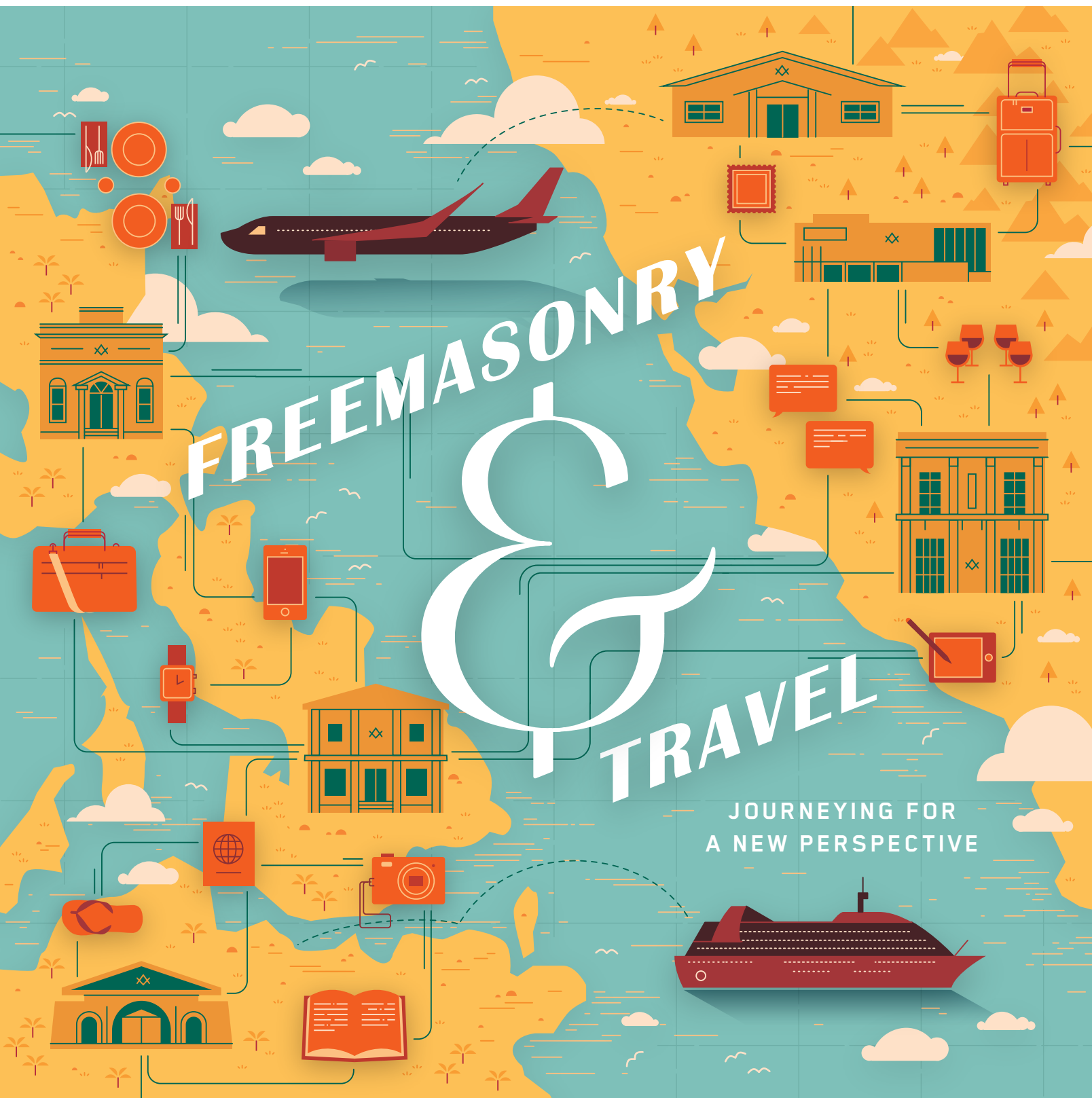




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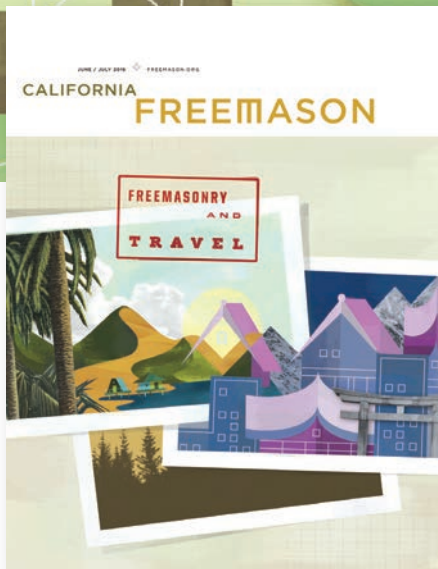
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CALIFORNIA FREEMASON

**JUNE
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6



THIS ISSUE'S COVER DEPICTS TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN MASONIC LODGES AROUND THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY CALIFORNIA AND PHILIPPINES – THE SUBJECT OF THE FEATURE ARTICLE. SHOWN HERE IS THE RUNNER-UP COVER: A SMALL COLLECTION OF TRAVEL EPHEMERA IS PILED LOOSELY TOGETHER, SUGGESTING THAT THE OWNER OF THESE TREASURES IS REMINISCING OVER A RECENT OR PAST JOURNEY. THE MASONIC SYMBOL SIGNIFIES THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BOTH TRAVEL AND MASONRY TO NEW EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE, AND WISDOM. LEARN MORE AT FREEMASON.ORG/JUNE16COVER.

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

For Grand Master M. David Perry, travel has been an inspiring part of his Masonic journey.

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FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

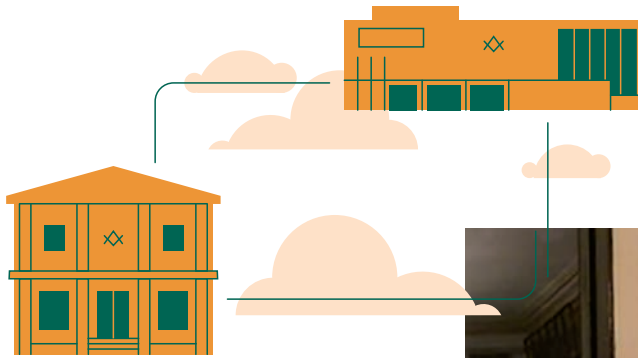
One brother's unique idea for a traveling gavel is building connections between Masons throughout the nation – and with it, creating opportunities for meaningful fellowship.

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FREEMASONRY AND FREEDOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Despite a turbulent political climate in Middle Eastern nations today, there is a strong foundation of Freemasonry in the region – and it may serve as a roadmap for future peace.

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THE PHILIPPINE CONNECTION

Far away in the Western Pacific, 7,000 miles and a 16-hour flight from California, floats the island nation of the Philippines. But as distant as it is geographically, Philippine Masonry is close at heart for the growing number of Filipino-American Masons in this state, and it represents a special relationship for our Grand Lodge.



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This June, the Masonic Homes will host an innovation-themed conference. With a new mobile memory care program and a suite of cutting-edge technology to debut, California is setting the example.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

KNOCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED



In my continuing journey as grand master of California, I have been blessed with the opportunity to visit lodges throughout our state as well as in many other jurisdictions around the world.

