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CIVILITY

IN AN

UNCIVIL AGE

“ It is not unthinkable
**FOR MASONS TO
LEAD THE WAY**

TO A SOCIETY
IN WHICH
**MORE CIVIL
BEHAVIORS REIGN,**

and respect for
one another,

**AND DIFFERING
OPINIONS
IS PARAMOUNT.**”

» — Margaret C. Jacob

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Civility in an Uncivil Age

In the 18th century, Freemasons exemplified civility and respect within lodges and the public sphere, quietly assuming an influential role in the development of a free civil society. Today's members may need to consider a bolder approach in order to reignite open, civil public discourse and freedom of expression within an increasingly tumultuous political and social climate.



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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

M. David Perry, Deputy Grand Master



IS CIVILITY ALIVE?


Whether or not we can articulate the definition of *civility*, it is a part of our everyday lives. We are not only witnesses to it; civility is a part of us and has been from our very beginnings. It was evident when we were taught to share, to respect our parents, and to treat others as we would want to be treated: That was civility in the making. It was there when we first learned to talk and continues to be present today in the way we respond each time we are spoken to. (We all understand the phrase, “It’s not what you say, but the way you say it.”)

Civility is in front of us, no matter where we are or what we do. But sadly, it is the lack of civility that seems most apparent. Waning civility manifests in our schools, as young students cope with peer pressure – and worse, bullying. It is in our workplaces, as we navigate office politics and try to work with others with whom we may not agree. We witness it at the most innocent of places – children’s sporting events – where our kids are taught sportsmanship, teamwork, and fair play, while parents in the stands display the opposite. It is there even in many homes, where what should be our most treasured relationships may be the most hurtful to those involved. When we pick up the newspaper, turn on the TV, or fire up our computers, it is there. Are we, as Freemasons, more civil to one another? The answer should be yes, but even in some of our lodges, where peace and

harmony should prevail, civility does not always come easily. Being civil to one another can sometimes seem to be more work than it is worth. Yet we must continue to work at it – we must think about our actions, just as we must think before we speak. Civility should be as simple as the Golden Rule: “Treat others as we would want to be treated.”

Let us remember why we joined this great fraternity, where good men are made better; let us use the tools of our craft. The square provides direction and helps us square our actions by the square of virtue. Virtue is the cement that binds our relationships, and it is by our virtues that we are measured. Remember – as Masons, we are not measured by our wealth or fame, but by our character, deeds, trustworthiness, and love for one another.

The square and compass symbol that we proudly display on our buildings publicizes that within is a Masonic lodge, the home of Freemasons who act upon the level. When we proudly display that same symbol personally, on our jewelry, car, or the clothing on our backs, it should be a reminder to us to behave in a manner fitting of a Freemason. Our fraternity’s greatness is demonstrated through our positive contributions to the world.

As we reflect upon the notion that a man must ask a Mason to become a Mason, we must ask ourselves: Are we the role models that we strive to be? 

UPON THE LEVEL, BY THE SQUARE

AN ANTIQUE LIMERICK OFFERS AGE-OLD WISDOM

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

In 1830, workmen were repairing an old stone bridge in Limerick, Ireland. When they removed some of the stone to effect the repairs, they found a curious relic of an earlier era. It was an old brass square, with this engraved upon it:

*I will Strive to Live with Love and Care
Upon the Level, By the Square
1507*

The square is currently the proud possession of Lodge No. 13 in Limerick. Also known as the “Baal’s Bridge Square,” it was presented to the lodge in 1871 by the widow of the provincial grand master, to whom it had been given upon its discovery.

There is no way to know if the square originally had a Masonic association, but the sentiments in the engraving are clear enough. The echo of these words is still found in the closing ceremony of Masonic lodges: One of the last reminders for brothers before they go forth into the world is that Masons “act by the square” at all times and that they must “meet upon the level,” meaning that they are expected to treat all men and women as equals wherever they may be. To this sentiment is added the expectation that everything we do will meet the test of the plumb – the emblem of justice.

This concern with *right* behavior is a Masonic characteristic and it is important not only within the lodge, but also when members are abroad in the world. Therefore, the ancient Masonic symbols of the square, the level, and the plumb are equally applicable to our political and social dealings when abroad in that world. Freemasons have contributed much to the

development of the democratic society in which we live, but the most valuable contribution may be this principle of how we should act when in the company of others. Masonic lodges are places where debate and discussion are done freely and fairly, without the need to attack those with whom we may disagree. It is an ordered space, under the direction of the master, whose authority to control and direct the debate is almost absolute. But this, in turn, requires that he adhere strictly to fairness in allowing such discussions, asking all those present to “conduct themselves with due order and propriety” while the debate is in progress.

Political society is held together by an agreement – John Locke called it the “social contract” – whereby men and women surrender their individual right to live as they please in exchange for a society in which we give to one another the right to also live a life of fulfillment. The Declaration of Independence phrased it this way:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident
That all men are created equal,
and are endowed by their Creator
With certain unalienable Rights
That among these are Life, Liberty
and the Pursuit of Happiness*

It is sometimes easy to forget that our political discussions should be shaped by principles larger than the immediate issues of the day. But this is a concept our earlier brothers understood quite well. They

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MASONIC EDUCATION

I WILL
STRIVE TO LIVE
WITH

LOVE AND CARE

UPON THE LEVEL,

BY THE SQUARE



WE HOLD

these truths to be

SELF EVIDENT

brought the Masonic passion for free discussion to the emerging political society that was the product of the American Revolution. It is for this reason that our country did not turn to tyranny or dictatorship. The preservation of freedom was empowered by the creation of the “public space,” something that is missing from all totalitarian movements, religions, cultures, and political states. Masonic lodges served to be akin to “schools of government.” And although they were that, they were also so much more: they were the model for free and open discussion within the rules of civility and respect.

It is difficult to preserve the freedoms that are won with an original revolutionary impulse, but these freedoms are essential to the longevity of a society. Americans were successful in their fight because they found that the secret of living in an ordered society was to encourage political and social dialogue and to treat opponents with courtesy, civility, and respect.

And, going back to our limerick, if our conversation with others is shaped by “love and care,” we will listen to one another

with respect. If our response to others is “upon the level, by the square,” we will treat others’ opinions as we would wish them to treat ours. And, if we use the test of truth – squaring our actions by the square of virtue – we won’t misrepresent the views of others in our discussions, as we will trust them not to misrepresent ours.

