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CALIFORNIA FREEMASON

SEVEN WAYS *to* EXAMINE YOUR EXISTENCE

Why the seven liberal arts and sciences are more important now than ever

ASTRONOMY

MUSIC

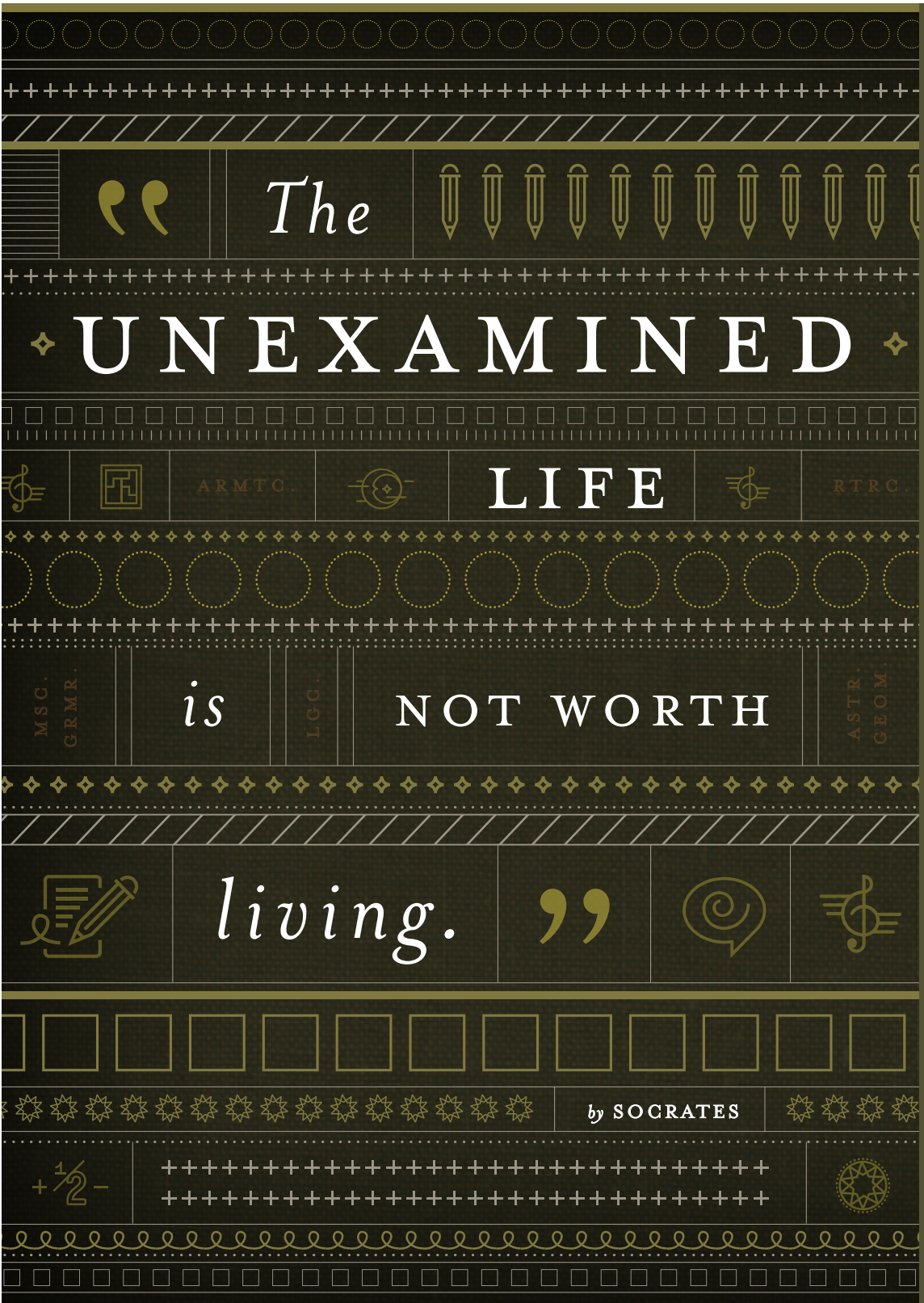
ARITHMETIC

LOGIC

GEOMETRY

RHETORIC

GRAMMAR



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CALIFORNIA
FREEMASON

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John L. Cooper III, Grand Master

Our Moral Compass

There is an old saying, "If you don't know where you are going, any way will get you there." If we lead a life without purpose and without direction, then it doesn't much matter which way we travel. However, Freemasonry is a journey with a purpose. In the Fellow Craft degree the candidate is presented with the three primary tools of Freemasonry, the plumb, the square, and the level, and he is told that:

> *"The plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly in our several stations before God and man, squaring our actions by the square of virtue, and remembering that we are all traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns."*

We are all "time travelers" in the most primary sense. While none of us knows the span of time that we have remaining to us, we know that there will be an end of the journey. How we spend the time allotted to us here, and the direction that we go, makes a difference. We can either have a meaningless and wandering existence, or we can have a journey with a purpose, with an end in view. This is perhaps best expressed, again, by our ritual when, in the lecture of the third degree we learn that the different stages of life have meaning:

THE THREE STEPS

The three steps usually delineated upon the master's carpet, are emblematical of the three principal stages of human life: youth, manhood, and age. In youth, as Entered Apprentices, we ought industriously to occupy our minds in the attainments of useful knowledge; in manhood, as Fellow Crafts, we should apply our knowledge to the discharge of our respective duties to God, our neighbors, and ourselves; that so, in age, as Master Masons, we may enjoy the happy reflection consequent on a well-spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality.

Our journey as Masons takes us through these three symbolic steps, and we have something to guide us along the way, for Freemasonry is our compass – *our moral compass.*

The grand master's logo in 2013-2014 depicts a world with a navigational compass and a Masonic compass superimposed on it. It is intended to symbolize for us that our journey is one guided by the principles of Freemasonry, and one that has a purpose. The choices we make in life will not only affect our journey, but its end as well, and keeping true to our moral compass will keep us going in the right direction.

The path we take as Masons is most often not the path that the rest of the world takes. We have chosen to take a path which is "less traveled," in the words of the poet, Robert Frost. But our path will be one of joy and one of accomplishment if we use the moral compass of Freemasonry to guide our way. And in the end, that will make all the difference.

ANCIENT FRIEND AND BROTHER

THE TEACHINGS OF PYTHAGORAS CONTINUE TO INSPIRE OUR FRATERNITY

by John L. Cooper III, Grand Master

Mathematics, the "queen of the sciences," has always had a preeminent place in the liberal arts, and in Masonry. It appears twice in the list, as both arithmetic and geometry, and we are told in our ritual that geometry is "the first and noblest of sciences, and the basis upon which the superstructure of Freemasonry is erected."

