

APRIL / MAY 2016



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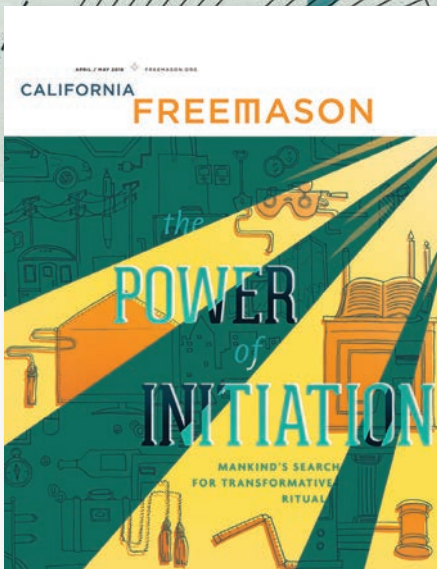
CALIFORNIA

FREEMASON



APRIL MAY

2016 VOL 64 | NO 04



THIS ISSUE'S COVER COLORFULLY REFLECTS THE TOOLS AND SYMBOLISM FOUND WITHIN THE INITIATORY RITE OF FREEMASONRY. SHOWN HERE IS THE RUNNER-UP COVER, WITH BRIGHT LIGHT BEAMING DOWN ON MASONIC SYMBOLS, WHILE MATERIAL POSSESSIONS ARE HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS. LEARN MORE AT FREEMASON.ORG/APR15COVER.

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

THE LASTING “INITIATION”

I am sure that most of us have seen some of the many exposés of Freemasonry on television and the Internet. At first, I felt betrayed by those who would disclose our secrets. But I soon realized that while viewers can witness our ceremonies through these videos, they are not learning the secrets of Freemasonry.

Even if those things that we consider most secret were divulged, outsiders would not learn the true secrets of our fraternity. That is because our teachings are disclosed through an “initiation process.”

We use the word “process,” because the teachings of Freemasonry go far beyond the Entered Apprentice degree. They take place when we are passed to the degree of Fellow Craft and when we are raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. They continue as we reflect upon, and then internalize, the symbolism and metaphors of Freemasonry – through discussions with our mentors and coaches, by supporting other brothers and witnessing their degrees, when participating in Masonic education programs, while seeking to understand the insights of Masonic scholars, and, perhaps most importantly, as we witness our Masonic values resonating through every aspect of our relationships and lives.

When do we know the true secrets of Freemasonry? When the knowledge we have gained through the initiatic process becomes wisdom and thus becomes the root from which our lives blossom.



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Illustration

Cover and feature, p. 9, 20–23
© Chen Design Associates

Ad Design

IBC, BC: Sarah Gilbert

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CALIFORNIA FREEMASON ISSUE 4
April/May 2016

USPS # 083-940 is published bimonthly by Masons of California, 1111 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94108-2284. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to California Freemason, 1111 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94108-2284.

Publication Dates – Publication dates are the first day of October, December, February, April, June, and August.

Subscriptions – CALIFORNIA FREEMASON is mailed to every member of this Masonic jurisdiction without additional charge. Others are invited to subscribe for \$12 a year or \$15 outside of the United States.

Permission to reprint – Permission to reprint original articles in CALIFORNIA FREEMASON is granted to all recognized Masonic publications with credit to the author and this publication.

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THE THEATRICAL BEAUTY OF INITIATION RITUAL

MODERN MASONIC RITUALS HARNESS THE EMOTIONAL POWER OF THEIR DEEP DRAMATIC ROOTS

By Pannill Camp

The legendary 19th century actor Edwin Booth treasured the tragic role of Hiram. Booth began his professional career in San Francisco and California mining camps in the early 1850s, where he came to be known both for his restrained yet colorful portrayals of brooding characters like Hamlet, as well as for the deeds of his infamous younger brother, John Wilkes Booth. Edwin Booth was a devoted Mason, and believed that no tragedy in his repertoire was “so real, so sublime, so magnificent as the legend of Hiram.”

DEFINING THEATER

Booth’s grasp of the drama inherent in ritual prompts us to ask: What does it mean to think of initiatory and other rites as a kind of theatrical performance? In certain contexts, to refer to something as “theater” can be derogatory; think of the epithet “political theater.” Indeed, when Freemasonry’s secret lodge activities were first exposed to the French public in the middle of the 18th century, critics used such language to belittle Masonic rites, calling them “spectacle” and “mummeries.”

But to acknowledge the commonalities between Masonic ritual and theater is not necessarily to imply that Masonic ritual is *merely* theater, or that it is somehow false or

fake. Anthropologists and historians have long believed that Western theater originated from religious rituals, such as the Egyptian cult of Osiris and the City Dionysia festivals of ancient Greece. Contemporary scholars of performance place theater and ritual on a continuum of rehearsed human behaviors that permeate social life and persist into the 21st century.

Understanding the ways that ritual draws from the art of theater not only helps us to understand the complex, richly coded, and emotional experiences at the core of Masonic traditions today, but also helps explain why Masonry attracted such intense interest in the 18th century.

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STAGING OF THE LODGE

In the 18th century, while Masonic membership expanded rapidly, especially in France, theater was also extremely popular. The surviving records of Masonic rituals from these days reveal activities that make sophisticated use of theater's most primary aspects: space; spectators' visual, auditory, and other perceptions; and dramatic action.

Today's lodge and temple interiors, which often boast large proportions, decorative arches and columns, and raised rows of seats show a savvy appreciation for the emotional power of architecture. The modern use of specially decorated garments, symbolic tools, and decorative wall and floor cloths can all be compared to the costumes, props, and scenery of professional stagecraft.

The modern use of specially decorated garments, symbolic tools, and decorative wall and floor cloths can all be compared to the costumes, props, and scenery of professional stagecraft.

But even very early lodges seem to have been designed in a way that utilizes and sometimes mirrors the spaces and concepts employed by theaters for displaying dramatic action.

High on the list of necessary functions for a lodge building in the 18th century was separation from the profane world, and it was also crucial to protect lodge members from prying eyes and state espionage. But the measures taken to achieve these goals – secure doors, painted windows, and curtained portals between

rooms – also created theatrical effects. A police report following the raid of a Parisian lodge in 1744 indicates that the lodge rooms were very dark, requiring officers to use lamps to navigate the space. As any theater director knows, such conditions make it possible to exploit the visual dynamics of shadows and control atmosphere by accentuating gloom and uncertainty at certain phases of a performance and warmth and intimacy at others.

Masonic ritual spaces draw inspiration from performance spaces across many cultures. The lodge's alignment with the four cardinal directions echoes the designs of both ancient Roman and classical Indian playhouses. Vitruvius, the Roman architect, advised against building a the-

ater with southern exposure to avoid excessive heat. Bharata Muni, who wrote the manual for Vedic theater in ancient India around 2 B.C., dictated that a new playhouse must be dedicated with food offerings of different colors to the east, west, south, and north. For these influential creators of performance space, and for the designers of lodges, an understanding of spatial anchor points was fundamental to the process of imbuing a place with meaning and purpose.

