is it? Geoffrey Chaucer, in "The Canterbury Tales," offers the early Anglo-Saxon interpretation of freedom when he describes it as generosity, frankness with others, and a cheerful willingness to perform one's duty. In his mind, free will is a moral responsibility.

This sentiment is echoed by Johann Gadicke, author of a German Lexicon of Freemasonry, who writes, "...[W]e are, or should be, free from the dominion of passion, pride, prejudice, and all the other follies of human nature. We are free from the false delusion that we need not be obedient to the laws." Famed historian, Freemason, Confederate Army general, and author Albert Pike tells us in "Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite,"

"With man's exercise of thought are inseparably connected freedom and responsibility. Man assumes his proper rank as a moral agent, when with a sense of the limitations of his nature arise the consciousness of freedom, and of the obligations accompanying its exercise, the sense of duty and of the capacity to perform it." He adds, "... Freedom of man lies in his reason. He can reflect upon his own future conduct, and summon up its consequences; he can take wide views of human life, and lay down rules for constant guidance. Thus he is relieved of the tyranny of sense and passion, and enabled at any time to live according to the whole light of the knowledge that is within him, instead of being driven, like a dry leaf in the wings of the wind, by every present impulse."

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Freemasonry, by its nature and practice,



To follow this logic then, by abusing drugs, engaging in promiscuous sex, and bending and breaking the rules of honesty, we are simply wrapping ourselves in self-imposed chains.


Writing in the middle of this century, the author and philosopher Ayn Rand observed that, “Man is the only living species that has the power to act as his own destroyer – and that is the way he has acted through most of his history.” Like power, freedom cannot only exist as a concept; it implies a necessity for action. In the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, one of the leading thinkers of the Enlightenment, freedom is expressed by the question: “What should I do?” It is our response to this moral question that determines if we are free.

PRESERVATIONISTS OF FREEDOM


Freemasonry, by its nature and practice, leads men “into the light” – towards freedom and away from the darkness imposed upon them by formative and societal influences. It is an institution intended and structured to promote the highest ideals of civilization. It advocates civic liberty, freedom of conscience, and individual rights. It espouses that society at large must permit freedom of action as well as of thought. Men cannot be free within themselves unless they

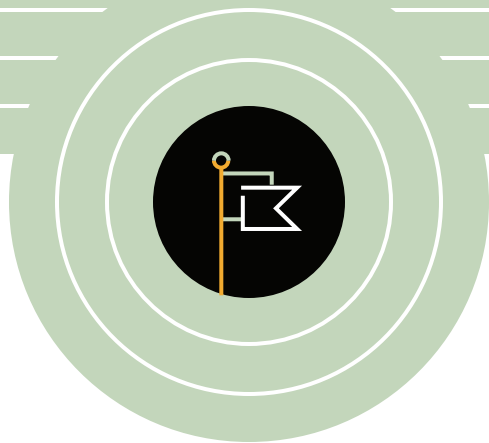
live within a culture that is itself free; therefore, the concepts of personal and societal freedom are inextricably intertwined.

Accordingly, Freemasons are intrinsically linked to the concept and exercise of national freedom. It can be fairly stated that the existence of Freemasonry for the last 300 years has been largely defined by the pursuit of such freedom. Masons have led revolutions to overthrow tyrants and kings, established liberal governments, and been included among the greatest thinkers and artists of the Western world. These include Johann Goethe, Christopher Wren, Alexander Pushkin, Wolfgang Mozart, Robert Burns, Simón Bolívar, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and George Washington – to name a few. Masons have advocated and advanced freedom even at peril to their own lives, actively opposed the oppression of religious control of government and education, advocated and brought about democracies, established liberal arts colleges, and promoted secular, universal education. To preserve freedom is one of our greatest callings as brothers. We are obligated to speak and act against injustice.



leads men
“into the light”
– towards
freedom and





by formative
and societal
influences.

away from the
darkness imposed
upon them

INTO THE LIGHT

True freedom is one that each man must define for himself: We are the only ones who can truly know if we are free or reacting to influences outside ourselves and forces within. It is for this reason that Freemasonry focuses on teaching each brother to free himself of unchecked passions, unwholesome desires, destructive social conventions, and negative expectations. We are taught to see and stay clear of the chasm into which we might otherwise plunge. Returning to Rand, “[Man] is free to evade reality, he is free to unfocus his mind and stumble blindly down any road he pleases, but not free to avoid the abyss he refuses to see.”