This idea is a very old one in Freemasonry, for the old charges, also called the "old Gothic constitutions," place geometry in a premier position amongst the liberal arts and sciences. The Regius Manuscript, c. 1390, says (in modern English translation):

> *In that time, through good geometry,*
> *This honest craft of good masonry*
> *Was ordained and made in this manner…*

Many of these constitutions refer to Euclid as having carried the knowledge of Masonry to other lands, and the references are generally to geometry. Euclid (c. 325-265 B.C.) was called the "father of geometry," and Euclid's Elements remains a primary geometry textbook today. In the 47th Proposition of his Elements, Euclid provided a proof of the relationship of the sides of a right-angle triangle so that when the proportions are correct, a right angle is formed. The importance to stonemasons of this geometric principle is evident, because in order to construct stone buildings properly, a square corner must first be established. The use of geometry in general, and the 47th Proposition in particular, was therefore an essential element in operative masonry, and this importance was transferred to speculative Freemasonry in a symbolic sense.

The 47th Proposition of Euclid is more familiarly known as the "Pythagorean theorem," for its discovery was attributed in ancient times to the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras. We know very little about Pythagoras as a person, and almost as little about his teachings. He is supposed to have been born on the island of Samos around 570 B.C., to have established a "school" at Crotona, in Italy, and to have died around 495 B.C.

Kitty Ferguson, in her book, "The Music of Pythagoras: How an Ancient Brotherhood Cracked the Code of the Universe and Lit the Path from Antiquity to Outer Space," noted that:

> *"Pythagoras and the devotees who surrounded him during his lifetime were obsessively secretive... The earliest written evidence about Pythagoras himself that modern scholarship accepts as genuine consists of six short fragments of text from the century after his death, found not in their originals but in works of ancient authors who either saw the originals or were quoting from earlier secondary copies."*

Despite the conclusions of modern scholars about the difficulty of knowing much about Pythagoras, he has a firm place in Masonic lore and ritual. In 1772, William Preston, a past master of the Lodge of Antiquity No. 1 in London, published the "Illustrations of Masonry" – a collection

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GEOMETRY:

The first and noblest of sciences, and the basis upon which the superstructure of Freemasonry is erected.

of material then in use as "lectures" in Masonic lodges in England and Scotland. This book was used by Thomas Smith Webb, an American Mason, in 1797, to create his famous "Freemasons Monitor," which was drawn upon by American grand lodges as the source of the lectures of the three degrees of ancient craft Masonry. Preston is thus the "grandfather" of our lectures as used today, and we find in Preston words and phrases which are very familiar. In "Illustrations of Masonry," he writes:

> *"Masonry … is not only the most ancient, but the most moral Institution that ever subsisted; as every character, figure, and emblem, depicted in the lodge, has a moral meaning, and tends to inculcate the practice of virtue on those who behold it."*

This material is not included in our present lectures, but we still reference Pythagoras as our "ancient friend and brother" in the long form of the lecture of the third degree.

In the 18th century, Masons were fascinated by the philosophy of Pythagoras, and by the "secret brotherhood" which they believed him to have established at Crotona. The link between his famous Pythagorean theorem made this even more important. Kitty Ferguson goes on to say:

> *"Those six early fragments are not, however, the full extent of the available evidence about the Pythagoreans…. Philolaus, a not-so-secretive Pythagorean, wrote a book… revealing that early Pythagoreans proposed that the Earth moves and is not the center of the cosmos. Plato… tried to incorporate what he thought of as a Pythagorean curriculum – the "quadrivium" – at his Academy in Athens. Aristotle and his pupils wrote extensively about the Pythagoreans a few years later… It seems no other group has ever made such an effort to remain secret, or succeeded so well, as the Pythagoreans did – and yet become so celebrated and influential over such an astonishingly long period of time."*

The teachings of Pythagoras are thus a part of Freemasonry, and while Freemasonry is not a secret society in the same sense that the school of Pythagoras was, like Pythagoras himself, and his school, we too have become "celebrated and influential over an astonishingly long period of time."

FACES OF MASONRY

MEET DAVID STILES: RETIRED GEOMETRY TEACHER, MASON SINCE 1987

by Michelle Simone

David Stiles has always loved mathematics. As a child growing up in the 1950s, he was fascinated by space age culture and learned that the astronauts he admired used the principles of algebra and geometry to travel to the moon and to explore the outer realms of the universe. At an early age, he determined that he would be a math teacher in order to share his affection for numbers and equations with future generations of scholars.

"I feel very strongly that mathematics is something that we, as a society, very much need today," explains Stiles, a past master of Temescal Palms Lodge No. 314. "Teachers try to present this information to high school students as something they can enjoy, but also as something that is valuable to their future lives."

In his second year of college, Stiles had a revelation: He would likely be asked to teach geometry, and he hadn't taken a geometry class since his own high school career. Not wanting to let down his future students, Stiles enrolled in a geometry course. And he quickly realized that while he enjoyed algebra and other forms of mathematics, geometry was his passion.

"Geometry offers a lot of angles for inspiration," says Stiles. "When you look at space travel – or any kind of travel – and measuring distances, you learn that to travel on the planet we live on, you can't use the geometry we learned in high school. You need a vastly different understanding."

Stiles' studious approach to his career mirrors the thoughtfulness with which he entered the craft 10 years later. His father was a Mason, and he'd spent time in his youth studying the fraternity. When a couple of his close friends became Masons, he revisited his research before deciding to join, too. And he was quickly struck by the connections he found between Freemasonry and mathematics.

"In the early days of Masonry, the architects didn't share the secrets of mathematics," Stiles says. "They protected them,

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and only shared them with people who they believed were trustworthy in some way. Masonry was the same way. Now we disseminate information in both Masonry and in schools, but that desire – to pass along important knowledge to those who are trustworthy – is still relevant."

Though Stiles is now retired from his teaching career, he continues to provide valuable instruction and guidance within his lodge. As candidates complete the Fellow Craft degree, Stiles, who received a Hiram Award from the lodge in 1998, uses the opportunity of the degree ceremony to emphasize Masonry's culture of learning.

"We take a man from the beginning and we try to raise him up through geometry – to develop within each man an understanding of the higher form of learning," Stiles says. "There is a journey in the second degree, and we hope that as the candidate progresses through it he will gain a better understanding of the esoteric parts of Masonry, as well as its applied principles."

In his own words:

WHAT DRIVES YOUR PASSION FOR TEACHING?

I have an esoteric goal: I've always felt that by being a teacher I'm going to teach some kids who will go off to become teachers themselves and they'll have students and some of those students will become teachers… This process will go on forever. And in this way, what I teach will last forever.

HOW DO YOU CONNECT YOUR CAREEER AND THE CRAFT?

In both Masonry and teaching, there is a desire to disseminate information. We look for good men and we try to give them the benefit of what we perceive as being important. The lessons of Masonry and the lessons schoolteachers teach are both important to society. Anything worth learning in school and anything worth learning in Masonry will positively affect your future life. And Masonry pushes me to become better than I am.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO NEW MASONS?

Don't let receiving the degree stop you from continuing your studies. Read, study, and expand your knowledge. There's more to it than wearing a pin.

GENTLEMEN OF STONE

THE ROLE OF THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS AS A MASON'S EDUCATION

by Tobias Churton

It was Freemason Rudyard Kipling who famously declared: "All art is one, man." He might have been thinking of the seven liberal arts and sciences, whose fruits together constitute the foundation of civilized art and science – that which our earliest Masonic documents insist on calling "Masonry," while emphasizing geometry's primacy.