The processional nature of the initiation rite echoes the Locus and Platea staging of medieval theater – a method in which actors travelled from one freestanding set to another. Their

audience lined rectangular walls, recalling spectators' arrangements in court theater settings, such as the Palace of Whitehall theater, which was famously decorated by the architect Inigo Jones. The sightlines in modern ritual practice are more complex as theatrical spectacle than those of typical 17th and 18th century theatres, which largely relied upon picture frame stages facing an audience mostly on one side.

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THE ALLURE OF DRAMA

Though the theatrical predecessors of Masonic ritual space are ancient and medieval, its dramaturgical components follow early 18th century trends. Many others besides Edwin Booth have noted the “drama” or “tragedy” inherent in the legend of Hiram, which exhibits certain features that might have resonated specifically with 18th century spectators. It is a biblical tale, and Jean Racine, a master of neo-classical tragedy, had written several Old Testament plays at the end of his career – including the 1691 “*Athalie*,” which was set in Solomon’s Temple.

But closer to the core of the Hiram legend’s dramatic appeal is its moving, “pathetic” nature. Drama critics in the 18th century prized the ability of such stories to prompt audiences to tearful surges of feeling (as opposed to the shocking result of a play like “*Oedipus*,” or the messy, cold resolutions of Shakespearean tragedies like “*Hamlet*”). Hiram’s demise, the result of an arguably spontaneous and unplanned crime faced willfully and nobly, is a good example of a pathetic tragedy. According to the critic Jean-François Marmontel, tragedies in which a protagonist dies after being reduced to a disastrous choice, like Brutus or Cato, are more pitiful – and more moving – than those in which someone chooses an evil path. Ritual documents from the 18th century show that Masons understood this tragic story to be an example of the *pathétique*. One ritual text in the Museum of National Heritage relates that Hiram’s murder “deeply moved” King Solomon.

FROM SPECTATOR TO ACTOR

Perhaps the most vivid sign of the theatrical sophistication of Masonic ritual, however, is the way that this potent dramaturgy and the dynamics of the audience’s sympathy are orchestrated

to work together. Unlike conventional theater performances, those involved in a ritual cannot be divided neatly into actors and audience. An initiate’s function is both to watch the spectacle prepared for him, and to step into its central role. Based on 18th century ritual documents and exposures, he typically listens as those before him complete the ritual, while on the other side of the process, brothers who have already attained the degree are at hand to perform their roles while also watching the action. A sophisticated doubling of sympathetic identification occurs when the recipient is prompted to imagine himself both in the place of Hiram and in the place of his fellow brother. Simultaneously, the other participants sympathize with the recipient, and by extension, Hiram again.

While it borrows the staging, role-playing, and dramaturgical resources of theater, Masonic ritual intensifies the number and power of sympathetic connections typically available to everyday spectators. Edwin Booth clearly recognized this, and other accomplished actors who became Freemasons – including Edmund Kean, Henry Irving, and Peter Sellers – surely knew it, too. What individual Freemasons take away from their ritual experiences will surely vary from lodge to lodge, brother to brother, and event to event. But all should know that they are part of a lasting and sophisticated performance tradition that has brought its participants to moments of artistic revelation. ✨

Editor’s note: Pannill Camp, Ph.D. is assistant professor of drama and director of graduate studies, A.M. in theater and performance studies at Washington University in St. Louis. He is writing a book entitled, “Arts of Brotherhood: Eighteenth-Century French Freemasonry in Performance.”

MEMBER PROFILE

PASSING THE TORCH

MEET ANURUDDH KUMAR MISRA MEDICAL DOCTOR MASON FOR 12 YEARS

By Michelle Simone

Bro. Anuruddh Kumar Misra of Phoenix Lodge No. 144 in San Francisco has always thought ahead.

Inspired by ambitious immigrant parents, he determined his life's passion – to become a medical doctor – in high school. Today, as a board-certified physician in both sports and internal medicine, Misra serves as medical director for US HealthWorks in the Bay Area and counts several professional athletes among his consultancy clients. He frequently provides health expertise for TV, radio, and blogs, and has volunteered throughout the world.

When it comes to Masonry, Misra views the lessons of the fraternity as a roadmap for his life. "The Entered Apprentice degree was in some ways the most important for me. It drove home humility in a way that was very unique; that I had never experienced before," Misra says. "As a new father, I am already thinking of how to share these concepts with my daughter."

According to Misra, the idea of legacy – passing on the lessons that one has been taught – resounds throughout his career. "When I took the Hippocratic Oath, I had to consider, *What does it mean to be a healer?*" Misra says. "It is a powerful feeling to realize that one of the purposes of your initiation is to acknowledge your role in the next generation of healers who will replace the mentors who came before you."

And, he says, it is the same in Masonry: "You are the next torch-bearer. You have a responsibility – to carry a higher level of accountability; to be trustworthy; to represent and honor the men who mentored you – and those who came hundreds of years before." ♦

WEB EXTRA

Listen and watch radio and
television interviews with Dr. Misra:
akmisramd.com/radio.php

MASONIC EDUCATION

Induction VS. Initiation

THE INTENTION BEHIND EACH
CANDIDATE'S PURSUIT OF
MASONRY IS AN INTEGRAL PART
OF THE INITIATION PROCESS

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

A few years back, I had the pleasure of hearing a paper presented by a young and very thoughtful Mason, Jordan Yelinek, who later served as grand orator of our Grand Lodge, and then, when I was grand master, as my senior grand deacon. His topic was "Induction vs. Initiation," and he contrasted what we experience as we enter Freemasonry with what is experienced when becoming a member of most other organizations. So, with appreciation to Bro. Yelinek, I would like to share some observations about how Freemasonry is different than almost any other organization.

Many organizations, including Freemasonry, have special ceremonies to welcome new members. These celebrations are often formal and include sharing both the culture of the organization and the expectation that it holds for the new member. There are some peculiar preconditions in Freemasonry, however, which set the stage for what will happen upon formal admission into the fraternity.

One of the most significant of these preconditions is that a man must freely and voluntarily seek membership. This is validated by the promise a Mason makes, and is considered so significant that under no circumstances is there to be any implication that he was "talked into" membership. At the beginning of a new Mason's journey, the marshal is delegated by the master to reveal the candidate's intentions. In no uncertain terms, the marshal asks:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

No one

PASSIVELY *becomes a Mason ...*

HE MUST

KNOCK



on the door of

FREEMASONRY

HIMSELF.

Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, that unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, you freely and voluntarily offer yourself as a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry?

To emphasize the importance of the question and to reflect his intention of seeking out membership, the candidate will be asked this five more times throughout the course of his admission. Before accepting him as a member, the lodge must satisfy itself that it is really “of his own free will and accord” that he is seeking the privilege of becoming a Mason.

IF A MAN TRULY UNDERSTANDS THE ART OF THE CRAFT, HIS INITIATION WILL TRANSFORM HIM SO THAT HE BECOMES A BETTER MAN.

The conditions that Freemasonry requires of him are of such a serious nature that under no circumstances should he undertake the promises that he will make without a serious intention to perform them. He vows, among other things, to be a “good man and true,” to live a moral and upright life, to treat others as equals, and to practice brotherhood on a daily basis. At the end of the initiation ceremony he is reminded that from this point onward:

By the exercise of Brotherly Love [you are] to regard the whole human species as one family, the

high and the low, the rich and the poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support, and protect each other.

