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FREEMASON

Oct/Nov 2009



What is a Lodge?

THE BUILDING
AND THE BROTHERHOOD
WHERE MASONS ARE MADE

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February 26-28, Irvine

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Senior Wardens

April 30-May 2, Ontario
May 14-16, San Ramon

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June 26, Sacramento
July 10, Pleasanton
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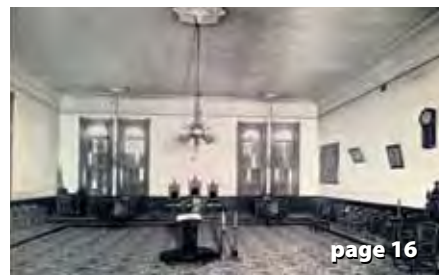
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What is a Lodge?

Without the lodge, there would be no Masonry. Take an in-depth look at the building and the brotherhood where Masons are made. Rich symbology in the lodge room tells the story of the fraternity's earliest days and unites members in a shared identity. Most importantly, lodges unite Masons through fellowship, values, and lessons that reach far beyond the fraternity.

Lodge Spotlight Hear from some of California's most loyal members, and how their lodges elicit their continued participation.

In California The numbers add up to one thing: it's been a remarkable year for California Masonry. Check out at-a-glance highlights from 2009.

Masonic Education John Cooper explores the obvious question – Why blue? – and reveals a not-so-obvious answer.

Around the World The debate about the "right" size for a lodge membership is a worldwide discussion. Grand lodges in the United States and abroad have different traditions and opinions – as well as some surprising similarities.

Masonic Homes Masonic Homes residents reflect on the sense of belonging and brotherhood that characterizes their lodge experience, which they're now instilling in others.

IT'S TIME TO Come Home

KENNETH G. NAGEL,
GRAND MASTER



It was 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday or the third Wednesday or some other night that your lodge met. Can you picture that evening when you first arrived at the lodge to receive your Entered Apprentice degree? Can you remember how you felt?

Anticipation of the unknown and excitement about a new venture was the feeling for most. As all have passed through the initiatic process, each man has undergone a unique, personal experience – one that also connects him with every other brother who has passed through our portals.

Each man, upon submitting an application, had some expectation of what Masonry was going to offer him and what might be expected of him. It is almost universal, though, for a candidate to tell you that he was awestruck when his eyes first beheld the form of the lodge and the parallel lines of his brethren there to greet him upon being brought “into the light.”

If this is true, we must ask ourselves: “Then why, in a typical lodge, are only 10 to 15 percent of members active?”

Of the other 85 percent, many don’t darken the walls of the lodge for years at a time. What was the candidate expecting that the lodge did not deliver? Why did his anticipation and excitement wane? Where did the lodge go wrong – or, did it go wrong at all? These are questions that our lodge leadership must address.

As we commence this new Grand Lodge year, my theme is: Freemasonry, the Foundation of our Country; Blue Lodge, the Foundation of our Craft; *Coming Home*.

This theme has two connotations. The first is the physical act of returning to our craft lodges.

I have always believed that Masonry is a habit. If you are in the habit of attending lodge, then there is no problem. But, if you are out of the habit, then it is easy to find a dozen excuses not to attend meetings or functions.

This trend of a majority of our membership not participating must be reversed. We must find out what within the lodge makeup will prompt our members to become engaged.

I am asking all our lodge leadership to have a single goal for the year: Reconnect with members and widows.

Make contact with each and every member – not a quick e-mail or a short message left on an answering machine, but a personal contact to determine how every member is doing. Remind them that they are valued assets of the lodge and that they matter. Find out what would excite them about the lodge again and how they can once again become engaged with their brothers. You see, we do not have a membership problem. We only need to find a reason for our members to *Come Home!*

The second connotation of my theme is the importance of “coming home” to the ideals of our craft, which we each professed on bended knee at the altar.

We each took an obligation to better ourselves, to protect our craft, and to care for those that cannot care for themselves. Each member must look within himself and determine if he is living his life by those ideals. Do you care for a brother or widow in need? Do you shine your Masonic light through the actions of everyday living? Do you share your experiences of what being a Mason means to you?

My brothers, I ask that you help me show the world why our craft exists, why we continue to be relevant within our community, and why we will continue to thrive.