Freemasonry has much to offer our political dialogue today. And one place to begin is by making sure that our own comments meet the test of the old square found under a bridge in Limerick, Ireland:

*I will Strive to Live with Love and Care
Upon the Level, By the Square* ♦



IN CALIFORNIA

FREEMASONRY AND THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

AN INFLUENTIAL MOVEMENT WAS INSPIRED BY MASONRY'S COMMITMENT TO TOLERANCE AND FREE THOUGHT

By R. Stephen Doan, Past Grand Master

Some would argue that we, especially us Californians, have benefitted because Bill Gates made a billion dollars. Many Americans carry in the palm of their hand a computer more powerful than could have been imagined just a few generations ago. Computers are in almost every home and office worldwide, simplifying formerly labor-intensive tasks, transforming the way we work, and redefining our economy. It is this type of innovation that brings fundamental economic change to a society. But as a result of this change, there are often only a few clear winners who make the lion's share of the profit. A great chasm between rich and poor often results.

Progressives and the progressive movement were born out of the desire to even out the great inequality of wealth this type of economic change can create. This movement flourished from the 1890s to the 1920s in the United States, promoting social and political reform. In many ways, the men who drove this movement had motivations similar to the men of the English Enlightenment who transformed an operative craft to a speculative science. California was an important contributor to the progressive movement, and California Freemasons were key players in it.

History on repeat

Following the American Civil War, the progressive movement sought solutions to the perceived excesses of American industrialization. As had happened before in England during its Industrial Revolution, tremendous concentrations of wealth developed in America, producing a period that we remember as the Gilded Age. Everyone benefitted from the improved standard of living earned through the industrialization of America. No longer were Americans held hostage by subsistence farming. Farmers could use technology to grow more with fewer laborers, liberating farm workers to move to cities and towns to take the new jobs that industrialization had created.

Yet, while standards of living improved, this rapid industrialization was not without social costs. There were not enough American citizens to satisfy the need for workers, and the lure of better wages and living conditions in America attracted increased immigration. New immigrants with limited English-language skills and little understanding of the democratic process were often swayed by local political bosses. These "mobsters" used their assumed authority to exploit vulnerable immigrants at the expense of the common good, threatening the established American political dynamic. In addition, many immigrants lived in subpar conditions which, while perhaps an improvement from their lives in their homeland, were shocking to many Americans.

In a society based on rugged individualism – the belief that we can succeed on our own and that government involvement in society should be minimal – the individual is at a disadvantage when so much power is concentrated in big business. As the saying goes, money buys power. The people with key jobs and large holdings in big, industrial corporations developed an oversized influence on all aspects of public life. No longer was the debate between small farmer or rancher and small town merchant or craftsman. The debate was between big business and individual workers, and big business was winning.



PROGRESSIVES PROMOTED FREE, QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN.

California's role

In California, the perceived influence of oversized business was not focused on large industrial concerns, but rather with the oversized impact of the railroads – particularly the railroads' ability to control and manipulate the pricing of transporting California farmers' and ranchers' products to the industrial East. (This is one reason why progressives were also interested in the Panama Canal – they wanted to provide an alternative to the railroad system, to minimize its power.)

In this culture where money equaled influence, Freemasonry's values – including the right to improve oneself and equality of opportunity – were attractive to the larger population and were at the core of the progressive movement during the 1890s to 1920s. This Masonic influence can be found in many of the socially-centered initiatives that were adopted during this time.

California Governor Hiram Johnson, a Mason, was the leader in bringing into effect many reforms that are still in place today. State Senator Albert E. Boynton, who would eventually become California's grand master, was the leader in the state legislature who shepherded Governor Johnson's legislation into law. Along with their fellow progressive politicians (many of whom were also Masons), Johnson and Boynton put into place many important initiatives.

Continued next page

IN CALIFORNIA

The progressives' legacy

One of the progressives' greatest accomplishments was introducing ways for the public to have a stronger voice than industrial concerns or a single, influential person. The initiative, referendum, and recall procedures, and our practice of non-partisan judiciary appointments are examples of this. Progressives also strengthened the direct primary law, obtained voter approval of women's right to vote, initiated the direct election of United States senators, and sought to regulate monopolies through antitrust laws that promoted fair competition for the benefit of consumers. To ensure government operations were run honestly and efficiently, a state civil service commission was established to select and retain government workers based on ability, rather than political connections. They strengthened and expanded the state's regulatory agencies by making them independent of the groups being regulated and staffed them with honest, disinterested, and qualified experts.

California progressives sought scientific, medical, and engineering solutions to address the perceived ills of society. To protect workers, they established an effective state labor commissioner and made a number of labor improvements, including adopting eight-hour work days for women, establishing child labor laws and workers' compensation insurance, setting a minimum wage, and initiating an industrial welfare commission to address sweat shops.

They established an important legacy that's treasured by California Masons today: To encourage assimilation of immigrants into American society (and away from the influence of bosses), progressives promoted free, quality public education for all children. The progressive movement dovetailed even more closely with Freemasonry when Grand Master Charles A. Adams committed California Masons to supporting public schools, beginning in 1920 with Public Schools Week. His program continued in the years that followed, and many have said that Masons were the pioneers and catalyst for quality California public education for many decades to follow.

Why Masons?

Why would Freemasons be behind these reforms? Masons recognize that independence is possible only when one has the skills to make his own decisions, which Freemasonry symbolizes through the study of the liberal arts and sciences. California Freemasons promote this value through their support of universal, free education for our children.

Masonry teaches the importance of harmony, especially with opponents, and searches to find ways to avoid partisanship that can impede progress. The progressive movement attempted to address these problems by changing the rules by which we appoint our leadership, and giving the people more opportunities to voice their opinion.

As we grapple with very similar issues in today's California – the quality of our public schools, immigration concerns, and tax laws – we can find lessons in these past efforts. Equality of opportunity, an educated citizenry and the avoidance of partisanship are Masonic values that are just as important to the success of society today as they were during the progressive movement of the last century. ✧

FREEMASONRY AND THE CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

OUR COUNTRY'S MOST TREASURED FREEDOMS ARE CLOSELY TIED TO THE CRAFT

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

Although Freemasonry does not permit discussions of politics in its meetings, discussions about supporting public schools are expressly permitted by the California Masonic Code. Section 200.030 declares that, "Statewide public schools welfare, including school bonds and school taxes, is a proper subject for discussion in Lodges." There are some limitations that follow, but for the most part, discussion of the welfare of public schools is an exception to our general rule prohibiting political topics. There is a reason for this, and surprisingly, it may not be known to many Masons. Here is the story.