The legendary Regius Poem

The earliest evidence for linking Masonry to the seven liberal arts and sciences is the Regius Poem, possibly written by a monk from Llanthony Priory, Monmouthshire, around 1390. The poem celebrates the classical seven: grammar (language); dialectics (philosophical logic); rhetoric (beauty and power of speech); music (harmony); astronomy (including astrological prognostication); arithmetic (which "sheweth one thing that is another" and numerical equations), and geometry ("that can," as the poem suggestively puts it, "separate falsehood from truth, I know.")

Some 330 years later, in 1723, when the Rev. James Anderson published the Grand Lodge of England's Constitutions, the liberal arts were anticipated as ideal accomplishments of Free and Accepted Masons. Indeed, the first words read to a new brother by the lodge master or warden were ordered thus:

> *"Adam, our first parent, created after the image of God, the great Architect of the Universe, must have had the liberal sciences, particularly geometry, written on his heart; for ever since the fall, we find the principles of it in the hearts of his offspring…"*

While it is odd that a stipulation for Masons to familiarize themselves with the seven liberal arts is today tucked into the Fellow Craft ritual, it is odder still to imagine this requirement being demanded of medieval trade-freemasons (workers in freestone). Was this not setting the bar a little high?

While clerks in training for holy orders at medieval universities were expected to absorb the *trivium* – the first three literary arts – before ascending to the *quadrivium* – the mathematical arts, including geometry – such knowledge was the privilege of clergy, gentlemen, and educated aristocrats. By definition, the seven *artes liberales*, delineated by Dionysius Thrax in the first century B.C., constituted the education of those in late antiquity who did not work for money: "free" persons with administrative rights; people who were able to employ craftsmen. Crafts were not liberal arts.

Adopting the liberal virtues

Samuel Johnson's first English dictionary, which was published in 1755, defines the word "liberal" as: "*1.* Not mean, not low in birth; not low in mind. *2.* Becoming a gentleman. *3.* Munificent, generous, bountiful, not parsimonious." We might recognize these "liberal" virtues as being somewhat

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Masonic, but we should be surprised if apprentices working on late medieval abbeys claimed parity with their employers. Well, not at least until they experienced the seven liberal arts.

As far as we can tell, such accomplishments were fit for masters, the "masters of works" – wealthy men of social standing with access to monastic learning. Given the social system of the period, a master's position was anomalous, for a master mason (architect) could be a man of liberal education who worked for money, though not with his hands. He practiced geometrical construction: a liberal art. Such a man represented an ideal of masonry that could achieve high status – a status asserted when bodies suspicious of masons' liberties and secrecy attacked them.

Crafting the old charges

14th and 15th century English evidence reveals a unique assertion of a new kind of man, a man who had emerged within a background of declining feudalism and burgeoning middle and gentry classes. His presence is implied in the Cooke Manuscript, the second oldest document of Masonic rules and history. Dated around 1420, it reveals familiarity with Ranulph Higden's "Polychronicon" (c. 1342), which combined ancient histories with biblical accounts.

Perhaps the composition of a learned monk from the English Midlands, the Cooke Manuscript mixes the liberal arts into the mortar of Masonry's legends. Whereas the Regius Poem weaves a suggestive story of Euclid (325-265 B.C.) teaching geometry to noble offspring to keep them out of mischief, the Cooke Manuscript stresses the central legend of the craft before the glorification of Hiram Abiff and Solomon's Temple: The construction of two pillars by the patriarch Jabal, founder of geometry and masonry, to preserve the seven arts and sciences from punitive deluges of water and fire.

Surviving the flood, the pillars were allegedly rediscovered by Pythagoras and Hermes Trismegistus. Hermes' supposed antique works ignited the Renaissance in the 1460s, and Masonry was thus identified as the primal science to restore the mental energies of man after the deluge. This almighty claim was echoed, with variations, throughout 16th and 17th century versions of the Masonic old charges.

Far from the tame second degree invitation to the seven liberal arts as a basis for searching into the "hidden mysteries of nature and science," the old charges assert the seven sciences as the divine gift of creative imagination.

Masonry: quintessence of liberal arts

Extant accounts of 14th century operative masons in London show cutting, laying, and squaring as the "proofs" of masons' competence. It is extremely doubtful that trade lodges were ever expected to teach the seven liberal arts and sciences to apprentices; however, should the most promising apprentices aspire to mastership, there was an ideal.

The early 15th century apparently witnessed new confidence in Masonry being itself a liberal art, one fit to generate gentlemanly and regal patronage. While upper-class interest in fellowship with the craft, art, and science is evident from at least 1646, we have no *a priori* reason to discard Masonic stories that its lodges included great men of society and learning from the early 15th century, at least.

The key to Masonry's transformation from trade-based to hybrid philosophical fraternity lay in its self-identification as liberal arts genius rooted in the primal revelation of God to Adam – knowledge that the modern second degree self-help recommendation barely hints at. It is, nonetheless, a hint intended for serious examination.

As the historical adoption of the seven liberal arts by operative masonic lodges suggests, the liberal arts have the capacity to liberate humankind.

Editor's Note: Tobias Churton, M.A., is a lecturer at the Centre for the Study of Esotericism at the University of Exeter. Also a film-maker and the founding editor of Freemasonry Today magazine, Churton is the author of several books about Freemasonry, including, "The Golden Builders: Alchemists, Rosicrucians, First Freemasons."

ASCENDING THE WINDING STAIRCASE

THE LESSONS AND CEREMONY OF THE SECOND DEGREE ENRICH OUR MASONIC EXPERIENCE

by Jay Kinney

When asked to choose their favorite among the three degree experiences, many Masons do not hesitate to answer that it is the second, Fellow Craft, degree. Central to that degree ritual is what's familiarly called the Staircase (or Middle Chamber) Lecture, during which the candidate symbolically ascends a winding staircase leading to the Middle Chamber of Solomon's Temple, where the workers who built the temple were said to have received their wages.

At each stage in the candidate's ascent of the stairs, new lessons are imparted, introducing him to the three key Masonic virtues, five architectural orders (along with allusions to the five human senses), and seven liberal arts (representing the centuries-old tradition of a well-rounded education). The overall symbolism encourages an ascent towards greater understanding, wisdom, and truth on the part of the candidate – a goal often symbolized by the seeking of light.

An inspiring treasure

Today, Masons in California place a painted or drawn floor cloth depicting the winding stairs at the feet of the Fellow Craft candidate during his second degree ceremony. This floor cloth is often made of canvas or oilcloth, intended to be sturdy enough to withstand generations of candidates walking across it, step by step.

One lodge with a particularly striking floor cloth is Napa Valley Lodge No. 93 in St. Helena. Napa Valley's floor cloth dates back just 15 years: In 1998, Norman Moore, then Napa Valley's master, visited Nevada Lodge No. 13 in Nevada City for a third degree ceremony. He was impressed by a remarkable Masonic mural on the lodge room wall, and upon inquiry, learned that it had been painted by John Dahle and John Dahle, Jr., a father-son team of artists who were members there. (The Dahles are now residents of the Masonic Home at Union City.) Moore learned that the pair had also painted a second degree floor cloth for their lodge, and commissioned the Dahles to paint one for Napa Valley Lodge as well. Upon its completion, Moore his wife donated the floor cloth to the lodge at their own expense.