Traveling is an essential part of being a Mason. There is no better feeling than to walk into a lodge as a stranger and leave as a brother – to become part of the family of that lodge. You will leave having formed a bond of fraternal love, and with new friendships that can last a lifetime. Many times, you will gain a new perspective, a renewed Masonic spirit that you will take with you when you leave, sharing it with brothers in your home lodge. It is exciting to exchange ideas, to work together to accomplish something great, and to build on the common goal of becoming a better man. Every lodge is special and each has something to offer. You just have to get out there and see the Masonic world around you.

Have you traveled lately? If not, I encourage you to experience another lodge. Don't limit yourself; visit as many different lodges as you have time for. This may mean traveling to a lodge in another country, or making the time to attend a meeting or Masonic celebration in a community nearby. Within California alone, there is a great deal of diversity in our brotherhood and much to be learned by exploring it.

All you have to do is knock, and the door will be opened.

M. David Perry

M. David Perry, Grand Master

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From Sea to Shining Sea

FROM VIRGINIA TO CALIFORNIA, A TRAVELING GAVEL IS
CEMENTING STRONG FRIENDSHIPS NATIONWIDE

By Julie Bifano Boe



The journey began with a spark of inspiration. In 2013, as the incoming master of Transportation Lodge No. 337 in Newport News, Virginia, Brian Croteau wanted to create a significant and unique legacy for his lodge: introducing a traveling gavel that would eventually visit all 50 United States.

To emphasize the importance of the gavel as a symbol of Masonic fellowship, it was carefully hand-crafted by Bro. Tom Mainwaring,

Croteau's good friend and an experienced wood worker, from Philippine mahogany and finished with tung oil. Affixed to the side of the 15-inch

gavel was an anodized brass plaque inscribed with the year, the lodge name, and Croteau's name.

By January 2014, the gavel was on its first voyage to Washington Lodge No. 3 in Williston, Vermont – Croteau's mother lodge. In the coming months and years, relationships blossomed as

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

the singular gavel was sent to lodges across the country. Again and again, Croteau was pleasantly surprised by how brothers throughout the country cared for and respected the gavel as though it was their own.

CHANCE CONNECTIONS

For Croteau, building relationships between brothers and lodges is essential – it's how his own introduction to Virginia Masonry began. While working at Thomas Nelson Community

of Transportation Lodge. Limneos invited Croteau to weekly lodge meetings; and within three months, he was an active member.

The traveling gavel has flourished partially through Croteau's eagerness to forge connections. In March 2014, he was visiting Monitor Lodge No. 197 in nearby Hampton, Virginia when he came across "Cap" Fritz. "The moment Cap walked through the door, he stood out," Croteau recalls. "He was wearing a Western-cut jacket,

a perfect opportunity for the gavel to reach the Southwest.

Less than a week later, Fritz had secured permission from his lodge master and the gavel was scheduled to visit Edgewood Lodge No. 82 later that year. While in New Mexico, the gavel was carried some 1,300 miles around the state, and was even present at the laying of a cornerstone for a new elementary school. Soon after the gavel left New Mexico, Croteau received a series of photos from Fritz detailing the many adventures of the gavel with Edgewood Lodge.

BROTHERHOOD AND TRUST

Connecting with other brothers and sending the gavel off isn't always easy; however, social media outlets support the process. The vast majority of Croteau's relationships have been formed online. "I realized I could use Facebook as a tool to make connections with other brothers, and get the gavel out there," Croteau says. From the simple Masonic emblem on his Facebook profile photo alone, many new friendships have arisen.

Robert Elder from Portland Lodge No. 55 in Portland, Oregon was one of these connections. After Elder noticed the Masonic emblem on Croteau's profile and reached out to him, the two men learned that they had both experienced a great personal loss, and developed a nearly instant bond. Soon afterwards, the gavel was sent to Portland Lodge as a gesture of friendship, and today the brothers maintain a strong friendship. Croteau says, "I knew the gavel would be safe and guarded simply because it was being sent to brothers of Masonry. I trust my brothers."



College in 2010, he happened to notice that a gentleman working at the snack bar on campus was wearing a Masonic ring. He quickly introduced himself and learned that Daryl Limneos was the current master

of Transportation Lodge. You just don't see that in Hampton very often." Croteau quickly befriended Fritz, sitting next to him at dinner. When he learned that Fritz was from Edgewood, New Mexico, Croteau saw

Bringing Members and Lodges Together



In Division X, a traveling gavel is stirring members' competitive spirits. The gavel rotates between lodges, who seek to "capture" it. It works like this: If a visiting lodge brings more members to a tiled meeting of the gavel's current home lodge than members who attend the meeting from the home lodge, the visiting lodge steals the gavel. If the home lodge has stronger attendance, they keep it.

"The competition brings members from disparate lodges together to enjoy a degree and exchange ritual techniques. The more members show up, the more exciting the degree," says Michael Opsteegh, past master of Solomon's Staircase Lodge No. 357. "And, since the home lodge doesn't want to lose the gavel in a 'surprise attack,' members feel compelled to show up regularly."

The unique gavel and the plaque upon which it is mounted were handmade by Milton Green – the past master of Bellflower Paramount Lodge No. 523, now Bellflower Lodge No. 320 – at the request of Karim Oscoff, then the master of Irvine Valley Lodge No. 671. The gavel is carved from zebra hardwood, found in Africa and South America, and the surrounding plaque is light red oak.

"I got the idea to create the gavel to promote multiple lodge fellowship and brotherhood. It has served its purpose and far exceeded our expectations," says Oscoff. "At every gavel challenge, there have been more than 50 Masons in attendance – and at times more than six lodges competing for it."

Solomon's Staircase Lodge No. 357 narrowly stole the gavel from Orange Grove Lodge No. 293 in August 2015. "We had over 70 Masons present at Bro. Jesse Kelii's first degree," recalls Opsteegh. "It was truly a night to remember."

The gavel's next destination is still to be determined, but any legally constituted lodge may participate in the challenge. Learn how at freemason.org/traveling-gavel.

THE CALIFORNIA CONNECTION

Greg Cherry, currently the master of Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge No. 307, received the gavel about a year ago from Croteau. Their connection transpired through Cherry's uncle, Gaylord Lockett, who belongs to another Newport News lodge. Having heard about the gavel, Lockett suggested that Croteau contact his nephew in California. Croteau and Cherry soon began making plans to send the gavel across the country.

Cherry recalls, "I saw keeping the gavel as a tremendous honor and responsibility. I wanted to represent it well and use it to give people an idea of what Masonry looks like in California." Cherry took photographs with the gavel and his brothers at Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge, but also had photographs taken of the gavel at iconic California landmarks, including the Santa Monica Pier, Golden Gate Bridge, and Venice Beach. He also traveled with the gavel to 10 different lodges in the area, where it helped to facilitate new friendships.

Croteau's altruistic attitude and enthusiasm are contagious, and Masonic brothers like Fritz, Elder, and Cherry have caught on. They continue to take the possession of the gavel seriously, and with honor, while using it to foster connections.