A search for further light

Freemasonry involves a personal commitment to seeking knowledge, which Freemasons call "light," and growing this knowledge is often referred to as a search for "further light in Masonry." From this commitment developed Freemasonry's deep promise to strive for an enlightened citizenry, and the concept of universal education became one of our great contributions to the world.

Perhaps in other countries it would have been sufficient for Freemasonry to just theoretically support an enlightened citizenry, but in America, our belief of the importance of education developed into tangible support for a free public school system. But, Freemasons' vision went far beyond that of fostering an educated public. This vision included the concept of a public space, uninhibited by governmental or religious control, where the enlightened citizenry could be free to discuss and debate. This concept has had its greatest flowering in America, and is alive in every community in our country.

The roots of "free" public schools

The importance of a public school system independent from church and state can be found in the ritual of the Order of DeMolay. At a DeMolay officer installation, the installing officer asks that the Holy Bible be opened on the altar, and proclaims it a *symbol* of religious freedom – not the repository of any particular religious faith, but a *symbol* of the freedom to pursue the religious beliefs that each individual may hold sacred to himself. He reminds those present of the importance of living in a free society committed to a government *of the people, by the people, and for the people*. Lastly, he places a set of school books on the altar, and says:

"From the station in the East, emblematic of the morning years of life, we place the school books on the Altar as a symbol of the intellectual liberty, without which there could be neither civil nor religious freedom. They are particularly emblematic of the great public school system of our country, the foundation of that universal enlightenment which is the crowning glory of our institutions. Devoted championship of our public schools is a cardinal teaching of the Order of DeMolay."

Note that the installing officer does not say that we are *only* committed to an educated citizenry. We are, but we are also committed

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HISTORY



**PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF THAT
UNIVERSAL ENLIGHTENMENT**

WHICH IS THE
CROWNING GLORY
OF OUR INSTITUTIONS

to much more. He states that the public school system of our country is, “the foundation of that universal enlightenment which is the crowning glory of our institutions.” Why should this be? What makes public schools, and by extension, a safe, free place to discuss ideas, so different and important?

A new revolution

Hannah Arendt, one of the great political theorists of the last century, escaped Nazi Germany just before millions of Jews were arrested and subjected to the horror of Holocaust death camps. This personal experience caused Arendt to spend her life studying why and how societies can engage in such evils against their citizenry.

Through her study of repressive governments like Nazism and Communism, Arendt discovered that there was a common characteristic of their opposites – societies that found a way to foster freedom and individual liberty. And she noted that while the American Revolution had resulted in the creation of the world’s first free society, other, even later, revolutions ended in tyranny. What was so different about the American Revolution? And how did it make a difference for freedom?

Arendt’s answer was that the American Revolution resulted in the creation of what she called the “public space” – a space where ideas could be exchanged without recrimination, where reason could prevail. The American Revolution was a success because Americans founded an ordered society that could engage in political and social dialogue while respecting differing opinions – one that treated opponents with courtesy and civility.

Shepherds of the public space

After 1781, when the war was effectively won, Americans engaged in a frenzy of “constitution-making” at the state level, which culminated in their writing of the United States Constitution in 1787. All of these new political documents protected the political rights of new citizens, such as those

eventually guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. The genius of this American political innovation is that these rights could only be exercised within a “free space” – a public space free from both religious and political influence or control. The failure to understand this requirement caused other revolutions that followed ours to revert to tyranny afterwards.

Freemasons led the charge for instituting a free public space, helping fellow citizens understand the importance of having a neutral forum for debate and discussion – a requirement at the heart of our treasured freedoms of speech, press, and assembly. Our lodges continue to model this public space today, as they did in the 18th century. And afterwards, it was a natural step for Masons to initiate and then support the creation of public schools as the way of fostering and protecting this “public space.”

The rest is, as they say, history. We as Masons are passionate in our support for public schools because we believe them to be the best guarantor of the preservation of liberty. As the DeMolay ritual puts it, they are “the foundation of that universal enlightenment which is the crowning glory of our institutions.” ✧

FEATURE



CIVILITY

IN AN



UNCIVIL AGE



WHAT CAN
— AND SHOULD —

FREEMASONS DO ABOUT IT?



▶▶▶ BY MARGARET C. JACOB ▶▶▶▶▶

Imagine stepping into the lobby of a chic London theater, dressed to the nines. You might suppose you'd find your fellow theater-goers similarly decked out, equally prepared for an evening of refinement and culture. When the lights dimmed and the curtain rose, you would hope – no, you would expect – that this audience would follow the plot with interest, and applaud at the appropriate moments. During intermission, you imagine, you might all retire to the lobby for a refreshment and gracious discussion.

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These expectations, reasonable enough today, are a far cry from the reality of 18th-century London. In that time and place, common behavior at the theater ranged from loud gossiping over the actors, mimicking of performances out on the floor, violent rioting, and, on particularly spirited evenings, a communal trashing of the theater. Petty theft, drunken brawls, and prostitution were regular affairs.

Amid all that rabble-rousing, there was one force of quiet composure. Enter the Freemasons: model theater patrons, exemplars of etiquette, pillars of civility. In 18th-century London, some Masonic lodges paraded through the streets together to the theater, where they made an example of watching in polite stillness. Eventually, others followed suit. With time, their silent example made a difference. The question is: Would it today?