My brothers, it is time to *Come Home!* ✨



by Richard Berman

True-Blue

Daylight lodges bring together some of California's most loyal Masons

It can take just a few months to become a Master Mason, but being a brother is a lifelong commitment. Only about one half of one percent of California Masons leave the craft – an impressive rate, especially considering that Rotary International, a comparable organization, currently has a 20 percent withdrawal rate.

Member longevity has a lot to do with the high retention rate in California Masonry. For a member to remain active in blue lodge as he enters his senior years, he must continue to feel a sense of belonging. But often, there are other factors: his lodge brothers must be ready to assist with transportation and other challenges of attending evening meetings.

As one solution, some of California's lifelong members have been instrumental in forming daylight lodges throughout the state.

Daylight lodges function just like any other, except that meetings are held during the day, when it is often more convenient for older brothers (as well as brothers who work night shifts or have other evening commitments) to attend.

NORTH COUNTY DAYLIGHT LODGE: REACHING RUSTY MASONS

One such lodge is North County Daylight Lodge No. 843 in Escondido, just north of San Diego. According to Charter Master (and current Junior Warden) Bob Harrell, the group was founded in the early 1990s by a group of brothers in Consuelo Lodge No. 325.

"We had a lot of members who weren't active," Harrell says. "We reached out to the 'rusty' Masons

to see how we could get them to come back to meetings."

After exploring a number of options, in 1993 a number of brothers decided to create a daylight lodge that would allow older Masons to stay involved.

"It's really been a great success," Harrell says. "There are a lot of retirees



**Bob Harrell, junior warden
North County Daylight Lodge**

in the area, so we had no shortage of older Masons who wanted to participate. When we started we were under dispensation, so we could only have 50 brothers – and we actually had a waiting list."

The lodge is fulfilling its purpose.

"The guys love coming here because they get to participate fully in the lodge," Harrell adds. "We don't give a lot of degrees here because of our demographic, but we still have a lot of fun. We are a very close-knit group."

BICENTENNIAL DAYLIGHT LODGE: REMOVING ROADBLOCKS TO PARTICIPATION

While it can be difficult for older Masons to regularly participate in lodges that meet at night, participation rates in daylight lodges are quite high. One example is Bicentennial Daylight Lodge No. 830 in Sacramento.

"That high participation really builds a great sense of community and brotherhood."

"We have 146 members, and about 40 percent come to our meetings," reports Secretary Ray Lenau. "That high participation really builds a great sense of community and brotherhood."

Meeting in the daytime is a major factor, according to Lenau.

"A lot of our members don't want to drive at night," Lenau says. "Being a daylight lodge removes that barrier."

In addition, Bicentennial Daylight Lodge helps build up participation by hosting regular potluck meals for brothers and their wives. The lodge's formula is also a draw for new members.

"Most of our members come from other lodges," Lenau says, "but in 2008 we actually raised six Master Masons here." ✦



Why I Remain a Mason

LIFELONG MEMBERS SHARE KEYS TO KEEPING ACTIVE

While daylight lodges offer an excellent roadmap for increasing Masonic retention, there are plenty of brothers who remain active in non-daylight lodges throughout their lives. What are some of the reasons they stay involved?

Leading roles

Charles Bersani of Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge No. 366 in Fresno became a Mason in 1972 and a year later became tiler. More than 35 years later, he's an important voice in his lodge and the craft.

"It's key for older Masons to have something to do in a leadership role, even if it's not serving as an officer," Bersani says.

He's stayed involved on a number of boards and committees and through leadership roles including inspector, chaplain, and officers' coach – his current role.

Bersani, who received the Hiram Award in 1990, also credits family ties.

"My two girls were both Job's daughters, and my grandson was recently raised as a Mason," Bersani explains. "That has definitely helped keep me active and committed."

Commitment to the cause



Charles Hutchinson,
treasurer since 1969

For Charles Hutchinson, past master of Downey United Lodge No. 220, lifelong involvement in Masonry is part of a larger commitment to community involvement.

In addition to being a Mason since 1962, Hutchinson has also been involved with Rotary, the Boy Scouts, and the Downey Regional Medical Center, where he served as president and was a board member for 22 years.

"Being involved with good causes is a central part of my life," says Hutchinson, who received the Hiram Award in 1985.

A retired certified public accountant, one of the ways that he has remained active in Masonry is by using his professional skills to help his lodge. He first became treasurer in 1969 and has filled the role ever since, with the exception of one year.