The word “freedom” is used in Freemasonry in a symbolic or metaphysical sense that differs from its ordinary meaning. Freemasonry, and in particular the local lodge, serves as a

vehicle to “free” men from the materialistic forces of the outside – that is, the profane world. It opens the mind, providing a path that leads away from our internal chains, away from bigotry, intolerance, and narcissism. Masonic ritual emphasizes freedom and the exercise of free will so that each brother can incorporate them within his life. From the early 18th century through present day, Masonic lectures have identified freedom, fervency, and zeal as the qualities that each brother should aspire to.

In Plato’s Republic, Socrates relates the allegory of the cave, in which a group of prisoners live chained within a cave all of their lives, facing a blank wall from which they cannot turn. Unable to observe and participate in real life, they observe shadows moving across the face of the wall – shadows created by those who pass before a fire behind them. The prisoners, knowing no better, give names to these shadows. This is as close as they can get to perceiving reality, so for them, the shadows are real. A philosopher, according to Socrates, is someone who has freed himself from the metaphoric “prison” of unenlightened human existence in order to perceive the “true forms” surrounding him. So it is that Freemasons turn away from metaphorical “shadows on the wall” and towards Masonic enlightenment.

At each man’s entrance into the craft, he is introduced to reality in its true form, without the obstructive “shadows” cast by his own preconceptions and societal influences. To advance his journey of discovery, the lodge serves as a home

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Freedom cannot only exist as a concept; it implies a necessity for action.

for fraternal interaction. It is here that many of life's important lessons are learned, such as leadership, trustworthiness, public speaking, willing obedience to authority, the practice of democracy, and respect of rules and law. What is often called the "magic" of Masonry transforms shy, uncertain men into those who are self-assured, confident, natural leaders, and willing followers. The lodge also serves the essential role of initiation. Repeated exposure to the ritual of the three degrees allows its lessons, especially those of a profound and subtle nature, to slowly permeate the subconscious of the brother, releasing him from negative habits and practices, freeing his mind of dogma so he is open to the greater influences of the divine.

In the final analysis, Masonry is about liberating men, enabling them to experience true personal freedom. In doing so, it enables them to be better husbands, fathers, sons, and citizens. Better men all around. Z'ev ben Shimon

Halevi speaks of this change in "The Work of the Kabbalist" when he writes,

"The gift of free will is greatly misunderstood, for while most people believe they have it, they seldom use it, preferring to be carried by habit and circumstance until fate confronts them with choice. When the option of true individuality is taken up, then there is an awakening of the soul, which allows people not only to act independently, but to be responsible for their own lives."

To take this important step, to free ourselves of negative conditioning, unhealthy conformity and destructive expectations, requires enormous courage. It is not easy to change ourselves, which is why so few men do. We are tested time and again. We fall short; we disappoint ourselves. But with the support of the craft, its ritual, and our brothers, we can become and remain free. We can be powerful advocates for good. We can make a difference. It takes resoluteness to exercise responsible, moral freedom for ourselves and others. But only through pursuing that path can we be truly satisfied with our lives and Masonic journeys. Freedom is essential to happiness – and it is within our reach. ✨

Editor's Note: Ronald J. Watkins is past master of Wayfarers Lodge No. 50 and past district deputy grand master of the Grand Lodge of Arizona. He is currently master of Cuenca Wayfarers Lodge No. 69 and deputy grand chancellor of the Grand Lodge of Ecuador. He is also the author of more than 30 books, including "Unknown Seas: How Vasco da Gama Opened the East" and has discussed his work on a number of notable television programs.



THE TORCH OF TRUTH

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY SHINES WITH MASONIC IDEALS

By Antone R.E. Pierucci

“No institution has done more to promote liberty and to free men from the trammels and chains of ignorance and tyranny than has Freemasonry.” It was a muggy August day in 1884 when William A. Brodie, grand master of New York, intoned these words over the cornerstone of what would soon be the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York City. It was a grand scene – despite the rain that soaked the hundreds in attendance – and one that proved a fitting conclusion to a journey that had begun decades earlier in a dining room in Paris.

