

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2015



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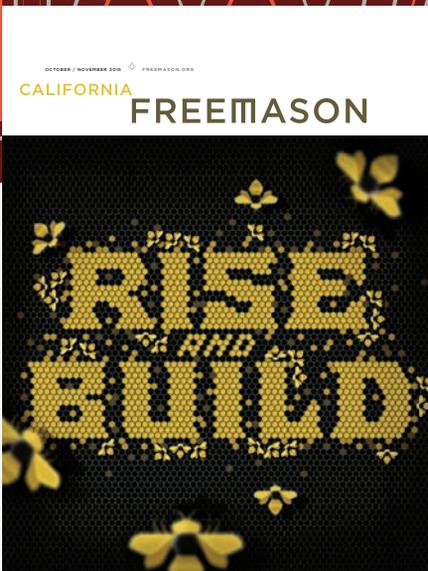
FREEMASON



CALIFORNIA FREEMASON

OCTOBER NOVEMBER

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THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE FRATERNAL YEAR DEBUTS AN UPDATED LAYOUT AND REFRESHED VISUAL PERSPECTIVE. THE COVER ART ILLUSTRATES UNSEEN HANDS UNDERTAKING THE ENDEAVOR TO "RISE AND BUILD." SHOWN HERE IS THE RUNNER-UP COVER - BUILDERS IN THE NATURAL WORLD. LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR COVER SELECTION AT FREEMASON.ORG/OCT15COVER.

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Just as our stonemason ancestors carefully built up Gothic cathedrals, supporting the Masonic life of new members is fundamental to the endurance of our craft.
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RISE AND BUILD

For present-day Masonic leaders, Grand Master Perry's theme, "Rise and Build," is an inspiring and apt metaphor – and a call to action. From consolidated lodges that have experienced a resurgence in vitality to brand new lodges in Covina and Bakersfield, California Masonry is heralding an era of statewide resilience and growth.



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Freemasonry made a foothold in Serbia 95 years ago and has clung tenaciously to it since – through wars, political upheaval, and persecution. Today, the country is rebuilding and growing stronger. So, too, is its fraternity.

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To navigate the shifting landscape of health care reform and meet the needs of the California fraternity, the Masonic Homes has harnessed a critical philosophy: There's power in partnerships.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

RISE AND BUILD

Since the beginning, our fraternity has been about building. In ancient times, we were a guild of craftsmen who possessed the unique knowledge of geometry, use of stone material, and physics needed to build some of the greatest cathedrals and temples known to man. Many still stand to this day.

Today, each of us are the living stones that form our own temples. And our stones are far more fragile, precious, and valuable than our ancestors': We are builders of men. Just as there are rules for building strong structures, there are rules for shaping the living stones with which we are entrusted. Here are some:

1. Treat people with respect, and treat others the way you wish to be treated.
2. Look for the best in others.
3. See "MMFINA" on every person's forehead. (This stands for "Make Me Feel Important, Needed, and Accepted.")
4. Listen with your eyes.
5. Find ways to encourage people around you on a regular basis.
6. Be patient and kind, and keep no record of wrongs.
7. Don't gossip.
8. When in doubt, refer back to the first rule before proceeding.

Together, following these rules, we will rise and build. We will guide our youth, strengthen brothers and lodges that need support, create new lodges, and forge strong relationships with each other. Alone, we can do a little, but together we can accomplish so much.

The joy that we discover through the act of building can be shared between brothers and lodges throughout California – a transference of positive energy. Through shared words of encouragement and brothers working side by side, we will soon build something great.



M. David Perry

M. David Perry, Grand Master

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MASONIC EDUCATION

THE BUILDER MASONS

OUR FOREFATHERS' GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE
PROVIDES AN INSPIRATIONAL METAPHOR
FOR SUPPORTING NEW MASONS TODAY

By John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Master

Gothic cathedrals stand as splendid monuments to our stonemason ancestors. These structures are marvels of engineering achievement, and their endurance over centuries serves as a testament to the skills of the men who built them.

Gothic architecture is characterized by the use of arches and flying buttresses. Soaring walls are punctuated by windows of stained glass, which let light into buildings in ways unimaginable before the invention of this style of architecture. Arches intersect with one another, spreading the downward thrust of the building's weight in different directions so that ceilings of stone seem to float upon the light that streams in from the many windows.

Building a Gothic cathedral did not simply involve stacking one stone on top of another. To construct these structures, which were often 10 stories high, stonemasons first created wooden forms to hold up the stone blocks. Only when the arches were complete, and the weight of the structure was properly balanced, could the wooden forms be removed to reveal the full splendid glory of the Gothic cathedral.

Masonic lodges build up Masons in a similar way. When a Mason enters the lodge as an Entered Apprentice, he

does not yet know the principles of Freemasonry, and he must learn the use of the symbolic tools with which he is expected to shape his future life as a Mason. As with the Gothic cathedrals of his stonemason ancestors, the Masonic lodge is where this learning takes place. The process of forming the Entered Apprentice into a Mason is rightly called *Masonic Formation*. Just as the soaring arches of the cathedral must first be held up by the wooden forms over which they are built, the lodge upholds the new Mason as he learns the spiritual nature of building that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

A lodge can forget how important this formation process is for a new Mason, and may neglect its responsibilities to him. Some lodges confer a degree, hand the new Mason a cipher ritual containing work he is expected to memorize, and hope that he will be interested enough to come back for the next degree. Some of these Entered Apprentices return, but many do not. Members of the lodge then wonder what happened to those new brothers who were once so eager to learn about Freemasonry, and who came on their own "free will and accord." The reason

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



We understand the need to
lay a firm foundation
for a great building.



Similarly, we cannot expect a
young Mason to stand on his own.

these men fail to advance and are lost to Freemasonry is because the lodge did not understand one of its fundamental responsibilities: It must form and support the Masonic life of its new brethren.

We would not expect the beauty of a great Gothic cathedral to spring to life merely by tossing a few stones into the air, and allowing them to fall randomly on the ground. We understand the need to lay a firm foundation for a great building, to erect its walls properly, and, for a Gothic cathedral, to shape the arches and flying buttresses with proper support until the structure can stand on its own. Similarly, we cannot expect a young Mason to stand on his own.

Welcoming interested men to our stated meetings is a start, but it is not the end. Teaching them our candidate's lecture is a beginning, but it is not the conclusion. Helping a new Mason complete candidate education is necessary, but it is not our goal; upholding and supporting him in his Masonic journey is. And, a lodge that understands the importance of this Masonic Formation is a lodge that is building Masons for eternity – just as our ancestors built great cathedrals to endure for centuries.

The heart of Masonic Formation is Master Masons working together with Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts as they work to become Master Masons. The best way to do this is to bring brothers at all degree levels together to discuss Freemasonry. These discussion groups are usually taught by experienced Master Masons who become master teachers in their own right. These teachers encourage new Masons to seek further light in Masonry on their own, but they embrace the key concept of Masonic Formation: giving intentional support to each new brother as he begins his Masonic journey and understanding of our ancient craft. This process is not accidental or random; it is purposeful, and the result of careful planning on the part of lodge leadership. It involves a commitment of time and resources. But the result is strong Master Masons who lead lives of impressive commitment to the tenets of Freemasonry. ♦



BUILDING COMMUNITY, REBUILDING HOMES

BROTHERS IN SAN MATEO
BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS
TO HELP NEIGHBORS IN NEED

By Matt Markovich

For 17 years, San Mateo Lodge No. 226 has taken Masonry's tenets well beyond the realm of rite and ritual. Each year, they channel relief and brotherly love into something concrete – wood, brick, and stone. Since the late 1990s, brothers have partnered with Masonic family members and a local nonprofit to rebuild homes in their community.