"It's been a great way to stay active," Hutchinson says, "and more, to really be a part of what our lodge does."

By the Numbers

California Masonry

335

Degree-conferring lodges
in California

1,829 Entered Apprentices initiated

1,328 Fellow Crafts passed

1,254 Master Masons raised

13.2

Average number
of overall degrees
conferred per lodge

*Best average in
30 years*

4,411

Total degrees conferred
Most since 1990

3.7

Average number
of Master Masons raised
per lodge

*Best average in more than
25 years*

**“Of what am I most proud? Not
the number of degrees we confer,
but the number of new Masons
who become active in our lodge.”**

—Randy Brill, master, San Diego Lodge No. 35

mbers

had a stellar year in 2009. Here it is, at a glance.

***Fiscal 2009 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009)**

86

Number of degrees conferred by South West Lodge No. 283 – the most of all California lodges

“We take pride in what we do, and have a unique sense of ownership in the lodge. We adhere to all the rules and regulations, but we also have fun and enjoy ourselves. We feel like a family.”

—Clarito De Vera, master, South West Lodge No. 283

38

Average age of new Entered Apprentice

26

Number of Master Masons raised by San Diego Lodge No. 35 – the most in the jurisdiction

SECRETS TO SUCCESS

San Diego Lodge and South West Lodge share some factors in their success

- Lodge secretary makes time to welcome prospects
- Candidate's coach inspires and encourages degree candidates
- Well-designed Web site maintained by a skilled Webmaster
- Strategic Plan that is updated regularly
- Focus on fun and fellowship
- All-inclusive lodge activity nights where petitioners can mingle with brothers
- Willingness to help fellow lodge members and other lodges
- Friendly and dedicated members and families

DEGREE LEADERS

Entered Apprentices initiated

1. South West No. 283: **38**
2. San Diego No. 35: **29**
3. Saddleback Laguna No. 672: **29**

Fellow Crafts passed

1. South West No. 283: **26**
2. San Diego No. 35: **22**
3. Lemon Grove No. 736: **19**

Master Masons raised

1. San Diego No. 35: **26**
2. South West No. 283: **22**
3. Huntington Beach No. 380: **20**

WHY BLUE

One of the “mysteries” of Masonry is the term we have for our lodges. They are called “blue lodges” – but why?



It seems this question should be easily answered, but that is not the case. Standard Masonic encyclopedias and dictionaries will yield a variety of fanciful explanations, many of which are more speculation than fact. However, Masonic references from the early 18th century include the use of the color blue, and one such reference in Samuel Prichard’s “Masonry Dissected” (1730) may, in fact, be the source of the use of “blue” for our lodges today. Here is the story.

In the 18th century, Freemasons were fond of developing Masonic “test” questions to screen brethren who showed up as visitors to their lodges. The Masonic catechisms of the period – questions and answers used to instruct candidates in the teachings of Freemasonry – occasionally included “catch” questions that would only make sense to someone familiar with the lodge setting. One test

question concerned the “gold jacket and blue breeches.”

Prichard reports this curious dialogue:

Q. Have you seen your Master to-day?

A. Yes.

Q. How was he Cloathed?

A. In a Yellow Jacket and Blue Pair of Breeches.

NB: The Yellow Jacket is the Compasses, and the Blue Breeches the Steel Points.

Today the compass (or Compasses, as it was spelled in the 18th century) is usually made entirely of silver or gold. But originally, the body of the compass was brass – hence the color yellow – and the points were tempered steel – hence the color blue. The test question would clearly be understood by anyone who attended lodge and saw the square and compass resting on the Volume of the Sacred Law.

UE?

by John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Secretary

We know that this symbolism was extended to the actual clothing worn by the master of a lodge on at least one instance. On St. John's Day in June 1725, the Earl of Ross was installed as grand master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and was escorted to the place of installation by six lodges. The master of one of these lodges is reported to have worn a "Yellow Jacket and Blue Breeches." This may have been a whimsical reference to the dialogue later reported in "Masonry Dissected," between those who were "in the know" regarding why the Master was so dressed.

In the lecture of the Entered Apprentice degree, there is a reference to the Holy Bible and square and compass that may be an echo of this 18th-century esoteric symbolism, now largely lost to us. We learn that:

The Holy Bible is dedicated to God, it being His inestimable gift to man

as the rule and guide of his faith; the Square to the Master, because it is the proper Masonic emblem of his office; and the Compass to the Craft, for by due attention to its use, we are taught to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds toward all mankind.