The word *initiate* comes from the Latin word *inire*, which means, “to enter in.” The word *induct* comes from another Latin word, meaning, “to carry.” The difference is significant. To be “inducted” is a passive concept, for someone “inducted” into an organization is carried into it by others who are already members. But *initiation* involves the active concept of *walking across the threshold by one’s own volition*.

No one passively becomes a Mason. He must enter a lodge on his own, and be received as such. He must knock on the door of Freemasonry himself. While still beyond the door, he is asked once again if he freely and voluntarily seeks to become a Mason. And all his future advancement in the fraternity will depend upon the correct answer.

The concept of *initiation* also has within it the concept of *transformation*. Initiation into Freemasonry is intended to be a transformative experience. All the symbols and allegories in Freemasonry that a candidate will discover on his journey are intended to press that idea home.

If a man comes through the doors of Freemasonry with no intention of changing his life, then his admission is no more than a mere *induction*, so common in other organizations. But if he truly understands the art of the craft, his *initiation* will transform him so that he becomes a better man. At the end of the evening, we will remind him that his *initiation*, if properly understood, will change his life. We will tell him, for example, that he is to treat his neighbor differently than many in the outside world treat theirs:

... by acting with [your neighbor] upon the Square; by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require; by relieving his distresses and soothing his afflictions; and by doing to him as, in similar cases, you would that he should do unto you.

Freemasonry is an *initiatric fraternity*. Becoming a Mason is not being “inducted” into a fraternal order or club. At the end of the Entered Apprentice Degree, the lodge confirms this by telling the new Mason:

My Brother: having passed through the ceremonies of your initiation, allow me to congratulate you on your admission into our ancient and honorable Fraternity. Ancient, as having existed from time immemorial, and honorable, as tending to make all men so who are strictly obedient to its precepts.

Becoming a Mason is a far greater commitment, with a far greater consequence, to his spirit and his life. ✧



WORDS OF WISDOM

The young men and women who join DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow for Girls look to their mentors for seasoned advice. We asked more than 114,000 fans on the Masons of California Facebook page and youth order fans: **WHAT ADVICE IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR NEW MASONIC YOUTH?**

Stay true to yourself and you will be a great Mason!

– BARBARA WILLIAMS

Treat everyone with respect and don't take kindness as weakness.

– JAMES COURTEAU

Strive against conformism; seek out what lies beyond.

– IVETTE CH

Educate by personal example.

– LAGO DAS GARÇAS

Keep your eye on the prize. It's all worth the effort you have to put in – just stay at it.

– BRIAN KING

Respect others the way you would want them to respect you. And enjoy it!

– ROLAND MATHESON

Learn right from wrong and never back down from doing right, even if doing wrong looks easier, more attractive, or will make you more popular. Doing right will bring more satisfaction and happiness in the long term.

– ANDREW MAKIN

Open-mindedness and respect for all life.

– THOMAS PAULUS

Every decision you make has an effect. When you choose to walk, speak, or act, do so with care and compassion to your fellow man.

– CASEY LATHAM

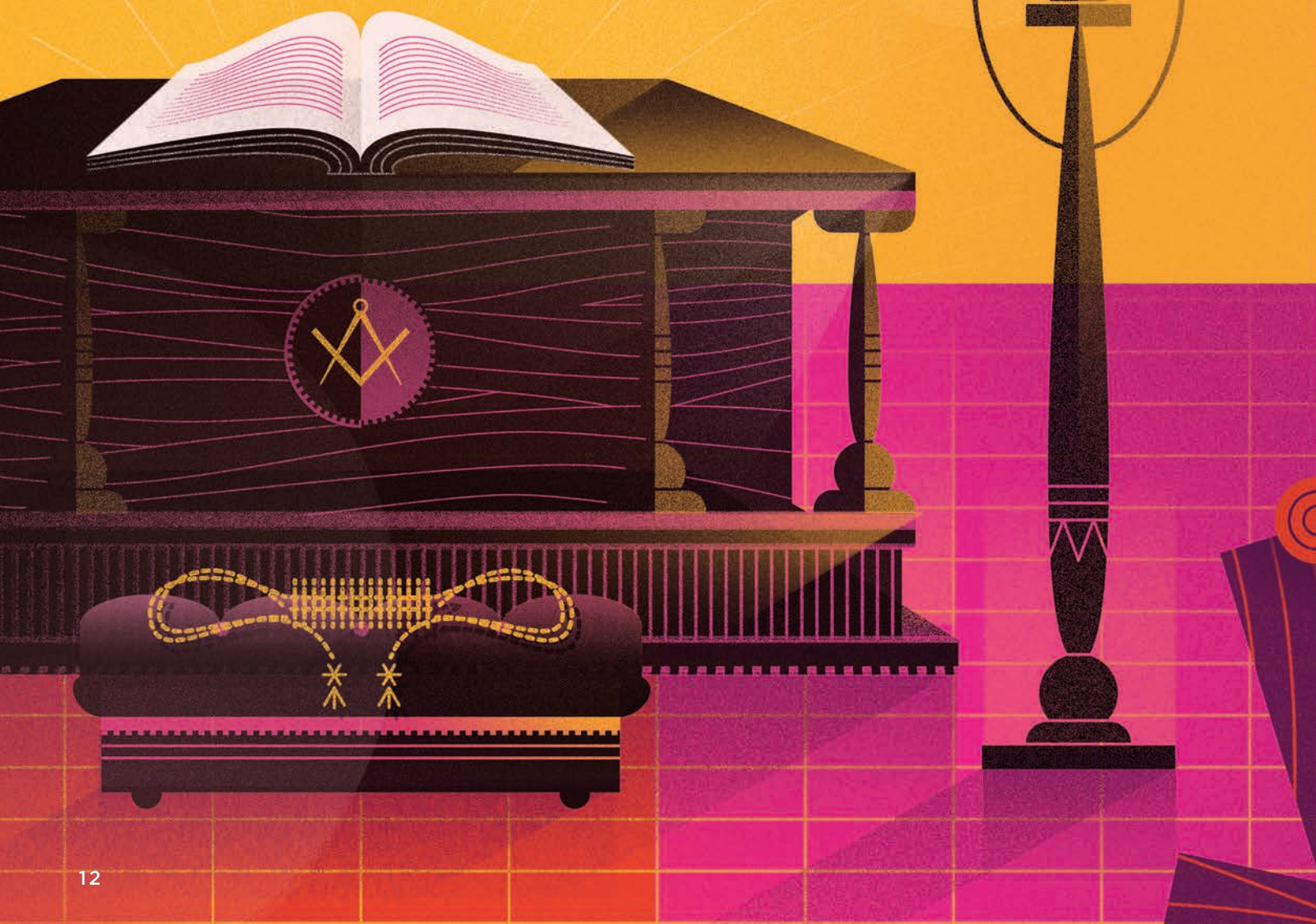
Study hard, work hard, sleep hard.

– RUDOLPH SERRANO

Know your goals and never lose focus. Respect each other as brothers and sisters. Learn from your mistakes and never let anyone make the same mistakes you have.