THE CAUSE

In 1999, John D. Nelson was serving simultaneously as junior warden of San Mateo Lodge and master of the Burlingame Scottish Rite. He and Past Master Ron Edwards fell into a discussion about service partnerships between Masonic groups. It led to the idea of sponsoring a “Masonic family” project – one that would connect the lodge with area Scottish Rite and Masonic youth, while making a lasting difference for their community.

To maximize their impact, they turned to Rebuilding Together Peninsula (formerly called Christmas in April). It's a chapter of Rebuilding Together, the nation's leading non-profit organization for providing critical home repairs, modifications, and improvements for low-income homeowners. Each year, homeowners in San Mateo apply to the program; often, they are seniors, individuals with disabilities, or families struggling to afford the upkeep required to keep their home safe. Rebuilding Together Peninsula selects those with the greatest need and assigns a local sponsor to each. Since 1999, San Mateo Lodge has been one of these sponsors.

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THE CREW

The project culminates with a one-day home repair in April, completed by an army of volunteers. But planning begins at least four months in advance. Sponsors provide the manpower and funding to complete crucial repairs, which means that they must secure donations, purchase materials, and muster volunteers.

For the 17 years that San Mateo Lodge has been a sponsor, Burlingame Scottish Rite has provided financial support. The lodge has provided the volunteers and planning work, led by lodge captains (for many years, Edwards and Nelson; currently, Edwards and Secretary Jim Ritter). To stretch their dollars, they often ask local Home Depot and Lowe's stores to chip in supplies. They recruit volunteers from Masonic groups and friends of the fraternity throughout the area. And, in the months leading up to the April event, they enlist lodge brothers to meet with the homeowners and map out a plan. It's a task for which San Mateo Lodge is exceptionally well suited: A number of tradesmen are members, including electricians, carpenters, and painters. Every year, they lead the volunteer crew through technical and transformative repairs, drastically improving the quality of life of their sponsored family.

"We've put in new windows; changed flooring; cleaned up yards," ticks off Ritter. Brothers have installed handrails, fixed sinks, and changed fuse boxes. A few years ago, they worked on the home of an older man with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and customized the molding and baseboards of his home to accommodate the oxygen lines he needed for treatment. A year before that, the homeowner was a Masonic brother at a nearby lodge; the San Mateo Lodge team specially requested to be his sponsor. Every year, members of the lodge team make an effort to get to know the neighbors whose homes they're repairing. Homeowners are encouraged to be home on the big day to meet the volunteers and, if they'd like and are able, to help out. On the day of the repairs, 40 to 50 volunteers typically turn out,

from teenagers to octogenarians; Masonic youth to long-time Masons. The project is the lodge's largest community outreach event each year. From the outset, Ritter says, it's been a tremendous success.

"Everyone looks forward to these events," Ritter explains. "Even people who aren't always able to attend lodge will make time – it's a big deal for everyone to be able to help."

THE PERSONAL CONNECTION

In the end, after months of planning and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor, another family in the community has a safe place to call home. The lodge benefits, too. The partnership with Rebuilding Together Peninsula has helped San Mateo brothers to establish and nurture

strong ties with local charities and nonprofits, while raising awareness of Masonry's role in the community.

It's also given brothers an opportunity to experience great joy. The connection between the individual and the universal – a call to mindful labor and active participation in one's community – is at the very basis of Freemasonry.

"When you volunteer like this, you give of yourself," says Ritter. "You get a real sense that, 'This is me helping, and these are my brothers helping.'"

He commends the vision that Nelson and Edwards had

in developing the partnership with Rebuilding Together Peninsula. Because the nonprofit oversees the application and selection process, plus many other logistics, brothers are able to make a real impact without requiring administrative infrastructure. "It's a great way to participate in the community by connecting with programs and agencies that are already here," he says.

Seventeen years after he and Edwards first suggested a Masonic service project, Nelson reflects on how meaningful Rebuilding Together has been for the lodge and community.

"I like to say that we are making new friends for Masonry, one family at a time," Nelson says. ♦

***“We are
making new
friends for
Masonry,
one family
at a time.”***

JOHN NELSON

FREEMASONRY RISING

AS WAR-TORN SERBIA REBUILDS, ITS FRATERNITY REBOUNDS

By Laura Benys

Grand Master Ranko Vujačić and his brothers waited eagerly for June 9. When the doors of Belgrade's Ethnographic Museum opened that day, a special exhibition would open with them: "Freemasonry in Serbia 1785–2014." This public presentation, organized by the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia under the leadership of Vujačić, would acquaint the Republic of Serbia with its rich Masonic culture.

Visitors could linger over Masonic regalia, and walk through a replica of a Masonic temple. They could learn about famous Serbian Freemasons of the past, from the great linguist and language reformer Vuk Karadžić to scientist Mihajlo Pupin. They could view pieces from the 1941 Grand Anti-Masonic Exhibition, staged in Belgrade during German occupation.

The exhibition commemorated 95 years of Freemasonry in the region. But it was also timed to usher in a new chapter in the fraternity's history. After painful cycles of rise and decline, Masonry in Serbia seemed truly poised

to rebound. Any public interest would help. The museum was predicting 200 or 300 visitors over the exhibition's run, and Vujačić and his brothers would be grateful for every one.

As it turned out, the prediction was wrong: More than 8,000 people came – on the first day alone. Interestingly, most of the visitors were in their 20s and 30s.

WAR ZONE

Serbia, like its neighbors on the Balkan Peninsula, has had a complicated and often violent history. For 7,000 years, its plains and mountains have been

a battleground for empires, from the clashes of ancient Romans to the 20th century's Balkan Wars. The capital city of Belgrade has been destroyed and rebuilt more than 40 times.