INSPIRATION FOR AN ICON

In the summer of 1865, a group of men sat around a table in the suburbs of the City of Lights, discussing the politics of the day. In attendance was a somewhat hodgepodge collection of characters: Edouard Rene de Laboulaye, the owner of the house and a well known author; noted historian Henri Martin; Oscar and Edmond de Lafayette, descendants of

French aristocracy; and a young artist from the Alsace region, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. All but Bartholdi were Masons; the de Lafayettes were grandsons of Marquis de Lafayette, the Masonic brother of George Washington who was instrumental in France’s support of the American Colonies during the Revolution. It was reportedly Laboulaye who first off-handedly remarked how

wonderful it would be for France to present the American people with a monument to memorialize the friendship between the two nations, two sister republics and bastions of freedom. Although no action would be taken for some years, the idea of a monument germinated in the creative mind of the young artist Bartholdi, where it found fertile ground.

Following the 1870 revolution that overthrew the Louis-Napoleon monarchy and the disastrous conclusion to the Franco-Prussian War, the time seemed ripe for France to reconnect with America. In 1871, the plan for the as-yet-unnamed monument was rejuvenated, with Laboulaye garnering support for the project at home and Bartholdi raising interest in America. It was decided that America would finance the construction of the pedestal and France that of the statue itself. The plan was to erect the monument by July 4, 1876 – the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

A MASONIC TRIBUTE

The iconic monument took form as a resolute lady liberty. In one hand she held a tablet bearing the date of July 4, 1776; in the other, a blazing torch of enlightenment. The statue’s symbolism, as well as its actual name, “Liberty Enlightening the World,” was derived from Masonic imagery of enlightenment. Perhaps it was therefore inevitable that, surrounded as he was by Masons and himself the creator of a monument dedicated to the Masonic ideals of freedom and enlightenment, Bartholdi would be inspired

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by the teachings of Freemasonry. He was initiated into the brotherhood in October of 1874.

It wasn't until 1884 that the statue was complete and two more years passed before its installation. Yet although the initial deadline had passed a decade earlier, it had only been 20 years since the sculpture's conception – hardly any time at all given its enormity. The Statue of Liberty, as the striking monument was popularly nicknamed, stood 151 feet tall. With her austere gaze, she commanded the entry into the port of New York. She still stands there today, a testament to the value of freedom so greatly cherished by the democracies that birthed her.

SUBLIME IDEALS OF HUMAN FREEDOM

In 1903, the same year that a bronze plaque bearing Emma Lazarus' now-famous poem, "The New Colossus," was installed within the statue, the grand orator of California, Edward

Hart, gave a speech entitled "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." In it, Hart succinctly expressed the

inextricable relationship between the fraternity and the ideals of liberty: "Masonry favors freedom... It has ever borne aloft the torch of truth, and has produced, as has been shown, the most illustrious examples that history affords of men devoted to the sublime ideals of human freedom." To this muster-call of historical figures can be added Bartholdi and his Masonic brothers who made the Statue of Liberty and her message of freedom, so aptly described by Lazarus, a reality: "Give me your tired, your poor; Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free... I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" ✧



Freemasonry Set Free

DECIPHERING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN
PRINCE HALL MASONRY AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

By Tyler Ash

For nearly 200 years, the Underground Railroad has been an elusive, almost mythical aspect of American history, shaping the way we view the cultural and sociopolitical landscapes of the American psyche during the 1800s. A key question continues to elude historians: How did such a large network of people help nearly 100,000 slaves gain freedom while still maintaining a secretive, almost clandestine, status? One fascinating insight may be found by studying some of the leading Prince Hall Masons in Boston during the pre-Civil War period through the post-Reconstruction era. As the sediment of time is gradually lifted from the artifacts of historical truth, researchers are rediscovering fundamental relationships between key conductors of the Underground Railroad and leaders of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

One of those researchers is James R. Morgan III, a past master of Corinthian Lodge No. 18 and the worshipful associate grand historian and archivist of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. Morgan, who was also recently a keynote speaker at the 16th Annual California Masonic Symposium in June of 2016, is a scholar of African-American history and a member of the Phylaxis Society, the only independent research organization dedicated to the study of African-American Freemasonry.

"One of the formulating hands of Prince Hall Masonry was the trans-Atlantic slave trade itself and the effort

of people of African descent to find their freedom and gain liberty," Morgan says. "It was in the best interest of Prince Hall Masons to aid that struggle." The relationship between Prince Hall Masonry and the Underground Railroad was symbiotic, says Morgan. A number of the earliest Prince Hall leaders were once enslaved themselves. "Many of these men were considered 'runaways' even as they were advancing in Masonry," Morgan says. "They were aware that their freedom could be revoked at any time."