In describing the value of possessing the gavel, Cherry says, "It allowed me to personally experience being part of a body of Freemasons nationwide. The gavel connects us all on the fraternal chain."

For Croteau, the gavel has allowed his lodge to travel further than he ever dreamed possible. "I have friends everywhere," he says. "Some of them I just haven't met yet." ♦

FREEMASONRY AND FREEDOM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

HOW ARE FREEMASONRY'S VIRTUES REFLECTED IN CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORIC MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURE?

By Said Chaaya

From Morocco to Iran and even further beyond, the Middle East is experiencing turmoil. The fragmentation of nations, fall of borders, demolition of states, drastic restructuring of civil laws, and massive migration of populations have lead to both demographic shifts and permanent changes to citizens' everyday lives. The diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural dimensions of this large geographic area have begun to assume a reputation of violence and hatred, and increasing turmoil is alarming the political powers of the world, as conflicts threaten stability and peace far beyond the region.

When evaluating this chaotic state, we can understand that current disagreements in these societies imply a lack of the fundamental Masonic values of freedom, tolerance, charity, and fraternity. It may be surprising, therefore, to learn that Freemasonry has a longstanding legacy in this area.

FREEMASONRY COMES TO THE MIDDLE EAST

In the early 18th century, Freemasonry reached the Ottoman Empire, establishing itself in Constantinople, today known as Istanbul, and Saint Jean d'Acre – the contemporary city of Akko, Israel. Many lodges were founded in these regions, but unfortunately few records remain to reveal information about their memberships or rituals. We do know that

early lodges were mainly composed of European travelers and traders; they tended to exclude the locals, whether they were Christians, Jews, or Muslims. After the French Revolution and the Egypt campaign, however, Arab elites sought to make transformational changes in their societies. And, as they looked towards a more progressive, modern era, they were eager to know more about Freemasonry. They considered the Masonic accomplishments in Europe to be a model for progressing towards equality and a better life.

The first institutional lodge established in the Middle East was Palestine Lodge No. 415 at the Orient of Beirut in 1861. The lodge worked under the auspices of the Grand

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Lodge of Scotland, and in 1868 and 1870, the Grand Orient de France formed others. What made these lodges unique from previously existing lodges was their willingness to initiate locals – Turks, Arabs, and Armenians from different sectarian backgrounds who all worked together in unity and harmony under the same roof and within the framework of Masonic values. While this kind of diversity is more commonplace in Masonry today, it was revolutionary at the time. This new model of society proposed by the Freemasons differed from current social norms that separated people of various religious and ethnic groups.

As these lodges grew in the mid 19th century, Masons actively worked to inspire more political and social freedom by proposing alternatives to the religious model of society within the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire at the time. Following the tenets of Masonic relief and charity, they introduced modern scientific techniques that improved the lives of their communities. And, most notably, they published and translated books, newspapers, and novels into Arabic, diffusing new concepts of liberty – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom to reject all forms of fanaticism in daily life. As Masonic ideals spread, and concepts of liberty were embraced, intellectual elites were inspired to work for more political rights. They increasingly sought self-determination and fought against despotism, embracing the European Enlightenment movement and Western ideals.

The culmination of these evolutions was a necessity for political reform and led to multiple revolutions: The 1879 Urabi Revolt, an Egyptian nationalist uprising against the Khedive; the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905, which paved the way for a parliament in Persia; and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which resulted in overthrowing the Sultan. It can be said that each revolution was inspired by the values of the French Revolution – which was also rooted in Masonic ideals.

*There is no
fraternity without
tolerance, and this
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to unify people
from different
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in galvanizing
citizens to work
hand in hand to
build up their
countries together.*

FREEMASONRY'S ROLE IN THE REGION TODAY

Today, freedom seems like a faraway dream for many Middle Eastern citizens. Constructing social change is extremely difficult since tolerance is largely absent from the public sphere. It is hard to imagine how any improvement can be possible when many parts of the region are facing intolerance and refusing to embrace diversity. A Freemason from Lebanon named Butrus al-Bustani raised a question in 1860 that is still very accurate in 2016:

Why citizens of the same country “who drink the same water, breathe the same air, and speak the same language are killing and destroying each other.” If only there was a simple solution that could resolve all the region’s problems.

Yet social progress can be cyclical, and in order to reconstruct the Arab world, citizens could start by accepting Masonic values as a fundamental basis for a new and “modern” society. There is no fraternity without tolerance, and this fraternity’s ability to unify people from different backgrounds could be instrumental in galvanizing citizens to work hand in hand to build up their countries together.

Anderson’s Constitutions remind us: “Masonry becomes the Center of Union and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must else have remained at a perpetual distance.” This is why the Middle

East is in great need more than ever of the Masonic virtues that W.M. Monasterski emphasized in Beirut in 1870: “There is one God, one justice and one truth. That God was already before there was a single established religion on earth, and anyone who loves and prays to that God is a brother!” ✦

Editor’s note: Said Chaaya holds a doctorate in history from the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, and is a postdoctoral research fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. A speaker at the 2016 International Conference on Freemasonry at UCLA, Chaaya is a widely published author and scholar of Masonic and Middle Eastern culture.

MEMBER PROFILE

FULL CIRCLE RELIEF

MEET VICTOR LUU
MEDICAL DOCTOR
AND VOLUNTEER
MASON FOR 4 YEARS

By Michelle Simone

Like many Americans, Victor Luu's family came to the United States in search of a better life – in their case fleeing the chaos of Saigon in the final days of the Vietnam War. The refugees' desperation was palpable: Luu, then 13, remembers it vividly. "I can hardly fathom the fears that must have been on my parents' minds as they left everything behind and got on a fishing boat with no idea of where it was headed and no access to food or water," he says.

Fortunately, the family was rescued by a U.S. Fleet ship. They traveled first to the Philippines and later moved to San Mateo, California, through a church sponsorship. Luu thrived, attending the University of California, Davis, and later the UCLA School of Medicine. Today, he is an urgent care physician and is firmly rooted in Southern California with his four children and wife, Nicole. He is the senior deacon of Arcadia Lodge No. 278.

Luu was drawn to Masonry's tenets of love, relief, and truth, which reflected the values his parents instilled in him as a child – as well as his experiences with martial arts mentors at the Chinatown East Wing Kung Fu Club in Los Angeles. "My two Kung Fu masters freely give back to the community without expecting anything in return. Their honorable actions are so much in line with Masonic traditions," he says.

These same values drove Luu to join the Project Vietnam Foundation,

a nonprofit humanitarian organization that provides volunteer medical services to underresourced children and those in Vietnam's most impoverished rural regions. "Helping the poorest of the poor with basic medical needs is the greatest sense of providing relief," Luu says. "It cannot be described, only experienced." ♦

Editor's note: Learn more about Project Vietnam, including how to volunteer, at projectvietnam.org.