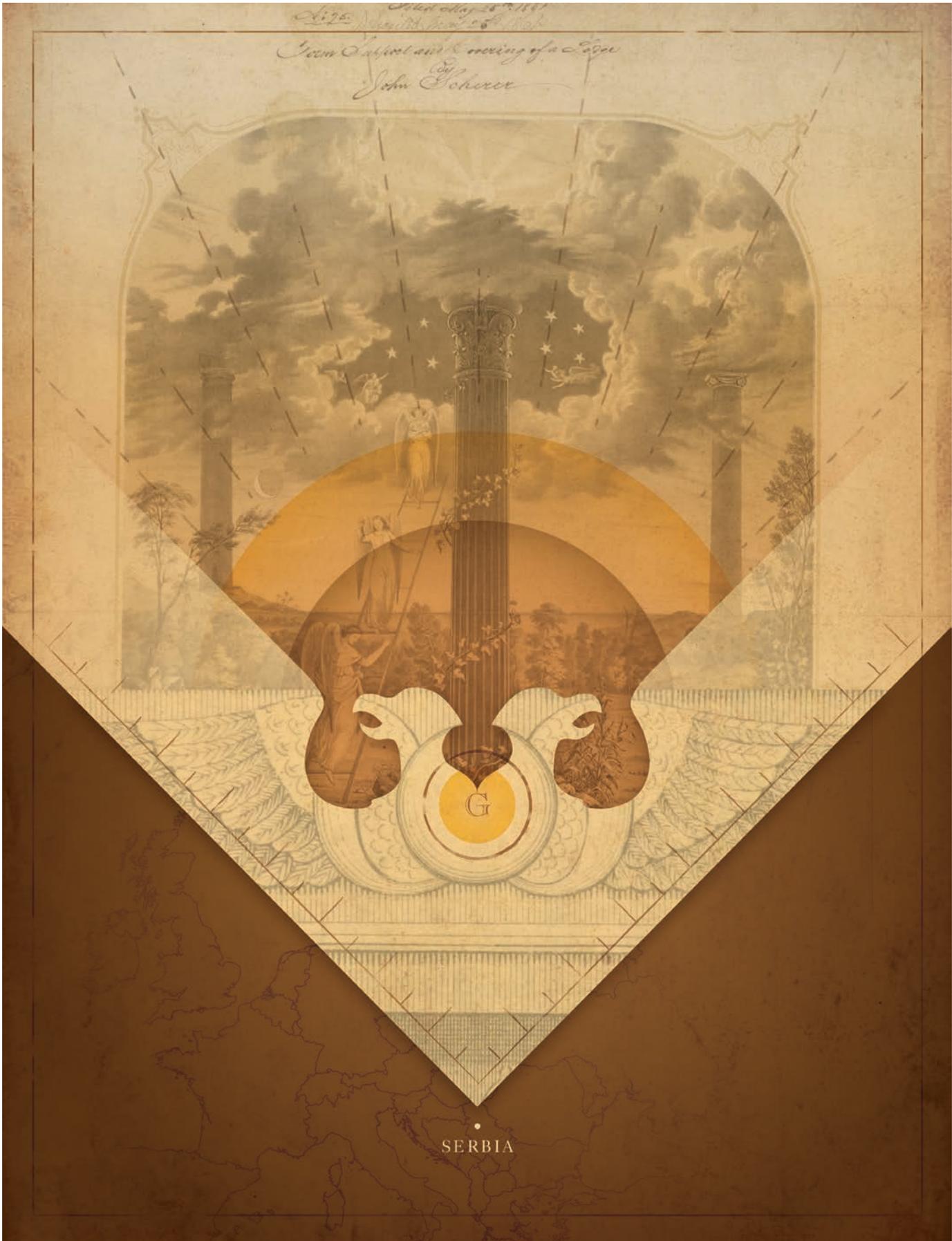
Freemasonry first arrived in 1785, when what is now Serbia was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Masonic lodges soon sprouted throughout its cities, sponsored by grand lodges from Hungary to Hamburg to Italy. Finally, in June 1919, Serbia – a sovereign state by then – gained a grand lodge to call its own. Over the next two decades, it grew to 30 lodges and more than 1,000 members.

World War II put an end to the boom. Like most European grand lodges, Serbian Freemasonry was forced underground to escape persecution. When the war ended, communism settled into the region, and Freemasonry was outlawed.

There are reports of at least two lodges in Belgrade that continued to meet secretly into the 1960s and 1970s, and several failed attempts to renew Masonic activities with the help of American and Swiss grand lodges. But it wasn't until 1989 that the

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Allegory
Plan of the Temple of Liberty
from Liberty and the moving of a Stone
by John Schreyer



•
SERBIA

fraternity re-emerged in what was by then Yugoslavia. Political changes had ushered in a new government stance toward Freemasonry, and the grand lodge – today the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia (RGLS) – was reestablished in June 1990. (Although several splinter groups exist, RGLS is the only grand lodge in Serbia recognized unanimously by the Grand Masters of North America and more than 140 regular grand lodges around the world.) After a long dormancy, Freemasonry had returned.

“Through our work, we wish to introduce our society to true Masonic values; to understand that Masons work for the well-being of the whole of Serbia.”

GRAND MASTER RANKO VUJAČIĆ

BUILDING AGAIN

In the 25 years since, even while the region weathered new political fractures and violence, Masonry in Serbia has steadily regained its former prominence. In 2008, two years after Serbia again became an independent country, RGLS had about 700 members in 22 lodges. Today, the numbers exceed their pre-WWII heyday: There are about 1,200 members in 34 lodges across the country, including lodges operating in the English and German languages. A lodge in Vienna is in the process of being chartered. Earlier this year, the RGLS organized a Masonic exhibition in a synagogue, together with the city authorities of Nis, in southern Serbia. Schoolteachers took their classes to see the exhibition and to share the positive impact Serbian Masons have had in the history of the country. Two months ago, the RGLS established a Masonic Academy in Belgrade. This institution will enable Masons in Serbia and neighboring countries to learn more about Masonry, and to introduce it to their communities.

And in June, RGLS hosted the European Grand Masters' conference in Belgrade, the “largest and most important Masonic event ever organized in Serbia,” according to the Masonic Press Agency blog. Still another Masonic public exhibition is planned later this year in Subotica, near Serbia's Hungarian border.

Throughout Serbia's history, known Freemasons have often been public leaders. This trend is also returning. Exhibitions like the one at Belgrade's Ethnographic Museum have put the fraternity back in the public eye. RGLS brothers are embracing humanitarian and educational causes from flood rehabilitation to education support to aid for the blind and visually impaired.