– KAIQUE FERRAZ

THE POWER OF INITIATION



MANKIND'S SEARCH FOR TRANSFORMATIVE RITUAL

BY *Ronald J. Watkins*

STORIES OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION – metamorphoses of individuals from childhood to adulthood, boys to men, ignorant to self-aware – are as old as civilization itself. Since the beginning of human history, initiation rituals have served as a ceremonial means through which societies have recognized and chronicled these life-altering transitions.

In the times of the Ancients, for more than 1,000 years, the highly secretive cults of the Eleusinian, Dionysian, and other Mysteries used rituals to elevate their chosen elect to greater dignity and awareness of life. Most of the great names of antiquity were among these

initiates. And, so profound were the consequences of their transformations through initiation that Clement of Alexandria, a Christian theologian writing in the second century of the modern era, wrote, “I am made whole by initiation.”

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In today's society, there are no universally acknowledged rituals that denote the transition into adulthood. Yet the desire for an initiation – complete with ceremony, formality, and transformation – has transcended time. The need for initiation is driven by an age-old quest for acceptance; a confirmation to the initiate signifying: You have arrived. You belong.

MEN BEHIND WALLS

We live in difficult times, perhaps the most challenging in all of history. Many men feel disconnected from meaningful life, adrift from tradition, cut off from their heritage, and estranged from what they intuitively believe should matter. The reality is that men require more than status, power, and wealth. As Manly P. Hall writes in "The Secret Teachings of All Ages," "Those who sense even in part the dignity of life cannot but realize that shallowness apparent in the activities of this age."

The need to live a life influenced by positive expectations, by a code of honor and integrity, is an ingrained masculine attribute. Men instinctively believe that the future depends upon them – on what they do, on their resources, and on their judgment – yet childhood and adolescence no longer have clear endings; they are protracted well into early adulthood. Men desire to know what it means to "be a man" and how to define when they have become one. They may understand that they need guidance, but it can be difficult to identify and bond with mentors who can provide vision and direction.

In their core, men desire to form bonds with other men they respect, and to be joined to something greater than themselves. They have a hunger to be accepted by other men and to select those they most respect to serve as mentors. And, they also desire to leave their own legacy; to sire or mentor other worthy men who will further accomplish great works and be heroes to the next generation.

In the forward to Mircea Eliade's "Rites and Symbols of Initiation," mythologist Michael Meade writes, "At some level, we each know that huge shifts in nature and culture are affecting us daily. But without some spiritual vision and ritual structure, we lose the capacity to handle death and embrace life fully. Instead, we build walls of denial to hold off terror and confusion and try to cover our helplessness with displays of force and greed."



COMMON GAVEL



THE ORIGIN OF RITUAL

From the beginning, before civilization or even history, men have sought to deal with the need for deeper connections through ritual; yet, the search for its origin provides no satisfactory explanation beyond the simple statement that ritual is inherent in human society and has existed through all time. Though we can surmise some early rituals based on studies of so-called primitive societies today, the first use of ritual is unknown.

We define *ritual* as a specific, observable mode of repetitive behavior intended to define or describe a person or event. It exists within churches, at the Thanksgiving dinner table, and even at the opening of sporting matches. People draw comfort from ritual, as it gives them a sense of completeness and belonging. Ritual also helps people comprehend and bear difficulties that they must endure. As Meade puts it, "Without a ritual to contain and inform the wounds of life, pain and suffering increase, yet meaningful change doesn't occur." There are, among others, rituals for birth, marriage, death, war, and coming of age.

Eliade, who is a historian of religion, philosopher, and leading interpreter of the religious experience, tells us that ritual restores freshness and strength to an exhausted world.

Ritual identifies particular times and spaces as sacred. When entering a sacred space, men leave the profane world behind to embrace the comfort and security of peace. Within these sacred spaces, the veil between humans and the transcendent are paper thin, providing the opportunity for communion between the divine and material worlds.

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LAMBSKIN APRON



SACRED TEXT

DEFINING INITIATION

Initiation refers to a specific kind of ritual, a word used by the Romans to “designate admission into the Mysteries of the sacred and secret rites.” It is intended to instruct the aspirant in certain secret knowledge and to join him to a special or sacred society, creating in the process a more fully developed and committed identity.

Initiation can also mark for society and the aspirant the transition from boyhood to manhood, at whatever age it comes. It merges the unconscious to the conscious mind, most likely for the first time in the initiate’s life. It is profound and intended to be life altering.

Joseph L. Henderson in “Man and His Symbols” by Carl Jung puts it this way:

Any of us can see, of course, that there is a conflict in our lives between adventure and discipline, or evil and virtue, or freedom and security. But these are only phrases we use to describe an ambivalence that troubles us, and to which we never seem able to find an answer.

There is an answer. There is a meeting point between containment and liberation, and we can find it in the rites of initiation... They can make it possible for individuals... to unite the opposing forces within themselves and achieve an equilibrium in their lives.

Other scholars draw a direct line between initiation and rebirth, with Hall writing, “By initiation... death is transcended, and during the course of physical existence that art of the spirit which is asleep in form is awakened ...” Meade echoes these sentiments with his assertion, “In dreams and dramas of initiation, death represents change for the entire psyche and life of a person.” Meade is, notably, positioning death as an opposite of birth, rather than as the opposite of life. So profound is the intended consequence of initiation that Eliade also considers it to be indispensable for the beginning of a spiritual life: Only in initiation is death given a positive value.

Aristotle believed that it is the experience of the initiation itself, rather than the knowledge imparted during the ritual, that allows the initiate to understand the hidden meaning of life. The ritualistic experience itself strikes at a man’s very being, “awakening” him. He emerges from the ritual as a better person than the man who entered it, and now embarks on a new direction, one that alters for the good his treatment of others and his perception of himself. Nothing will ever be the same.

For those who are ready and able to experience the initiation as it is intended, its effects begin at once. They may start with subtle, internal differences, but they will slowly manifest in how the initiate deals with others. In Masonry, we know a man is truly an initiate when he has changed for the better; when he demonstrates a closer affection for





family, greater tolerance at and about work, and less of a temper or abruptness in relationships; when he utters expressions that place his temporal life in an eternal perspective. Not all initiates overtly manifest profound changes but the differences are usually apparent to those who know someone who has been transformed.

Regrettably, not all who submit to the ritual are initiated. As Socrates wrote, "Many are the candidates seeking initiation, but few are the perfected initiates." Some are simply not ready, some were never appropriate candidates to begin with, and in other cases, the ritual is presented in a jocular, unserious manner that has no positive effect.

**"In dreams
and dramas of
initiation, DEATH
REPRESENTS
CHANGE for the
entire psyche and life
of a person."**

MICHAEL MEADE

MODERN RITUAL DECLINE

The major Western religions have always been home to ritual and certain initiatory rites, which were historically viewed as essential to their members' place in society: Those not receiving rituals were seen as outsiders and unwelcome, while those who were initiated became part of the community. In recent decades, however, Western religions' ritual role has declined. And while most initiatory aspects retain their religious significance, they no longer occupy a dual

function as an initiation for larger social purposes. Abbreviated forms of marriage, baptism, and funeral rites lack the substance and significance they previously held, and exclusion from participating in them usually does not have consequence or meaning. These rites no longer serve as a common bound for all of society.