A PASSION FOR ADVENTURE

TWO BROTHERS' JOURNEY TO
SOUTH AFRICA PROVES THAT
TRAVELING RUNS IN THE FAMILY

By John A. Vlahides



International travel, like Freemasonry, has been a family tradition for Harold “Hal,” Jr. and C. Ross Croulet, ever since their father, Harold W. Croulet, Sr., first regaled them with stories of traveling from their San Diego home across the border into Mexico. The elder Harold Croulet was a third-generation Mason, and the tales he shared with his sons were rich in brotherhood and adventure. Now in his 50th year of Masonry with San Dimas Lodge No. 428, Hal Croulet recalls his father’s stories with affection. “My dad used to go to Tijuana Lodge from San Diego, and he shared a lot of what it was like,” he says. “Now whenever I go anywhere, I try to locate a Masonic lodge – to see it and share the fellowship. Whenever an opportunity arises to visit another lodge, I snap it up.”

Harold Croulet, Sr. worked for the Navy, and in 1966 the family moved to Washington, D.C. Hal Croulet was a grown man, a Mason, and had already started his career as a schoolteacher. Ross Croulet was still finding his way, but thanks to a chance encounter on a golf course between his older brother and a congressman’s chief of staff who

was also a Mason, he was able to obtain an interview for his dream job. He succeeded and soon became a page for the House of Representatives. “It was Ross’s magic time,” recalls Hal Croulet.

Ross Croulet had long been interested in international affairs, fascinated by tales of his father’s journeys, stories



of traveling to the Middle East aboard a steamer through the Suez Canal told to him by one of his former teachers, and the kinds of far away adventurers that filled the pages of National Geographic. Attending the Capitol Page School in the attic of the Library of Congress only deepened this already robust curiosity. "Serving as a page was a fantastic experience," he says. "I met several presidents, past and future, including Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerry Ford, and George H.W. Bush – when he was a congressman. And I met Bill and Hillary Clinton a few times, too."

Ross Croulet's chance for his own overseas adventure finally came when he joined the Peace Corps and was assigned to serve three years in Banjul, the capital city of Gambia. It was his first experience in international development, but by 1998, he found himself in Lesotho, a tiny

country surrounded entirely by the Republic of South Africa, working on a massive project to build infrastructure to supply water for South Africa's growing cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. His team was responsible for helping some 20,000 displaced peoples through economic development. And, it was an historic era: During his two-and-a-half years in the Lesotho highlands, while he simultaneously oversaw eight development projects, apartheid ended and Nelson Mandela became the first black president of South Africa. "It was an exciting time to be there," he says. "We really enjoyed ourselves, with good friends from all ethnicities."

Ross Croulet had become a Mason at Federal Lodge No. 1 before leaving Washington, D.C., and he began to attend Maseru Lodge No. 2835 in the small South African city of Ladybrand, abutting the Lesotho border. "Freemasonry in South Africa was interesting because there had been a schism between the United Grand Lodge of England, which conducted the ritual in English, and the Boors, who conducted the ritual in Afrikaans. The Afrikaans had their lodges, and the English had theirs." And, he recalls, "We always had to wear evening clothes – a tuxedo – to attend lodge."

In January 2001, Hal Croulet had just retired from teaching, and leapt at the chance to visit his brother in Lesotho, where Ross Croulet had advanced to junior deacon at Maseru Lodge. During the visit, Hal Croulet had the honor of substituting for the absent senior deacon. He was also struck by the formality of the lodge and differences in its ritual. "We wore powder-blue cuffs," he recalls. "And, they accepted my signs, but when I was done, the brothers told me, 'You perform the ritual like they do in Scotland.' That caught me by surprise! I learned that the deacon's work is basically universal. You can perform it essentially anywhere if someone is on the side to prompt you."

Both brothers are now back in the U.S., Ross Croulet in Florida and Hal Croulet in California. Yet the experience of visiting his brother in Lesotho remains a highlight for Hal Croulet. Most significantly, it remains the only time that the brothers have attended lodge together. "Because my brother was in South Africa, I was able to share the lodge, and it was a wonderful experience," Hal Croulet says. "I cherished the fellowship and just being welcomed. That's the most precious thing that you have being a Mason – sharing Masonic virtues and ideals with other brothers. For me it is the greatest feeling." ♦

THE PHILIPPINE CONNEC



TION

BY LAURA BENYS

TIES TO HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND IDENTITY CLOSE A 7,000-MILE DIVIDE



ilfredo Sarino has only seen his grandfather in family photos. There are just a handful, and in all of them, he is wearing formal Masonic regalia. In the picture that Sarino has studied most, his grandfather is seated in the master's station on the day of his installation, backed by officers of his lodge in the Philippines. As a young man, Sarino became a Mason in that same lodge, just as his father had before him. And although he never had the chance to meet the man who started it all – his grandfather passed away long before he was born – a few years ago, he could've sworn he heard his voice.

It was 2009, and his father had just died. Sarino traveled back to the Philippines for the funeral. During the Masonic service, his heart seized.

"I felt a longing," he says. "I think it was my grandfather telling me, 'I'm giving you a kick in the butt.'" He laughs a little at this. "I think it was him saying, 'We gave you Masonry, but you're not practicing it. You're not getting any younger. Get something going here, guy.'"

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Sarino returned home to California, and started attending lodge. In 2014, he applied for dual membership in the California fraternity. He is now a marshal at Acacia Lodge No. 243 in Hayward. Although his visits back to the Philippines are few and far between, he says he will always maintain his membership there, too. "I'm proud to be a member of both grand lodges," he says. "I was raised in the same lodge as my father. My grandfather was one of the original officers. That's very sentimental to me."

Heritage is a long road. It stretches from the far-off past, well beyond the horizon of our personal memories. But it also stretches into the future. It compels us forward in strange ways. Our ancestors, even those whom we've never met, inform our cultural context and our biological quirks. The things we know about them – what they valued and the traditions that shaped them – can help us make sense of where we fit into the world. They can guide our journey.

So when Masonry enters the equation, it's a powerful thing. The fraternity can reinforce a connection to culture, and culture can reinforce a connection to fraternity. In California, the state with the largest Filipino-American population in the nation, it is a particular joy to note the role that Masonry plays for brothers like Willie Sarino. It's important to celebrate the bonds that make it possible.

FROM THERE TO HOME

Masonry arrived in the Philippines in the 1850s, when the islands were still a colony of Spain. It was a melting pot of jurisdictions – Portuguese, British, German – but most early lodges were chartered by the Spanish grand lodge. In 1898, Spanish rule over the Philippines ended with Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War, and a period of American colonization began. American military servicemen and bureaucrats who had joined Masonry in the United States began forming their own lodges in the Philippines, including three key lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California. In 1912, these lodges came together to

petition the Grand Lodge of California for an autonomous Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands. (Their proposed constitution was borrowed verbatim from the Grand Lodge of California's; the only changes were substituting the words *the Philippine Islands* for *California*.)

Around this time, a regional grand lodge, with a largely Filipino membership base, was also chartered by the Spanish Grand Orient. In 1917, the two grand lodges merged into the modern Grand Lodge of the Philippines. It was a difficult decision, perhaps especially so for the Filipino Masons, who far outnumbered the American Masons. But ultimately, the

"I'M PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF BOTH GRAND LODGES. I WAS RAISED IN THE SAME LODGE AS MY FATHER. MY GRANDFATHER WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL OFFICERS. THAT'S VERY SENTIMENTAL TO ME."