Napa Lodge Secretary Ronald Werle, says that today's members are "absolutely very proud of [the floor cloth]. We love to perform the second degree, because we get to show it off."

Step by step

Though the use of floor cloths in California ritual is an integral part of the present-day Fellow Craft degree experience, its presence in the ritual ceremony evolved over time.

In early modern Masonry in the 1700s, the winding staircase and other craft symbols employed as teaching aids were often drawn in chalk on the wooden lodge room floor and erased after the end of a degree ritual. In time, this evolved into a more permanent form as a removable floor cloth or a tracing board – typically a painted or lithographed depiction of Masonic symbols that were discussed during degree lectures.

According to Adam Kendall, collections manager of the Henry Wilson Coil Library and Museum of Freemasonry, prior to the establishment of the California Grand Lodge in 1850, individual lodge charters hailed from many different states.

As a result, ritual wording and practice varied from lodge to lodge – while some lodges may have used floor cloths, it is likely that others did not.

When California moved to standardized rituals and adopted the Barney Work – a system of ritual work propagated by John Barney (1780-1847), one of a number of traveling ritualists responsible for popularizing the Preston-Webb work, which underlies contemporary degree rituals in most American jurisdictions – floor cloths likely accompanied this transition and became accepted custom soon after.

The symbolic journey

The special place that the second degree holds in the hearts of brothers is based upon the memorable symbolic ascent with which it encourages growth along a journey towards wisdom. And the challenges and illuminations offered by immersing candidates in the liberal arts is also strengthened by a fraternal connection.

Candidates do not embark on this journey alone.

Though the Senior Deacon plays a ritual role in each of the three degrees, in the second degree he not only guides the candidate through the different stages of the ritual, but also gives the degree's lecture, in this case the Staircase Lecture.

Immersed in his degree sequence, a Fellow Craft candidate trusts the senior deacon as his personal guide through the past, present, and future. It's a symbolic role, but a surprisingly intimate one, nonetheless. In the fabric of shared experiences that build Masonry's sense of brotherhood, the senior deacon's guidance in the Fellow Craft degree, as a candidate climbs the winding stairs, is a crucial and memorable component.

As Werle observes, "When the Staircase Lecture is well-memorized and presented, and the candidate steps on a floor cloth as handsome and striking as ours, the impact is unforgettable. We're very grateful to the Dahles and the Moores for helping make this experience possible."

WEB EXTRA

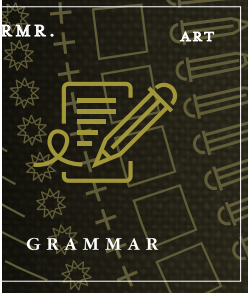
Read more about John Dahle's artwork in the August/ September 2011 issue of California Freemason, online at freemason.org.

THE WINDING STAIRCASE FLOOR CLOTH OF NAPA VALLEY LODGE NO. 93, PAINTED BY BROS. JOHN DAHLE AND JOHN DAHLE, JR., MAKES THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE EXPERIENCE MEMORABLE.

SEVEN WAYS *to* EXAMINE YOUR EXISTENCE

Why the seven liberal arts and sciences are more important now than ever

by LAURA NORMAND



As a passenger in a car, you might feel flickers of appreciation for the landscape racing past, and you might have a rough idea of the direction you are heading. But then again, you might doze off. You might play Angry Birds or answer emails. Whether or not you're paying attention, you assume you'll wind up at your destination. And physically, at least, that's probably true.

If you are behind the wheel, the journey is another experience altogether. You read signs more closely, and you study the map to compare different routes. You can circle back to a historic building or a roadside stand. You might ask directions from locals, and decide to ditch the interstate for a scenic county road. You ask more questions, and you engage more in your surroundings. You are forced to think about where you are, where you're going, why you're making the journey, and the best way to get there.

If life is a journey, the seven liberal arts and sciences help us climb back behind the wheel.

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THE DAWN *of* EDUCATION

Parts of the seven liberal arts and sciences were named as early as ancient Greece, around 500 B.C., in the heyday of Pythagoras. In 400 and 300 B.C., Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle stressed the importance of a broadly educated, inquisitive citizenry. Centuries later, the Roman orator Cicero argued for a "liberal arts" education where students learned through critical thinking and the scientific method. A well-educated person, Cicero declared, would lead a more informed and fulfilling life, and be a better citizen.

Centuries later still, in 16th-century Europe, the leaders of operative Freemasonry decided that the fraternity should train its members in more than just technical skills. Unlike many of the other "blue collar" workers at the time, Freemasons had too much responsibility to rely on the nobility to tell them how to think and act. The seven liberal arts and sciences, the basis of a formal education at the time, became a mainstay of Masonry. Masons today are still charged to study them: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

But these are just the labels we have given them. Strip away the schools, the teachers, and the course work, and the seven liberal arts and sciences have been part of our collective consciousness for as long as we have existed.

J. Cesar Rubio is a candidate coach at Palm Springs Lodge No. 693 and leads a regular Masonic education class there.

"As man evolved, he looked up into the heavens and wondered what it was all about," Rubio says. "He realized that the stars, the sun, the moon, and the planets were teaching him lessons. The sun was teaching him that there's a spring where everything comes to life. There's a harvest season where everything is mature. And there's a time when everything dies."

"By studying the heavens above," he says, "man realized that what happens above also happens around us, and eventually happens inside our own bodies."

It's this kind of knowledge – the kind that goes well beyond facts and figures – that comes from studying the liberal arts and sciences.

BOOT CAMP *for the* BRAIN

To understand why the seven liberal arts and sciences are relevant today, imagine a geometric compass. The first leg, the point that anchors it, represents an approach to learning. The second leg, the drawing tool, represents the lessons themselves. The circle that it draws represents a way of life.

In the second degree of Masonry, the candidate begins to work on the "approach to learning" leg of the compass. He is asked to reflect on the structure of learning, why learning is important, and how he will continue to learn as life goes on. Enter the seven liberal arts and sciences.

Like any muscle, the brain must be conditioned. The seven liberal arts and sciences are like a comprehensive cross-training routine. Most of us probably feel a tractor-beam pull toward some of the liberal arts over others. The left-brain thinkers are tempted to gravitate to logic, the intuitive types to rhetoric, the tone-deaf give music wide berth. But just like weight training can improve a distance runner's speed, we improve our overall intellect by studying all seven.

We also improve our ability to learn, and our inclination to ask "Why?" in the first place. Whether we are trying to understand the importance of a word in a piece of Masonic ritual or studying the interplay between dissonance and harmony in a piece of music, we are working at problems that require concentration. Like early man puzzling over the heavens, we have to struggle a bit. Just when we've arrived at one answer -- say, we grasp

the importance of a keystone in an arch -- we are confronted with a series of entirely new questions: Who first invented the keystone, and when, and why? What is its symbolic meaning?

That's the challenge, and ultimately the benefit, of the seven liberal arts and sciences. The more we study them, the more subtle their lessons become. They require a real digging; a commitment to noodle around with a tricky concept and hold it in our mind until, suddenly, like Newton and the apple, we break through to a deeper level of understanding.

This is the kind of thinking that's supposed to happen inside Masonic lodges.

