

CALIFORNIA 

# FREEMASON

Summer 2004

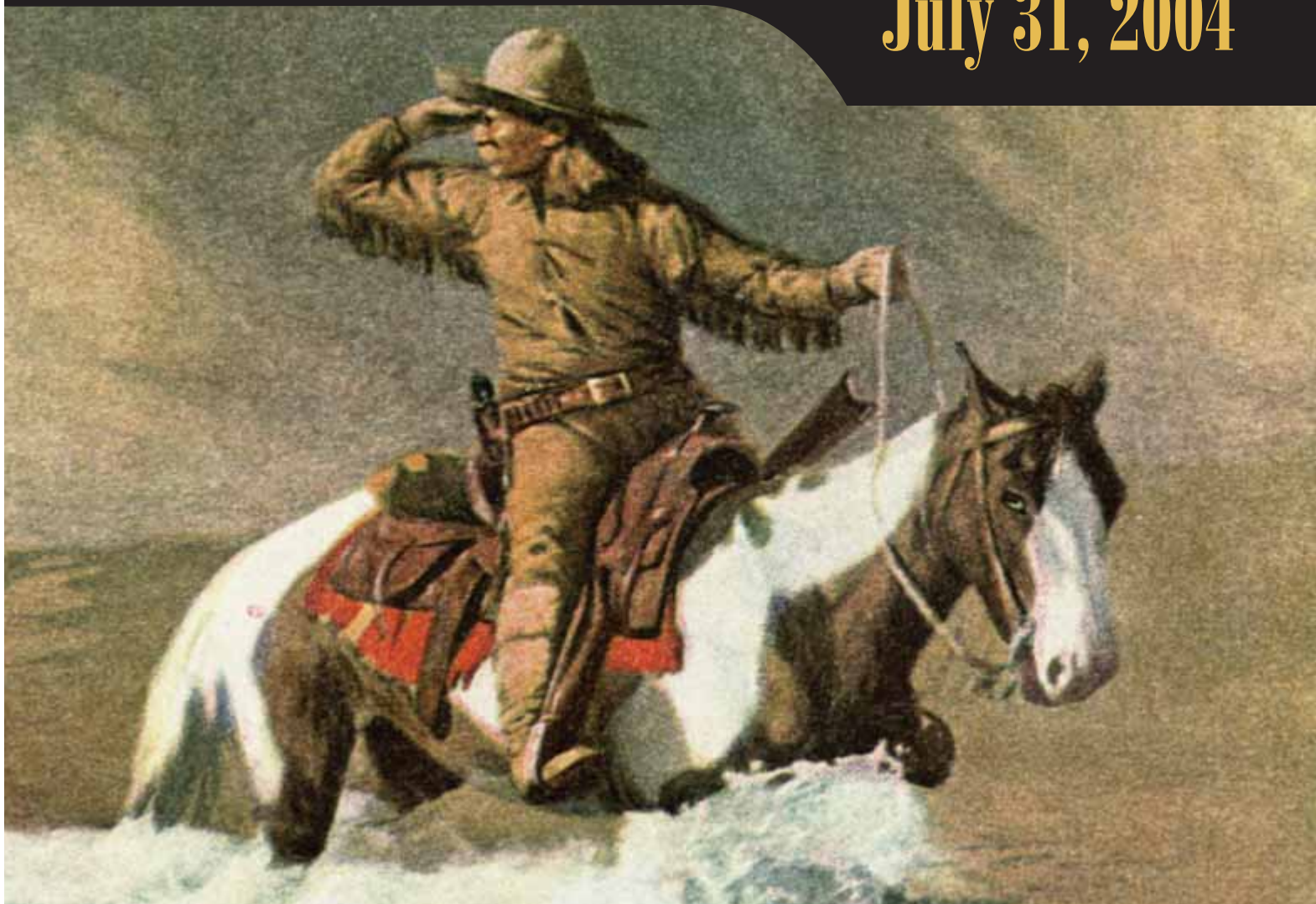
A portrait of John Vantuno, a man with a receding hairline, smiling, wearing a black t-shirt. The background is a composite image featuring a blue sky, palm trees on the left, and a rocket launch on the right.

## AIMING FOR THE STARS

ROCKET SCIENTIST JOHN VANTUNO'S JOURNEY THROUGH MASONRY

[www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org)

**FOURTH ANNUAL**  
**CALIFORNIA MASONIC SYMPOSIUM**  
**July 31, 2004**



## “Freemasonry and the American Frontier”

2004 FELLOW OF THE INSTITUTE FOR MASONIC STUDIES

**DR. HOWARD STEWART**

PAST MASTER OF THE TEXAS LODGE OF RESEARCH

**LOCATION:** San Diego Scottish Rite, 1895 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA

**TIME:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., followed by a banquet and key note address

**REGISTRATION: \$69**

**BANQUET: \$49**

**ON DISPLAY:** The Masonic apron of Davy Crockett

Hotel reservations can be made at the Radisson Hotel San Diego. Call the reservations department at **619/260-0111** and ask for the California Masonic Symposium rate of \$115 per night (double occupancy, not including tax). The rate is valid three days before and three days after the Symposium. Hotel reservations must be made by July 2, 2004 to guarantee the group rate and room availability.

Symposium registration forms are available from the lodge secretary and are available at **[www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org)**.



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## 12 cover story

From one-day Mason to life long learner, John Vantuno shares his journey through Masonry since being raised in a New Jersey one-day class. Vantuno, made a Mason in 1998, credits his one-day conferral as a critical turning point in his life. Without the opportunity to join when he did, John may not have become a Mason until later—if ever. Vantuno, a rocket scientist, is a past master of Willow Glen Fraternity Lodge No. 399 in San Jose.

For more articles of interest, check out California Freemason Online at [www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org).



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## Freemasonry and Membership

Membership is the lifeblood of any organization and Freemasonry is not any different. It is time to cease talking and wringing our hands about declining membership. It is time to take positive action to provide eligible men the opportunity to seek out the principles for which our craft stands.

Our members possess the manpower to exert beneficial influence throughout our society. That potential, however, is far from realized! The teachings of Freemasonry lie dormant in too many of our members. We must begin to illustrate to those outside the walls of our lodges, that the lessons we possess are beneficial to society in general.

I ask every Mason who has knelt at our Masonic altar to rise daily with a consciousness of tasks confronting them and those about them, and by precept and example strive for that true brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God which we cherish so fervently.