This passage assigns the meaning of the compass to Freemasonry itself, and explains its purpose. As the compass is used to draw circles, so Freemasonry teaches its members to draw a boundary around their conduct so that they do not trespass on the person or feelings of another through unwarranted intrusion of their own particular sectarian beliefs on social, political, and religious matters. The compass becomes a symbol of restraint upon our own passionate beliefs and a concomitant respect for the opinions and beliefs of others.

It is thought by some that the association of the blue of the points of the compass was transferred to Freemasonry as a whole, and especially to the foundational degrees of Freemasonry – the three degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry: the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason degrees.

Long after our ancestors developed this association, we forgot its origin, and why we now call our lodges "blue" lodges. But this designation may well hark back to the old test question based on a symbolism now lost – the steel points of the compass in the 18th century.

The source of the symbolism has been forgotten, but not the continuing meaning behind it. Our blue lodges are still places where we learn the importance of constraining our passions, and practicing a respect for the religious and political opinions of others. ✧

What is

A photograph of two men in a lodge setting. The man on the left, Wil Smith, is wearing a white dress shirt and a patterned tie, smiling. The man on the right, Karim Oscoff, is wearing a red polo shirt and is gesturing with his hand while speaking. The background features a large, ornate mural on the wall with a central sunburst design and a classical urn on a pedestal.

Every month, Irvine Valley Lodge brothers turn out for relaxed fun at Fellowship Night. Wil Smith, left, and Karim Oscoff are regular attendees.

a Lodge?

by Cason Lane



THE BUILDING AND THE BROTHERHOOD WHERE MASONS ARE MADE

Some people go to church in a church, others go to temple in a temple, governments hold court in a court, and Masons attend lodge in a lodge. In each instance, the term is not only the place where meetings are held, it's also a collective word for the people who meet there and the common principles that unite them.

As such, the Masonic lodge is both tangible and intangible. It communicates Masonic history and symbology through the physical characteristics of the lodge room, while uniting the brethren through timeless concepts like brotherly love, relief, and truth.

THE PHYSICAL LODGE: HISTORY OF THE LODGE ROOM

The physical characteristics of lodges can differ from those in other parts of the world, and there are even some variations from one California lodge to the next. But all lodges share the same inherent identity: They are places where Masons are made – through lessons, rituals, and symbols that call upon the rich history of Masonry.

SYMBOLS BEHIND THE SET-UP

Like most Masonic lodge rooms, those in California are patterned after King Solomon's Temple, representing the mythical origins of the fraternity. The construction of the Temple, built in Jerusalem around 1,000 B.C. as a monument to man's faith in God, employed more than 33,000 workmen led by a brilliant architect, Hiram Abif, whose mythology permeates Freemasonry.

California lodge rooms are situated as an oblong square from east to west, a reference to the era of the Temple, when it was believed that the earth was shaped in just such a form. The lodge can be interpreted as a symbol of the world, then, with the stations of the officers suggesting the journey through youth, manhood, and age: the master in the east, senior warden in the west, and junior warden in the south. The letter G – representing both God and the science of geometry – is always suspended over the master's chair.

All California lodge rooms feature four elements required to open lodge: the Volume of Sacred Law, the square, the compasses, and the charter or warrant of constitution. And there are always two globe-topped pillars in the west, harkening to the pair of bronze columns that were prominent architectural features of the Temple.

Again drawing from the orientation of King Solomon's Temple, there are three candles, or lights, positioned in a triangle to the right of the altar, facing east. The equilateral triangle, a divine symbol in many ancient religious writings, appears throughout Masonry.

MASONIC REMINDERS

Per Masonic tradition in the U.S., California lodge rooms are never without the three immovable jewels – the square, the level, and the plumb, worn by the master, the senior warden, and the junior warden, respectively – which represent morality, equality, and the rectitude of conduct. These jewels



A lodge represents many things to its members. At Irvine Valley Lodge, that includes a place for family members to gather for dinners, community service activities, and movie nights. "We've got kids running around during lodge dinners now," says Past Master Art Salazar. "It's phenomenal."

"We look at it from the perspective of being a family."

are considered immovable because they're always found in the east, west, and south.