"The liberal arts and sciences go to the core of the power of our symbolism in Freemasonry," says R. Stephen Doan, past grand master and vice chair of the Institute for Masonic Studies. "You join a group that is asking you to think about things in a manner totally foreign from the way in which you've thought about them before. You're trying to look at more things symbolically. Once you understand that the tools of architecture have symbolism, you begin to realize that other processes have symbolism, too. You are forced to look at different things and ask, 'Why is that happening?'"

PATHWAYS *to* ENLIGHTENMENT

When we cultivate the habit of lifelong learning, we cease assuming we already have the answer. We start finding meaning in the people, places, and events that we previously assumed did not apply to us.

In the analogy of the compass, this is the "life lessons" leg. Whether we are academics or executives, grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy fit into our everyday lives. Each liberal art or science breaks down in its own way. When we write a thank-you note, arrange our desk, prepare a meal, or watch the nightly news, their lessons are at play. By paying attention, we can live our day-to-day lives with greater intention, meaning, and wisdom.

Grammar, which instructs us to choose our words carefully, teaches us to think before we speak and to realize the power of words – that old saying, "the pen is mightier than the sword." Rhetoric, the art of persuasion, teaches us that what others hear is the most important part of what we say. Logic teaches us to consider the facts and appeal to reason before making decisions; in so many words, it trains us to look before we leap.

These first three liberal arts were considered the foundation of education even in ancient Greece. They are still considered the tools for learning today. As any grade school teacher knows, we must first learn how to read; we then spend the rest of our lives reading to learn. In this same vein, once we are able to express ourselves, we can ask questions; once we know how to reason, we can comprehend the answers. We gain the skills to understand the world around us.

Armed with grammar, rhetoric, and logic, we tackle the four liberal sciences. The more times we circle back to get a closer look, and the more comfortable we become with thinking symbolically, the more we get out of them.

Geometry, Masonry's most pervasive symbol, helps us understand what creates a solid foundation and a beautiful aesthetic. It inspires us to seek balance; to act on the level and on the square in our interactions with others. Arithmetic teaches us to separate fact from feeling in the pursuit of truth; to refine our grammar and rhetoric with the clinical precision of mathematics. In thinking about its most important symbol, the equal sign, we are primed to look for the inherent equality among individuals. Music helps us appreciate the natural harmony of

Continued next page

the world; it compels us to seek that harmony within our own lives, to resolve any dissonance between ourselves and others. Astronomy impresses upon us that everything has a season; that everything is connected; that the world is bigger than one man. In Rubio's words, it "teaches us that the sun will come up at a certain time, that we cannot force the plants to spring before it's time. We learn to be logical, practical individuals, to live within our means and in harmony with our surroundings."

Teasing out these life lessons isn't easy – at first glance, arithmetic and "all men are created equal" may not be the most obvious pairing. It requires a certain aptitude for thinking symbolically. Meanings evolve as we evolve. Lessons change to fit our place in life. Like Masonry, the study of the seven liberal arts and sciences is a lifelong pursuit.

Richard Hixson is inspector of District 129, a past master of Martinez Lodge No. 41, and a photographer. "When I think about what I want to accomplish, I use geometry to sort of set up a structure in my mind," he says. "It starts with the foundation, the cornerstone, asking: 'What direction are we going? What are our needs and desires?' I use rhetoric to communicate these ideas and concepts; to put the nails in the timber."

"I interpret each of the seven liberal arts and sciences to fit my personal needs at any given moment," Hixson says. "Right now, since I'm in a leadership role, rhetoric is a very strong element. The input I get is all based on communications of people around me. I found out a long time ago that it's not only what I say; it also matters what others hear. I have to learn to speak in a way that they can understand me."

WHERE *have all the* RENAISSANCE MEN GONE*?*

Back in 500 B.C., Pythagoras was working out some of the most complex mathematical questions of our universe. He wouldn't admit a student to his school, no matter how bright, if he or she couldn't play a musical instrument; that's how important he believed an intuitive sense of harmony was. Darwin's fascination with geology led him to the Galápagos Islands, and his theory of biological evolution. Besides studying medicine, meteorology, oceanography, astronomy, and statistics, Benjamin Franklin was a writer, a politician, and a musician. (Among his lesser-known inventions: the glass harmonica.)

That's the seven liberal arts and sciences in a nutshell. The universe is a jigsaw puzzle, and to put together a complete picture, we must first collect all the pieces. It's a different approach than we often see today, as the traditional liberal arts education gives way to an emphasis on technical skills and specialization.

As Doan puts it, discovery requires "taking all kinds of distant things and following a golden thread between them. If we spend so much of our time focused on one narrow area of what we practice in life, we can't make these connections to come up with epiphanies."

"We're so specialized today that we don't see the whole picture," he says. "Knowledge is knowing the facts. Wisdom is knowing the facts and how they all interrelate. For the most part, we teach knowledge today."

For better or worse, the information age seems less concerned with epiphanies and more with multitasking. It's less about observation, and more about keeping pace with 24-hour news. Today more than ever, the seven liberal arts and sciences are an important counterbalance. They can be a filter for the deluge of information, and an incentive to seek out more. By studying grammar and rhetoric, we weigh the words we read more carefully. By becoming well-versed in the scientific method, we start asking better questions and demanding more complete answers.

Continued next page

THE SEVEN

liberal arts and sciences

ARE LIKE A COMPREHENSIVE CROSS-TRAINING ROUTINE. BUT JUST LIKE WEIGHT TRAINING CAN IMPROVE A DISTANCE RUNNER'S SPEED

we improve OUR OVERALL INTELLECT *by*

STUDYING *all* SEVEN

"It's too easy today to operate with a little bit of information," says Grand Secretary Allan Casalou. "We have so much access to a little bit of information. It's more important than ever to understand how it fits into the larger landscape of our lives and our history. The seven liberal arts and sciences give us perspective, and they give us a structure to make sense of it. We can find meaning and not just have a bunch of data."

As Cicero argued more than 2,000 years ago, it's this broader understanding that makes us good citizens.

"You're a voter. Are you going to do what people tell you to do because it's on the Internet?" Doan says. "You're not supposed to take what the press tells you as the gospel truth; then you're a serf. The point is to reach your own conclusion. You're supposed to be a discriminating consumer. You're supposed to keep exploring, to not be satisfied in what you're told. If you read or see or experience something that's powerful, and you don't understand it, do you walk away from that? No. You ask why. You spend a long time asking why."

HOW *the* SEVEN CAN SAVE US

If the seven liberal arts and sciences are a compass, then as we grow in our ability to learn, the anchor leg lengthens, and as we grow in our command of certain life lessons, the drawing leg lengthens. As we continue our studies, we are able to draw larger and larger circle, touching more areas of our lives.

Excepting academic institutions, there are very few places left for the modern Renaissance man to retreat from the din of the outside world, turn off his cellphone, and reflect on the seven liberal arts and sciences as a whole. The Masonic lodge is one of them.

"Masonry is a progressive moral science," Doan says. "The seven liberal arts and sciences teach us to use the scientific method to improve ourselves, to make observations about our conduct and how we impact others. Through observation, reflection, hypothesis, and testing, we gain understanding of the moral standards inherent in Masonry's symbols. We develop theories about why we act the way we do, and we modify our behavior based on these theories. Then we test them, by observing whether we are more harmonious with the people and situations around us."