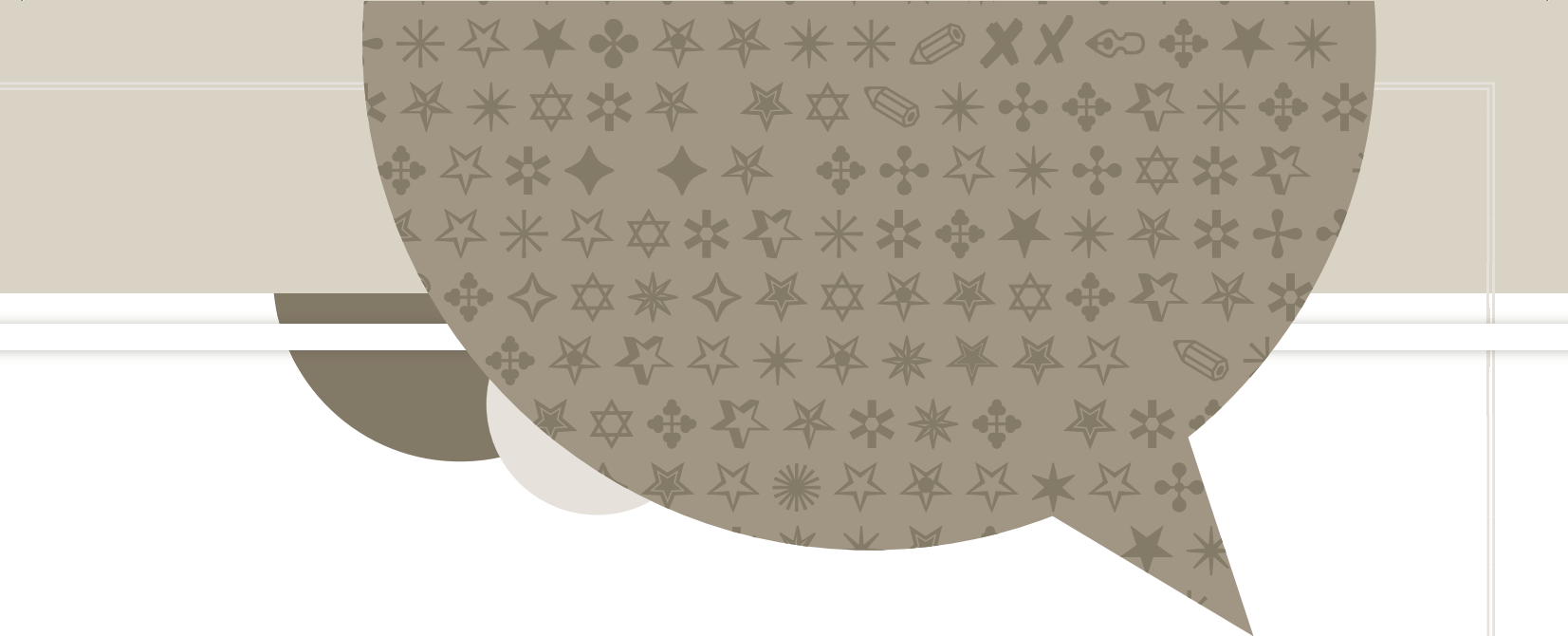
COURIERS OF CIVILITY

Inside of theaters and out, ample evidence suggests that, beginning in the 18th century, Freemasonry acted as a civilizing influence in both Western Europe and the American colonies.

In multiple orations, in every European language, we can find Masonic brothers praising the order for its practice of friendship and mutual respect. An orator in Paris during the 1780s told his brothers, “The hearts of Masons touch one another everywhere at every point.... The happiness of one is necessarily the happiness of all.” French Freemasons of the time provided cash to brothers or their widows who had been caught in distress or poverty. They asked members who were doctors to assist other ill brothers and to do so without a fee. Dutch and Belgian lodges had similar funds.

Eighteenth-century Masonic orators declared that “every lodge is a democracy.” British orators proclaimed, “We wish to unite all men of an agreeable humour and enlightened understanding,” and furthermore, “All men are by nature brethren, so consequently all men are by nature equal.” Dutch Freemasons saw the entire world as a republic; each nation as a family; every individual as a son.

“Whether they were combating the inequities of the financial market or the rudeness of theater-goers, it seemed that Masons hoped to make up for the failings of society.”



In its first century of existence, this Masonic idealism about society and humankind was infectious. In The Hague, the constitution book of a lodge for men and women proclaimed, “The brothers and sisters [will deport themselves] without vice, in order to augment the good manners of society.” Whether they were combating the inequities of the financial market or the rudeness of theater-goers, it seemed that Masons hoped to make up for the failings of society.

THE PATH OF GREAT DISCRETION

Yet brothers also sought to hold the world at bay. There is a tension, rooted in history, between Masonic ideals and a fear of notoriety in the public gaze. Early brothers regularly referred to non-Masons as “the profane.” Especially in Catholic Europe, Freemasons kept a low profile while working to assist brothers, orphans, and the indigent.

In the English-speaking world, lodges followed the lead of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), which in turn followed the lead of king and court. During the early decades of the 20th century through the end of World War II, the UGLE opted not to be seen or heard. Britain was not without its anti-Masonic, anti-Semitic fringe, and discretion was useful in avoiding vicious public attacks. But first and foremost the UGLE was imitating the practices of king and aristocracy: The less said, the better.

This policy had one fatal flaw: The UGLE did not work to counter hostilities or conspiracy theories, or even to clarify common misunderstandings. The habit of discretion, which still holds among the upper classes in Britain, continues to

dominate official Masonic responses. Since the 1950s, a careless form of British journalism has been on the rise; witness the phone-hacking behavior of the now defunct News of the World. Over the last 30 years, one consequence has been a flood of public attention to the fraternity, a fair bit of it negative in tone or content. In January of this year the British newspaper The Independent opened an article on Freemasonry and the police with the following: “Secret networks of Freemasons have been used by organized crime gangs to corrupt the criminal justice system, according to a bombshell Metropolitan Police report leaked to The Independent.” The response of the UGLE? No comment.

Freemasonry is still a part of civil society, but it may have become an odd, cautious part. Lodges deliberately avoid politics and religion. They usually do not insert themselves in public discussions. But does that render them ineffective when, or if, they participate in the public sphere?

Continued next page



INCIVILITY IN THE REPUBLIC, AND THE ROLE OF MODERN MASONS

At its 18th-century origins, Freemasonry proclaimed values very much derived from what may be described as “classical republicanism.” Masonic orators invoked the Roman republic as an ancient example: Virtue lay at the heart of an ethical society, one that eschewed mindless luxury, greed, and self-interest. Lodges on either side of the Atlantic – and the Channel – talked about moral regeneration, about how patriots would obey the laws and still work to reform society and government. Clearly, those ideals worked best in actual republics, such as were created in the late 18th century.

What about today? Republicanism, in its modern form, is still central to the Masonic legacy. It is not about left or right, liberal or conservative, white or black, male or female. It is about virtuous behavior appropriate to citizens of a republic.

In this line of thinking, *incivility* is the antithesis of republican virtue, precisely because it actually works to stifle freedom of expression. And society’s current issue of incivility is in our public discourse, particularly with regard to politics and race. Certainly we can see this happening around us – our endless entertainment news cycles fan the fires of partisanship, and anonymous online forums have made spiteful public comment easier and more bold. Staying silent may sometimes seem to be the only reasonable way forward. But it begs the question: Do we as Americans understand how to have civil public conversations about difficult and emotional subjects that can deepen our understanding of one another?

