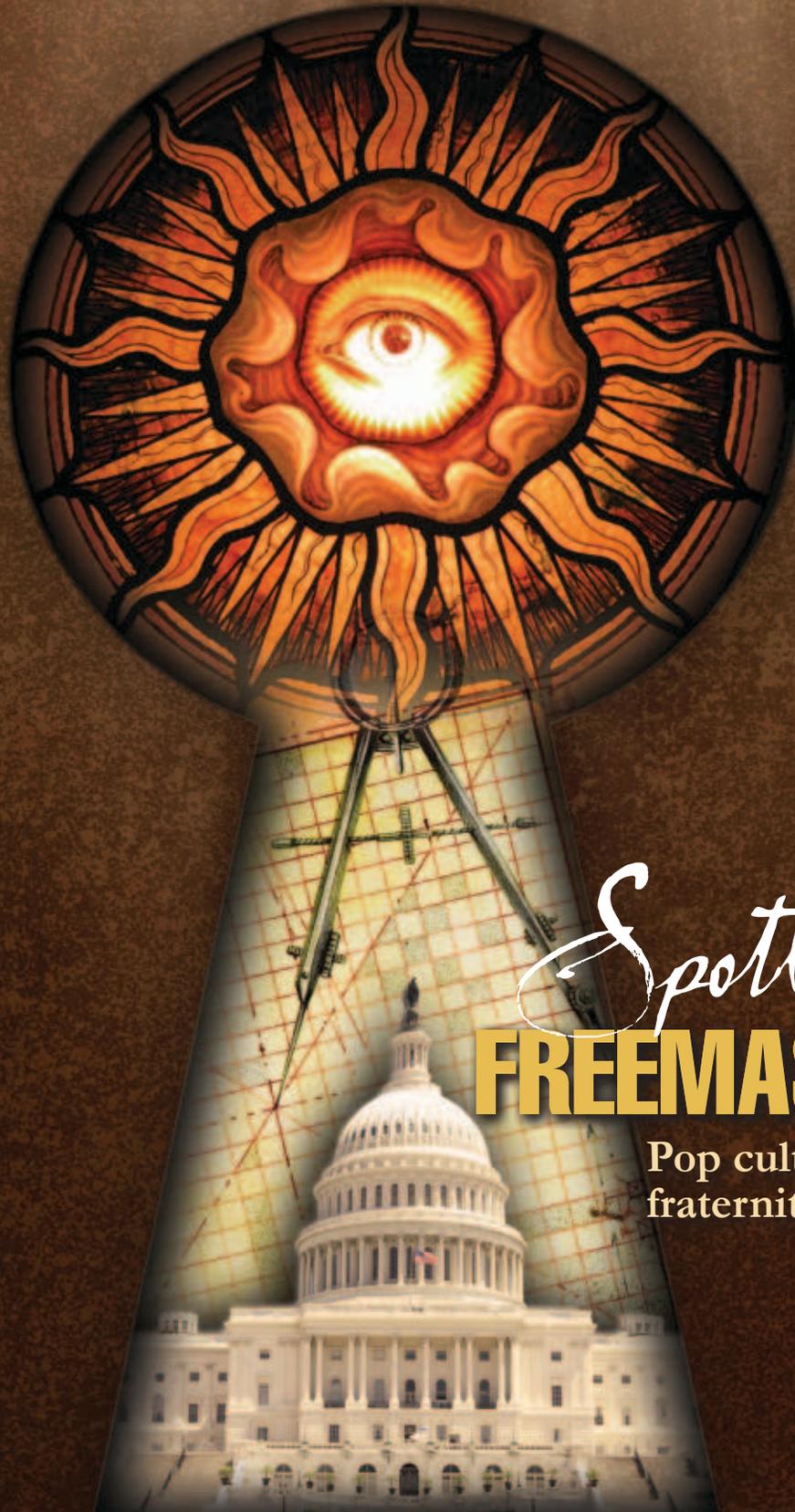


CALIFORNIA 

FREEMASON

Dec/Jan 2010



Spotlight on
FREEMASONRY

Pop culture puts first
fraternity center stage

freemason.org

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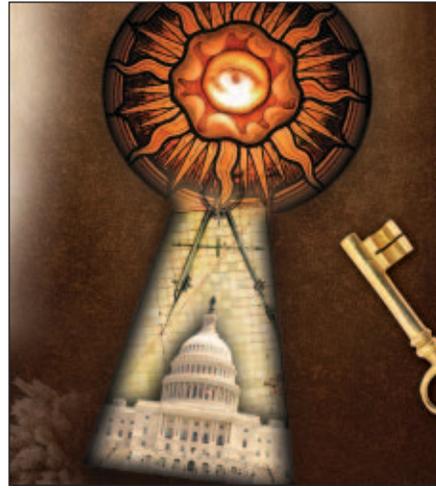
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More Than a Passing Fad

WILLIAM J. BRAY III,
Deputy Grand Master

My wife, Linda, and I have two grandchildren. It's amazing how they latch onto new fads. I remember when Game Boy came out – they immediately began pleading for one of their own.