Our ancient brethren saw a need to adapt to their environment after Euclid's theory of geometry was rediscovered and published. This revealed the secrets that operative Masons had for constructing the large cathedrals of the day. They saw a complete change in their guilds as others now could build as they had. As the numbers of members in their guilds began to decline, the operative Masons accepted others into membership: men who had no connection with the building trades and men who had an interest only in the moral principles taught and

**I wonder if the operative Masons had not taken that bold step, would Freemasonry exist today?**

encouraged by the guilds. I wonder if the operative Masons had not taken that bold step, would Freemasonry exist today?

As I believe our ancient brethren did, we must change our approach as well. In "The Craft and its Symbols," Allen Roberts wrote, "the principles

of Freemasonry are transmitted unimpaired, but the vehicle through which they are expressed changes as the years go on."

Membership is the responsibility of each of us. We all know good men who would be qualified for membership. We also need to concentrate on membership retention and provide, through good lodge leadership, programs for the diverse generations we have in our order. How important it is to make sure that all of our members and their families enjoy our Masonic heritage.

This issue is dedicated to the exploration of the initiation process and membership-related ideas. The new membership development program, Pass It On, is a tremendous opportunity for each of us to talk about and share Masonry with our families and friends. Let's get to work! ✨



**Fredrick L. Sorsabal**  
Senior Grand Warden



Join Grand Master Howard D. Kirkpatrick and other Grand Lodge officers at any of the five one-day conferral demonstrations.

As the state considers legislation that would allow the Grand Master to authorize a one-day conferral of the three degrees of Masonry, Grand Master Kirkpatrick has assembled a team to conduct five demonstrations throughout the state to provide insight into the process.

At the 2003 Annual Communication, Grand Master William Holsinger proposed a recommendation that California adopt one-day conferrals in a manner similar to other grand lodges. More than 61 percent of the lodge leadership voted in favor of the recommendation, carrying over the legislation to October 2004.

"There were many questions raised at the Annual Communication about the one-day conferral," says Grand Master Kirkpatrick. "The demonstrations will help answer those questions."

While the degrees of Masonry will not be performed at the demonstrations, those who attend will receive a full explanation of the way in which the degrees will be performed and how the education portion of the program will be presented. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask

## What Is a One-Day Conferral?

By Richard Berman

### Demonstrations offered to answer questions

questions about the one-day conferral process and educational presentations.

The committee that has been assigned the task of presenting the demonstrations includes Deputy Grand Master David R. Doan, Grand Lecturer Harold A. Macy, and the five assistant grand lecturers.

A listing of the dates and locations of the demonstrations is provided in the sidebar.

While one-day conferrals may seem like a major departure from tradition, in fact there have always been many ways to join the craft. For example, grand masters are authorized to make a Mason at sight. General Douglas MacArthur was made a Master Mason at sight on January 14, 1936, while serving in the Philippines, and was instrumental in creating the first Masonic lodges in Japan.

Another hero of the Second World War, George Marshall, was also made a Mason at sight by the Grand Master of Washington, D.C., in 1941.

The Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C., was the first grand lodge in the US to adopt one-day conferrals. In the 12 years since, 34 other grand lodges across the country have followed suit. 🍁

**Grand Master Kirkpatrick invites Masons to attend any of the five one-day conferral demonstrations**

#### **SATURDAY, JUNE 26**

Long Beach Scottish Rite  
855 Elm Avenue, Long Beach  
1:00 p.m.

#### **SATURDAY, JULY 24**

Fresno Masonic Center,  
2992 E Clinton Avenue, Fresno  
1:00 p.m.

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 28**

San Francisco Scottish Rite  
2850 Nineteenth Avenue,  
San Francisco  
1:00 p.m.

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11**

San Diego Scottish Rite  
1895 Camino Del Rio South,  
San Diego  
1:00 p.m.

#### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2**

Elk Grove Masonic Center  
9829 Waterman Rd, Elk Grove  
1:00 p.m.

To confirm dates and times, visit the events section of **[www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org)**.



# THE TRADITIONAL OBSERVANCE LODGE

By Dennis Chornenky



While many Masons may have heard about European concept lodges, which are relatively new to American Freemasonry, few have heard of the traditional observance lodge.

Traditional observance lodges are similar to European concept lodges in that they incorporate higher dues, festive boards, a strict dress code, and higher standards of ritual. They differ in that they choose to follow a close observance of the traditional initiatic elements of continental European and South American Freemasonry.

This observance is characterized by a solemn approach to holding stated communications and conferring degrees, the use of the chamber of reflection as part of the

initiation ceremony, forming the chain of union after the meetings, longer time between degrees, and the requirement for candidates to present a paper before the lodge on the lessons of each degree prior to advancement.

Traditional observance lodges are also more likely to use the term agape rather than festive board to describe the meal that follows the meetings. Agape is the ancient Greek word for love, and in Freemasonry the term signifies a meal eaten in common by a congregation of Masons in token of brotherly love.

A non profit organization working to promote the study and understanding of traditional Freemasonry, called the Masonic Restoration Foundation (MRF), provides

education and support for traditional observance lodges in recognized jurisdictions. The MRF fosters a network of lodges and individuals that will help preserve the initiatic tradition within American Freemasonry.

The essential work of a traditional observance lodge is not to review minutes or bills, or plan social or philanthropic activities, but rather to create an atmosphere where the members can learn the lessons of Freemasonry and how they can be carried into their daily lives.

This is referred to as Masonic formation, which is the ever-continuing process of spiritual and intellectual formation that all Freemasons must undergo in order to improve themselves in Masonry. This term differs from Masonic education in that it refers to a process of growth concerned with much more than intellectual faculties. Masonic formation is the process of fitting the rough ashlar of the imperfect being into the perfect ashlar. It is a constant transformation through the use of Masonic symbols, rituals, and teachings.

Success of a traditional observance lodge is viewed as effectively imparting the traditional teachings within Masonic symbols and the unification of the brethren in such a pursuit.

Successful traditional observance lodges, usually maintaining a small membership of fewer than 50 brothers, retain and engage their members with meaningful human fellowship, stimulating discourse, and enriching programs.

Traditional observance lodges make Masonic teachings and philosophy

accessible and interesting to members and deal with the philosophical issues and questions that many men begin to find more meaningful as they mature.