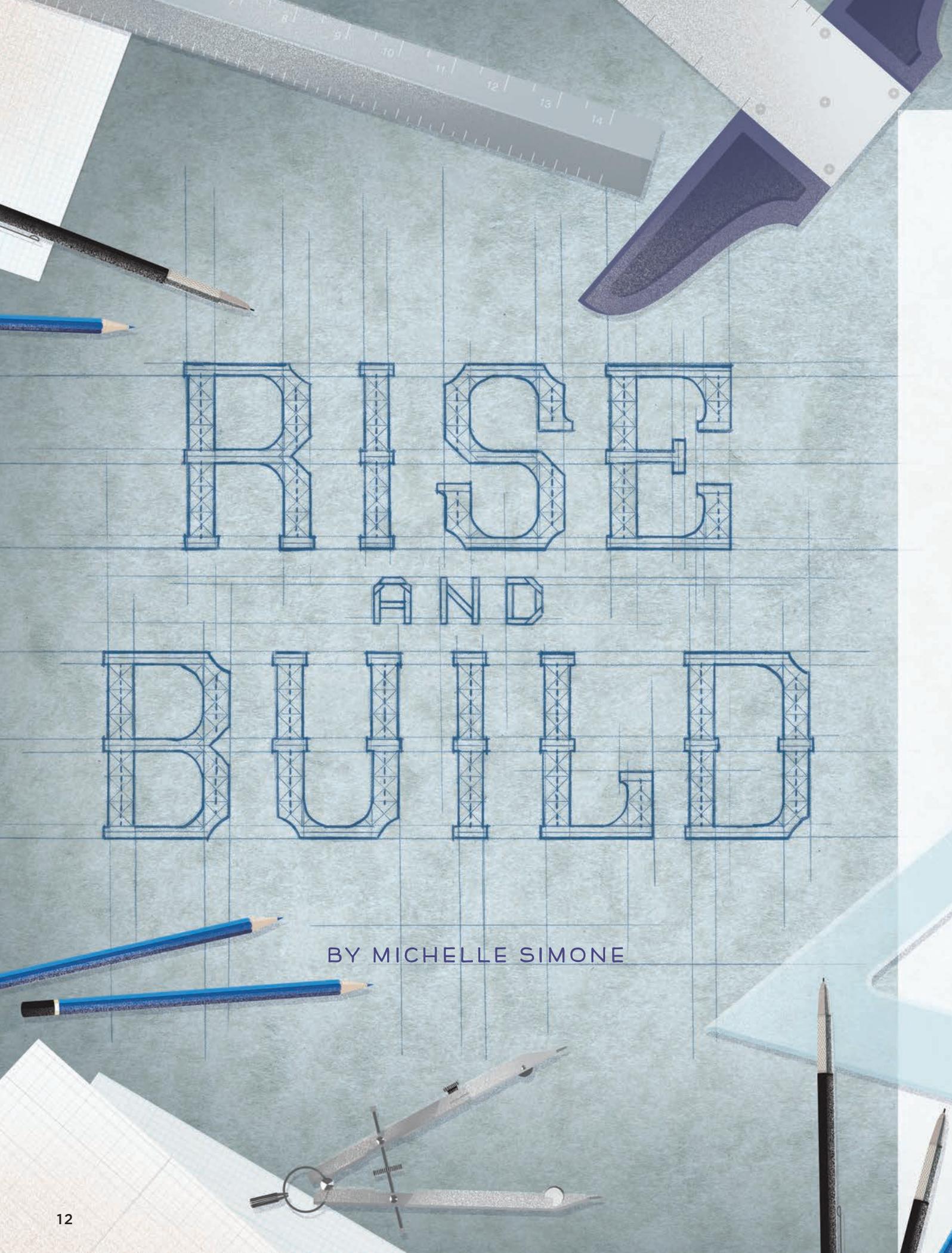
“Through our work we wish to introduce our society to true Masonic values; to understand that Masons work for the well-being of the whole of Serbia,” Vujačić says.

OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

These days, along the streets of Belgrade, dilapidated buildings are beginning new lives as bars and cafes. Long-neglected neighborhoods are returning to vibrancy as artists set up shop. As the dust from its tumultuous past settles, Serbia is rebuilding. Freemasonry is part of the picture, both as a reflection of the country's revitalization, and as a possible catalyst.

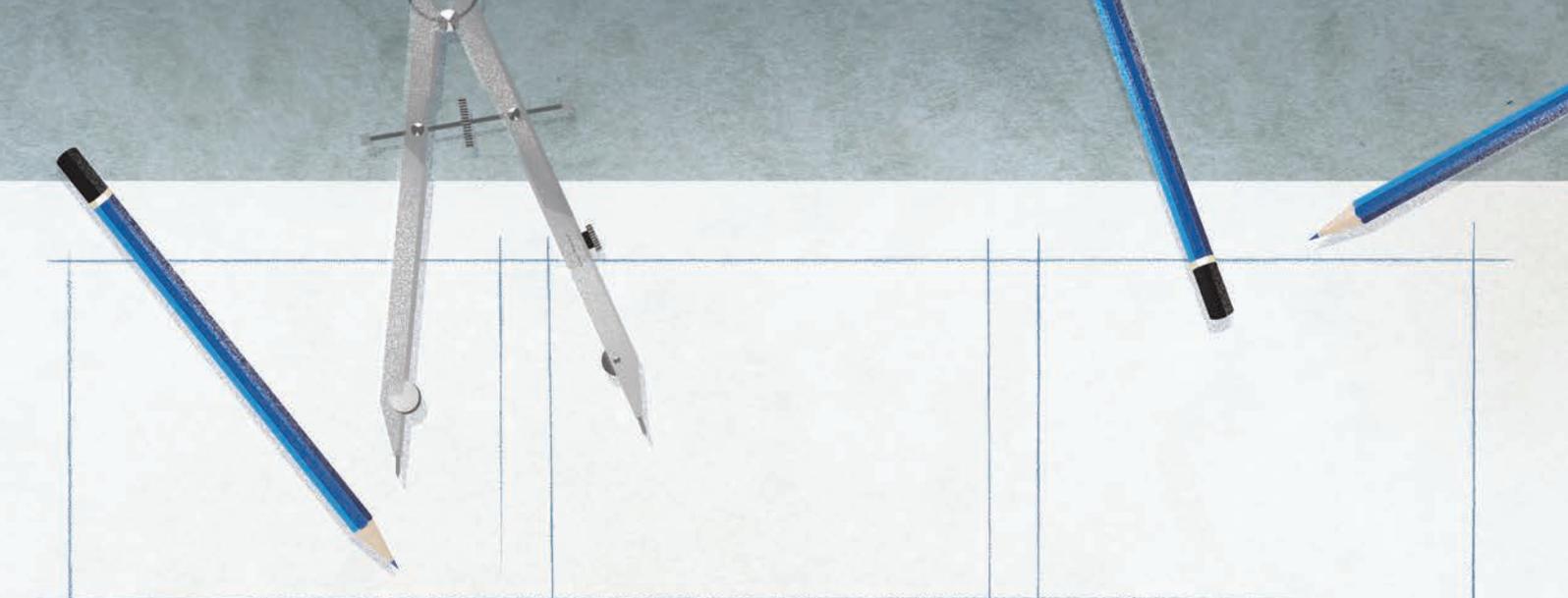
In June 2014, Vujačić welcomed the public into the new Masonic lodge in Belgrade for an episode of “Mira Adanja-Polak and You,” a popular talk show on Serbian national television. During her tour, host Mira Adanja-Polak (the “Barbara Walters of Yugoslavia,” according to her website) pauses to interview another guest, Thomas Jackson, honorary president of the World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges.

“[Freemasonry] probably had a greater influence on the evolution of civil societies than any other organization in history outside of organized religions,” Jackson says in a gentle, professorial tone. “That's the opportunity that Freemasonry now has in Serbia,” he tells Adanja-Polak. “And that's the opportunity that Freemasonry has in all of Eastern Europe.” ❖



RISE
AND
BUILT

BY MICHELLE SIMONE



WHY DO SOME EMPIRES ENDURE FOR CENTURIES WHILE NEIGHBORING STATES DISSOLVE? HOW CAN ONE BUILDING WITHSTAND AN EARTHQUAKE, WHILE THOSE BESIDE IT CRUMBLE INTO DUST? AND WHY ARE SOME MASONIC LODGES ABLE TO THRIVE WHILE OTHERS AROUND THEM STRUGGLE?

When faced with political and architectural examples, the answers are usually evident: Revolutions within the strong empire failed or its government was effective; a building's seismic-resistant structure functioned properly. But when it comes to individuals and lodges, outcomes are far more nuanced. Devoid of elements of chance or intuitive foresight, the defining characteristic of people and lodges that remain is described most simply as *resilience*.