For a time, men's initiation came primarily through fraternal organizations. To be known as a member of a fraternity, particularly Freemasonry – the world's oldest fraternity most dedicated to initiation – was a badge of distinction. But since the late 1950s, all fraternal organizations have faced serious membership declines.

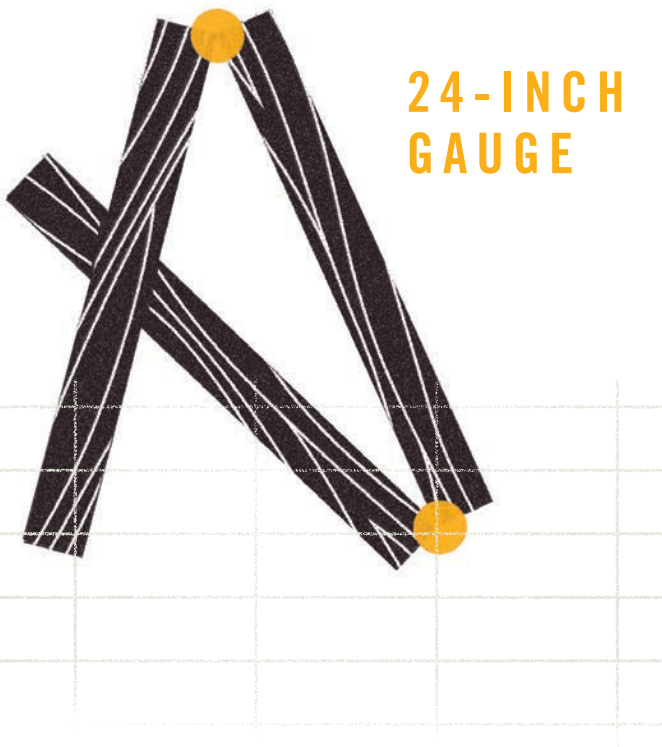
Ritual is vanishing from our society at an accelerated rate with each passing decade. Both churches and fraternities have started to abandon it or have chosen to dilute it beyond

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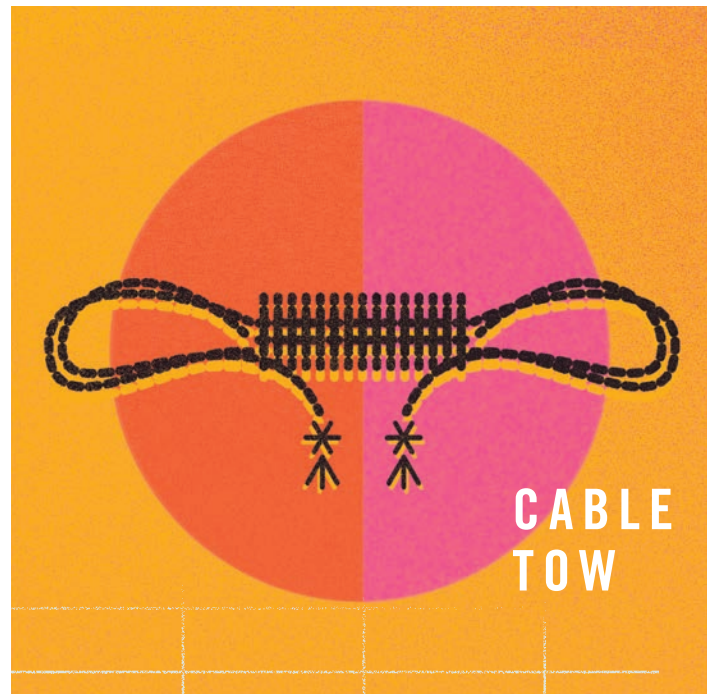
functionality. Yet the need for ritual, and in particular for initiation, is just as great today as it has always been. Transformation through initiation can mean better fathers, husbands, sons, and citizens. It means that men understand their roles in society. This serves to help ground not just the initiates but also their families, providing a traditional certainty in their personal lives that is now largely absent.



24-INCH
GAUGE

A GREAT TRUTH OF MEN

Though it is not usually understood as such, Freemasonry is at its core an initiatory experience, all but standing alone in the personal transformation it offers through its ritual. The fraternity is generally regarded as the modern heir to the Mysteries, and whether it is a direct or philosophical descendent of them, it seeks through its ritual the same ends: to initiate good men; to open to them a portal through which they may transform their lives. Men seeking meaning in their lives can find the transitions from immaturity to maturity, student to mentor, follower to leader, and inspired to inspirer within Masonic ritual.





According to Bro. Andre Salmon, we can, within ourselves, “defeat defeatisms, defeat pain, defeat suffering, defeat low self-esteem, defeat insecurity, defeat inner chaos and outer hostility, and lift our eyes to a brighter horizon.” Masonic scholar Julian Rees echoes, “As Freemasons we have a unique chance, using symbols and allegory, to free ourselves from the limitations of scientific materialism and to own up to the otherness in ourselves without which a complete knowledge of ourselves is not possible.”

The key to this transformation is to provide a rebirth – the opportunity to start anew, to see symbolic death through initiation as a welcome transition, to rid oneself of fear in order to enjoy the gift of life and all it has to offer – and to share that gift with all those the initiate encounters.

In both the Mysteries and Freemasonry, the candidate is cut off from the profane world and relinquishes some of his senses. He is instructed in ancient knowledge as he is slowly admitted into a new society. At one point, the initiate obligates himself in the presence of his new brothers, invoking God or the gods. This is followed by trials, most often associated with a great mythical figure, and he ultimately emerges at the end a more spiritual man, united within this new brotherhood.

A great truth is that promises made in the presence of men we honor hold a special and binding power. We are inspired by the process of joining together, and by the obligations we then assume. Rees asserts that, “[A]t our initiation we are launched on a quest for self-knowledge, a quest so important, that all other activities in Freemasonry,



HOODWINK

however laudable they may be, whether social, charitable or ritual, must take second place.”

A key point of this statement is Freemasonry as *launching a quest*. Freemasonry is an initiatic society, but its lessons and value are not fully contained within the three degrees. In order to truly benefit from the brotherhood, the new Mason must regard his initiation as the foundation to a lifelong process of developing his own knowledge, seeking to improve his character, and giving back to the brothers who so openly welcomed him in through the transformative experience of the ritual. This is the heritage of all Masonic brothers and a noble one it is indeed. ✧