A typical meeting of such a lodge may go as follows. The brethren, all dressed according to the dress code (at minimum black suit, white shirt, and black tie), will arrive at the lodge hall, which will be dimly lit by candlelight or by other subtle sources, with classical music playing softly in the background. If there is a degree, the brethren will maintain complete silence prior to the ceremony. Otherwise, they will converse quietly over some light refreshments before entering the lodge room and

**THIS IS REFERRED TO AS MASONIC FORMATION, WHICH IS THE EVER-CONTINUING PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL FORMATION THAT ALL FREEMASONS MUST UNDERGO IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THEMSELVES IN MASONRY.**

being seated.

Once the lodge is formally opened, the master will call for a period of silence, usually lasting several minutes. Then the master will call for the scheduled papers and pieces of music to be presented.

The music is of a contemplative nature and is viewed as an important component of every meeting; it is intended to acquaint the brethren with the spectrum of Masonic music composed during the 18th century and to educate them on the profound history of the classical musical tradition and its relationship to Masonry.

The presentation of papers is viewed as an essential aspect of the life of the

lodge and promotes the continuing study of Masonic lessons by the brethren. The topic of the papers must be relevant to the interests of the lodge, and papers of a strictly historical or biographical nature are rarely entertained in the lodge room, though they may be presented during the agape.

Topics considered appropriate for the lodge room are symbolism, initiation, ritual, philosophy, and art.

Before closing the lodge, the worshipful master will call for another period of silence. Once the lodge has been formally closed, the brethren will gather around the altar for a ceremony known as the chain of union, which is meant to symbolize the common commitment to Masonic ideals and connection with other Masons all over the world.

The brethren will then retire to the agape, which is usually a catered meal with formal toasts and where a discussion of the main paper presented earlier will take place.

Traditional observance lodges give their members the opportunity to partake in a ritual and sociability that they cannot find anywhere else. Traditional Masonry allows brothers to move their minds from the mundane to the profound, away from life's petty particulars to attention on its transcendent meaning. While traditional Freemasonry may not appeal to everyone, it is proving to be a success in more and more jurisdictions around the United States. ✨

For further information, visit the Masonic Restoration Foundation Web site at [www.masonicrestoration.com](http://www.masonicrestoration.com).



# OUR

John L. Cooper III, Grand Secretary

In the long form of the lecture of the Entered Apprentice degree, the candidate is told that "The trestleboard is for the master workman to draw his designs upon," and that "by the trestleboard we are reminded that, as the operative workman erects his temporal building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the master on his trestleboard, so should we, both operative and speculative, endeavor to erect our spiritual building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the supreme architect of the universe in the great book of nature and revelation."

Thus the Entered Apprentice, if his degree includes the optional long form of the lecture, is told about the trestleboard. If he is already on the lodge mailing list, he undoubtedly is already receiving what is called the lodge trestleboard. Since the master sees to the publishing of the monthly trestleboard, he quickly makes the connection that this published trestleboard is for the master to draw his designs upon—in other words, to let the members of the lodge know what he wants the lodge to do.

The history of this term, however, is a bit more colorful than this prosaic explanation would indicate. First, there are two Masonic terms that seem to apply to the same thing—the trestleboard in our

**Second degree tracing board c. 1825 London. Courtesy of United Grand Lodge of England.**



# SPIRITUAL, MORAL, AND MASONIC TRESTLEBOARD

American lectures, and the tracing board in the English lectures. The latter is not a lodge newsletter, but rather an item somewhat like a chalkboard on an easel—with a separate board for each of the three degrees of Masonry. On it are drawn and painted symbols illustrating certain portions of the lecture accompanying each of the degrees.

Both the American trestleboard (newsletter) and the English tracing board have a common origin—and share that common origin with another American piece of lodge paraphernalia, the second degree floorcloth, as well as a (now) symbolic item in the long form of the lecture of the third degree: the master's carpet.

All these things started with the desire in early lodges to help the candidate remember what he was being taught about Freemasonry. You may have heard the old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. Our Masonic forebears understood this, and when they met in taverns and inns, would draw Masonic designs on the floor of the meeting room with chalk—and sometimes with charcoal and fuller's earth, or clay as well.

Our Entered Apprentice lecture still has a reference to “chalk, charcoal, and clay,” from a time when those were actually used at each lodge meeting. We also know, from the earliest records, that the newest Entered Apprentice was assigned the duty of mopping the floor after the degree, wiping out the designs that had been drawn there.

It was not too great a jump from these designs drawn on the floor to the painting of those designs on a cloth, which could be laid on the floor for the degree, and then rolled up and saved for the next time. The one for the



third degree—the master's carpet—was sometimes actually a carpet, with the designs woven into the cloth instead of merely painted on it.

The next step was to hang these cloths on a board supported by trestles (the trestleboard), and then to paint the designs on the boards themselves (the tracing board). A later development was to lithograph the designs on oilcloth, and hang them on the wall of the lodge room (the wall chart). Many lodges in California still have sets of these old wall charts, although their use was discontinued some time before 1950.

At some time in the latter part of the 19th century some lodges bought projectors and glass slides—lantern slides, as they were called—and projected the symbols on the wall of the lodge or on a screen set up for the purpose (four lantern slides shown at left). Today, in California, lodges can use 35 mm slides for the Entered Apprentice degree using colored illustrations to accompany the lecture of the first degree. Grand Lodge now makes these slides available on a CD—convenient for use with a laptop and projector.

The temporary drawings on the floor of the lodge have thus come a long way. They have migrated to floorcloths (still in use for the second degree), to tracing boards (used in England), and to slide shows—at least for the Entered Apprentice degree in California. They also inspired a common name for the lodge bulletin, and ended up as one of the symbols in the lecture of the third degree as the master's carpet.

And the youngest Entered Apprentice no longer has to wash out the drawings with a mop and pail! 🍷

# Freemasonry and the Initiatic Process

John L. Cooper III, Grand Secretary

**I**n common Masonic parlance, a Mason is initiated, passed, and raised—he is initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. Yet it is not in the first degree alone that a Mason experiences initiation.

There are multiple initiations as a Mason moves from stage to stage within a degree, and from degree to degree as the mysteries of Freemasonry are unfolded to him. Thus Freemasonry may be properly termed an initiatic brotherhood, a system of progressive revelation of information that helps the Mason to understand more than he knew before at each step of the journey.

But because this Masonic initiatic experience has settled down over the last few centuries into a series of degrees, we often confuse the taking of a degree with true participation in the initiatic process itself. Such, however, is not the case.