To look at it another way: Successful entities do not continue on due to the absence of adversity; they continue on in spite of it. They demonstrate – to borrow from Merriam-Webster – “the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again.” When faced with daunting obstacles to which they cannot help but succumb, they do not remain in the ashes. Instead, they choose to lift themselves up: They opt to rise and build.

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STRONGER TOGETHER

This is a sentiment familiar to Bro. Jim Clark, secretary of Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge No. 366 in Fresno. Clark played an instrumental role in the consolidation of his lodge with Clovis Lodge No. 417 earlier this year, and he's seen firsthand how lodges can be transformed when brothers stand together and commit to making a difference.

Consolidation sometimes has negative connotations. But as Las Palmas-Ponderosa demonstrates, the marriage of two administrations can be hugely successful. Located within a small, vibrant community, Clovis Lodge had attracted an enthusiastic group of young members. But new brothers needed support, and many longtime members were having trouble keeping up.

"We had some members who also belonged to Clovis, and they'd invite us to attend their degrees," Clark recalls. "At the last few meetings, I'd say our lodge filled a third of the chairs. Those members wanted to keep Clovis going, but they were tired."

Because Clovis leaders were stretched thin, they couldn't maintain contact with members – and without a continued link, many did not follow through with the degrees. "A lot of young guys just kind of got lost," Clark says. "There wasn't a Trestleboard; there weren't any communications. After their degrees, brothers went home and nobody contacted them again."

A THEME TO LEAD BY

California Masons will recognize "Rise and Build" as the theme Most Worshipful M. David Perry selected when he was installed as California's grand master this year. It is an easy analogy to Perry's longtime career in building construction and to the fraternity's historic operative roots. But Perry's vision is not limited to physical structures, or even to "building up" the number of brothers statewide. Instead, he is evoking a symbolic type of rising (to the occasion) and the importance of building things (relationships and brotherhood) that are valuable, but intangible. As Perry puts it, "This is the time for us to come together to make something great."

In other words, when California Masons join together in support of their fraternity, the result is a resilient – and robust – brotherhood.

Yet despite these brothers' absence, many retained their original spark of interest in Freemasonry. Once the lodges consolidated and members began regularly receiving emails and letters, many came back – even those who hadn't been to lodge in several years.

Statewide resolutions also played an important role. In 2012, at the 163rd Annual Communication, delegates adopted CMC Resolutions 11-06 and 11-07, which for the first time allowed Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft Masons to attend all stated meetings. This legislation effectively transformed new members' experience, giving them a voice, a feeling of ownership, and a reason to come to lodge. At Las-Palmas Ponderosa, two members who had been gone for more than 10 years came back to finish their degrees.

At first glance, it might seem that Clovis Lodge faltered while Las Palmas-Ponderosa had always been flourishing. But, Clark explains, Las Palmas-Ponderosa benefitted from the consolidation, too.

"We were busy, but we were really hurting for officers," he says. The same brothers served year after year. And while they enjoyed leading, they were ready to pass the baton. Consolidating with Clovis was a perfect opportunity for them to transition into mentors. "Clovis had a lot of young guys who wanted to be officers, and we were able to help them lead. Now, some of the candidates even coach each other

as they're going through their own degrees. They're eager to give back."

A similar situation took place in Modesto in 2005, when Modesto Lodge No. 675 joined with Stanislaus Lodge No. 206. "We raised about the same number of members, but 675 ran out of officers," says Michael Arnerich, now secretary of the consolidated lodge, Modesto No. 206. "Brothers came in for degrees, then everyone left. But by the time I came in, there was a pinochle game before each meeting. Soon, the master had to send somebody down to get the cro-nies out of the game room! We were having a lot of fun." For Arnerich and other brothers, social opportunities provided a chance to connect.

EMBRACING LEGACY

Richard Watson of Destiny Lodge No. 856 agrees that strong social connections are a defining characteristic of a resilient lodge. Watson was among Destiny's founding members when it was chartered on the campus of the Covina Masonic Home in 2014.

Like many Destiny brothers, Watson was a member and past master of Covina Lodge No. 334, which folded in 2007. But together with Masonic Home residents John Abernethy, Mark Sandstrom, and Jim Nash, Watson didn't give up hope for a lodge in his community. The brothers believed that the presence of the Home was a great advantage. Many Masons were residents, and the

former lodge had conferred degrees there in the past. The lodge would benefit residents who couldn't physically drive off campus, while offering the community a window inside.

Today, Destiny's roster includes a large number of Covina residents, but many brothers are from the greater community. And, the lodge's location has proved to be essential. "When you arrive on campus, the history is in the air," Watson says. "We're surrounded by brothers who have devoted their entire lives to Masonry – and who in many cases were instrumental in making it what it is today. That's really special."

In creating Destiny Lodge, Watson jokes that the founding members were like the phoenix, resurrecting themselves at the Masonic Home. Yet they were careful to preserve Covina Lodge's legacy. Some artifacts went into the archives at Grand Lodge, and the pedestals, signed by generations of DeMolay officers, were entrusted to San Dimas Lodge. Destiny continues to use many Covina fixtures today. "Each lodge has so much history," Watson says. "Even if members move elsewhere, it's important to preserve traditions."

At Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge, shared history is also a priority. Following consolidation, the historic Clovis temple was sold, but its stained glass windows were preserved and mounted in the Las Palmas-Ponderosa lodge room, to be illuminated during degrees. Framed photos of Clovis past

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masters adorn the lodge walls. "It's important for Clovis members to feel at home here – and they really have a wonderful history," Clark says.

FELLOWSHIP AND FRATERNITY

Resilient lodges provide ongoing opportunities for members to strengthen relationships with brothers and experience Masonic fellowship. At Las Palmas-Ponderosa, brothers are integrated with concordant bodies and community organizations. They support Masonic youth – in particular, California Rainbow Heart of the Valley Assembly No. 217. A lodge scholarship program recognizes youth leaders, and Rainbow Girls regularly attend the lodge's famous stated meeting dinners. "We have a chef who prepares and plates our meals; it's like something on the food channel!" Clark says.

He is quick to point out that stated meeting dinners "are not moneymakers." All prospects and candidates are invited to attend – and many meals are paid for by the lodge. Recently, 15 Boy Scouts showed up unannounced for dinner, and according to Clark, that's all part of the fun. "We always overcook. We don't believe in turning anyone away."

Las Palmas-Ponderosa members also socialize outside the lodge. "About 20 or 30 of us meet every Thursday for degrees, then go to a restaurant,"

Clark says. "It's nice to get together for something social – and we always invite prospects, too."

At Modesto Lodge, an array of activities reflects members' diverse interests. Recent offerings have spanned the gamut from a deep sea fishing trip to cigar nights, pool parties, motorcycle cruises, shooting range gatherings, and an ice cream social. A popular event is the annual pool tournament, which is open to the community and requires participants to draw partners blindly.

"We invite prospects out to all our social functions," says Arnerich. "We'll ask them to help us in the kitchen, or to set up a social event. We get to know them by working together."

And, lodge ladies are encouraged to take part in the fun. "We try to include ladies in at least one social event each month," Arnerich reports. The popular 'Ladies Night Out' commonly draws 10 to 20 couples. And, at other social occasions, ladies make up a third of the guests.