WILFREDO SARINO

consolidation was driven by a desire for solidarity on both sides. In a letter to the brethren, the Filipino grand master wrote, "Our only and exclusive reason for agreeing to the fusion was to save our most important principle: Masonic unity." Filipino and American grand masters agreed to alternate year by year, a tradition that continued until 1974.

Today, Masonry still has a strong presence in the Philippines. Many of the country's national heroes were prominent Masons in history, and many of its civic leaders are today. Meanwhile, 7,000 miles and a 16-hour flight away, a Philippine connection has taken root in California soil, nourished by the Golden State's growing Filipino population. According to a 2010 census, almost 1.5 million Filipino-Americans live in California – nearly half of all those in the entire U.S. – as well as almost half of all Filipino immigrants in the nation.

While no records exist for how many California Masons are of Philippine descent (member ethnicity is not recorded), as California's Filipino population has grown in the past 30 years, so has the number of Filipino-American Masons. For some of these members, their fathers or grandfathers were Masons in the Philippines, and the California fraternity is a continuation of that legacy. For others, the fraternity provides a cultural network, with California's many affinity lodges serving as a kind of community center for socializing and maintaining cultural ties.

Sarino's lodge, Acacia Lodge, has a large Filipino membership. This wasn't the biggest factor in his application, but he appreciates the connection to his native country and culture, which can otherwise feel so distant from his day-to-day life. "A primary purpose for a lodge is to help members feel at home," he says. "It's nice to be with people who in some ways share the same culture. You don't have to do much explaining. For me, I feel at home."

THE REASONS WE COME TOGETHER

Like Sarino, William Suguitan was born in the Philippines and immigrated to the U.S. as a young man in the 1980s. Unlike Sarino, he wasn't part of a Masonic lineage. In fact, growing up, he had almost no exposure to the fraternity. It wasn't until he saw a California friend in Masonic regalia that he even thought to ask.

Suguitan was raised in 2010 at Francis Drake Lodge No. 376 in South San Francisco. An architect by trade, Suguitan's enthusiasm for fellowship and his interest in photography also led him to serving as an informal photographer for Grand Lodge events. In 2014, he traveled with Grand Lodge officers to the Philippines to capture the Annual Communication. It was the first time he'd been in his mother country as a Mason. And, it was a revelation.

"I was like, wow. Everybody was hugging me, calling me brother. I had brothers on the other side of the world," says Suguitan. He learned that a nephew in the Philippines was a past master and attended a lodge social event as his guest of honor. "This is my uncle; he's a Mason in California," his nephew repeated proudly with each introduction. "It was instant family," Suguitan says.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

FRATERNAL TWINS

In October 2015, in the Philippine city of Davao, local lodge Toril No. 208 and California's Valley Lodge No. 135 signed a special twinning pact. Approved by the grand lodges of both jurisdictions, the pact promises a commitment between the two lodges to share Masonic experiences. The path to it began when Alex Llanera, past master and current secretary of Valley Lodge, discovered that an old friend from the Philippines was also a past master of Toril Lodge. During Llanera's year as master of Valley Lodge, he and his brother approached their lodges about formally establishing a relationship.

"From the very beginning, both lodges embraced it," Llanera says. Their first joint endeavor was to raise funds to build a preschool in the Tugbok district of Davao City in the Philippines for 54 children whose families had been displaced by flood, fire, and typhoon. It was a swift and impressive success. The building was inaugurated in April, and each student received a backpack filled with school supplies and emblazoned with the square and compass and the names of both lodges. And although the twinning pact is strictly between the two lodges, Llanera was able to rally support for the school from Valley Lodge's fraternal network and community. The plaque on the new building also recognizes the support of General Douglas MacArthur Lodge No. 853; Ben Ali Islander Club and Shriners International; the ladies of Valley Lodge; and the employees of Kaiser South Sacramento.

The twin lodges look forward to shared fellowship events in the years to come, and especially to collaborating on more service projects in both California and the Philippines. "It's really about giving," says Llanera. "That's where we're going now."

Back in California, he witnessed something similar at last year's MGM degree, a twice-annual gathering of lodges and brothers for a third degree conferral and weekend of festivities, led by a different host each time. MGM stands for the Tagalog phrase *Manlalakbay na Gurong Mason*, which in English means "traveling Master Masons." The California celebration was inspired by a father's journey from the Philippines to attend his son's raising at Atascadero Lodge No. 493. Masons from a number of other California lodges attended to show their support. Since, the event has become a celebration of worldwide fellowship, reprising twice each year with a different candidate and at a different location in California, with the help of a growing fleet of volunteers from the fraternal family. The most recent event, held in February in San Diego, was attended by about 425 Master Masons, representing 91 lodges and 13 grand lodges from throughout the U.S. and world. It has also become a unique opportunity to experience the degree charges of different jurisdictions: The candidate is raised under California ritual, but in past events, after the lodge has closed, the raised brother has received the Tagalog, Oklahoma, and Washington state charges. In August 2015, the first time that Suguitan attended, California Past Grand Master Ken Nagel gave an inspirational speech. In it, Nagel declared the MGM degree event a "hidden treasure" of Masonry.

This past April, another group of traveling Master Masons celebrated cross-cultural ties with a journey in the opposite direction. A group of California Grand Lodge officers, including Grand Master M. David Perry, traveled to the Philippines to attend the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. It was the first recorded instance that a sitting grand master from California has been present at the event.

"It was an opportunity to reinforce our grand lodges' relationship, and to celebrate the fact that we have such a long history together," says Grand Secretary Allan Casalou, who also attended. "This relationship has special meaning. We are a mother grand lodge of the Philippines. We have many dual members, and a significant number of members with descendants from the Philippines who feel a connection there. We're trying to reinforce and celebrate that connection."

Building on this relationship is a priority for the Grand Lodge of California, says Casalou. "This coming together of our cultures takes effort. It takes these types of exchanges, and asking ourselves, what can we do as leaders to move in the right direction?" In early 2016, the California and

Philippine grand lodges issued a joint statement condemning unrecognized groups that had arisen in both jurisdictions. It was a sensitive and challenging topic, but it also proved the bond between the two grand lodges. "We have this desire to unite around what's most important in Masonry, allowing people to be different but appreciating the fact that Masonry does stand for something to all of us," says Casalou. "And in the end, that prevails."

STARTING AGAIN

In 1918, the year after the modern-day Grand Lodge of the Philippines was created, Willie Sarino's grandfather became a charter officer in the new Pintong Bato Lodge No. 51 in Bacoor. It is the same lodge from Sarino's favorite photo of his grandfather, taken on the day of his installation as master. By helping to create the lodge, his grandfather started a legacy for countless Masonic families, including his own.

When he was in his 30s, Sarino became a Master Mason at Pintong Bato Lodge. But soon after, he emigrated to the U.S. and threw himself into starting a career and raising a family. For the next 22 years, he drifted away from the fraternity. It wasn't until his father's funeral in the Philippines that he sensed his grandfather's voice, and a true pull back to his Masonic heritage. As Sarino puts it, "I started on my journey again." It was his grandfather who had started it all, and in a way, it was his grandfather who brought him back.

When Sarino thinks back to his childhood in the Philippines, some of his earliest memories are of his father, studying for hours from a book filled with strange symbols. "It was written in a code. It stuck in my memory," Sarino says. He now has his father's ritual book and Masonic ring, along with the pictures of his grandfather.