However, the movable jewels – the rough ashlar, perfect ashlar, and the trestle board – are not common in California. The rough stone reminds brothers of their naturally imperfect state, and the perfect stone connotes the goal of self-improvement through education, personal endeavors, and the blessing of God. The trestle board – recalling the symbol-packed cloths or tracing boards that 18th-century lodges used for degree ceremonies

– represents the moral and spiritual code that guides every Mason.

FROM FLOOR TO CEILING

Interestingly, the symbols that are known as the "ornaments" of a Masonic lodge – namely the mosaic pavement, the indented tessellated border, and the blazing star that collectively form the floor of a Masonic lodge room – are noticeably absent in California, despite their prominence in the lecture for the first degree.

In the lecture, the checkered mosaic – representing the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple – symbolizes the good and evil in man's realm of dualities, while the tessellated border suggests harmony and the star in the center connotes divine wisdom.

A handful of local lodges have made a special effort to install

the floor. Culver City-Foshay Lodge No. 467 constructed the floor when it came time for the lodge to replace its carpet in 1992. The lodge's emblematic floor is made of Chinese marble for the white tiles and Mediterranean granite for the black ones.

Members of Burbank Lodge No. 406 were so enamored with that floor that they installed the same design in their lodge room. In addition, the Burbank lodge room is one of only a few in California to include another symbol from the lectures – a domed, painted ceiling that depicts the clouded canopy and starry firmament, suggesting that the lodge is a symbol of the world. The ceiling was painted in 2000 by former Grand Orator Ron Cooper.

"The Masonic lodge is a classroom, and these symbols set our lodge up for education," says Master Jeffrey Yates.

THE ENDURING LODGE: THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE BROTHERHOOD

The history and symbolism of the lodge room explains what a lodge is on a physical level, but on a deeper level, a Masonic lodge is defined by the enduring, intangible qualities that unite its members.

A FELLOWSHIP AND A FAMILY

For Irvine Valley Lodge No. 671 in Lake Forest, one of those qualities is fellowship, which helps bring current members together while also attracting new ones.

"We look at it from the perspective of being a family," says Past Master Art Salazar (pictured on cover). "For me, fellowship is a refreshing and revitalizing aspect of the week. It's good to be with guys you can relax with and really be yourself around."

To further the bonding experience, Irvine Valley Lodge makes fellowship-oriented activities a priority, including a monthly Fellowship Night, family outings, and community events.

For new applicants, Salazar says the lodge takes time to learn their interests, help them feel at home, and create fellowship opportunities.

"We take more time than going through the required list of interview questions," he says. "We really try to get to know each applicant. We identify on the front end what they're looking for, so they can be paired up with like-minded people from the beginning."

IN PURSUIT OF SOMETHING BIGGER

The spirit of fellowship was an important lodge quality for Joe Perrigoue, who joined Irvine Valley Lodge in 2007.

"One of the things that attracted me to the lodge was the enthusiastic welcome I received when I first showed up to stated meeting," says Perrigoue, now senior deacon. "The concept of brotherhood and fellowship was so central. They all enjoyed each other's company while all pursuing something bigger."

But Perrigoue points out that if the lodge were just a place to hang out, then he wouldn't be there. The way he sees it, fellowship is a way of

CENTER STAGE: DEGREE RITUAL

The meaning behind the movements

The whole purpose of a lodge room is to make Masons, and the set-up naturally draws attendees' focus to its center, where the degree ritual happens. The arrangement of the lodge room, and the deliberate way that brothers move around it for ritual – the "floor work" – is symbolic of the lessons of the craft.

Paul Hennig, grand lecturer and ritual chairman, says the floor work embodies many of the geometric symbols of the lodge by positioning one brother at a certain angle from another. But a lodge usually doesn't call out these movements. Rather, he explains, the floor work fosters a subconscious appreciation of the symbology.

That subconscious awareness remains with a Mason in his everyday life.

"You become aware of the inexplicable way that everything falls into place," Hennig says.

uniting Masons in the pursuit of a greater goal.

"For me, fellowship is very important, but it's not the lodge," he says. "The lodge is really the practice of brotherly love, relief, and truth that happens under the umbrella of Masonry." ♦

by Richard Berman

ALL LODGES, GREAT AND SMALL

The debate about lodge size often comes down to culture

Freemasonry is a universal brotherhood of men committed to the same core set of values, but, for example, Masons in the Swedish Rite must be Christians, and it would be unthinkable for an English Masonic lodge to follow both York and Scottish traditions. One of the most obvious differences between lodges worldwide is the number of brothers who are members.