Initiation is not an external and physical activity; it is an internal and spiritual activity for which the framework of a degree or of many degrees serves as a pathway. A Mason may take all the degrees of Freemasonry available to him and never experience a spiritual initiation. A non-Mason may never take any of the degrees of Freemasonry, and yet



experience a spiritual initiation akin to what Freemasonry is intended to accomplish through study and meditation on the same teachings that Freemasonry organizes into its degrees. In fact, Freemasons have long recognized this truth, referring to individuals who, for whatever reason, are not or cannot be Freemasons under our prevailing rules—as Masons without the apron. Their Freemasonry derives not from receiving the degrees of Masonry in the traditional manner, but from having conformed their lives to the

teachings of Freemasonry, and having passed through the same kind of spiritual experience that the degrees are intended to foster.

This subject is of more than academic interest. A debate often takes place between those committed to our traditional way of making Masons and those who believe that there are alternate ways of making Masons.

When the initiatic process is properly understood, the arguments are not really opposed to one another. Each is insisting on the validity of the initiatic



process as a means of becoming a Mason. If they each laid their arguments side by side, they would find remarkable agreement on the nature of the initiatic process and how one becomes a Freemason.

The initiatic process actually starts long before a man knocks at the door of a Masonic lodge. In some old rituals a Mason is asked where he was first prepared to be made a Mason, and he replies, "In my heart." And that is true.

Unless an individual is prepared in his heart to become a Mason—unless he has prepared himself to be open to learning what Freemasonry has to teach him—the degrees of Masonry will make little impact on him. The monitorial marshal's questions, asked of a candidate before he is allowed to knock at the door of the lodge, state it clearly: "Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, that unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, you freely and voluntarily offer yourself as a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry?" A candidate must be ready to learn in order to be truly prepared for what he will experience through the mysteries of Masonry.

Our degrees nowadays are laid out in sections. Although we require certain proficiency between the degrees, there is initiatic progression within each degree between the sections of which no proficiency is required. That does not mean that we have no expectation that the candidate will ever become proficient—become knowledgeable—about the meaning of the several ceremonies which occur within a single degree. We do expect him to work on becoming knowledgeable about the experience through a lifetime of learning about the meaning of those ceremonies.

And that is true for all the degrees of Masonry, regardless of how much we require him to memorize and recite in lodge between the degrees. The old long form proficiencies were never intended to teach the candidate

all that there is to know about the preceding degree, and neither are the newer short form proficiencies.

They are both intended to whet his appetite for returning again and again to what he has experienced, making his initiatic experience the work of a lifetime.

Initiation is a process that goes on continuously. It does not begin when a candidate knocks at the door of a lodge, but rather it begins when he first seeks out the light that Masonry has to offer. It does not occur because he takes a degree, or even if he takes a degree and memorizes some

ritual pertaining to that degree. It occurs because his mind and spirit absorb the meaning of the teachings unfolded to him through the initiatic process. And it keeps on occurring throughout his life, if he rightly understands it, until at last he lays down his working tools for the final time.

Initiation is not merely a beginning. It is a series of beginnings that occurs many times in a single degree, and many times as various rites and degrees unfold new vistas to his understanding. It is also not necessarily linear. Progressive does not always imply forward movement in one direction. It can mean a deeper understanding of truths

previously understood, but understood in a new context as the years go by.

Freemasonry is a progressive moral science not because it consists of a series of degrees, but because it consists of a series of experiences that causes us to think through the meaning of life in light of its teachings. Freemasonry is an initiatic fraternity not because it confers three degrees on three separate nights, but because it brings a man into contact with a fresh understanding of ultimate reality through a series of steps.

In the final analysis, it is not whether a Mason became one in a single day, a single year, or a single decade. It is whether he becomes a Mason through a lifetime of initiation. ✧

Unless an individual is prepared in his heart to become a Mason—unless he has prepared himself to be open to learning what Freemasonry has to teach him—the degrees of Masonry will make little impact on him.





John Vantuno, who became a Mason in a one-day class in New Jersey and subsequently became very active in his California lodge and community, enjoys launching model rockets in his spare time.



# AIMING FOR THE STARS

**MASONIC RITUAL ISN'T ROCKET SCIENCE. JUST ASK JOHN VANTUNO, PAST MASTER OF WILLOW GLEN FRATERNITY LODGE NO. 399 IN SAN JOSE. HE SHOULD KNOW: HE'S A ROCKET SCIENTIST.**

By Richard Berman

In today's mobile society, it is more and more common for Masons to move from city to city, or even to new countries. The rituals of the craft vary all over the world, and it is not unusual for new brothers to have a variety of practices that may seem out of place in their new lodges.

For John Vantuno, as a transplant from New Jersey, the major difference was how he became a Mason in the first place.

Since 1998 Vantuno has been a systems engineer at Lockheed Martin in Sunnyvale, where he works on the U.S. DOD Missile Defense Agency's Thernal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) ballistic missile defense program. When he moved to northern California, he did not know anyone in the area. Nevertheless, the local Freemasons made

Vantuno feel like he had a home away from home.

After graduating from Penn State with a degree in aerospace engineering, Vantuno returned to his home state of New Jersey in 1994. He began to develop an interest in Freemasonry through his lifelong friend Bill Johnson and his father Brian, who were both active Masons in Newark Lodge No. 7. Vantuno spent several months learning about the craft before deciding to apply to become a Mason.

"I knew a little bit about the Masons through my friend and his father," he says. "I tried to arrange a time to go to the lodge, but I was told to wait a few weeks for a 'special event.'"

That day came in January 1998, when Vantuno joined 200 other potential

brothers at the Grand Lodge of New Jersey for a one-day conferral of the three degrees of Masonry. "This was offered as a way to make you feel like you belong and attend lodge meetings right off the bat, rather than having to wait to participate in the ceremonies and business."

Throughout the day the candidates received one-on-one instruction from the Master Masons and were taught the signs and modes of recognition for each degree. As the first, second, and third degrees were conferred on a single initiate at the front of the hall, all of the new Masons recited the oaths together. The entire program took about eight hours, and all 200 initiates were raised together to the degree of Master Mason.

One-day conferrals are being adopted

*continued on page 14*

**“FOR ME, BEING A MASON HAS HELPED ME TO CREATE A TIE TO MY COMMUNITY, EVEN WHEN I’M IN A NEW PLACE,” HE SAYS. “I FELT IMMEDIATELY WELCOME HERE IN CALIFORNIA, EVEN THOUGH I’M FAR FROM WHERE I GREW UP.”**

with increasing frequency by grand lodges throughout the United States that are looking to increase their ranks and get new members involved in their local lodges from day one. Once they are raised as Master Masons, the new brothers are expected to return to their local lodges for more in-depth training in the rituals of the craft.