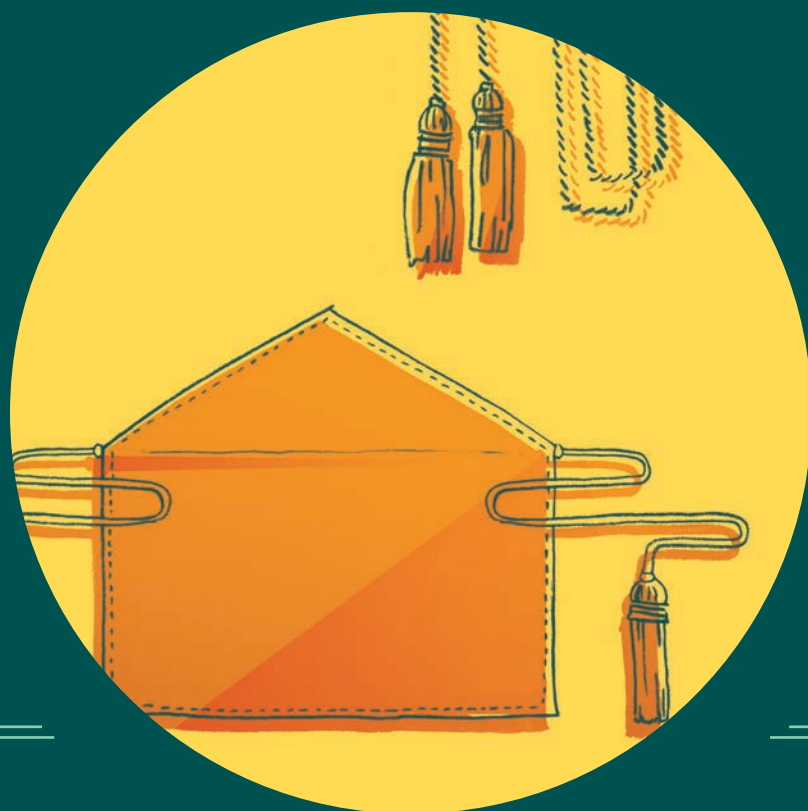
Editor’s Note: Ronald J. Watkins is past master of Wayfarer’s Lodge No. 50 in Arizona. He is the author of more than 30 books, including “Unknown Seas: How Vasco da Gama Opened the East,” and has discussed his research on a number of notable television programs.



WHAT WAS THE MOST MEANINGFUL ASPECT OF YOUR INITIATION?

A candidate's initiation into Masonry is an introduction to strange new symbols, secret rituals, and an unbreakable bond of fellowship. In this rush of new experiences, what stands out the most? What resonates in the moment, and which images and feelings stay with the Mason long after?

The answers are as varied as the candidates themselves. We asked six recent initiates to weigh in by answering the question: *What was the most meaningful aspect of your initiation?*



ALEXANDER HUANG
Cornerstone Lodge No. 659

The most meaningful aspect of my initiation was the mentorship I received from my friend, Paul Simonoff, and the camaraderie that I felt from the lodge. It was because of Paul that I finally found my way into becoming an Entered Apprentice, and it was because of my lodge brothers that I felt welcome and confident in my path forward.

JASON V. DAVID
Caledonia Lodge No. 486

The thing that stood out for me the most was when my dad delivered my obligation. I've been going to lodge with him since I was 5 or 6 years old, as far back as I remember. I grew up at lodge dinners and playing Bunco outside stated meeting. When I turned 18, I said, "Dad, I want to join." He was the master of my initiation ceremony.

RAUL DALISAY
Black Mountain Lodge No. 845

Learning that the Supreme Being is the center of the brotherhood, and that as I exercise my loyalty and worthiness in Freemasonry, my faith in God strengthens.



ANTHONY C. SANTOS
Amity Lodge No. 442

Most of all, I'll never forget taking my oath. I took it to heart! It was a very meaningful and enlightening experience, thanks to the guidance of my brothers. They showed me the true meaning of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

JESSE JOHN GROSSMANN
Santa Rosa Luther Burbank
Lodge No. 57

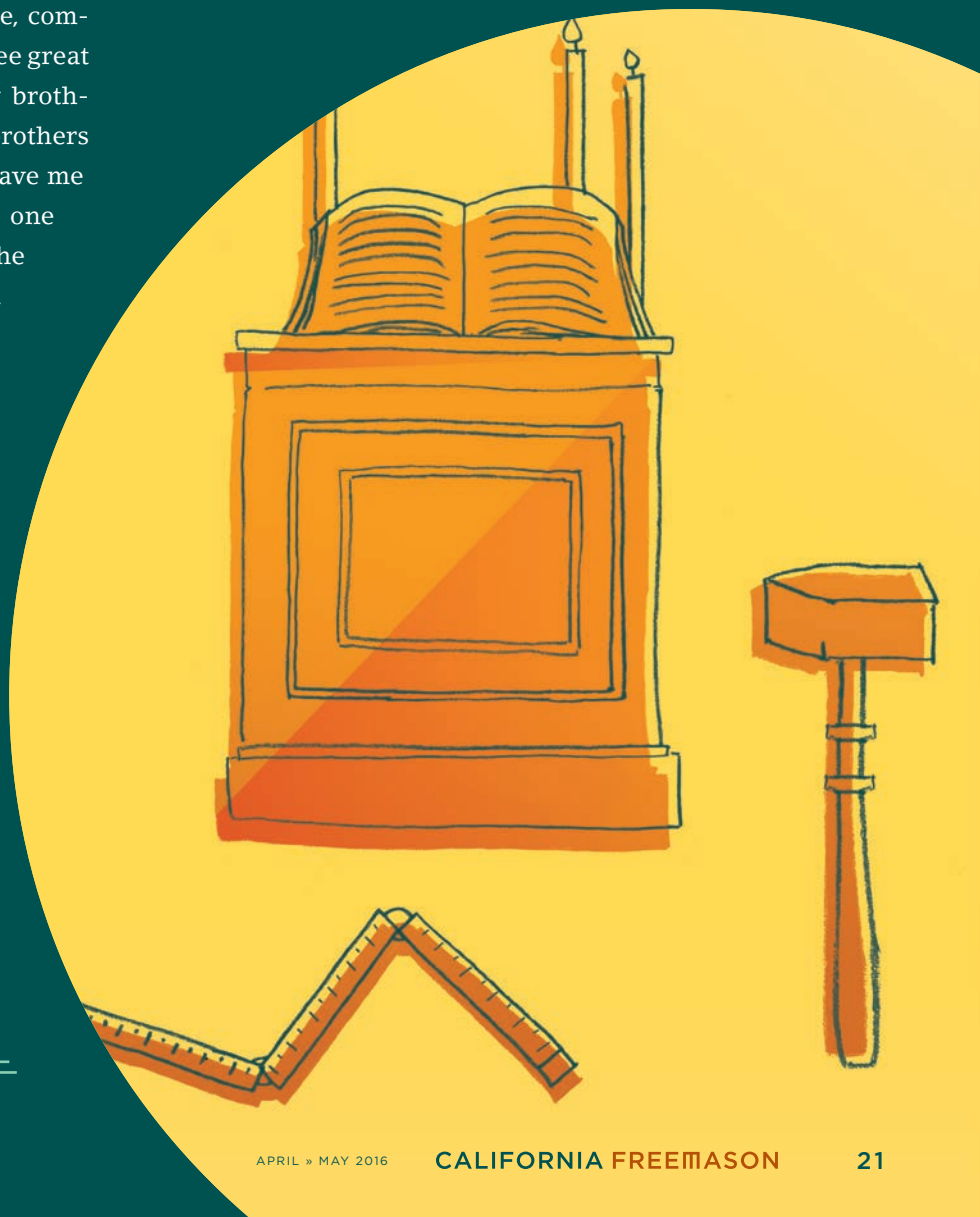
For me, it was the moment my hoodwink was lifted – my hand resting on the Holy Bible, compass, and square, and the shadow of the three great lights dancing silhouettes across my new brothers' faces. I thought about how all other brothers experienced this same enlightenment. It gave me a warm and secure feeling of acceptance, one I'd never experienced in my life. I felt on the level. It was at that point that my personal and fraternal obligation to Freemasonry became the helm of my existence.