"This quest for understanding is also a way to learn how to live a good and true life," says Casalou. "It makes us more tolerant. We learn that there are many different ways to express goodness and truth. You can see the elements of the seven liberal arts and sciences in many different theologies and philosophies, in the ideas of good judgment and equality, fairness, justice, symmetry, and harmony."

From gravity to thermodynamics, many – if not all – of the laws governing the universe seem to come down to a desire for harmony. So do the concepts governing morality. The seven liberal arts and sciences can be the linchpin.

For Rubio and the members he mentors at Palm Springs Lodge, that's the big picture.

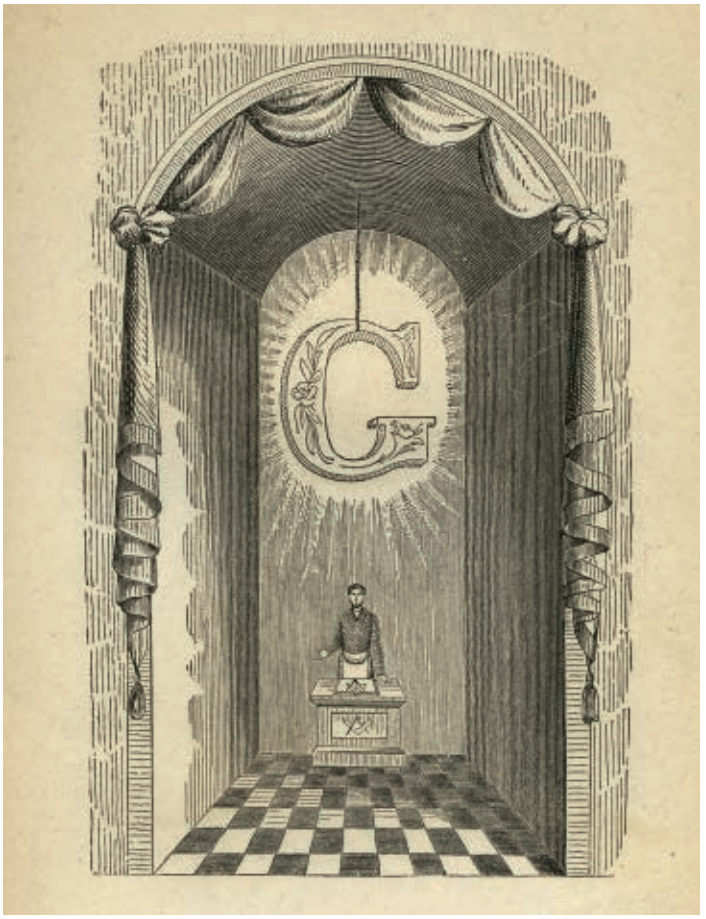
"A lot of us, especially these days, feel disconnected," Rubio says. "People say if you want to get in touch with yourself, you should go camping: To let your body get back into a natural rhythm of life. To me, that's what studying the liberal arts and sciences does."

"You begin to realize that the liberal arts and sciences are a gateway to your personal freedom," Rubio says. "The greatest prison that can ever be created is within the walls of your mind, through indoctrination, through allowing others to tell you what reality is. Once you educate yourself, once you get out there and explore, you free yourself from these impediments. You learn not only how to tolerate, but also to respect others. You learn to appreciate life. The seven liberal arts and sciences are the doorway to this freedom."

THE ARTS OF LIVING

THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS OFFER AN INTRINSIC AND LASTING VALUE

by Mark W. Roche



What are the "liberal arts"? The term has its origin in the medieval concept of the *artes liberalis*, the seven liberal arts that were appropriate for a freeman (the Latin "liber" means "free") in contrast to the *artes illiberalis* or *artes mechanicae*, which were pursued for economic purposes and involved vocational and practical arts, which prepared young persons to become weavers, blacksmiths, farmers, hunters, navigators, soldiers, or doctors. The seven liberal arts included three basic arts focused on developing a felicity with language: grammar (or language), rhetoric (or oratory), and dialectic (or logic). These were known as the *trivium*. Added to these were the four advanced mathematical-physical arts: geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy, which were known as the *quadrivium*. The liberal arts were preparatory not only for gaining a livelihood but for the further study of law, medicine, and theology.

A culture of active learning

The liberal arts build on one of the oldest ideals of learning, which Socrates put into practice in ancient Greece. For Socrates it was clear that we learn more effectively when we pursue questions ourselves and seek answers ourselves, when we embody what educators today call "active learning." The student is actively engaged in the learning process, asking questions, being asked questions, pursuing often elusive answers in dialogue with others. Knowledge cannot simply be poured, like water, from one large container into an emptier one ("Symposium," 175d). Socrates also made it clear that learning is most important and most successful when students are engaged in meaningful discussions, asking questions that will determine who they are and what they think about life's most significant issues. For example, what is human excellence? What is friendship? love? courage? How do we learn? What constitutes the just state?

The Socratic method of engaging great issues through a question-and-answer format prepares the inquirer for further learning.

Continued next page

This is one of the reasons why Plato's dialogues rarely offer answers, leaving the reader with an understanding of what she knows and doesn't know and the imperative to continue the path of inquiry on her own. To know something is not simply to mimic the truth but to be able to give reasons and arguments for that truth; this level of reflection ensures that the student will be able to defend a view against the arguments of future opponents instead of simply succumbing to their persuasive rhetoric; will be ready to apply knowledge in changing circumstances; and will be equipped to build on existing knowledge and extend it, via the same principles of searching inquiry and rational reflection, into new areas.

The lost art of contemplation

The intrinsic value and first purpose of a liberal arts education can be associated with the value of the lost art of contemplation, with what the Greeks called *theoria*, which is independent of practical aims. The cultivation of critical thinking and of those formal virtues that allow us to impact the world, competencies that I have explicated as the second purpose of a liberal arts education, correlates with today's elevation of science, capitalism, and technology and so can be associated with the contemporary ascendency of *poiesis* (production). The third purpose of the liberal arts, the call to virtue and vocation, mirrors to some degree the third mode of relating to the world recognized by the Greeks, *praxis* (action). All of us are engaged in *praxis*, but in its richest form, *praxis* involves not only an awareness of higher values and the development of formal capacities in our relations with others but also an existential commitment, a calling to serve others in addition to ourselves.