In 1890 the lodge room in Benicia Lodge No. 5 required just one row of chairs for its modest membership. Today the membership roll of an average California lodge has grown larger than those in many other parts of the world.

Masons who have traveled to other grand lodges in the United States and overseas can attest to the disparities in the sizes of lodges. History and demographics, rather than a formal strategy, seem to be the driving factors.

Self-limiting lodges

"A big part of traditional Masonry is intimacy," says Dennis Chornenky, master of San Francisco-based Prometheus Lodge UD. "Members

want to form a bond with their Masonic brothers, and that is much easier to do with a smaller group."

Chornenky, who has visited 12 grand lodges in Europe so far as part of Masonic research, says that lodges there tend to be self-limiting.

"It really comes down to culture," Chornenky says. "In many parts of Europe, when a lodge reaches a certain size – between 50 and 80 members – a group will split off to form their own lodge. This is common in Germany, where it's seen as a way to renew tradition by going back to the basic act of constituting a lodge. I think it's healthy for Masons to have this kind of approach."

It appears that no grand lodge has an official cap on the number of brothers who can join a particular lodge, but California's Past Grand Secretary John L. Cooper says that many overseas jurisdictions have

unofficial ways of keeping lodges small.

"The real regulator of lodge size is the informal requirement in other countries for lodge attendance," Cooper explains. "A member who does not attend is asked to resign."

"In American lodges this custom has never prevailed," he says. "As a result, many American lodges have large membership rolls but a much smaller group of active Masons."

What's the big idea?

Pros and cons of different lodge sizes

Of course, there are advantages and disadvantages to both large and small lodges, in terms of member count. Richard Fletcher, past grand master of the Grand Lodge of Vermont and executive secretary of the Masonic Information Center, explains it this way:

"Large lodges tend to have many more resources and can weather declines in membership better. But smaller lodges can really create the sense of community that is such a central part of Masonic life."

Chris Connop, information officer for the United Grand Lodge of England, notes that members of smaller lodges often find it easier to get involved and move up through the officer line.

"Historically, England has had smaller lodges, but today we're seeing larger lodges in smaller communities as a result of shrinking membership and consolidation of lodges," Connop says.

That limits opportunities for leadership.

"There is one lodge in Hertfordshire with an 18-year list for the officer line," Connop says. "One certainly wouldn't find that in a smaller group."

Patterned after population

The Grand Lodge of Texas has a reputation for smaller lodges, but rather than deliberate limiting of membership rolls, it tells the story of how the state was settled.


"The sizes of our lodges evolved based on population patterns," says Grand Secretary Tom Guest. "There was never a plan, like you see in other grand jurisdictions. Texas is a big state, and we have 877 lodges serving 95,000 Masons."

"We have smaller lodges in towns and villages," Guest adds, "but we also have lodges with hundreds of brothers in Houston, Fort Worth, and other big cities."

Guest points out that many of the smaller lodges are able to survive thanks to plural membership policies. "Because Masons can apply to belong to several lodges, we can sustain ourselves in rural communities that literally may have disappeared except for a store and a Masonic building."

Even in Europe, the history of how communities were settled has manifested in modern lodges. Indeed, according to Robert L. D. Cooper, curator of the Grand Lodge of Scotland Museum and Library, the average Scottish lodge has between 30 and 60 members.

"Back in the early days, traveling was dangerous and difficult, so there were a lot of smaller lodges in local communities," Cooper says. The trend may have been born out of necessity, but it's still alive and well today.

"Even today," Cooper says, "having a lot of small lodges is the norm here – people want to know the other brothers, and they want to participate in the lodge." 





Greatest Gift for the Greatest Generation

OUR UNITED STATES WORLD WAR II VETERANS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY THEIR SENSE OF DUTY, HONOR, AND HUMILITY. THE GRAND MASTER'S PROJECT WILL SHOW OUR GRATITUDE FOR THEIR SERVICE.

THANK OUR VETERANS

World War II ended in 1945, but it wasn't until 2004, nearly six decades later, that a memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C. to the 16 million who served in the armed forces during that war.

Health and financial obstacles have prevented most surviving veterans, now well into their 80s, from taking the long trip to honor their fallen friends and their years of service.