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FROM SLAVES TO LIBERATORS

Lewis Hayden is one example. Born a slave in Kentucky in 1811, he taught himself to read. In 1844, he and his enslaved family were aided by white abolitionists Calvin Fairbank, a Methodist minister, and Delia Webster, a teacher from Vermont, along the Underground Railroad from Lexington, Kentucky to Ripley, Ohio. Assisted by additional abolitionists, the Hayden family continued north to Canada, where thanks to the Canadian Act Against Slavery of 1793, slavery was outlawed. After attaining their freedom, the Haydens moved to Boston – the center of the abolitionist movement at the time, as well as one of the most active communities

of free African-Americans in the country. Boston was also where Prince Hall, the individual, founded African Lodge No. 1 (now No. 459) with 14 other African-American Freemasons in 1782.

Hayden soon became a key figure in Bostonian society and the Underground Railroad. He was extremely passionate about the abolitionist movement, even willing to risk his life in support of the cause. He sheltered more than 100 fugitive slaves at his Boston residence and clothing store, which became known as “the temple of refuge.” John J. Smith, a freeborn African-American from Virginia, played another vital role. After testing his luck in the gold fields of



California, Smith moved to Boston between 1849 and 1850, and became a barber. His shop soon served as a hotbed for abolitionist activity and as another key stopping point for runaway slaves. Like Hayden, he was a member of the first Prince Hall lodge, African Lodge No. 1.

As Prince Hall lodges became more established, the education they provided for their members offered a launchpad to higher social status, despite the prejudicial climate of American society in those days. Hayden and his Prince Hall contemporaries harnessed this newfound power to advocate for social justice and lift up brothers who tried to follow in their footsteps. In 1843, George Latimer, a fugitive slave from Virginia, escaped to Boston through the Underground Railroad but was captured upon his arrival and sent to state prison. Prominent Masons, including Hayden and Smith, began a blitzkrieg in the media. A group of abolitionists formed the "Latimer Committee," issuing several lengthy petitions to the Massachusetts State Assembly. This resulted in the Personal Liberty Act, or the "Latimer Law," which prevented officials from aiding slave catchers by detaining suspected fugitive slaves in state facilities.

After the ruling, Latimer was viewed as a hero in the abolitionist community and his freedom was purchased for \$400. Propelled by immense gratitude, he became a Prince Hall Mason himself and began aiding Underground Railroad efforts. One well-publicized example of Latimer's contributions is the freeing of a fugitive slave named Shadrach Minkins. In a daring rescue, Hayden, Smith, Latimer, and Edward G. Walker – all Prince Hall Masons within the Boston Vigilance Committee – forcibly retrieved Minkins from courthouse officials after he was arrested under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Through the Underground Railroad, they ensured his safety to Canada.

"The Latimer and Minkins rescues are perfect examples of symbiosis between Prince Hall Masonry and the Underground Railroad," Morgan says. "These men fulfilled a unique social role."

LAUNCHING A LEGACY

Boston's Prince Hall leaders continued to have lasting and widespread effects both in Masonry and in American politics – accomplishments that were, as Morgan notes, remarkable for their time. After founding numerous Prince Hall chapters, Hayden served twice as grand master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, from 1852 to 1855 and 1857 to 1858. After the Civil War, he published several works on Freemasonry in the African-American community and traveled throughout the Reconstruction-era South, working to create new Prince Hall lodges and to support those that had been newly established.

Smith went on to serve as a state legislator, a recruiter for African-American segregated regiments and cavalries during the Civil War, and as grand master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in 1859, the year after Hayden was reelected. Today, John J. Smith Lodge No. 14 in Massachusetts bears his name.

Walker exemplifies the value of Prince Hall Masonry to African-American men of his generation. He was one of the first African-American men to pass the Massachusetts bar exam, and later became one of the first African-Americans elected to the Massachusetts State Legislature. In 1896, he was nominated as a U.S.

presidential candidate by the Negro Party.