A humbling sense of the value of the past is essential for us as we recognize that not everything can be addressed via advances in instrumental or technical rationality. The balanced self requires not only rationality, analysis, and discipline, but also playfulness, sympathy, and beauty. Today, philosophical synthesis and reflection on eternal values have for the most part given way to specialization and utility. The pragmatic concept

If God held all truth in his right hand and the sole everlasting urge for truth in his left, with the result that I should forever and always err, and said to me, 'Choose,' I would humbly bow before his left hand and say, 'Father, grant me this. Pure truth is for you alone'"

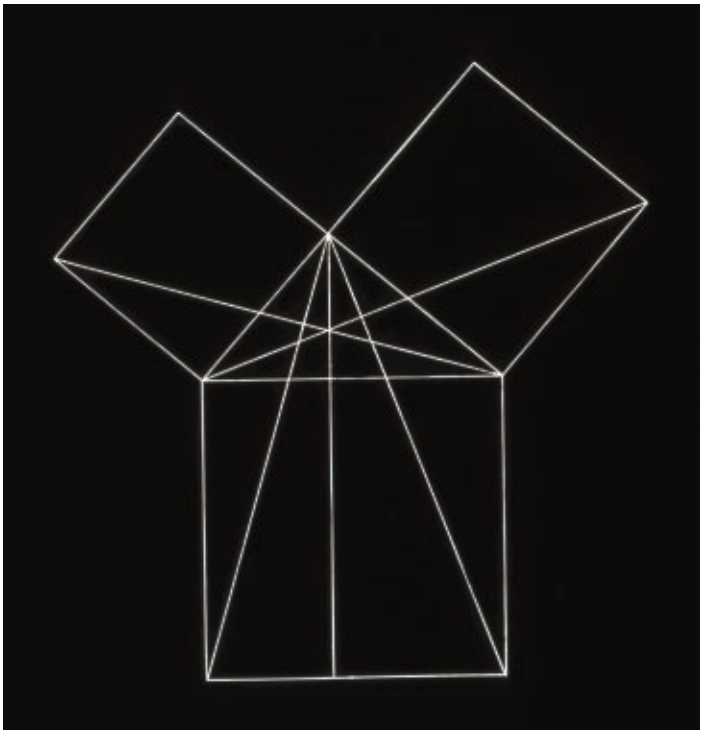
G. E. LESSING

of truth as utility is intimately connected to the reign of instrumental reason, which usurps the traditional hierarchy of *theoria* (contemplation) and *poiesis* (production). In an era that elevates the act of making, we tend to neglect the value of contemplation and the leisure that makes it possible.

Elevating the mind

Contemporary society has little patience for the apparent idleness of learning for its own sake. Today we elevate an instrumental form of thinking, a means-end rationality, in ways that tend to obscure what is of intrinsic value. Ironically, means-end thinking does not lead to happiness or well-being. When reflection on how to reach certain ends becomes supreme, it easily overshadows the question, 'Which ends should I seek to achieve?'

But answers to our searching questions are of interest whether or not they apply to the practical world. They satisfy an innate human longing for knowledge; indeed for wisdom. Yet not only the answers we discover, but also the simple pursuit of profound questions has intrinsic value. To explore a fascinating question, independently of the results, is to engage and elevate the mind. The German Enlightenment writer G. E. Lessing once said, "If God held all truth in his right hand and the sole everlasting urge for truth in his left, with the result that I should forever and always err, and said to me, 'Choose,' I would humbly bow before his left hand and say, 'Father, grant me this. Pure truth is for you alone'" (13:24).



The search for truth, the engagement with different positions, the experience of learning more, develops our highest capacities.

Editor's note: Mark William Roche, Ph.D., is the Rev. Edmund P. Joyce, C.S.C. professor of German language and literature and concurrent professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. This article was excerpted from Roche's award-winning book, "Why Choose the Liberal Arts?"

IONIC IN NAME, IONIC IN DEED

ONE LOS ANGELES LODGE MAKES TIMELESS WISDOM A PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE

by Matt Markovich

Boasting more than 400 members, Ionic Composite Lodge No. 520, which has met in Los Angeles since 1921 (as Ionic Lodge, before consolidating with Composite Lodge No. 639), is known as one of the "Big 15" lodges in California. Its success can be attributed to a number of positive initiatives, but what stands out most to current members is the lodge's pervasive culture of inclusiveness and continued education through the liberal arts.

Open doors, open minds

In 2002, then-master Michael Bear (now a three-time past master) cofounded Ionic Composite's popular Masonic Discussion Nights with Past Master Roy Steinfeld, who was then senior warden. Bear and Steinfeld hoped the open-door discussions, which welcomed male and female members of the community, Masonic and non-, would initiate an open dialogue about Masonry, including its history and purpose.

"Newer members were really more interested in learning about Masonry as an organization," Bear explains. "Many were digging on the Internet and reading books [to learn about Masonry]. The discussion group gave them a chance to learn more about the organization, and the lodge had an opportunity to reach out to prospects as well."

Through the Masonic Discussion Nights, Bear and Steinfeld educated members about what Masonry really entailed and, as Steinfeld puts it, "busted the Internet myths."

"We had a great deal of reading material," Steinfeld says. "We explained how studying all the areas of the liberal arts was very important. We concentrated on different aspects of the liberal arts and passed out handouts that showed how different subjects connected the various liberal arts to Masonry."

The Masonic Discussion Nights provided a forum for members at all levels – from new Entered Apprentices to 30 and 40 year Master Masons – to share their understanding of Freemasonry outside esoteric Masonic ritual.

Current lodge master Jeffrey Bear, a two-time past master and Michael Bear's Masonic brother as well as sibling, has continued the events' focus of illuminating and demystifying tenets of Freemasonry. He finds that the lodge's open discussions often mirror the Socratic teaching methods espoused through the liberal arts – by passing ideas back and forth amongst each other, members are able to determine and define their own truths.

"Everybody has a different idea about [Masonic teachings and concepts]," Jeffrey Bear says. "If you don't toss things back and forth, you're not getting the full value of what Masonry has to offer."

Great (Masonic) books

Mirroring the historic growth of Ionic Composite Lodge, the discussion group has expanded as well. When the group ignited a new interest in many already-active members to learn more about Masonic literature, Past Master Joseph Esshaghian, then senior warden, saw this interest as an opportunity. In 2011 he created a lecture series and book club to complement the discussion group.

Since then, Esshaghian explains, "We've learned how Freemasonry has matured and evolved through the years, and how the liberal arts have factored into that evolution. We've

AT IONIC COMPOSITE LODGE NO. 520, MASONIC DISCUSSION NIGHTS AND A BOOK CLUB ENCOURAGE AN OPEN DISCUSSION OF FREEMASONRY.

been able to get a clearer picture of where we've come from as a fraternity, where we're headed and how best to serve mankind through the lessons we teach and the morality we espouse."

This year's lecture series includes presentations from R. Stephen Doan, past grand master, on the history of Masonic jurisprudence; from Ronald Robinson, past grand master of Prince Hall Masons about Prince Hall Masonry; and Sanford Holst about the history of Masonry, including the Phoenicians and Knights Templar.

"The lectures, discussions, and book club have greatly expanded on what we learn within our lodge," Esshaghian says. "We've been able to go into much greater depth and [gain] a more profound understanding of Masonry's lessons and history – of our obligations to ourselves, our families, and to society as a whole."

As Jeffrey Bear relates, "Ever since I've been a member of the lodge, there's always been an emphasis on doing something more than memorizing 'the stuff.' There's a lot more meaning in what we memorize."

Expanding understanding

Esshaghian sees expanded educational offerings as a way to emphasize Masonry's role as a vital, living practice. Ionic Composite's programs infuse time-honored principles with thought-provoking lessons that enable

Continued next page

DISCUSSIONS FOLLOW THE SOCRATIC TEACHING METHOD – BY PASSING IDEAS BACK AND FORTH, MEMBERS DETERMINE AND DEFINE THEIR OWN TRUTHS.

members to make the sometimes esoteric words of Masonry more tangible.