In the background, Sarino's 3-year-old grandson, Kaleb William, is stirring. It's morning; Kaleb slept over the night before. Since retiring from the airline industry, Sarino has become his grandson's go-to babysitter. "It's helping my Masonic work," he jokes. "When I sit and watch him, I do my memorizing."

Perhaps someday, that image will be filed into Kaleb's memories, an echo of Sarino's memory of his father – head bent over a book of symbols, a special ring on his hand. Perhaps someday, when he is feeling lost, Kaleb will hear the voice of his grandfather, and it will guide him on his journey. ✦

There Was a Traveling Man

A NEW LOOK AT THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE TRAVELING MAN

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

In addition to the symbolism attached to architectural tools, Freemasonry is built upon stories and legends. And, no story is more intriguing than the one about the “traveling man” – the stonemason who traveled from work site to work site in search of a job. We have little direct evidence of how traveling stonemasons did this, but it remains an important part of the lore of Freemasonry.

According to our traditional history, when a building was completed, and stonemasons were released from their duties, they would scatter in different directions looking for work. Upon their arrival at a new work site, the master stonemason in charge would test them to determine if they were really who they claimed to be. One test asked them to recite part of the legendary history of the craft – the Old Charges. Another required them to give the proper passwords and grips. The final test was to ask them for the “mason word.” The mysterious “mason word” was proof that they were, indeed, members of the guild of stonemasons, for it was the most carefully guarded of all the secrets. It was so secret that it was only given in a way and a manner known to fellow masons, and then only in a whisper – “mouth to ear.”

Contemporary Masonic historians have searched for evidence of this colorful story in the old records of the craft, but have come up empty handed. Perhaps these “traveling masons” were so careful with their means of proving who they really were that no evidence has survived to prove the accuracy of this old story. Or, perhaps the evidence has been under our noses all the time, but we have not been looking in the right place.

The “right place” to look may not have been in England, Scotland, or Ireland – the homeland of speculative Freemasonry as we know it – but in France. France has preserved an organization similar to Freemasonry called the “Compagnonnage.” The French title of those who belong to it is “Compagnons du Tour de France.” Today the “Tour de France” is a famous bicycle race, but the race was named for a much older institution, a “Tour de France” associated with stonemasons in the Middle Ages. When a journeyman stonemason (a fellow of the craft, as we would call him) wanted to become a master stonemason, he would leave home and go “on tour.” The tour – the “Tour de France” – would take him to many towns around the country where he would work for different master

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



stonemasons to prove his skill. It was as if he were having his “card punched” by other skilled workmen, who would certify that he, indeed, proved his worth to achieve the rank of “master stonemason.”

When one of these “journeyman stonemasons” arrived at a new work site he would prove himself by “words and signs” that he had learned during his days as an apprentice.

As with our own Masonic stonemason ancestors, these “Compagnons” had their own manuscript legends, which were carefully preserved through the centuries. They were also organized into three separate societies, with names that seem somewhat familiar to Masons today: The Sons of Solomon, the Sons of Master Jacques, and the Sons of Master Soubise. Of these three, the Sons of Solomon were stonemasons, while those who belonged

to the other two societies often belonged to other trades, such as carpentry.

So here we have it: In France, an organization called the “Sons of Solomon,” who are stonemasons by trade, travel from one work site to another to prove their skill, and at the end of the “around the country tour,” are eligible to be honored as “master craftsmen.” The Compagnonnage is still in existence today, and while it is not a direct ancestor of our form of Freemasonry, it is easy to see a practice that is very similar to our own legendary history of “traveling stonemasons.” Coincidence or not? We may never know. But this knowledge does present a compelling theory that a possible answer to our long search for the historical proof of the “traveling man” and his Masonic “proof” may have been right across the English Channel in France all along. ✧

Bon Voyage, Brother!



Planning a Masonic journey of your own? Follow this simple checklist to visit a Masonic lodge in another jurisdiction:

□ NOTIFY GRAND LODGE.

Well in advance of your trip, contact Grand Lodge Member Services to let them know when and where you plan to travel. Member Services will confirm that our jurisdiction shares recognition with the jurisdiction you would like to visit, and will handle all initial communications with that grand lodge. As part of these communications, Member Services will send an official letter of introduction to the grand lodge you would like to visit and a copy to you. Member Services will also let you know which lodge to visit if you have sent a general inquiry to a jurisdiction.

□ PACK YOUR BAGS.

Be sure to bring the following:

- » Grand Lodge introductory letter
- » Current California dues card
- » Universal attire (optional) – dark suit and tie, white gloves, apron

□ ARRIVE EARLY FOR THE EXAMINATION.

Give yourself at least half an hour before the stated meeting to present your credentials and take the “strict trial and due examination.” This oral exam to confirm that you’re a Mason is usually conducted by three brothers.

□ FOLLOW THE RITUAL AS YOU KNOW IT.

Although rituals can vary between jurisdictions, it’s best to follow the signs and other aspects of the ritual that you practice at your home lodge. This will ensure the least disturbance to the lodge that you’re visiting, and will give you an opportunity afterwards to discuss any differences you notice.

CALIFORNIA LODGES

The only documentation needed to visit another lodge in our jurisdiction is a valid dues card. As a courtesy, you may wish to contact the lodge you will visit ahead of time to let them know of your visit so arrangements can be made to include you in any meals. You may be asked to retire from a meeting if controversial or sensitive matters will be discussed.

ENTERED APPRENTICE AND FELLOW CRAFT MASON

Although all California lodges conduct the stated meeting on the Entered Apprentice degree, as an Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft Mason, you may only visit a lodge other than your own if you obtain permission

from your lodge master and the master of the visiting lodge, and you are accompanied by a Master Mason who has sat in lodge with you. Special meetings and ceremonies may be open to Master Masons only.

If you have more questions, contact Member Services at memberservices@freemason.org.

FROM CALIFORNIA TO THE WORLD

READERS SHARE MEMORABLE MASONIC TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Our call for stories for this travel-themed issue was the most popular ever. From the Midwest to Malaysia, brothers' Masonic affiliation has brought meaningful connections to their lives.

GENE GOLDMAN *Amity Lodge No. 442*

"I visited a lodge in the Midwest, while I was on business. I walked a guy in cut-off shorts, a T-shirt, and unshaven for at least a few days – quite a departure from everyone else present. He walked to the East, sat down, picked up the gavel, and opened the lodge for business. Needless to say, I was surprised. After the meeting, the secretary informed me that the master was an undercover cop who sometimes came to meetings right from work, with this sort of unusual appearance. It gave me pause to consider: Do we really mean it when we say that a man's internal characteristics are the most important thing? Well, it was certainly true for this lodge."

PATRICK B. DUONG *Saddleback Laguna Lodge No. 672*

"A career transition landed me in Boston, where I visited some of the oldest lodges in our nation. With the region's rich history and deeply rooted membership, I was concerned about being accepted by the brethren and the overall activeness of the organization. To my pleasant surprise, I was accepted with open arms and was quickly made aware that in the most historic region of our country, Masonry was still alive, well, and growing. Full attendance levels at regularly scheduled meetings meant you'd be lucky to grab dinner if you hadn't RSVP'd, and the after-hour festivities following each meal showed proof that brotherly love was held to a much-esteemed standard."