GROWING CONNECTIONS, GROWING LODGES

Las Palmas-Ponderosa is the fastest-growing lodge in the Central Valley, and holds degrees every Thursday. By August, the lodge had initiated 17 Entered Apprentices, passed 17 Fellow Crafts, and raised 12 Master Masons. Modesto Lodge experienced a similar resurgence, with 11 candidates

initiated, six second degrees, and five third degrees. The secret to success? According to Clark: A lot of communication – and a lot of fun.

Both Modesto and Las Palmas-Ponderosa officers make it a priority for members and prospects to communicate and connect. "Our website is updated with lots of pictures," Clark says. "We have two Trestleboards – a printed mailing to about 500 people and a longer emailed version to 400. I also send other emails, letters, and even postcards – it's lot of work, but if we get one more person back, or stop one from leaving, it's worth it."

Maintaining contact with those who aren't tech-savvy remains a priority. "We have many members in their 90s," Clark says. "Other than one brother who's 96 and still driving, most don't make it to lodge, so they need mail to stay connected. Our older brothers are important; they're the ones who started everything."

On the flipside, online communications are playing a major role in connecting with new members and prospects. "Modesto has an extensive Web presence," reports Arnerich. "We maintain our website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts – and post throughout each week with content that draws visitors back." Both lodges have found online prospect information forms to be extremely valuable. At Las Palmas-Ponderosa, about 75 percent of those who request information online ultimately apply and continue

through the degrees. In Modesto, that rate is 98 percent.

Arnerich believes that once prospects find the lodge, it's essential to make their experience worthwhile and transparent. So whether a man is recommended by a member or finds the lodge himself, Arnerich meets him at the lodge to explain exactly what Masons are and are not, and to overview the degree process. Following this meeting, the prospect is invited to social functions and added to the lodge's email list to keep him connected. "We make it easy to get started," Arnerich says. "Then, we make it fun to come back."

A PASSION FOR RITUAL

Resilient lodges share another important characteristic of success: a passion for ritual. "We take our ritual very seriously," says Arnerich. "It's the first thing the candidate sees about Masonry, so we want it to be as good as possible for him, even if we've done it 100 times before."

Modesto Lodge holds ritual practice about three times a month, sometimes more. And, they travel to Columbia State Historic Park each April to perform a degree ceremony in the lodge room there. It's a treasured tradition. Following the degree ceremony, the lodge enjoys a full dinner – with the junior past master providing ice cream and pie. This year, 32 brothers attended. "We filled up the room!" recalls Arnerich.



From helping rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake to present-day Masonic charities, read more about how California Masons are committed to building a culture of relief in the June/July 2014 issue of California Freemason.
freemason.org/aim

"If you want people to come to lodge for degrees, you need to offer something meaningful for brothers to go to," Clark says. "There's nothing worse than attending a degree when only the officers are in the room. You'd wonder, 'What did I just join?' Having a good turnout is important."

And, Clark says, sharing passion for Freemasonry benefits all the brothers. "It's amazing when I sit and watch these young guys getting their degrees. They take every word in – they really want to learn; to become part of Masonry."

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REACHING BEYOND THE LODGE

California's newest lodge, Green Dragon Masonic Fellowship, U.D. – which just received its dispensation this past July – has found that its members' relationships have been strengthened by a shared passion for innovation. "We came from lodges where individual members were inspired to do new, different things, and were personally motivated to work quickly," says Gary Jackson, past master of Libertas-Security No. 466 and the fledgling lodge's master. "Our new lodge embraces that. If someone wants to do something different, we encourage him. We don't create a committee – we just take action."

This proactive approach is based heavily in brothers' commitment to serving their surrounding community. Green Dragon started out as a service group composed of Masons and non-members. They volunteered first at VillageFest – a local festival benefitting children in need – then moved on to helping with a variety of other charitable events.

"Once people realize you're organized, you can do things, and that you care, they start finding you," says Jackson. "And, we're happy to help. We want to be found. When people see a group of guys out there, working at a community event, they understand that you walk the talk. We don't get a candidate every time,

but we do get a lot more interest than by just having an open lodge."

Las-Palmas Ponderosa and Modesto leaders agree. Four times a year, Las Palmas-Ponderosa members provide bicycles and helmets, backpacks (stamped with the lodge's name and number), and school supplies to two local public schools, helping maintain their community presence. And in Modesto, the lodge's attendance-based bicycle giveaway program impacted student performance so dramatically that the school's rating improved – and community members couldn't help but take note.

Yet beyond community awareness, all of these programs have a deep personal impact as well: They help Masons demonstrate shared values and find meaning within their fraternity.

"Men who seek out Masonry today are looking for something that they cannot get elsewhere," Arnerich says. "They're looking for something to connect to – someone to talk to, and a way to make a difference."

Through the initiatives of these lodges – and so many more throughout the state – California Masons are truly rising to the occasion, building their communities, and renewing their commitment to a strong and resilient brotherhood. ✦

WEB EXTRA

RISING FROM THE ASHES

Read about how a catastrophic fire at one lodge helped herald a new beginning in the February/March 2014 issue of California Freemason.
freemason.org/rising



BUILDING STRONGER CONNECTIONS

We asked more than 93,000 fans on the Masons of California Facebook page: **HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LODGES AND BROTHERS?** Here is what they said.

Whole Masonic district public service events and schools of instruction are my favorites. Harley riding is fun, too.

– DANIEL J. FERGUSON

Reading Lodge No. 254 likes to get the ladies and kids involved in fun things – having a barbecue or a Fourth of July party with water balloons. We have morning breakfast at our lodge to discuss the degrees.

– URIAH MCBROOME

Service, service, service! Doing things for others always brings people closer: volunteer at the food bank, fundraise for Shriners, etc. Also, do more youth outreach. We need to instill Masonic values in our children. They are our future.

– DAVID MICHAEL RHODES

Just by remembering we are all equal, no matter rank or fortune.

– WILLIAM ROWLAND

Nurture and mentor new brethren. Nurture and mentor all brethren.

– FRASER SIM

Plan activities outside of lodge.

– BRANDON NOTCH

Provide basic Masonic education and explain what it means to be a Freemason at heart.

– BAYANI ENRIQUEZ ARIT JR.

My lodge in Las Vegas has a sister lodge in Downey, California. This year, we traveled there to perform a Master Mason degree. Next year Downey will travel to Las Vegas to put on a degree for us. This tradition has lasted well over 20 years. The host always provides lunch and entertainment, and we have an exchange of gifts between officers! It's a great tradition that brings brothers from neighboring states together.

– TRAVIS WORTMAN





MEMBER PROFILE

THE MASON INSIDE

MEET VIRGILIO A. MARAVILLAS SR.,
GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND CIVIL ENGINEER
MASON FOR 4 YEARS

By Michelle Simone

When he considers his life achievements, civil engineer Virgilio Maravillas can envision skyscrapers, shopping malls, and bridges – from the southeastern Philippines to Los Angeles and Dubai. Yet he considers his greatest accomplishments to be the intangible structures he has built – his relationships with his family, his community, and his lodge brothers.