RYAN DIGIULIO
Corinthian-Hammonton
Lodge No. 9

Receiving the support and acceptance of my new brothers, and knowing that it will last a lifetime.



What was the most meaningful aspect of your initiation? Join the conversation on the Masons of California Facebook page:
facebook.com/MasonsofCalifornia



BUILDING A MORAL AND ETHICAL LIFE

Freemasonry offers a discipline for personal transformation, helping us build more moral, ethical, and satisfying lives. Symbols are used to remind us of these higher standards, and to positively guide our actions. These symbols are presented through an initiatic process, a series of words and actions intended to take both the candidate and previous initiates re-witnessing the ceremony from the regular world to a place of heightened awareness. Initiates promise mutual support in each other's transformation, as well as mutual confidentiality about the specifics of the proceedings. They are made aware of what we call "modes of recognition," gestures or words by which they may make themselves known to one another, derived from symbols of common work.

These characteristics of Freemasonry as an initiatic process are also found in our three Masonic youth orders: Rainbow for Girls, Job's Daughters, and DeMolay. Each order has a distinctive initiation ceremony, each with a unique set of symbols and modes of recognition. Members commit themselves to the same process of self-improvement and mutual support as we do in our Masonic lodges, but with added poignancy: Our Masonic youth orders offer a vision of a moral and ethical life at a time when members are making

THE INITIATIC PROCESSES OF THE MASONIC YOUTH ORDERS PREPARE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN FOR A LIFETIME IN FREEMASONRY

By R. Stephen Doan, Past Grand Master



choices and practicing conduct that will set their future course as adults.

The rainbow is a symbol of God's promise, first made to Noah, that divine assistance will never again be denied to God's creation. The rainbow appears as the storm clears, pointing to a pot of gold in which Rainbow Girls find the treasures of a moral and ethical life: love, religion, nature,

immortality, fidelity, patriotism, and service, each of which is symbolically represented by a color of the rainbow. The girls learn that these treasures are available through faith, hope, and charity. Each girl receives at her initiation a miniature Masonic apron as a symbol of the love and protection she has received through Rainbow for Girls from all Masons.

Job's Daughters borrows from the Bible's Book of Job, the story of a righteous man whose faith was tested by incredible adversity and who learned from his experience that reliance upon God through faith and the power of prayer would sustain him until divine blessing could penetrate



IYOB FILIAE

the storm. Through their ritual, Job's Daughters learn that they can overcome adversities if they put their trust in God, and they are taught the triumph of faith in God as they journey through life. They are also impressed with the need for improving their times of prosperity with acts of kindness to their companions.

The dove, urn of incense, and horn of plenty are their expressive symbols of faith, prayer, and reward.

DeMolay has two degrees: In the Initiatory Degree, the DeMolay promises to practice the virtues symbolized by the seven jewels in the crown of youth:

filial love, reverence for sacred things, courtesy, comradeship, fidelity, cleanness, and patriotism. He understands that this commitment is the best preparation for manhood, as the practice of these virtues is also the basis of a fulfilling and useful life as an adult. In the DeMolay Degree, the candidate experiences a taste of the Masonic third degree.

His DeMolay brothers reenact the trial and martyrdom of Jacques DeMolay, the last grand master of the medieval Order of Knights Templar, who refused to disclose to the king the identity of his brother Knights or the location of the assets that they were

holding for the poor. DeMolay paid for his refusal with his life, which ended in incredible agony when he was burned alive while tied to a stake.

Many of us first became members of the family of Freemasonry through one of our Masonic youth orders. Others have been rewarded through their work as adult advisers in one or more of these groups. All of us support them by sharing our Masonic heritage and by providing them with other resources to help them in their journey towards self-improvement. Remember that nothing beats being there to show these young people that you care. By standing with them, you might just deepen your own understanding of Freemasonry by seeing our principles through the eyes of our Masonic youth. Your guiding hand is needed to ensure that their initiation is the beginning of a rewarding and just life. ✦



WEB EXTRA



Visit masons4youth.org to learn more about becoming a youth mentor.

MASONIC ASSISTANCE

The House Freemasonry Built

THE PROMISE OF THE MASONIC HOMES OF CALIFORNIA

By Laura Benys



When President William McKinley was asked why he became a Mason, he famously told a story about Winchester, Virginia in the final months of the Civil War. He was serving as an officer in the Union Army, when he visited a field where 5,000 Confederate soldiers were being held prisoner. A Union doctor was shaking hands with prisoners and handing them money. The doctor told an astonished McKinley: "If they are able to pay me back, they will. But it makes no difference to me. They are brother Masons in trouble, and I am only doing my duty." As the story goes, it was at that moment that McKinley resolved to become a Mason.

When a candidate is initiated, he promises to be there for his brothers. It doesn't matter whether there are differences between them, whether or not they have met before, or if it is a time of peace or war. The promise that took shape on the field in Winchester the day McKinley visited plays out today in acts of kindness from one Mason to another. It fuels every lodge's Outreach Committee, and accounts for the emergency donations that flow into faraway lodges hit by natural disaster.

Here in the Golden State, perhaps most powerfully and steadily, it is embodied by our Masonic Homes.

A MONUMENT TO RELIEF

The Masonic Homes of California was established in 1898 as a shelter for Masonic widows and orphans. Today, it encompasses numerous relief programs, providing outreach services to nearly 400 Masons and families throughout the state, and housing more than 380 Masons, wives, and widows at two residential campuses. This is all funded by the charitable dollars of California Masons.

Each candidate makes an initial financial contribution to the Homes. It's not dissimilar to an operative stonemason of old paying into his guild's emergency kitty for widows

and orphans. With this commitment, he becomes part of a charitable institution that will care for him and his own family, and will help him care for his brothers and theirs – to a far greater degree than he could ever achieve alone. He is entrusting the Homes to carry out his obligation of relief.

John Abernethy lives at the Covina Home. One of his greatest joys as a Mason has been as a candidate coach, particularly in opening the eyes of his candidates to the true nature of the fraternity. He requires that candidates meet with him at the Home, so they see what the fraternity built to protect its most vulnerable. They meet the elder brothers, wives, and widows who turned to their fraternity during a time of uncertainty and need, and were cared for like family.

"When you come to the Home, you see what Masonry really represents," Abernethy explains. "Masonry is not just being a member of a lodge. It is something that will affect you and your family for the rest of your life."

"The night you get your first degree is the last night you will have to be alone in the world," he says.

"When we welcome brothers and their wives and widows from

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

THE NORTH SIDE OF THE SAN GABRIEL HOME - THE FIRST MASONIC COMMUNITY FOR CHILDREN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - IN 1916



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masonicassistance@mhuc.org.

throughout the state to our two Masonic Homes campuses, they know that they will be cared for and that they will live well," says Masonic Homes Executive Vice President Gary Charland. "They know this because their brothers have promised so."

And, independent evaluations of the Masonic Homes concur. The Masonic Home at Union City has consistently received a five-star rating from Nursing Home Compare – ranking it as one of the best retirement communities in the country for health inspection, staffing, and quality measures.