The connections between Prince Hall Masonry, the Underground Railroad, and the rise in African-American social status continues to thrill contemporary historians. Secrets of this fascinating era are still being unearthed; yet, it is clear that without Prince Hall Masonry, there would not have been an Underground Railroad as it is understood today, and that other political and social achievements would have likely been delayed. "These men put their lives on the line to stand up for what they believed in," says Morgan. "It was a Masonic thing to do." And, as contemporary scholars may attest, early Prince Hall Masons' devotion to championing and living the Masonic ideals of freedom and equality profoundly impacted the course of our nation's history. ♦

***Without Prince
Hall Masonry,
there would not
have been an
Underground
Railroad as it
is understood
today.***



THE BEST LIFE AT EVERY AGE

AT THE HEART OF FREEMASONRY IS CHOICE -
INCLUDING THE CHOICE TO AGE WELL

By Laura Benys

BARBARA RANEY (CENTER)
PLAYS BEANBAG BASEBALL
ON A BOARD HAND-CRAFTED
BY FELLOW COVINA RESIDENT
BIL PAPAS.

Recently, John Obsniuk has been logging a lot of hours on the cross trainer. He's 92 years old, and uses a wheelchair to get around the Masonic Home at Union City. But he is working towards a goal: "Hopefully it won't be too long until I'll be able to get up again and dance with my two daughters," Obsniuk says. "And any other woman who's crazy enough to dance with me."

Obsniuk's determination is not unusual around the Masonic Homes, where the words "senior community"

have become synonymous with opportunity. The culture of aging here is a continuous effort to engage, give back, and grow.

Soledad Martinez, Union City's director of resident relations, has worked at the Masonic Homes for 22 years. "In the past 10 years, a new breed of residents has come in, with different expectations of what they want their lives here to be," she says. "They want to exercise and eat healthfully. They really want to incorporate their lives into the community. That, to me, is successful aging."

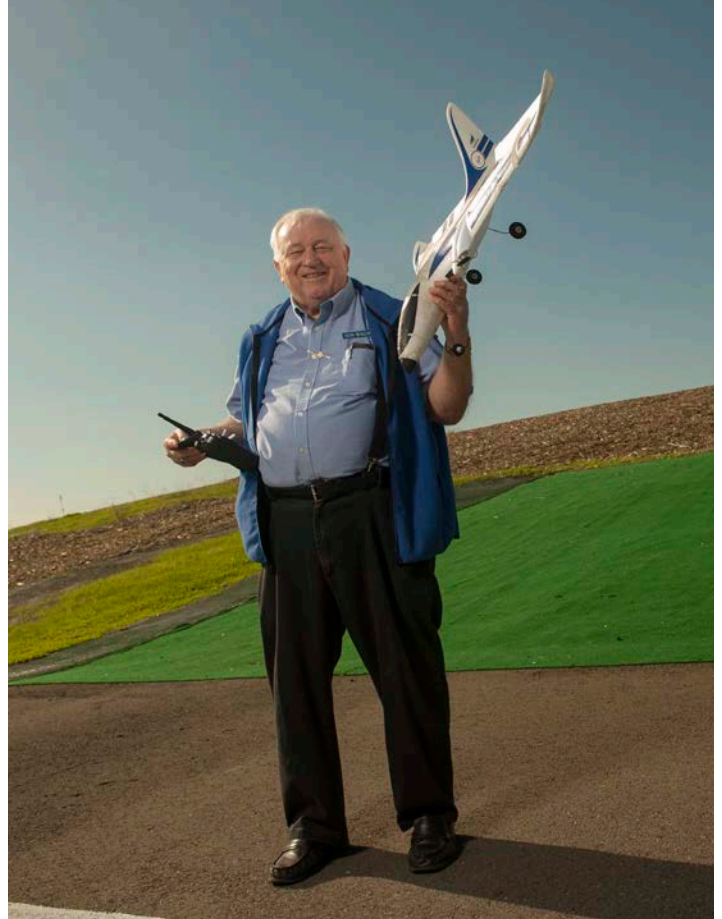
STAYING CONNECTED

Aging well is, of course, simply an extension of living well. And, it's a little different for everyone. How we each find fulfillment is a blend of our inner and outer sensibilities: staying curious about new possibilities, but also remaining true to our passions; surrounding ourselves with comfort while still challenging ourselves. There are intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual components needed for success. The Masonic Homes sets the stage to achieve these goals not only through expectations of residents and

TOP LEFT: UNION CITY RESIDENT DOLORES WALDEN MANAGES INVENTORY AT THE CAMPUS' NEW TO YOU SECONDHAND CLOTHING SHOP.