American grand lodges have remained, for the most part, just as silent as their British counterpart. If the fraternity is to combat incivility, it may need to move out of its comfort zone of discretion. Look at the rules of civil behavior, spoken or tacit, that characterize any lodge meeting. Could these be codified and taught to anyone of good will? There are specific forms of behavior that brothers seek to avoid. Could these be enumerated and presented to audiences interested in Freemasonry, who would learn in the process about civility? In Italian male and female Freemasonry, there is a widespread custom of remaining silent during one’s first year of membership. Is there some comparable practice in American lodges that might serve to make people stop and think before



A Partnership for Civility

"Civility is a variation of the 'Golden Rule.' It is being kind, courteous, polite, and avoiding overt rudeness. In community improvement it relates to higher-minded and self-sacrificing behavior. Civility is the "how" when it comes to building relationships."

—Jay Newman & Kent Roberts

Masons in California and throughout the country have been taking the matter of civility to heart over the past several years, and thinking hard about what actions they might take to make a positive impact in our society. At the 2014 Conference of Grand Masters of North America in Baltimore, Masonic leaders from throughout Canada, the U.S., and Mexico discussed ways in which Freemasonry might be helpful in efforts to build a more civil society. Their ideas were threefold:

- » Work to be more civil in all individual dealings with all people, Masonic and non-Masonic
- » Create tools based on Masonic tenets and values to be made available to every member across North America and eventually society at large
- » Convene and partner with other entities that share the objective of creating a more civil society

This third idea has resulted in a partnership between the Grand Lodge of California and the National Civility Center, an Iowa-based non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping people make their communities better places to live through a comprehensive approach to community

improvement. This approach includes engaging community members and local organizations to become more effective at solving tough social issues through listening, dialogue, and authentic human connections.

In September, Kent Roberts, founder and executive director of the National Civility Center, spoke to more than 200 Masons at the California Masonic Symposium in San Francisco and Pasadena, California. During his speech, Roberts made an inspiring point: Studies of thriving and flourishing organizations have shown that when positivity is instilled into them, a profound impact is made upon them. And, he's convinced that Masonic values can be the positive injection that society needs to become more civil.

The partnership is working to build a civility toolkit – an easy-to-use kit based on Masonic values and a list of “rules of engagement” that will help people build connections and dialogue to find common ground. The kits will be used across the country to help build a foundation for finding effective, workable solutions for divisive issues within communities.

Kent Roberts' final words at the Symposium were in the form of a question that we may all ask ourselves: “If not you, who? And if not Freemasons, who?”

For more information about the National Civility Center and its mission, visit civilitycenter.org.

speaking? Lodges have considerable experience with philanthropy, especially in the area of health care. Could they bring any recommendations to hospital professionals? Despite American Freemasonry's tortured history of race relations, enormous strides have been made to bring white and black brothers together. How did lodges do this: What principles guided the integration and what have been its benefits? Could

local Freemasons hold workshops in places like Ferguson, Missouri and bring together blacks and whites, police and citizenry, in the common cause of brotherhood?

Continued next page



Freemasons, by their very nature, are eager for knowledge, eager for formal settings where serious conversation can occur about a range of topics. Perhaps these discussions can begin within lodges, articulating the principles and protocols that inculcate civility. And perhaps this is a logical place for the meaningful conversations to start: among brothers who rely and trust one another in a safe environment.

CONSEQUENCES AND QUESTIONS

The question of its public persona is as old as Masonry itself. Within 20 years of the founding of the Grand Lodge in London in 1717, lodges were forbidden in the Dutch Republic because of their Orangist associations; they were spied on in France by the police; even in Britain, where they were a homegrown phenomenon, they were attacked from the pulpit.

Will contemporary American brothers run the same risk if they openly engage with the problem of incivility? Conspiracy theorists still lurk out there in the shadows. And in tackling any public issue – especially where politics is involved – one should expect a certain amount of hostility. Not all brothers will welcome this. In the public arena and among their own membership, the grand lodges would have their work cut out for them.

And so, how do Freemasons proceed? Should American lodges rethink their role in civil society?

As originally formulated by the German philosopher George Hegel, the concept of civil society denotes a zone of independent social life, separate from the state and from the traditional institutions of family, church, confraternities, etc. It is a place where the individual can be independent, mindful of events, forceful in his or her opinions, and also exercise freedom. For Hegel, “The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.” This “progress of freedom” would suggest that the uncivil has just as much a right to be voiced as the polite.

But what if the uncivil drives people out of the zone of engagement, forced out by the uncouth, the mean, impolite, racist, sexist, etc.; left then to retreat into the privacy of family – or even of the lodge? If that is what is now happening, then do participants in civil society have an obligation to change the nature and tone of the discussion? We are a republic without monarchy or aristocracy; here in America, leadership comes from the citizenry. Do Masons, in particular, have a responsibility to address social ills, to address our common humanity?

These are questions that only Freemasons can answer, armed with their history of republican idealism. It is not unthinkable for Masons to lead the way to a society in which more civil behaviors reign, and respect for one another, and differing opinions, is paramount. Just remember the theaters of 18th century London, and that Masons were able to lead by example to make a more meaningful experience for all. Perhaps now is the time for history to repeat itself. Let the questioning begin. ✨

Editor’s note: Margaret C. Jacob, Ph.D., is among the world’s foremost Masonic scholars. She is largely responsible for documenting and establishing connections between early European Freemasonry and the craft today. Through a partnership with the Grand Lodge of California, Dr. Jacob leads the development of academic courses on the history of Freemasonry and civil society at the University of California, Los Angeles.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

THE MASONIC INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY IN FRANCE

by Jay Kinney

France holds a unique place in the American imagination. From its perfume to its food and wine to its couture, France has a reputation for sophistication and the good things in life. This reputation, well-earned by its aristocracy, has been both a blessing and a curse for French society. French Freemasonry began in the French aristocracy, but it evolved to generously contribute to the democratic society we know today.

In the beginning

French Masonry began as a pastime of the rich and the ruling classes. Its reach expanded in the course of the 18th century to include the growing population of merchants and other businessmen, along with intellectuals excited by the ideas associated with the Enlightenment. This culminated with the formation of the Grand Orient of France in 1773 where, after considerable debate and maneuvering, two “fundamental principles” were enacted: that lodge officers were to be democratically elected, and that each lodge was to be equally represented at the grand lodge or national level. As Margaret C. Jacob, Daniel Kerjan, and other Masonic scholars have indicated, this established a democratic template that would soon challenge the hierarchical feudalism of France’s *Ancien Régime* – the social and political system under Bourbon royalty.