As it turns out, Vantuno did not have time to go back to his home lodge: His bags were already packed for a move to Denver less than 24 hours later! His intention was to join a lodge in Colorado and complete his

basic Masonic education. Fortunately, his friend Brian Johnson, past district deputy grand master, made sure he knew the Tiler’s Oath to ensure that he would be able to enter other lodges.

Upon arriving at the lodge in Denver, he was fully accepted by the Denver brothers, and he became an active member in the lodge. “I left New Jersey expecting to spend the rest of my life in Colorado. I had always wanted to live there—I really didn’t expect to leave,” Vantuno says.

After less than a year in Denver, however, he was once again on the

move. This time it was for his dream job with Lockheed Martin in California. “The job was perfect for me, and even though I didn’t want to relocate, it was just too good an opportunity to pass up.”

Arriving in the Bay Area during the tech boom was a jarring experience for the New Jersey native. It was also a lonely time, as he was among strangers for the second time in eight months. Once in San Jose, Vantuno joined Willow Glen Lodge No. 676.

“For me, being a Mason has helped me to create a tie to my community,





even when I'm in a new place," he says. "I felt immediately welcome here in California, even though I'm far from where I grew up."

In fact, he still maintains his membership in his New Jersey lodge, which is also home to a well-known Mason who worked with rockets: Neil Armstrong. In fact, the Grand Lodge of New Jersey has a moon rock that the astronaut brought back with him in 1969. Vantuno wryly notes that the stone actually belongs to Essex Lodge No. 7, but that the Grand Lodge took it "for safekeeping."

Vantuno became an active member in Willow Glen Fraternity Lodge No. 399 immediately upon arrival, and by 1999 he had been appointed senior steward. After serving as senior deacon, junior warden, and senior warden, Vantuno became master in 2003, shortly after the lodge's merger with Fraternity Lodge No. 399.

"Jumping into the officer line was a great way to increase my Masonic knowledge quickly," Vantuno recalls. "By being part of the weekly meetings and raising Master Masons myself, I developed an incredible appreciation for what the candidates have to do."

Under his direction, Willow Glen Fraternity Lodge—which merged just before he became master — sponsored a tee-ball team for local youth (Vantuno claims that it was a coincidence that the squad was called the Yankees, his favorite Major League team). The lodge also sponsors the Kids ID program, working with local schools to give

parents identification sheets of their children that can be used by police if a child goes missing.

Willow Glen Fraternity Lodge also offers an annual college scholarship, worth \$800, for high school students who enter an essay contest. All entries must focus on the U.S. Constitution and are judged by several brothers who are high school teachers. In its first year there was only one entry; several dozen are expected in 2004 as a result of the lodge's outreach efforts in San Jose schools.

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**"BY BEING PART  
OF THE WEEKLY  
MEETINGS AND  
RAISING MASTER  
MASON MYSELF,  
I DEVELOPED AN  
INCREDIBLE  
APPRECIATION  
FOR WHAT THE  
CANDIDATES  
HAVE TO DO."**

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Vantuno credits his one-day conferral program as being a critical turning point in his life. With his moves from New Jersey to Colorado to California in 1998, in all probability he would not have had the opportunity to become a Mason until later—if ever.

"On one hand, I feel that I missed out on a lot of the early stages. On the other,



**John Vantuno's best friend Bill Johnson and Bill's father Brian Johnson, past district deputy grand master of New Jersey, flew to California to install John as master of Willow Glen Fraternity Lodge No. 399 in San Jose in 2002.**

I have been a committed member of the fraternity, and my brothers have never treated me as anything other than one of their own. Over the last seven years as a Freemason I have gained a great deal of knowledge, and I credit the Freemasons for being such an important part of my life."

Despite having gone through the one-day class in New Jersey, rather than the traditional method, Vantuno does not feel that he has been treated differently by Masons in California. "There is definitely some surprise when I tell people about my path to Masonry, but I've found that people have been nothing but supportive."

After holding lodge leadership positions for most of his Masonic life, Vantuno is enjoying being outside of the officer line for the first time since 1999. Although he does not rule out involvement at the district level in the future, for the time being he is content to help the Yankees tee-ball team and work with local schools to support the Kids ID program in San Jose. "Being a Mason is a huge part of who I am, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have joined the craft when I did." ✨

**Community service is important to John Vantuno. He is especially proud that his lodge sponsors the Yankees tee-ball team.**



# Tout Les Masons du Monde

## OBSERVATIONS OF A CALIFORNIA MASON IN FRANCE

By Benjamin Auray

**T**oday it is increasingly common for Masons to be part of several lodges in their lifetimes as they move to new cities for work or family reasons. Benjamin Auray joined Crossroads Lodge No. 696 in San Diego in 1993, but moved to France the following year. After nearly a decade overseas, he shares some of his observations about his Masonic experiences.

When I left the United States to live in France, I was 24 and I had been initiated, passed, and raised the year before in San Diego. And I was just starting to be active in the line. I had been visiting several lodges in my district and throughout the state. Although I had not mastered the ritual, I felt very comfortable with the ceremonies and the way they were conducted.

Once settled in France, I decided to get started as soon as possible to continue my Masonic life. Masonry in France is far more complex than it is in the United States, and there are quite a few secret societies that purport to be part of the craft. I had to do some research among the dozen or so “grand lodges” throughout the country before finding the Grande Loge Nationale Française (GLNF).

In sharp contrast with the American tradition, French lodges have a strict delineation between the rites: In fact, it is unheard of for a Mason in France to hold degrees in more than one rite. Within the Grande

**Jean-Charles Foellner is the grand master of the Grande Loge Nationale Française based in Paris. Lodges in this jurisdiction require a candidate to write a research paper before being advanced to a higher degree.**



Loge Nationale Française, 50 percent of lodges follow the Scottish Rite, and only 5 percent use the York Rite. The rest of the lodges use French Rite, Rectified Scottish Rite, Emulation, or the Standard Rite from Scotland.

In order to determine what lodge would be most appropriate for me to visit, I was asked what rite I was practicing. I was not able to answer anything other than that my lodge was practicing the California Grand Lodge ritual, as all other lodges in California do. When I was told that the 1,271 Lodges of the Obedience were practicing about half a dozen different rituals, I realized how limited my understanding was of Masonry outside of the United States. As soon as I started visiting some lodges, I realized that although the final goal remained the same, the means to achieve this were quite different.