Esshaghian draws a direct line between the inclusion of liberal arts education in Masonry and the formation of a more inclusive worldview that can be carried into one's everyday life. He feels that the liberal arts assist individuals in understanding themselves and giving them a well-rounded education and worldview.

"Freemasonry, at its core, is about the equality of man and the betterment of the individual," Esshaghian says. "I believe the study of liberal arts drives this point home, in that the pursuit of knowledge undoubtedly imparts within the true aspirant an appreciation of all humanity and a desire to better his surroundings."

And, Esshaghian believes that when Masons gather together to learn, they gain a common ground upon which to strengthen fraternal bonds. He explains, "The liberal arts are a universal language and a universal truth, the pursuit of which can serve to bring all members together under a common desire for betterment of self and society."

Esshaghian's view of the liberal arts as a critical component of Masonry has led to his belief that common understanding through continued learning ultimately reveals a greater level of connectedness. "I feel that the more we learn, the more we can comprehend the truth of man's equality," he says.

And that is a goal to which all scholars of the liberal arts, Masons and non-Masons alike, may strive.

A TEACHER'S GIFT

RESIDENT TEACHERS INSPIRE NEW BEGINNINGS AT THE MASONIC HOMES

by Laura Normand

PEARL CHANDLER BRINGS A SWEET JOY OF LEARNING TO FELLOW RESIDENTS OF THE MASONIC HOME AT COVINA.

"I'm up to my elbows in fondant filling for candy-making," Pearl Chandler says. "I'm practicing."

This is not an unusual state of affairs. Almost every day, Pearl turns her and husband Jerry's apartment into a test kitchen for the Masonic Home at Covina. Today, she's tweaking a new recipe: a creamy brown sugar chocolate that tastes like one of See's Candies' best-sellers. Like a musician learning a composition by ear, she is unraveling the recipe by taste.

When she's not submerged to her elbows in fondant or churning out almond toffee by the tens of pounds, Pearl is often online researching recipes and determining how to make them accessible to fellow residents. After all, baking is only one half of her passion. Teaching it is the other.

"I was reluctant to move into the Masonic Home at first because I loved running my own baking business and teaching cake decorating classes. I thought I'd have to give all that up," says Pearl. "But when I interviewed with the staff, they said, 'Well, why don't you teach it here?'"

Sweet possibilities

Pearl holds candy-making classes twice a month on the Covina campus, and as many as 20 residents regularly attend. Pearl has led them through panorama eggs, chocolate bowls filled with chocolate-dipped strawberries, cranberry walnut bark, chocolate-covered cherries, and more. She presents modifications for every skill level, and all of the recipes are possible for residents to make in their own apartments.

"It's heart-warming to see people find out they can still do things. They're thrilled that they can learn something new," Pearl says. "I love teaching for that reason. And I get to keep trying new things, too."

Pearl watched her mother suffer from arthritis, and now is fending it off in her own

Continued next page

hands. "Just from life, I know it's important that I keep my hands moving, and my mind moving," she says.

The research and preparation that she puts into every class certainly does the trick. The classes themselves have helped others maintain, and even regain, skills. When she started teaching candy-making, a resident approached Pearl and explained that she couldn't do the activities because of arthritis. Pearl retorted, "You can eat, can't you? Come watch how candy's made, and then help us eat it!" Encouraged, the resident started coming to class simply to observe. Little by little, with a little coaxing, she began participating.

"In the last class, I offered to help with her piping bag," Pearl explains. "She said, no, that she could do it. And she did."

COVINA RESIDENTS MAINTAIN, AND SOMETIMES IMPROVE, SKILLS BY PARTICIPATING IN CHANDLER'S ON-CAMPUS WORKSHOPS.

Join the club

One of the "side effects" of the seven liberal arts and sciences tends to be that one never stops learning. In Pearl's case, there was a corollary: One should never stop teaching.

At the Masonic Home at Union City, Fred and Fran Bryan have reached the same conclusion. The couple moved in about three years ago, and immediately got to work carving out their own niches. Fred's was roughly the size of a golf ball.

"I started playing golf in 1964 and I've played it off and on for 60 years," says Fred. "When we got to the Masonic Home, I asked if I could get a group together. I contacted the golf clubs that I belonged to and asked them to donate some golf sets."

Every Wednesday afternoon, Fred leads residents out to the hitting cage on campus. He takes them from basic instruction, to more advanced techniques, to playing a couple rounds on a golf course. And although he'd never coached before moving to the Home, his lessons are a hit. Not long after he began his weekly lessons, staff started showing up, too.

"Since I started doing this, I've taught about 80 people how to play," says Fred. "It's a tremendous outlet. It gives me a chance to play more. And in thinking of teaching tips, I think of things that I need to work on to improve my own game."

FRED BRYAN HAS TAUGHT GOLF TO MORE THAN 80 RESIDENTS AND STAFF AT THE MASONIC HOME AT UNION CITY.

FRAN BRYAN'S (THIRD FROM THE RIGHT) PROFESSIONAL BRIDGE SKILLS DELIGHT FELLOW RESIDENTS OF THE MASONIC HOME AT UNION CITY.

At age 97, Fran is continuing her 65-year-tenure as a bridge instructor. A former military wife, she once took a series of instructor classes so she could teach the card game to officers' wives. Today she leads two tables of bridge every Monday afternoon at the Union City Home. She's become an unofficial figure in the Home's intake process, too, approaching new residents to ask if they like to play cards and want to learn bridge.

"I'm a people person," Fran says. "The point is not to make great bridge players out of anyone, it's to keep them using their minds. We really work on that here."

Fran has volunteered in other ways around the Home, but she gravitates to teaching for this reason: It's challenging. "I'm not getting any younger," she says, "and so I need to use my mind all the time. Teaching bridge keeps me alert and involved."

"You think when you come here that you're going to be sitting around doing nothing?" she asks. "Uh-uh. This is a very active place. It's so good for the morale of everybody to keep busy."

"This is a way to get into a new interest," Fred chimes in. "It's a new way of life."

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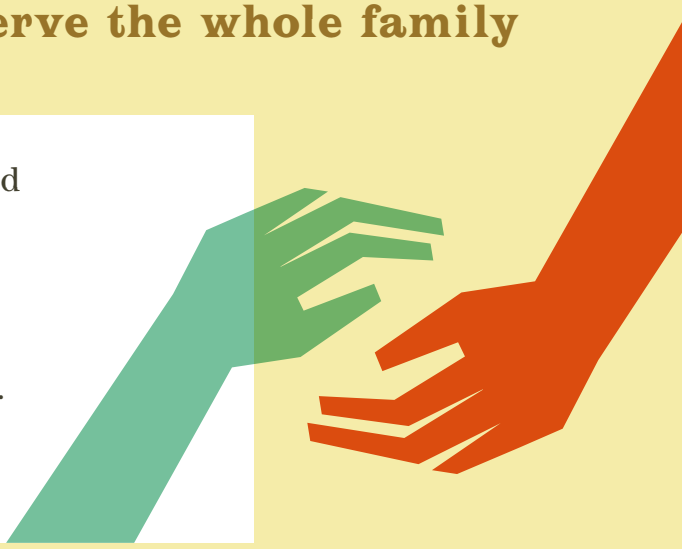

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