Freemasonry’s role in the French Revolution is a matter of scholarly dispute. That the Revolution was at least partly inspired by the ideals and philosophies of the Enlightenment is a given, but there is scant evidence of Masonic involvement in the uprising and the radical leveling of “the Terror” that followed.

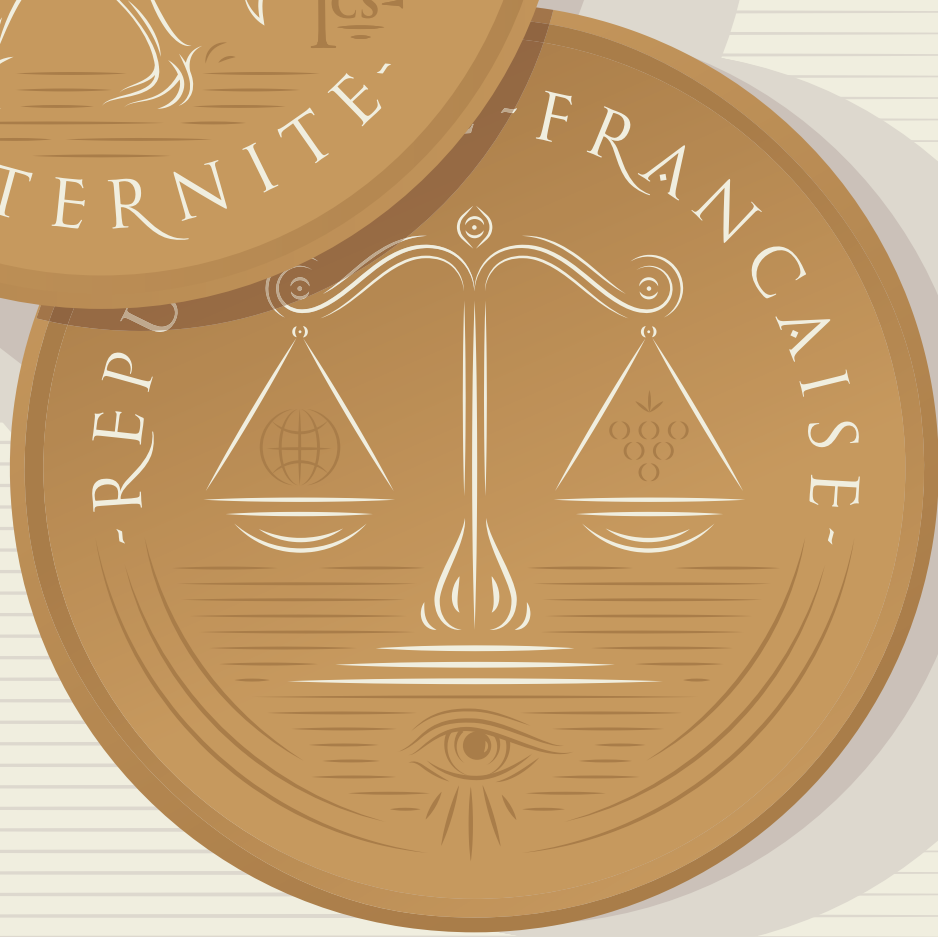
However, once Napoleon came to power, Masonry recovered its footing, and many Masons held leadership roles in the Empire. With Napoleon’s brother as grand master of the Grand Orient, that body “played an important role in the development of the 139 [administrative] departments at a time when Imperial France was at its height,” notes Pierre Mollier, the director of the Library of the Grand Orient of France and editor of the recently founded scholarly journal, *Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society*. According to Mollier, “French Freemasonry was so heavily intertwined with the Empire, that when the Imperial system collapsed, Masonry was very nearly swept away with it.”

Napoleon’s rule was succeeded by the Restoration (1814-1830), which featured the return of Bourbon kings to the throne. This also saw a return to the political influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which had a critical view of Masonry. Faced with a reactionary regime, most lodges contented themselves with founding charitable societies and other philanthropic initiatives, while still standing by the ideals of the Revolution. Such initiatives began to form the components of civil society.

Nevertheless, many Masons took part in the July Revolution of 1830, which forced the abdication of the Bourbons, only to have the House of Orléans assume power. During this next period, which culminated in the Revolution of 1848 and the establishment of the Second Republic, Masons’ interest in political and social affairs grew, with some lodges advocating utopian schemes.

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AROUND THE WORLD



The golden age

Dating back to the Enlightenment, there was a tradition in some French lodges of engaging with new ideas and supporting a broadly progressive agenda. However, this component rose and fell over the course of the political turbulence of the 19th century and also varied from lodge to lodge. Still, Mollier explains, “From the middle of the 1860s, French Masonic lodges began to attract a new type of member, drawn from the social and intellectual elite, who were destined to hold the reigns of political power in France until the turn of the century... During this period Masonry repeatedly acted as a conciliatory force in order to try and avoid a civil war.”

Though the period of the Third Republic (1870-1914) got off to a rocky start with the first decade dominated by royalist throwbacks, Mollier notes its most liberal period (1880-1914) “is viewed by many as the golden age of Masonry’s social involvement.” He points to legislation and social policies that were first discussed in Grand Orient lodges, and which were subsequently enacted by the government, helping to bring France into the modern world.

These included the freedom of association, the right to a primary education, legislation regarding unions and divorce, and legislation concerning women and children in the workplace. These ideals were international in reach. In America, progressive thinkers who were strongly influenced by the same Masonic values championed similar legislation in California and elsewhere.

The modern era

With the onset of World War I in 1914, much of Europe was drawn into a prolonged bloodletting that Mollier says “shook many Masons’ faith in social progress.” The rise of the extreme forces of Bolshevism and Fascism – both of which were hostile

to Masonry – and the German occupation of France during World War II forced French Masonry into a much lower profile, limiting its interaction with and influence upon civil society.

Still, amidst all the social upheavals that have rattled French society from the Revolution forward, French Masonry has provided a relatively stable center by helping to materialize the ideals of “*liberté, égalité, and fraternité*,” which are as much a part of the French heritage as the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are part of our American heritage.