Only about 25 percent of the lodges perform the work from memory, including the ones using the Emulation Rite and the York Rite. The majority of the lodges practice a different system that is often called “écossisme” (Scottish System). The ritual is read when opening and closing the

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**UNLIKE AMERICAN LODGES, ALL WORK IN THE FRENCH LODGES, APART FROM PASSING AND RAISING CEREMONIES, IS CONDUCTED IN THE FIRST DEGREE.**

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lodge, and when performing degrees. The true work of the Masons consists of writing essays (“planches tracées,” or trestleboards), which are presented in open lodge and subject to orderly discussion.

Proficiency is not achieved by memorizing the ritual; rather, the candidate is asked to present a “piece of architecture” to be read in open lodge. This has a twofold purpose: first, to demonstrate a Mason’s understanding of the ritual, and second, to enable him to elaborate on his personal perception of the symbolism pertaining to the degree.

Following the presentation, a vote takes place among the Master Masons of the lodge to decide whether the candidate is worthy to advance to the next degree. Should fewer than half of the members agree, the candidate is asked to present another piece of work at a later date. It is therefore quite

common for brothers to spend more than two years—often three or four—before being raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason.

The Masonic essays often include such topics as the working tools, the trestleboard, the ornaments of the lodge, the three Great Lights, the columns, and the mosaic pavement. They can also be purely symbolic, with such topics as love, the Saints John, the Holy Grail, or the rose. They can be philosophical or even historical, and focus on topics as diverse as the role of the crafts at the time of the cathedrals or Egyptian esoteric teachings.

This method of showing proficiency on such diverse topics is more subjective than the pure learning of the ritual as practiced in the lodges. However, it is hoped that in performing this research the candidate will learn, digest, and communicate the teachings of Freemasonry in his own words, with his own sensibility, thereby operating his transformation.

In addition to the purely speculative work required of Entered Apprentices, Fellowcrafts are expected to develop their operative behavior in the pure tradition of the cathedral builders. They are asked to visit as many lodges as possible to become conscious of the differences and similarities of the Masonic teachings that exist in the Masonic world. It is hoped that they will complete their knowledge of the Fraternity, and will return with enough experience before being raised and being responsible for perpetuating the tradition in their own lodge.

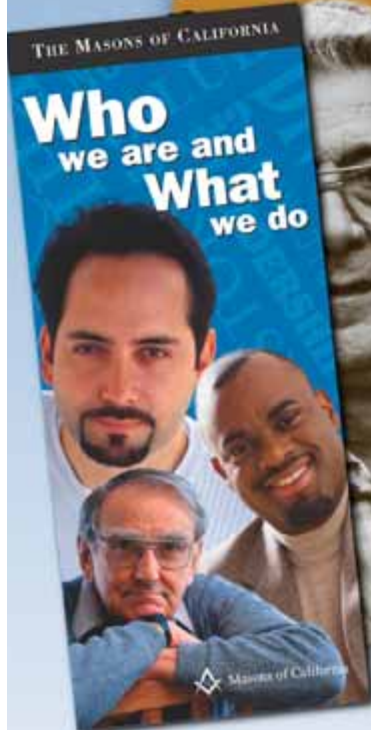
Unlike American lodges, all work in the French lodges, apart from passing and raising ceremonies, is conducted in the first degree. Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Masons are considered full members of the lodge.

By its wide diversity of the rituals being practiced, the Grande Loge offers great opportunities to its members to grow their knowledge of the Fraternity. However, this diversity is known only to its members. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the sponsors to direct candidates to the right lodge and ritual, given their sensitivity and emotional nature, in order to make sure that they will be most impressed by the ceremonies and that the impression will be a long-lasting one.

Having lived in France for almost 10 years, I have had the opportunity to work in both systems (York and “écossisme”). I am convinced that Masonry is truly universal, with one common goal: take good men and make them better. ✨

# Pass It On

## Helps lodges grow: Are you using it?



Will your lodge make five Master Masons this year? Lodges throughout the state are now using the Pass It On program to confidently share the Masonic legacy with others.

The Pass It On program includes a comprehensive five-step guide to growing and sustaining a strong lodge, as well as supporting materials which are essential to the program. Some of the supporting materials are described here:

The **Pass It On card** is a guide to having informative conversations about Masonry with prospective members, without soliciting membership.

The **wallet brochure** is a conveniently sized, compact piece to give to people who want to know about the fraternity.

The **membership information packet**, which contains the Masons of California brochure and application, can be handed or mailed to a man who expresses interest in joining the fraternity.

The **applicant information packet** is mailed immediately when your lodge receives an application so that the applicant and his family may learn more about the fraternity before the

home interviews. Two brochures are enclosed that discuss Masonic history, values, philanthropy, how we're organized, allied entities, and answers to frequently asked questions about Masonry.

The **candidate information packet** explains the roles of the candidate's mentor and coach, the initiation in the first degree, and completion of the second and third degrees.

Membership development is critical to the future of your lodge and the Masons of California. The Pass It On program is a valuable tool for membership growth and retention, strengthening the future of Masonry in California.

To order the Pass It On program kit or reorder materials, use the order form on [www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org) or call Grand Lodge Supplies at 415/292-9131. ♦



# Covina Children Learn Values

## They Will Take into Adult Life



By Ann Lyon Dudley

When children at the Masonic Home at Covina speak about what they want to do in their adult lives, many say they want to give back to others. When asked where that notion came from, one young boy said with shy pride, "it shows we care about what's been done for us by the Masons."

The simple yet profound ideal of giving back captures the essence of Masonic values. During their time at the Home, when many of the children are rebuilding their lives, they have the opportunity to observe brotherly love, relief, and truth in action. They see that these ideals can enrich their lives and those with whom they come into contact.

The three major areas of emphasis in the children's program—independent living, social skills, and academic achievement—tie back to the Masonic core values. That is the belief of Executive Director John Howl, who says the children are exposed to the values from the beginning of their stay on the Covina campus and throughout their time in the program.

Marissa Espinosa, director of the children's program, is pleased with the fact that a lot of what is contained in the Thank You Very Much customer service program recently rolled out in Covina is already being taught to the

children. She says it is basic good manners, and the children's program staff considers the children, their parents, and each other their customers.