THE PROMISE WE MAKE

Last year, brothers from Carpinteria Lodge No. 444 visited the Covina Home for its annual SummerFest. The master at the time, June Longcob, remembers halting the group on their tour through campus, and asking them to look around at the buildings, the grounds, and most of all the residents. "I said, 'When you make a donation, this is who you help,'" Longcob recalls. "I said, 'This is what you're doing.'"

"Our Masonic Homes are not retirement homes," says John Lowe, president of the Masonic Homes Board. "They are communities where residents lead active, fulfilling lives; places of safety and warmth, staffed by consummate professionals. They are places where the needs of our fraternal family always take the highest priority."

It's a cause that every Mason can lean into. Thanks to the donations of California Masons, the Homes

continues to expand and maximize services. Last year, an improved memory care program was introduced at the Union City campus, followed by a new short-term rehabilitation program. The existing skilled nursing facility will soon turn into a center for both short-term rehab and long-term care needs. In Covina, plans are coming into focus for a new health center that will offer skilled nursing and memory care for the first time. In the near future, both campuses hope to be able to welcome a greater number of assisted and independent living residents.

Fred Avery, a trustee on the Masonic Homes Board, describes each new program, service, and building as a vow fulfilled. Through the Homes, he says, "we are directly taking care of our own. We affect every Mason, now and into the next hundred years."

With that, the Homes embodies one of the fraternity's most powerful traits, first witnessed by a young William McKinley on the fields of Winchester: Masons genuinely care about, and for, each other.

"We are an organization that people can count on," says Douglas Ismail, chief philanthropy officer. "Think about how you are counted on in your life. You're counted on by your children, by your friends, by aging relatives. And if you're a Mason, you're counted on by your brothers. We don't take that lightly."

"People are counting on us," says Ismail. "We can't let them down." That's a promise each brother makes. And it's a promise he entrusts to the Masonic Homes. ♦

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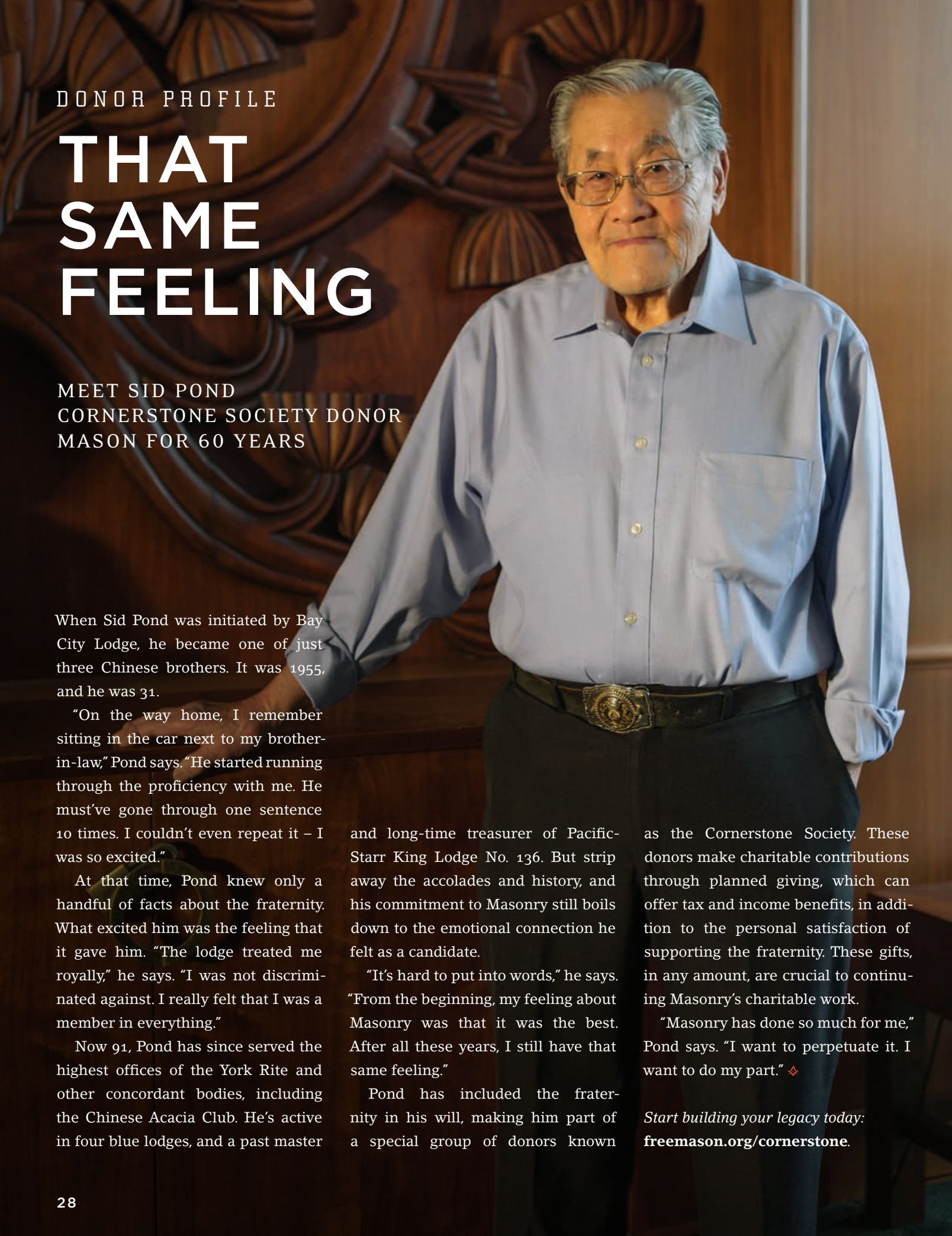
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DONOR PROFILE

THAT SAME FEELING

MEET SID POND
CORNERSTONE SOCIETY DONOR
MASON FOR 60 YEARS

When Sid Pond was initiated by Bay City Lodge, he became one of just three Chinese brothers. It was 1955, and he was 31.

"On the way home, I remember sitting in the car next to my brother-in-law," Pond says. "He started running through the proficiency with me. He must've gone through one sentence 10 times. I couldn't even repeat it – I was so excited."

At that time, Pond knew only a handful of facts about the fraternity. What excited him was the feeling that it gave him. "The lodge treated me royally," he says. "I was not discriminated against. I really felt that I was a member in everything."

Now 91, Pond has since served the highest offices of the York Rite and other concordant bodies, including the Chinese Acacia Club. He's active in four blue lodges, and a past master

and long-time treasurer of Pacific-Starr King Lodge No. 136. But strip away the accolades and history, and his commitment to Masonry still boils down to the emotional connection he felt as a candidate.

"It's hard to put into words," he says. "From the beginning, my feeling about Masonry was that it was the best. After all these years, I still have that same feeling."

Pond has included the fraternity in his will, making him part of a special group of donors known

as the Cornerstone Society. These donors make charitable contributions through planned giving, which can offer tax and income benefits, in addition to the personal satisfaction of supporting the fraternity. These gifts, in any amount, are crucial to continuing Masonry's charitable work.

"Masonry has done so much for me," Pond says. "I want to perpetuate it. I want to do my part." ♦

Start building your legacy today:
freemason.org/cornerstone.



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Age	CGA Rates	
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