BRO. PATRICK B. DUONG, SECOND FROM RIGHT, SHARES FELLOWSHIP WITH MEMBERS OF SAINT PAUL'S ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER, BOSTON.



GEORGE WHITMORE

Victorville Lodge No. 634

"Several years ago when my wife and I visited her relatives in Ohio, my brother-in-law, past master of Wooster Lodge, invited me for a second degree. The night I went it was raining, but a group of brothers met me outside the lodge and carried my wheelchair up the stairs so I could attend the degree – in their tuxedos. The following Saturday, they invited me to a barbecue. Again, there were steps that needed to be navigated, but they carried me up to share the warm brotherhood of the lodge and some awesome food. They knew I was in a chair and that it would be a major chore but they invited me anyway, and made me feel totally welcome and part of the family. That remains one of my fondest traveling memories of Masonry."

BOB BARDEN

Temescal Palms Lodge No. 314

"My wife and I were traveling from Riverside to visit our daughter in Indiana. As we crossed into Illinois, we stopped at a rest stop and were immediately surrounded by a large group of men – Pennsylvania Masons returning from a trip to Missouri. They had noticed the square and compass on the rear window of my truck and had been following us for a couple of hours. They said, 'It's good to see a Mason who is proud to be a Mason' and they were so right. I received a Pennsylvania Grand Lodge pin, and met a number of brothers that I might have passed at arm's length without having the chance to meet. Sometimes it pays to advertise."

MIKE RAMOS

Crow Canyon Lodge No. 551

"In 2002, my wife and I traveled to London on our honeymoon and I attended a Fellow Craft degree and festive board at Lodge of Merit No. 8523. The experience was filled with fellowship, hospitality, and true camaraderie. Everyone treated me as if they had known me for ages. So pleasant was the experience that we remained in firm contact and developed a great friendship. In the following months, my lodge and theirs engaged our respective grand lodges and entered into an official 'twinning.' To this day I remain in firm contact with brethren there and will be returning to England this fall to attend an installation for one of the brothers as master of his lodge."



SONNY GOTOS

Morning Star Lodge No. 19

"I traveled to Keystone Lodge No. 161 in Milton with my brethren from Stockton to attend their officer installation. Little did any of us know that it would be the last time the building would hold a lodge. Less than a month later, Keystone burned to the ground – its officers,

members, and Masonry in general, victims of arson. The experience proved the old adage that you don't know what you've got until it's gone – and, you don't have to travel far to appreciate Masonry and our beloved brotherhood."

SHAN KULASINGAM

Gateway Lodge No. 339

"I was brought into the bosom of the fraternity in 2009 at Sri Damai Lodge No. 9768 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. After settling in California, I joined a lodge here. Some of the rituals are different, the aprons are different, and the way we lecture is different, but our hearts are all one. Being a Mason has made me realize that there are no boundaries or borders in our love to our brothers and their families."

LIFE ON THE ROAD

FOR CALIFORNIA'S MASONIC YOUTH LEADERS, NEW EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT ARE ALWAYS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

By Michelle Simone

Jake Eres, master councilor of Northern California DeMolay, is packing. He'll be spending the entire weekend in Fresno for Rainbow Grand Assembly, as part of an ambitious itinerary that, in addition to statewide events, brings him to one DeMolay chapter in every division each week. It's not uncommon for him to travel from Sacramento to the Bay Area, Grass Valley, and the southeast portion of I-5 in a weekend. "As master councilor, I am expected to be at almost every event," he says. "I spend about \$100 and 50-60 hours per week to attend events and lead by example." DeMolay is basically a full-time job for Eres – on top of his responsibilities as a part-time worker and full-time student pursuing nursing prerequisites.

Miss California Job's Daughter Molly Anderson can relate. Although she is attending community college part time during her year of leadership, all of her courses take place on

weekday mornings, leaving her evenings and weekends free to travel on behalf of Job's Daughters. Always accompanied by her required female chaperone, she has driven as far

north as the Redwood Empire and as far south as Oceanside.

Being a Masonic youth leader means more than receiving accolades from peers and adult leaders, more

than boosting skills and enhancing a college resume: It's a big commitment and one that's not taken lightly. Colleen Penaluna, now past worthy grand advisor of California Rainbow for Girls, can still recall the rush of feelings she experienced when she learned that she had been elected: overwhelming excitement, a swelling sense of pride, and the realization that the course of her life was about to change dramatically. "In Rainbow, we don't campaign for positions; we are selected by a team of adult leaders. I never imagined that my name would be called," she says.

Stepping into the role of grand worthy advisor meant that Penaluna would dedicate the next year of her life to

journeying throughout California on behalf of her youth order. She would defer college; the role is a full-time responsibility, requiring travel statewide, from Eureka to Chula Vista – as well as to grand assemblies in Washington State. She would lead the grand service project, both soliciting donations and personally depositing them. "I was very intimidated, but it was also a huge honor and an amazing opportunity. I never would have considered passing it up," she says.

Penaluna drew upon her own leap of faith as inspiration throughout her year. In her speeches to young women and youth mentors, she encouraged them to take risks in order to make positive changes, both in their own lives and within the Masonic family. "I wanted to create a real call to action," she says. "The whole Masonic family needs to embrace modernization to continue to be relevant and make a difference. When young women are able to grow up within a dynamic organization that is learning to change with the society around it, they will also learn to be resourceful, to push for a better society."

"The biggest wins for me have been when I've traveled to a place and met a young man to whom I've told,

'YOU CAN DO IT. YOU CAN DO SOMETHING GREAT.'


– and later see him achieve something amazing."

JAKE ERES

The ability to be a mentor and a leader – both within the youth order and the Masonic community – is the highlight of all three youth leaders' experiences. "The biggest wins for me have been when I've traveled to a place and met a young man to whom I've told, 'You can do it. You can do something great.' – and later see him achieve something amazing," says Eres. "We have a chance to make other Masonic youths' experience really meaningful," says Anderson.

Youth leaders agree that Masonic mentors are priceless. "There have been times when I've doubted my ability to make something happen, and an advisor has been there to reassure me that through what I've learned in DeMolay and my own determination to succeed, there is nothing I can't accomplish if I set my mind to it and work towards it," says Thomas Jefferson (T.J.) Elliott, master councilor of Southern California DeMolay. "It's what makes DeMolay so special – our young men are given advisors with both DeMolay and real world experiences." Eres adds, "When a Mason you respect makes a point of shaking your hand and asking how you're doing – treating you like an equal – it makes you strive to be better, to really live up to those expectations. I wish more Masons understood how a simple handshake can make a big difference in a young man's life."

"Don't wait to get involved!" Anderson says. "We can only build connections between youth and adults by spending time together. We are all looking for the same things – and exploring them together is a really wonderful experience." ♦

A full-page photograph of John Bermudez, a man with a mustache, wearing a dark grey suit, a patterned tie, and a brown fedora. He is smiling and standing next to a bright blue vintage car, with his right hand resting on the front fender. The car has a 'Chrysler' emblem and a California license plate that reads 'UG473'. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and sunlight.