There are a number of ways in which the children are exposed to Masonic ideals, according to Judy Figueroa, director of admissions at Covina. The most influential is the way they see them alive and in action through their contact with adult residents and staff. Each children's home has an adoptive grandparent, an adult resident who visits and sits with them during special events at the Home. The children get to know an individual who has dedicated himself to doing good for others. "And that rubs off," Figueroa remarks.

The children also attend the Masonic Values Program awards every quarter. "It's a big occasion here," say Figueroa. "John Howl does a wonderful job at the presentation talking about the Masonic values in a way that makes them interesting and alive."

At the presentation the children learn about employees who express a genuine concern for those in need and go about helping them with compassion. Or, in another instance, they hear of someone who is always willing to help out when needed, does not complain, and gets the task done.

There are also more formal ways that the children learn about Masonic values. Some of them voluntarily choose to join Rainbow Girls, Job's Daughters, or DeMolay. Masonic residents who live on the campus serve as mentors for the boys as their wives do for the girls.

Recently, children at the Home who joined Masonic youth organizations commented that meeting the requirements of membership could be challenging. But they felt it was worth the effort. One young Rainbow Girl said she was learning skills that she would use all of her life. "I'm learning to believe in myself," was the way she summed up her experience.

A new member of DeMolay found the group to be a kind of social safety net that could extend throughout his lifetime. "People are there to help you. If you stumble, someone will pick you up" was his youthful description of brotherly love.

Thus, the boys and girls at Covina are continually exposed to the values of relief, brotherly love, and truth in a variety of ways. But the most persuasive learning experience is seeing them lived every day by Masons and their wives and the leadership and staff at the Covina campus. ♦

# THE HOMES

*are indeed*

## *Home to Residents*

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*Masonic values compel Homes to constantly strive to improve the high standard of resident care*

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By Ann Lyon Dudley

The highest level of individual attention and respect is what staff at the Masonic Homes of California strive for as they carry out their duties. From their first day on the job they are expected to be mindful that the Home is just that—a family home. The word “home” means different things to different people. To both the residents and staff of the Masonic Homes of California, the word means security, privacy, peace of mind, and fraternal affection.

The first priority of everyone working for the Homes, from board members to staff, is to make the brothers and their wives and widows feel safe, secure, and welcome in a manner consistent with Masonic values. It was, after all, a commitment to these ideals that gave birth to the Homes more than a century ago.

Deborah E. Stebbins, executive vice

president of the Masonic Homes of California, explains that an ongoing challenge for the Homes’ leadership is to seek ways to keep the concept of Masonic values fresh and current for staff. “We want the values to be living ideals for all of us who work for the residents in their home. We always look for new ways to make that happen,” she explains.

The Masonic Values program awards employees selected for their commitment to Masonic values. Since the program presents awards quarterly, it keeps a spotlight on Masonic values throughout the year.

Alan Gresham, chairman of the board of the Masonic Homes of California, emphasizes the importance of constantly striving to achieve excellence: “We need always to be aware that the care we provide is done in the name and



on behalf of every Mason in California—past, present, and future.”

Currently underway at the Homes are three major initiatives to enhance staff and volunteer awareness of Masonic ideals and core values. Administrators and staff believe they have always provided the best care but are constantly challenging themselves with the question, “How can we better highlight the values that have been a mainstay for residents for much of their lives?”

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*“We want the values to be living ideals for all of us who work for the residents in their home. We always look for new ways to make that happen.”*

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Robert M. Fallon, administrator at Union City, says the latest staff training began last fall with a look at the Homes’ mission statement. “We wanted to examine what it is that makes the Homes what they are,” he recalls.

That special distinction was deemed to be the spirit of the core values of relief, truth, and brotherly love. Brothers and their wives or widows who had already chosen to live at one of the Homes were attracted to them because of a desire to live among others whose lives are grounded in these values. The camaraderie they share and the brotherly ties that bind them are unique to the Masonic Homes.

John Howl, executive director of the Home at Covina, says the leadership decided to look at how these values were taught to staff, children, and

volunteers. “We wanted to make sure everyone was on the same page when we talk about values,” he remembers. Howl also feels the training gives everyone common skills and values for a diverse work force.

The first initiative put in place was to update the Masonic values–based employee orientation sessions that all new staff members attend. The orientation was revised last year to further emphasize that working for the Homes embodies Masonic values.

The new staff is told how meaningful it is to the brothers and their wives or widows to live at the Home. It is the safe haven of their retirement after a lifetime of providing service to others. They learn that residents feel a bond with staff, because for staff, working at the Homes is not just a job. A resident has recently been added to the roster of orientation speakers to personally make that point.

Last November the Homes introduced special training for staff in



**Skilled nursing residents like Edna Creek receive necessary assistance during mealtime at Union City.**

customer service techniques. Howl says that many staff members shine in providing services to residents, but there was a perceived need to improve relationship skills. Called Thank You Very Much, the program reflects Masonic core values and emphasizes the importance of being responsive to residents’ individual needs.

The customer service content of the program includes procedures to resolve problems before they begin, skills to empower employees to

*continued on page 22*



**Staff serves Elmer Carey in the main dining room for independent living at Union City. Last year the dining room was renovated and a new director of dining services created meal plans that give more variety to all residents.**



**Virginia Marshall receives assistance from Union City driver Jonathan Gonzalez when she returns from her doctor's appointment.**

handle difficult situations before they escalate, and techniques to get individuals who are distressed to reveal what it is that is really bothering them. The idea that every resident is an individual with feelings and something to contribute is constantly reinforced.

The Homes' administration and staff believe it is important to personalize the staff training. With this in mind, a revised set of service standards for the Homes flows from the Masonic values. Brotherly love means treating everyone at the Homes with kindness and respect. Relief is a way to feel relaxed and taken care of in a way that relieves stress and creates ease. Truth is telling the truth about realities of service and some of its challenges.

In acknowledgement of the vital role played by the licensed nursing staff and nursing assistants, another program, called LEAP, is currently being rolled out. LEAP stands for learn, empower, achieve, and produce. It is also resident focused.

The core values of LEAP are similar to Masonic values. The thrust of the program is teaching nursing staff that care is not something to do to residents, but something to do with residents. Although the staff already displays excellence in their work, there is always room for improvement.

New dimensions of care and compassion continue to be added to the Masonic Homes of California. The board, administration, and staff of the Homes believe the current staff training will make a difference in keeping Masonic values at the forefront of staff priorities.