TOP RIGHT: DOLORES' HUSBAND DON WALDEN TESTS A PLANE AT THE HOME'S RUNWAY.

BOTTOM LEFT: UNION CITY RESIDENT JOHN OBSNIUK BRUSHES UP ON HIS DANCING SKILLS.



social. Raney lost her husband two years ago, and says that since then, she's been making a special effort to stay busy and surround herself with good friends. She takes care of her physical health with exercise and lots of sleep. "It's a joke around here that my bedtime is 7 o'clock," she notes cheerfully. But the additional energy is put to good use: She is active throughout the Covina community, serving as a resident representative to the Board of Trustees as well as a designated resident driver. For the past year, she and fellow resident Pat Sanchez have run the New to You secondhand clothing shop, and she's joined all sorts of activities. Raney, a former professor at U.C. Davis, also makes ongoing learning a priority, with Covina's "Boost Your Brain and Memory" class. All these activities add up: Her full social calendar and ongoing movement have boosted her

mood and give her something to look forward to each day. A favorite activity of Raney's is bean bag baseball. Each lively game is played using a wooden baseball board hand-crafted by Bill Papas - another Covina resident who stays active in the campus woodworking shop.

In Union City, Don and Dolores Walden, a vivacious married couple, have a similar approach to successful aging: They are developing new interests and skills, and seeking out ways to contribute.

Don Walden is president of the Home's flying club, a model aviation group with its own runway on campus. Model flying was new to him when he moved in; now it's a passion. Weather permitting, he and half a dozen others are out at the runway just about every morning. When he's not flying, he

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staff, but through the many opportunities for learning, physical wellness, service, and connection.

For Barbara Raney, who lives at the Covina Home, successful aging is about being active, productive, and

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engraves badges and nametags for residents and staff in the Home's sign shop, and "putters around in the woodshop." He has developed a love of photography and is also chaplain and Trestleboard editor for Siminoff Daylight Lodge No. 850, which meets on campus.

"Sometimes, Don and I are like ships passing in the night," Dolores Walden jokes. She's carved out her own niche; like Raney and Sanchez in Covina, she co-manages Union City's New to You shop with resident Tricia Dahle. Neither woman had a retail experience, but they have been quick learners. The store is now busier than ever, with Friday afternoons often turning into an impromptu social hour as residents stop by to linger. Dolores Walden is also on the Chapel Committee, delivers campus mail, and serves as vice president and secretary of the Welcoming Committee.

"Our Masonic Home has so many activities and opportunities to volunteer," she says. "As residents, we can choose to stay at home if we'd like, but there's a lot of encouragement to get out and do something."

Dolores and Don Walden agree that staying active is key to aging well. It's important to not only get physical exercise, but to learn new things and be involved in the community. "The main thing," says Dolores Walden, "is to stay connected with people. That's healthy physically and emotionally."

STRONG BONDS

"Successful aging is being the best you can be, no matter where you are physically. It's being at your full potential, your highest quality of life," says Social Services Manager Diane Sanchez. She works mainly in the skilled nursing area of the Union City Home, which includes the Stepping Stones memory care program.

She runs a reminiscing group every Friday, which is her favorite part of her position. "I learn about residents' lives and their pasts," she says. "I feel very fortunate that I'm involved in these conversations."

In a chapter of life when social and emotional health are vitally important, these communities are known for their sense of intimacy and togetherness. In a recent reminiscing group, one of the residents brought up the topic of relationships.

"We talked a little bit about our loved ones," says Sanchez. "And at the end, the group was saying how they have made more than friends at the Masonic Homes – the people they've met here have become part of their family."

Obsniuk, whose goal is to dance again, never misses a session of the reminiscing group. In addition to working to improve his physical fitness, he finds meaning and opportunity in strengthening his mind through storytelling exercises. In particular, he enjoys sharing his longtime love of music. He grew up in a household of seven children, clustered around a player piano that his father acquired for \$5 in the 1920s. "We had a family of singing and dancing. Now they're all gone, but they're with me in my heart and soul when I dance – and when I remember them."

He also appreciates how the group has deepened his relationships with fellow residents. "It's a wonderful group," he says. "In many social situations, a lot of these people might just listen and close their eyes. But this group really gets everybody thinking. It challenges them and brings out their best."

This observation demonstrates the best of successful aging: It's a commitment to embracing every phase of life by acknowledging capabilities and working to maximize the potential for living well. ✧

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