Maravillas, who has studied and worked his entire life, has not slowed down in retirement. In fact, he came to the fraternity somewhat recently through a fellow volunteer he met through Doctors Without Borders, a humanitarian-aid organization known for its

projects in war-torn and developing countries. Now chaplain of Oasis Lodge No. 854, Maravillas savors each word in the perambulation, speaking intentionally to ensure that its meaning is heartfelt and clear. “I want to share the feeling I get from it,” he says.

“The biggest thing I discovered with Masonry is that you must put it in your heart. Men are made Masons in the lodge, and our ceremonies and buildings hold value. But we truly become Masons inside, in our own hearts. If you develop your moral compass and live on the square, you are living a good life. And, you will be happy.” ♦



We've Got an App for That!

A NEW MOBILE APP FOR LODGES IS
PAVING THE WAY FOR THE NEXT
GENERATION OF LODGE COMMUNICATION

By Jay Kinney

It's a familiar discussion at many lodges: How can brothers keep in touch between stated meetings and degrees? How is lodge news conveyed? How can a sense of lodge community be built and sustained?

There are many answers, of course, some better than others. Some lodges build email lists; some have phone trees; most have monthly Trestleboards or calendar mailings. And, a new tool is emerging as we speak: A mobile app for lodges.

COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

"App," of course, is short for *application*, a software program designed for mobile devices like smartphones and tablets, which allow users to summon a staggering deal of information at just one touch. In addition to sending calls and texts, users are accustomed to sharing news, photos, and ideas – facilitating connections anytime, anywhere.

As mobile technology has advanced over the past few years, some Masons have wondered: What if there was an app that could serve lodges as a private forum, free of ads, where members could chat securely, share photos, review the calendar and roster, and make reservations for dinners and other lodge events? The good news is that there *is* such an app, and Phoenix Lodge No. 144 in San Francisco has been using it since early 2015.

Mark McNee is a candidate coach and senior warden at Phoenix Lodge. He first became aware of the app when the Asiya Shriners became a pilot organization testing it. McNee notes, "I was certain that something like this would be embraced by Masonic lodges, especially those with younger members. It's a very handy way for brothers to be in contact between meetings. The funny thing is that, of the 51 members of Phoenix Lodge who signed up for it, the majority are over 50 years old."

"Like many lodges," McNee explains, "some of our members no longer live nearby. We have one brother who moved several states away some 20 years ago, but through our app he's become one of our most active brothers in a way that wouldn't have been possible before."

The app's functionality is focused on member usage, and its content is only visible to members of the lodge. It is organized into tabs, with each serving a different purpose: The socially focused "discuss" tab allows members to

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POSTS
Read and respond to recent postings by lodge brothers, or add your own.

PHOTOS
View all photos that members have added to posts throughout the app.

EVENTS
An interactive event calendar includes RSVP, mapping, and push notification options.

BRETHREN
Access your brothers' names and contact information.

CHAT
Send a message to an individual member, or group of members.



Get the App

IF YOUR LODGE IS INTERESTED IN GETTING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FREE LODGE APP, CONTACT MEMBER SERVICES AT (415) 776-7000 OR MEMBERSERVICES@FREEMASON.ORG

post messages, questions, conversations, and photos; a “photos” tab aggregates pictures that members have added to posts throughout the app. On the “events” tab, members can view an interactive calendar of events, with RSVP and mapping options – including push notifications. The “Masons” tab includes all members’ names and contact information.

Prometheus Lodge No. 851 in San Francisco and Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 in San Jose have recently adopted the app. Christopher Oryschak, age 32, is an Entered Apprentice at Prometheus Lodge. “Even though our lodge has fewer than 30 members, there are several brothers I have never met or spoken to, due to their commitments or because they’ve moved out of the area. These members have been active on the Prometheus app, however, so I’ve been able to place a face with their names and have gotten to know them on a personal level. It’s a great way to keep in touch.”

Oryschak adds, “A popular activity has been sharing pictures of Masonic art and architecture brothers have seen through their travels. In the past few months, I’ve seen photos from Copenhagen, the Vatican, Honolulu, and Indiana. It’s been a great way for me to get exposed to ‘real world’ Masonry outside of books and lodge meetings.”

Oscar Arguello, Jr., age 29, is chaplain and webmaster for Golden Rule Lodge No. 479, and helped to implement the app for his lodge. Arguello explains, “It has only been



a few weeks since we started using the app, but we’ve already seen many benefits. A great number of our members quickly adopted it. It has helped keep us in the loop about upcoming events and has improved our communication. We appreciate the ability to send members reminders and to give them exact locations with a link to online maps.”

These early adopters have especially appreciated the privacy the app affords. Unlike Facebook, where oftentimes users are unsure as to who might be reading their posts, only lodge members have access. Brian Glick, CEO and founder of GroupAhead – the company that developed the app – emphasizes that each lodge “owns” its own words and pictures. GroupAhead has no interest in trying to glean information from its users.

Looking to the future, both Oryschak and Arguello imagine a time when every lodge in California has its own app, with the possibility of event payments and private messaging, which will allow the executive team or other committees to have private conversations within the app. Some of these developments are forthcoming, while others may launch farther off in the future.

And, Arguello notes, the app may not be ideal for every member or every lodge. Despite its advantages, the app is not a substitute for traditional communication. Not all Masons have smartphones, or even computers. No one wants to create a “digital divide” where some brethren are connected and others are left out. And, some lodges may already have already implemented sophisticated systems of their own. Each lodge must make the decision to employ new technologies in the best way forward for them.

“Adopting technology has helped us know which members need to be contacted in the traditional ways: by telephone, mail, and personal visits,” Arguello says. While lodge apps may be the wave of the future, a commitment to bringing members together by a variety of means – both old and new – remains crucial as we continue to map out a future for our fraternity that will work for all of us. ❖

The Care Collaborative

THROUGH IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS, THE MASONIC HOMES IS CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN MEMBERS, COMMUNITY, AND A HIGHER QUALITY OF CARE

By Laura Benys

In February 2015, an improved memory care program was introduced at the Masonic Home in Union City, complete with a renovated physical space and cutting-edge programming. Later this year, the ribbon will be cut on a new short-stay rehabilitation program, the first of its kind on any of the Masonic Homes campuses. This summer, the Masonic Homes and Acacia Creek will host Masonic care leaders at the 2016 conference of the Masonic Communities & Services Association.

All of these achievements are the results of collaboration, and there is more progress coming down the pike. As health care reform unfolds in this country, local relationships among health care systems are going to be critical for everyone. For many in the industry, these partnerships will be a significant shift. But at the Masonic Homes of California, they are already part of the culture.

RESHAPING THE HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE

One example of this is in memory care. Cognitive care related to dementia and Alzheimer's disease is an area of special focus at the Masonic Homes, and in recent years the fraternity has positioned itself at the forefront of research into treatment. This includes a partnership with T.J. McCallum, Ph.D., of Case Western Reserve University in Ohio. McCallum's

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Toward an end to Alzheimer's

The Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support, and research, held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide. The Masonic Homes of California was a Gold Level sponsor of the San Francisco event, which took place on Sept. 19. Led by first lady Jeanette Perry, Masonic Homes residents and staff joined more than 3,000 members of the San Francisco Bay Area community for this symbolic walk. It was an inspiring day focused on an issue vitally important to the Masonic Homes of California, and the entire fraternity.

(((WEB EXTRA)))

Check out photos from the Walk to End Alzheimer's on the California Masonic Assistance Facebook page.