We can provide something that many World War II veterans cannot provide for themselves: an assisted visit to the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., at no cost to them.

More than 600 California veterans are on the waiting list for this trip – and the number is growing.

A lion's share of the funds raised through the Grand Master's Project 2009-2010 will be used to send as many veterans as possible to visit the World War II Memorial.

Those who fought in World War II made our country, our freedom, and our simple luxuries possible today. Together, we can show them that their service has not been forgotten.

To contribute, contact the Office of Philanthropy at 415/ 292-9117 or visit freemason.org/contribute.

Commitment to Care

Many veterans are not physically able to make the trip to D.C., but there are other ways to say thank you.

We can brighten their lives with a smile, a hug, or simply by sitting together in companionship.

The Masonic Hospital Visitors Program Committee connects Masons, lodges, and concordant bodies to local Veterans Affairs hospitals for visitation and volunteer work.

Also through the support of the Grand Master's Project, funds will be made available to the committee to support local projects at our V.A. hospitals that will show many more California veterans that we care – today and for years to come.

by Cason Lane

Belonging and Brotherhood

MASONIC HOMES RESIDENTS REFLECT ON THEIR LODGE EXPERIENCES

Each of California's 335 degree-conferring lodges has a unique personality that colors the experience of its members. But longtime Masons at the Masonic Homes say there's one thread that unites all of their Masonic backgrounds: a sense of belonging, fellowship, and brotherhood.



"I instantly felt like I was part of something," recalls Union City resident Jim Leggate, who first joined Masonry in 1972 at Golden Rule Lodge No. 479 in San Jose.

And it's that feeling of brotherhood that has kept him going to lodge all these years. Leggate continues to attend Golden Rule Lodge, where he received the Hiram Award in 1986, as well as Siminoff Daylight Lodge No. 850 at the Masonic Home at Union City. He strives to instill the same spirit of brotherhood in new Masons. At every meeting, he makes a point to welcome new candidates and help them feel at home.

Virgil Land, another Union City resident and Siminoff Lodge member, also attributes his long lodge involvement to the fellowship he's found in Masonry – and the opportunity to share that fellowship with new members.

"What makes a good lodge? Good fellowship. You become brothers," says Land, who hails from Culver City-Foshay Lodge No. 467. He received the Hiram Award in 1988. "I'm a past master – from 1955 – and I've been going to lodge regularly. I enjoy doing the work in the lodge and seeing the young people coming in and getting their degrees."

A Mason's work is never done

At the Masonic Home at Covina, residents strive to keep the spirit of fellowship and brotherhood alive by coaching younger Masons and staying involved at nearby Covina Lodge No. 334.

Past Master John Abernethy, for example, has been devoted

In Their Own Words

Homes residents share what lodge means to them

Covina resident Larry Weeks, reflecting on his time at Fellowship Lodge No. 668 in Yucaipa, says his love for the lodge is based on a connection to like-minded men.

"The lodge is a place I can go to and feel comfortable and be with men who think about life and our country as I do," Weeks says.

For Robert Riedel, who attended Sunnyside Lodge No. 577 in Torrance and Glendale Lodge No. 368 before joining Covina Lodge, the themes that have continued throughout his lodge experience are brotherhood, fellowship, and the presence of God.

"One thing that continues to come to mind whenever I'm in a meeting is the sincere presence of God," Riedel says. "That's really important to me."

Alex Adorador, Hiram Award recipient and past master of Siminoff Lodge, says that his Masonic experience has deepened with each passing year.

"In the beginning, you have affection for it – like puppy love – but you don't really fall in love until you've been at it for a few years," Adorador explains. "Just like in a marriage, it's the giving and taking, and the deeper understanding – that's where the love comes in. It becomes a part of you."

Adorador's lodge experience was transformed during his first year in the officer's line, when he became a self-described student of ritual. Today, he coaches candidates and officers. "You don't really become a Mason until you start living it," he says. "And to live it, you've got to be active."

to working for the lodge and encouraging fellowship between members since he joined Palm Springs Lodge No. 693 in 1979.

"I was raised on a Monday night, and by the following Monday night, I was in the junior deacon's chair. I have worked ever since," he says. "You should want to keep in touch and be a part of lodge. You don't want to go home and sit down."

"I just don't know what I would do if I didn't have a lodge to go to," he laughs.

Abernethy received the Hiram Award in 1988. Today, he is a candidate coach at Covina Lodge.