And now, in our modern Western society whose cultural influence extends far beyond geographic borders, both French and American grand lodges share a desire to support an authentic feeling of brotherhood that transcends national differences. This encompasses an active support for civil discourse, tolerance, individual freedom, and public education. These shared ethical values form a Masonic “chain of union” which continues to influence and positively affect our world, and is the Masonic contribution to today’s civil society. ✧

CONVERSATION STARTER

IN A TIME WHEN DISCUSSION OFTEN DEVOLVES INTO DISSENSION, FRATERNITY LEADERS TRAIN FOR CIVILITY

by Laura Normand

Recently, the small community of Ventura, California was divided against itself. Insults were hurled. Reputations were tarnished. Names were called. “It was vitriolic,” says Grand Master Russ Charvonja, who is a resident there. “And it was over whether or not to build a Walmart.”

The same thing happens every day in communities, and lodges, across the country. When a topic is emotionally charged, the first casualty can be common courtesy.

Charvonja hopes to find a better way. Last February, he presented an idea at the Conference of Grand Masters of North America: that Masons lead a movement for civility. He gained the support of grand lodges across the U.S. and Canada. This team is now in the process of collaborating with the Nationality Civility Center, and has begun developing tools to help lodges and communities approach divisive topics with a little more empathy, and a lot more decency.

Hot topics, cool heads

At the Grand Family orientation in August, Charvonja presented one such tool to his officers, leadership training facilitators, and Lodge Support Committee members.

When the officers and families filtered into the meeting room that day and took their seats in the audience, they saw five chairs in a semi-circle facing back at them. Two representatives from Arizona State University were waiting.

The brothers were about to take part in a training led by the University’s Institute for Civil Dialogue. As the Institute describes it, the training is intended to help participants face “hot topics” with “cool heads.” It is structured as a moderated discussion, which centers on a prepared statement about a polarizing topic.

The chairs in the semi-circle each represent a position: “strongly disagree,” “somewhat agree,” “neutral/undecided,” “somewhat agree,” or “strongly agree.” The volunteers in these chairs each have the chance to express their viewpoints in an opening statement and then in an ensuing dialogue. An impartial facilitator keeps the discussion moving and clarifies important points. A fact-checker is on hand to immediately confirm or refute any statements offered as facts. The audience’s job is to observe, ask questions, and reflect on their own reactions. All told, the discussion and debriefing for one topic takes about an hour.

The first topic at the Grand Family orientation was on the subject of school vouchers (although any divisive topic would have served). Five individuals took a seat in the semi-circle of chairs, which had been scooted so close together that participants’ knees were almost touching. Before they began, the facilitator reminded them of the rules of conduct: Be passionate but not hostile. Watch your body language. Separate fact from feeling. Listen carefully and empathetically.

Great expectations

Of course, some of this may sound familiar. Masons have always promised to approach differences of opinion with respect and cooperation. Grand Chaplain Gary Silverman, who was among the five position chairs, calls this the “Mason switch.” “The minute someone says to you, ‘That’s not very Masonic,’ you kinda go ‘Whoah,’ and put on your go-to-meeting clothes,” Silverman says. “A switch gets flipped.”



The civil dialogue training reinforces that switch. Past Grand Master John Lowe acted as facilitator for a second discussion topic. “The training provided, in a safe environment, a way to hear multiple sides of an issue,” he says. “Everybody got to state feelings and facts without one person dominating the conversation.”

S. Joseph Eshaghian, grand orator, was also among the hot seats. He was surprised and impressed when the opposing side altered his opinion a bit on one point. “That was an immediate and direct benefit of listening to the other person,” he says, “rather than forming my own argument in my head while they were speaking.” It’s something he practices as a Mason – but how often is it the case outside the lodge? In political debates? In family arguments? And what about in troubled lodges, many which struggle with opposing factions?

The brothers who participated in August may now be able to act as facilitators in such lodges, helping members through the same process. Through civil dialogue, perhaps lodges can more easily come to an understanding on what the issues are and how to solve them together, without simply trying to “win” the argument.

“This is not about debating,” says Charvonja. “In a debate, you’re not allowed to waver from your position, because if you do, then you’ve lost. This is about having a conversation, and perhaps even changing your own mind.”

Civil champions

“I really do think the civility movement is going to improve our world,” Charvonja says. “The better we treat each other, the more enjoyable our daily lives will be.”

The fraternity, through the National Civility Center, may one day convene community groups for the same type of dialogue that the California Grand Family had.

“Whatever the topic, it can only benefit from civil discourse,” says Silverman. “I can’t think of an exercise that’s more in harmony with the core values of Masonry.”

Eshaghian agrees. “People forget how to communicate and express themselves without trying to convince someone else that their viewpoint is correct or becoming belligerent,” he says. “Masons commit to self-improvement and to improving the world. This is a perfect project for us to champion.” ♦

FACES OF MASONRY

MEET MARCUS GRACIA: CORPORATE MEDIATOR AND MASTER MASON

by Laura Normand

When he was approached about this issue's Member Profile, Marcus Gracia was pleasantly surprised. "Usually lawyers are the brunt of jokes, not admiration," he says. Gracia's career took a meandering path, starting in finance, winding its way through arbitration, and ultimately arriving at his current role and passion: mediation. He is a negotiator between corporations, navigating emotionally charged situations in search of compromise.

"I take civility to heart," Gracia says. "*Civility* means trying to work on the positive rather than the negative, even when it's difficult – especially when it's difficult." Without civility, he says, people cease to treat each other well. They stop listening. Whether individuals or corporations, that rarely leads to a happy resolution.

In his line of work, the quality that Gracia values most of all is honor. "When one lawyer says to another, 'You are not an honorable man,' it's the equivalent of hitting him in the face with a gauntlet in the Middle Ages," he says. "It means, 'You ought to be disbarred.'" In law and in lodge, Gracia does his best to lead by example. He is a Mason of 25 years and twice-past master of Mount Jackson Lodge No. 295. In his installation as master last year, he directed his lodge to a familiar theme:



"In Masonry, we claim that we take good men and we make them better. How do we do that?" he asked his lodge. "We start out with honorable men."

In his own words

WHY DID YOU BECOME A MASON?

I met a fellow in San Francisco who I admired very much, who was very involved in Freemasonry. When he introduced me to the lodge, I admired the men I met there. I try to bring others into the fraternity in the same way: I try to model what I saw in those men.

HOW HAS MASONRY INFLUENCED YOU?

I'm a very opinionated person. I've got thoughts on everything. My brothers have helped me realize that I need to work on toning down the way I talk about those opinions. I look at each day as a chance to do that work.

HOW CAN FREEMASONRY LEAD TO A MORE CIVIL FUTURE?