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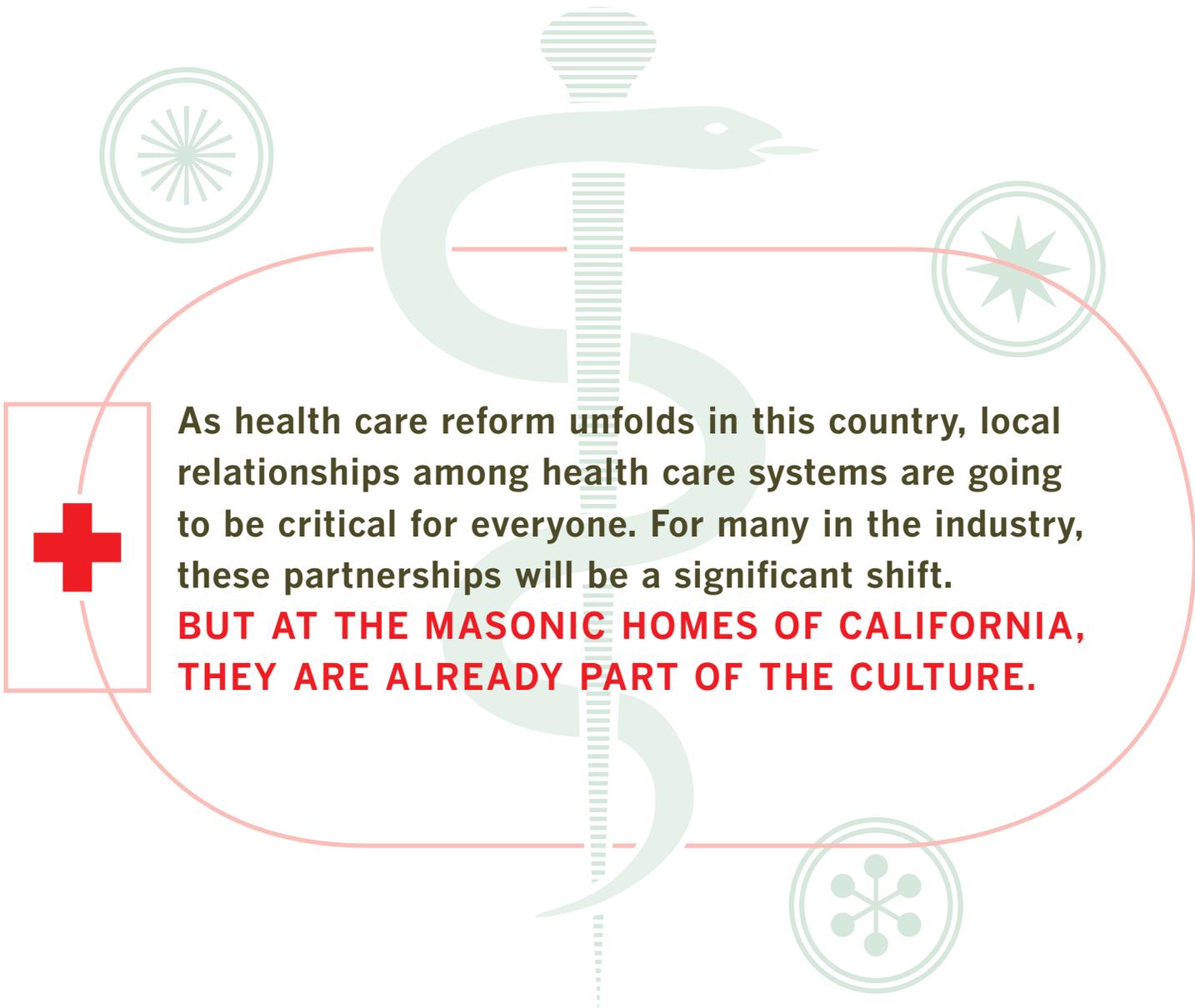
technology-based brain fitness program, the Brain Emporium, is offered at both Homes campuses as an early measure against cognitive loss.

The Homes has also honed in on improving the quality of life of those already living with memory loss. At the Union City campus, a new floor was dedicated this year to residents with advanced memory loss and dementia, with facilities and programming that reflect the growing body of research into this area.

The new memory care space dovetailed with another important development. Until earlier this year, if Union City and Acacia Creek residents needed rehabilitation care – for example, after being treated in the hospital for a hip replacement – they moved to the Home’s general skilled nursing floor to recover. But residents from both communities wanted a separate short-stay rehab floor for such rehabilitation needs. When the Home established the dedicated space for memory care, it freed up an entire floor for just that.

Later this year, the Union City Home will open a brand-new short-term stay rehabilitation program. According to Executive Vice President Gary Charland, this was the result of an 18-month collaboration with Washington Hospital Healthcare System. Known as Transitions, the program serves patients who no longer require acute hospital care, but are not yet ready to return home. It provides specialized care for cardiac, orthopedic, stroke, and neurosurgical rehabilitation – and it is not limited to Homes residents.

The typical patient stay at a short-stay rehabilitation center is just 10 to



As health care reform unfolds in this country, local relationships among health care systems are going to be critical for everyone. For many in the industry, these partnerships will be a significant shift.

BUT AT THE MASONIC HOMES OF CALIFORNIA, THEY ARE ALREADY PART OF THE CULTURE.

18 days. Administrator of Health Services Franco Diamond describes the Home's program as a cross between a hospital and a hotel, with private patient rooms, premium amenities, state-of-the-art rehabilitation gym equipment, and top-of-the-line care. It boasts a staff-to-patient ratio much higher than in a typical nursing home. Patients enjoy restaurant-style dining in a beautifully appointed dining room, and a concierge is available to answer families' questions and anticipate patient needs.

"We want to make the transition as smooth as possible from hospital to home. The more comfortable the person is, the faster he or she is going to be rehabilitated," says Diamond. "It's what skilled nursing should be, and can be."

This is an example, Diamond says, of "reshaping" the industry – with a much greater emphasis on quality, comfort,

and collaboration between levels of service. This is the future of health care.

CARE AND COMMUNITY

The Homes is embracing this future on many fronts. There's a research component: The Homes recently announced an initiative to create a National Database for Falls, compiling statistics from Masonic care facilities nationwide to inform administrators about risk factors. The Union City Home's "Brain Fitness Gym," implemented as part of McCallum's Brain Emporium program, is collecting data for a long-term study.

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There's a community component: The Masonic Home at Union City partnered last year with a local organic farming and job development program run through the county sheriff's department, as well as a community group that helps provide funding for local schools. The Home at Covina partners with the University of Southern California's School of Social Work, teaching critical skills to first-year students through an annual internship.

And then there is a health systems component: The short-term rehab program at Union City could not have been realized without the Homes' strategic collaboration with Washington Hospital. The forecast for health care calls for more of these community connections – between hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health services, and all other branches of health care.

"As more health care reforms unwind, our relationship with our local health care systems is going to be critical," says Charland. "By establishing relationships statewide with senior care providers, we can better serve our fraternity, on campus and through our community-based outreach programs." ♦



Read more about the Masonic Homes memory care initiatives in the December/January issue of California Freemason, online at freemason.org/memory.

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