"To be able to teach candidates what Masonry is and help them get their degrees is a blessing, and I really enjoy it," he says.

Camaraderie is contagious

One of Abernethy's pupils is Covina Home employee Sam Ung, who drives the residents to appointments and special events. Ung was so drawn to the spirit of



Many Covina residents are active at Covina Lodge, where they introduce new Masons to fellowship and fraternity.

From left: Robert Riedel, Ron Sequeira, Gus Cordes, John Abernethy, Jim Nash, Sam Ung.



When Covina Home employee Sam Ung decided to become a Mason, everyone at the Home was behind him.

fellowship that he witnessed in the Home that he asked for an application to Covina Lodge, which was promptly signed by residents.

“I’ve never seen any organization like it – people are so bonded together, they’re like a family,” Ung says. “They look out for each other.”

Ung experienced that sense of brotherhood firsthand when Abernethy, who he knew simply from driving to and from appointments, offered to be his coach. They began practicing together every morning before Ung’s shift: an hour each day, five days a week.

The other residents showed such an outpouring of support for Ung that he scheduled his second degree around their activities calendar. And instead of conferring the degree in Covina Lodge, which would exclude residents who couldn’t manage the stairs to the lodge room, his new brothers will hold it in the lodge room at the Home at Covina.

According to fellow resident and Officers Coach Jim Nash, who tends to the Home’s lodge room, area lodges frequently conduct degree ceremonies there as a way to involve Home residents who are unable to leave campus to attend a local lodge.

“It’s all about involvement and love of the fraternity,” says Nash. ✧

Connecting With the Homes

MASONIC OUTREACH SERVICES (MOS)

Masonic Outreach Services (MOS), a program of the Masonic Homes of California, provides our fraternal family access to the services and resources they need to stay healthy and safe in their homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities.

These services include:

- Information and referrals to community-based senior providers throughout California
- Ongoing care management at no cost
- Financial support

MOS also provides interim financial and care support to those who are on the waiting list for the Masonic Homes of California. Contact us at **888/466-3642** or intake@mhcuc.org.

ACACIA CREEK

To learn more about Acacia Creek, visit acaciacreek.org or contact:

Acacia Creek

510/429-6479 or 888/553-7555

dwiley@acaciacreek.org

MASONIC FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

If you are in need of support or know of a family in distress, contact **888/466-3642**.

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

The Masonic Homes has speakers available to come to your lodge to speak about our range of services.

For more information, contact **888/466-3642** or communications@mhcuc.org.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE PROFILES

Masonic Hospital Visitors Program Committee, 12 members

The committee's purpose is to coordinate the Masonic Hospital Visitors Program in California. The program provides support to local Veterans Affairs hospitals and clinics, and facilitates involvement of Masons, lodges, and concordant bodies through visitation and volunteer work.

To locate or contact your local appointed V.A. representative and get involved with the Masonic Hospital Visitors Program, call **415/776-7000.*

Institute for Masonic Studies Committee, 12 members

The committee governs the Henry W. Coil Library & Museum of Freemasonry and administers Masonic Education programs such as Masonic Formation and the annual California Masonic Symposium. The committee also oversees scholarly partnerships, including the Grand Master's Project to Advance the Study and Understanding of Freemasonry.



A Long Beach V.A. Hospital patient attends one of many events organized by the Masonic Hospital Visitors Program Committee.

GET INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Grand Lodge of California relies on members to provide volunteer leadership for the important work done by its committees and boards.

Committee and board positions are opportunities to share your expertise, enhance your leadership capabilities, and make a difference.

For information about the committees and boards, including a purpose statement and list of members, log in at the Member Center on freemason.org, go to ROSTER, then click on Boards and Committees.

If you are a warden, master, or past master who is interested in being considered for an appointment, please send an e-mail to communications@freemason.org.



Grand Lodge F & AM of California
1111 California Street
San Francisco, California 94108

PERIODICALS
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*They're waiting
for you at
blue lodge.*

COMING HOME February 2010

Coming Home is a fraternity-wide effort to bring all members, new and senior, active and inactive, back to their blue lodge, beginning with the February stated meeting. It's an event that will reaffirm our fraternal commitment, celebrate our shared Masonic experiences, and reach out to inactive brothers.

It will be the largest California blue lodge gathering in decades!

Fellowship.

Community.

Shared Values.