This year, the Homes are reaching out and asking all of the California fraternal family to consider the Masonic Homes. They are invited to think about "coming home" to the Masonic ideal of a home as a place of security, privacy, peace of mind, and fraternal affection. The welcome mat is out. 🏠

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Admission to the Homes

There are now three different payment options available to residents of the Homes: 75 percent assignment of assets and income, an entry fee combined with a monthly fee, or a monthly rental fee only. The fees vary according to apartment size and level of care. No one is ever turned away because of lack of financial resources. If you or a family member is considering applying for admission or wants to know more about the Homes, call our toll-free numbers: Union City in Northern California, **800/342-2979**, or Covina in Southern California, **866/627-6642**, or visit **[www.masonichome.org](http://www.masonichome.org)**.

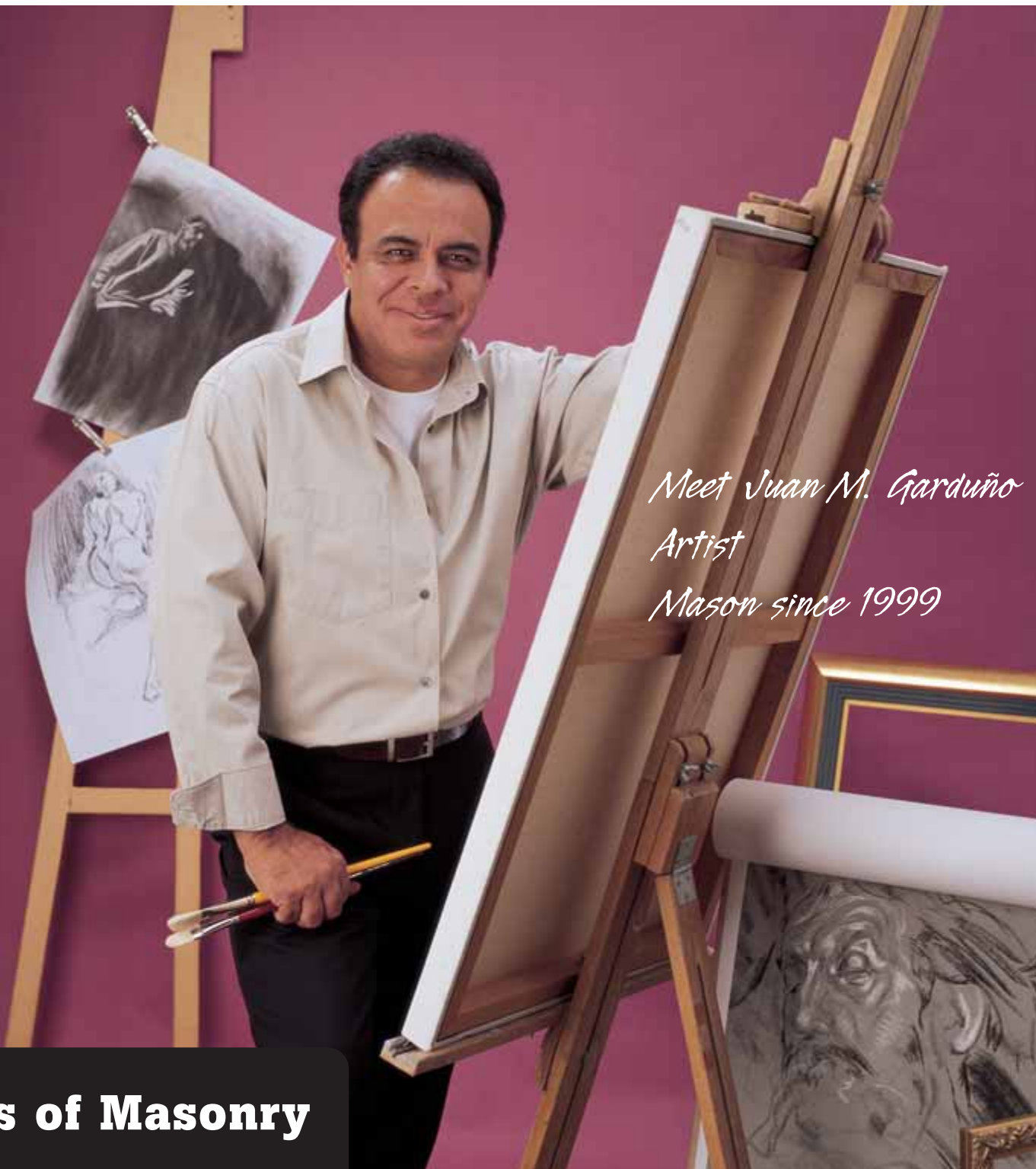
### Masonic Outreach Services

For seniors who wish to remain in their own homes or in a facility in their own community, there is another choice—Masonic Outreach Services (MOS). The MOS program helps recipients meet expenses by supplementing their monthly income. The Community Information and Referral Program can help those who need information regarding resources in their community. Trained staff can provide referral information on important topics such as housing options, insurance coverage, and much more. For more information, call **800/342-2979** ext. 1233.

### Presentations on the Homes

The Homes have speakers available to come to your lodge or function to speak about the services available through the Homes and other issues related to aging. These presentations are a wonderful opportunity for the Homes' trustees and staff to present timely and needed information, and also to hear directly from the membership about your needs and desired services. For more information, please contact the communications office at **510/675-1245** or **[communications@mhcuc.org](mailto:communications@mhcuc.org)**.





*Meet Juan M. Garduño  
Artist  
Mason since 1999*

## Faces of Masonry

**F**or Juan Garduño, Masonry is an endless source of enlightenment. "As with art," he says, "Masonry's precepts contain a structure from which one can create a productive and rewarding life. It has width and breadth. I've had the honor of meeting good men who willingly and unselfishly offer their time and talents to the benefit of all." Juan is a past master of Culver City-Foshay Lodge No. 467 in Culver City and is currently the grand pursuivant for the Grand Lodge of California.

"The most significant process of becoming a Mason is its ceremonies and rituals," says Juan. "For the candidate,

the ceremonies and ritual open unknown doors through which he can see that life is like a blank canvas and the working tools are his colors. The choices the candidate makes and how he applies those colors to the canvas of his life will determine how his masterpiece will look."

Juan, 43, lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Irma, and their three children, Bianca, Krystina, and Cristian. He works at Universal Studios in Home Video DVD Operations.



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Check out the new **members center** with valuable information about leadership development, membership development, Masonic education, fraternal support, and member resources.

The home page features **current news** items submitted by lodges throughout the state and you can submit your local news. Check back often for new stories.

The **Grand Master's itinerary** can be found under events. See if there is an event near you.

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