More and more, people are spending their time in the company of computers. But try as we might, we will never be able to shake hands with a computer. Civility doesn't come from the sky in a bolt of lightning. It takes practice. It takes work. That's part of what Masons do in lodge. ♦

GENTLE JOURNEY

THE TRADITIONS PROGRAM EMBODIES THE BEST OF DEMENTIA CARE

by Laura Normand

It was a beautiful afternoon in the garden – the sunshine warm on his arms, birds singing above. The plants shimmered under the fountain of his watering can. Two young ladies strolled past, then paused to admire something down the path. Something

about it moved him. He set down his watering can and picked two flowers. He approached the ladies with a smile, and handed a flower to each.

He could no longer remember his wife's name or the faces of his children. He no longer knew how to work a microwave or what year it was. But in that garden, with the sunshine and birdsong and two young ladies passing by, he knew exactly what a gentleman should do.

Continued next page



MEMORY CARE PROGRAM MANAGER CHRISTINA DRISLANE CONNECTS WITH A RESIDENT IN THE MASONIC HOME'S TRADITIONS PROGRAM.

MASONIC ASSISTANCE

Creating moments of connection

Dementia affects some 5 million Americans today. It's a devastating disease, deteriorating not only a person's memory, but his entire cognitive functioning, including reasoning and behavioral abilities. It comes in many forms, the most common being Alzheimer's disease. Researchers have yet to find a cure or treatment for any. But what they have learned is how to improve the quality of life of a person experiencing it. The Traditions program at the Masonic Home at Union City exemplifies those findings.

The gentleman in the garden that sunny day lives on a floor dedicated to the Traditions program and devoted to Homes residents who are physically strong but suffering with advanced dementia. These 15 residents are prone to wandering off. They often feel great anxiety and confusion. Some experience personality changes and delusions; many lose language skills and forget how to do everyday things. Over the past few years, the Traditions program has embraced sweeping changes to ease this process.

The program has always offered an intimate, structured environment, with lots of individual support. But now, with the help of a professional designer in memory care, the physical space is completely transformed. Three walls were knocked down last year, and new color schemes and décor were brought in. The dining room is now an open, family-style space flooded with natural light. The walls and furniture are awash in warm, engaging colors. Photographs of California landmarks and iconic images – a

field of poppies, San Francisco cable cars – dot the walls. As families visit and walk through the halls, they can point to these photos and use them to retell memories of family road trips and vacations. A crafts room is a hub for ceramics, painting, and arts therapies. Just outside is the garden, securely key-coded to prevent wandering off. A horticultural therapist volunteers regularly, leading programs that have drawn some of the most reclusive residents out of their shells.

For such residents, many who grew up on farms, the act of watering a garden or harvesting tomatoes is familiar and comforting. It's a tether to a piece of their identity that might have been lost. This is the thrust of the Traditions philosophy.

"We want to find moments of connection each day, chances to let our residents' real personalities shine through," says Christina Drislane, who supervises Traditions' programming and staff. "If there's a point in the day when they smile, we have given them back something that may not have happened in quite a while. There is no point in memory loss when that is unattainable. You just need to create opportunities for it."

The person within

New programming in the Traditions program focuses on creating those opportunities. At least six different activities are planned for each day, from painting to music appreciation to reminiscence groups, in an effort to reach each resident and fulfill different physical, psychological, and spiritual needs.

Traditions staffers, who are all certified in dementia care – above the minimum requirements – are trained to anticipate resident needs and intervene or redirect in a troubling situation. They perform all the regular duties of certified nursing assistants: passing out medication, serving food, and caring for residents' hygiene. But last year, they were also specially trained to lead groups. They might invite residents to an impromptu memory activity. They might take a few residents through an online program, or get a group together for karaoke. They lead art classes and music appreciation. After dinner, they gather with residents for



THE TRADITIONS PROGRAM WORKS TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED CARE FOR EACH RESIDENT'S UNIQUE NEEDS.

dominoes and simple card games. Walk into the Traditions floor, and it feels like family.

"Memory loss can be a rough journey or a gentle journey based on the skills and heart of the people around you," says Drislane. "The Masons are known for their tradition of caring."

This practice, embodied by all Masonic Homes staff, has a special place in the Traditions program. Caregiving for those with dementia can require great patience and understanding. "There are moments that are trying. There are moments when you have to take a breath and have the self-awareness to ask a coworker to step in," says Drislane. "The staff has to bring the best parts of themselves to this job."

It's another example of civility, in a way: When difficult situations are approached with compassion and grace, they often bring out our best.

And then, there are those moments when you witness miracles.

Drislane tells the story of one resident with severe dementia. The resident was losing her language skills, and rarely spoke at all anymore. But one day, as part of new programming, she and fellow residents were enjoying a presentation about classical music.

"She got up out of the blue, went to the piano, and started playing," says Drislane with wonder. "Nobody knew she could play! The piano had always been there. But having that time to focus on classical music, having that chance to hear a particular song – somebody inside her woke up." And these are the moments that are worth it all. ✦

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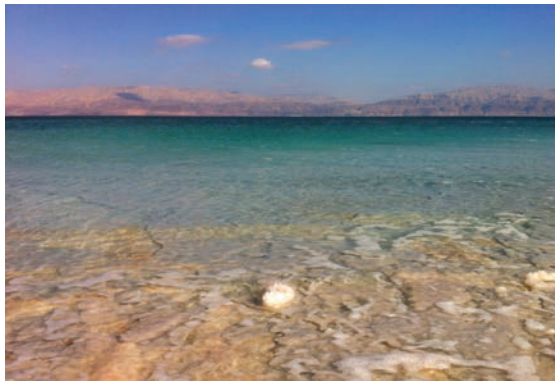
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A. Raymond Schmalz, Grand Treasurer
John R. Heisner, Senior Grand Warden
Russell E. Charvonja, Grand Master
M. David Perry, Deputy Grand Master
Bruce R. Galloway, Junior Grand Warden
Allan L. Casalou, Grand Secretary

SECOND ROW LEFT TO RIGHT:

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S. Joseph Esshaghian, Grand Orator
Christopher A. Putnam, Assistant Grand Organist
Daniel J. Dailey, Junior Grand Deacon
Roy R. Pool, AGL Division VII
Thomas E. Colgan, AGL Division IX
Stephen R. Miller, Grand Organist
Fred L. Avery, Grand Sward Bearer
Peter L. Cunningham, Grand Tiler
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