DONOR PROFILE

TAKING CARE OF ONE ANOTHER

MEET JOHN BERMUDEZ
ANNUAL FUND DONOR
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There is where you travel, and then there is *how* you travel. These days, John Bermudez's ride is a pristine 1950 Chrysler New Yorker, powder blue – "You ever hear the expression, 'land yacht'?" he says.

This affinity for vintage cars crept up on him about nine years ago. His first purchase, a 1952 Chevy 3/4-ton pickup, took him three years to fully restore. It brought back fond memories.

"As a kid, whenever anything went wrong with the family car, my father would fix it," Bermudez says. "In high school, a group of us would buy a car cheap and pull the motor out. We'd learn from the old-timers who were willing to give us their two cents and the tools we needed."

So perhaps it's no surprise that he fell in love with Masonry, where the tools were symbolic but the sense of community familiar.

"You hear a lot of reasons why people join Masonry. For me, it's always been the members," he says. "To hear history from people who've lived it – I value that very much." Bermudez was initiated in 1995 at California Lodge No. 1 in San Francisco. Today he is a past master, a past district inspector, and a leader in the York Rite and Shrine.

Every year, he makes a gift to the Annual Fund. He and his lodge have built a meaningful partnership with a local school, and have led support for causes like Raising A Reader and Masons4Mitts.

"By donating to these Grand Lodge programs, we are helping our neighbors and fraternal family," Bermudez says. "I can't imagine my life without the fraternity. I want to give back so that it continues to live up to the principle it was founded upon: taking care of one another." ♦

iHomes

FROM SMART DEVICES TO INTERACTIVE APARTMENTS, THE MASONIC HOMES IS EMBRACING INNOVATION

By Laura Benys

If you're a tech geek, you may have already met Alexa. She is the voice of the Amazon Echo, a sleek metal cylinder about the size of a paper towel roll that sits quietly in the corner of a room, waiting to be helpful. The device comes to life when you ask Alexa to turn up the lights, turn down the news, answer your trivia – or any number of other useful tasks. The Amazon Echo was a top seller during the 2015 holiday season, and appeared alongside famed actor, Alec Baldwin, and football star, Dan Marino, in a Super Bowl commercial. Soon, it might be a fixture in resident apartments at the Masonic Homes of California, too – and perhaps other Masonic communities after that.

STRAIGHT FROM SILICON VALLEY

The Amazon Echo is one of the tools to be explored at the 2016 Masonic Communities & Services Association (MCSA) Conference this June. Every year, the conference gathers administrators from 33 Masonic care organizations throughout North America to discuss community initiatives and challenges, from as diverse locations as Kentucky and Denver. This year, the Masonic Homes of California is hosting in Berkeley, and the timing is appropriate: June is Masonic Homes Month in California. This year's conference theme, innovation and technology, is appropriate too. With Silicon Valley right across the San Francisco Bay, attendees won't have to look far.

As the conference host, the Masonic Homes will welcome attendees for a tour of the Union City and Acacia Creek campuses, introducing new technologies that seek to improve senior care. Two "Smart Home" apartments will be unveiled – living spaces retrofitted with cutting edge technology, designed to be inexpensively integrated into existing

architecture. These Smart Homes provide a glimpse of how new technology tools can work together to improve safety and quality of life: A sensor triggers soft floor lights when a resident gets out of bed in the middle of the night. A doorbell flashes a light for the hard of hearing. A mattress tracks sleep patterns, and can alert caregivers if something is awry.

Many of these technologies have existed separately, but are only now being combined in exciting new ways. Some of the tools that the Homes will demonstrate are already widespread in the consumer market, but are just now being considered as solutions in senior care. The Amazon Echo is one example. Wearable devices, similar to fitness trackers like the Fitbit, which is worn around the wrist or clipped to an article of clothing, are another. By tracking health-related data like a resident's heartbeat, respiratory rate, sleep stages, and movement patterns, these tools might inform Homes staff of a resident's overall health, alert them

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to risk factors, and help guide care plans. And, by embracing the possibilities, the Homes has an exciting chance to set some industry precedents.

"We have a special opportunity here, in part due to our proximity to Silicon Valley," says Michael Skaff, chief operating officer for the Masons of California. "There's interest from a number of companies to leverage these Smart Home apartments to showcase some of their newest technology, and prove its efficacy. It's a great opportunity for public-private partnerships. It's





a chance to be truly on the cutting edge.” As a result, the Smart Home apartments will remain intact long after the MCSA Conference – bringing global businesses onto the Masonic Homes campus to preview its unique services and innovative vision for senior care.

THE CARE CURVE

Of course, innovation isn’t only a matter of technology. During the MCSA Conference, attendees will also be introduced to a one-of-a-kind memory care program, the Masonic Homes’ new Compass Club. The program was developed for residents in the early stages of memory loss who can still safely live independently, but who benefit

from specialized support. Its creator, Joseph Pritchard, the Homes’ director of memory care, describes the format as a “mobile day program”: residents continue living independently, but their days are framed by group activities throughout campus with staffers called “navigators” who assist and guide them.

In developing the Compass Club, Pritchard had no precedent to consult; this kind of program didn’t exist elsewhere, at least not to the Homes’ standards. He combined best practices from traditional memory care programs – which are typically geared toward assisted living residents in a

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confined environment – and adapted them for Union City residents. The Compass Club taps into the social, physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and nutritional domains of memory support. Activities range from music appreciation and art classes to ice cream socials and exercise. Because isolation is both a cause and consequence of memory loss, the program especially focuses on opportunities for social engagement. If a resident chooses to take a meal alone in her own apartment, a navigator will make a point to stop by later that day to chat for awhile.

The Compass Club was introduced this past winter to 20 residents, and already the Union City staff can see a difference. Before one resident started the program, she left her apartment only for dinner. She was losing weight and feeling depressed. Now she goes to the gym almost daily. She attends every music appreciation gathering. She paints. Although her memory occasionally fails, she is alert and attuned to the world around her. Another resident no longer insists that he should be moved to skilled nursing. When his navigator arrives in the morning, he asks, “What are we doing today?” When he hears a song he likes, staff even catch him swaying along.

“By investing a little bit of money and staff, the program has changed residents’ lives,” Pritchard says.

“For more than 100 years, the Masonic Homes of California has been intentional about evolving and updating our practices, trying to set an example to others in the care industry,” says Gary Charland, the Homes’ executive vice president. “We always look ahead to how we can improve, so we can better serve our Masonic family.”

“We’re ahead of the curve,” says Pritchard. “I would love for everyone else to catch up. This is where we all should be.” ✨

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OCTOBER 28-30 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Celebrate our accomplishments and plan for the future of California Masonry!

» **Special Event: An Afternoon of Magic and Memories: A Ladies and Family Event**

Guests of all ages will delight in magical illusions and a delicious lunch in the beautiful Peacock Court at the InterContinental Mark Hopkins hotel. Special pricing for kids!

» **Special Event: Rise and Celebrate: An Evening of Awards and Entertainment**

Saturday night, join Grand Master M. David Perry for Masonic awards, great food, and top-notch music that will get you on your feet.

**PURCHASE EVENT TICKETS
AND LODGING TODAY!
FREEMASON.ORG/ANNCOMM**