Billy and Petey were just nine and eight years old at the time. They hadn't read about Game Boy in the newspaper. They hadn't seen it on Good Morning America. And yet, they'd caught wind that it was the toy to have.

Popular culture is certainly pervasive. And in recent times, it's hard to think of a book with more media hype behind it than "The Lost Symbol," Dan Brown's latest. Like it or not, Freemasonry was at the center of all that hype. Just like our grandkids with Game Boy, pop culture pounced on a new fad: Masonry.

As a result, our fraternity is experiencing something like 15 minutes of fame right now. Young adults are googling "Freemasons" to learn more. Baby boomers who were Jobies or Rainbow Girls or DeMolays are sharing their Masonic background for the first time in decades. As the next page illustrates, media coverage of our fraternity has skyrocketed.

If you're like me, you may be cautious about rejoicing. I've never been a believer in "any press is good press," especially when it comes to my fraternity – something that I hold so dear. But there's something really encouraging and reaffirming about the quality of recent press. Our reputation is intact.

Of course, not all the facts are straight – and this issue of California Freemason will address that – but, by and large, the message about what our fraternity believes is accurate.

In hindsight, I'm not surprised. Our reputation is built on a strong foundation: more than four centuries of pursuing truth, brotherly love, and relief. It's hard to make a case for our sinister side when we continue to live up to that reputation – by lending a hand in our communities, supporting our public schools, and donating millions of dollars and thousands of hours to charity every year.

When "The Lost Symbol" dust settles, I think we'll notice some enduring results of these 15 minutes. First, more good men will have come forward to join our fraternity. Second, the general public will be more aware of our presence in their communities. Many may still be swayed by the persistent sense of mystery and sensationalism surrounding our gentle craft. Our challenge, as always, will be to welcome opportunities to explain who we really are, what we really do, how our values drive us.

Others will see what we already know: We are more than just a passing fad, and when our 15 minutes are up, we will still be making a difference. ✧

Buzz about Freemasonry

by Cason Lane



From TV to tweets to travel, there's a new focus on the fraternity

"The Lost Symbol" – another bestseller from Dan Brown, author of *"The Da Vinci Code"* and *"Angels & Demons"* – sold more than a million copies on its first day. With Freemasonry as its dominant theme, the novel created a surge of interest in the fraternity. In fact, the term "Freemason" jumped to number six on Yahoo's Top 10 Searches overnight.

Here's the positive pop-culture impact, quantified.

Media

During a six-week period in September-October 2009, "Freemasons" was in the headline or lead paragraph of 127 major-media news stories worldwide, compared with 44 in the same period a year before. That's nearly triple the number of Freemasonry-focused news stories. Freemasonry has also been the subject of such TV broadcasts as NBC's "Today" and "Dateline," as well as a two-part special on the Discovery Channel.

Chatter

On Twitter, a Web-based service that enables people to send short messages throughout the world, subscribers in recent months sent approximately 15 messages per day about Freemasonry, and they distributed about 45 Freemasonry-related Web links per week. A sampling of Tweets:

- "How does one become a Freemason?"
- "In my next life, I want to be a guy so I can be a Freemason!"
- "Finished reading Dan Brown's book and suddenly I want to become a Freemason."
- "A friend just handed me Dan Brown's 'The Lost Symbol.' Can't wait to read this and share with my dad, a Freemason."
- "Just finished reading 'The Lost Symbol.' Made me feel glad to be a Mason!"

Washington, D.C.

Since the Sept. 15 release of "The Lost Symbol," some Masonic landmarks in Washington, D.C., have seen an uptick in interest. Brent Morris, managing editor of *The Scottish Rite Journal*, says the House of the Temple – which isn't a typical stop on the tourist circuit – is receiving four times as many visitors as usual. In addition, Morris fielded more than a dozen media inquiries in a month – from National Public Radio to Reuters UK – compared with the usual two to four per year.

At the George Washington Masonic Memorial, Director of Collections Mark Tabbert says the landmark's Web site in recent months has received about 14,000 visits per day, compared with the usual 2,000. He adds that the educational Web site freemasonlostsymbol.com – sponsored by the Memorial, the Masonic Service Association of North America, and The Masonic Society – has been incredibly popular. ✧

Turn to page 12 for an in-depth look at the portrayal of Freemasonry in "The Lost Symbol."

POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Most readers came away from "The Lost Symbol" with a favorable impression of Masonry. These quotes from the book help illustrate why.

- * "The entire Masonic philosophy is built on honesty and integrity. Masons are among the most trustworthy men you could ever hope to meet."
- * "Masonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."
- * "The difference between Masonic spirituality and organized religion is that the Masons do not impose a specific definition or name on a higher power. Rather than definitive theological identities like God, Allah, Buddha, or Jesus, the Masons use more general terms like Supreme Being or Great Architect of the Universe. This enables Masons of different faiths to gather together."
- * "The Masons fall victim to all kinds of crazy legends."

STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE:
Freemasonry

Q & A

**It's prime time for a dialogue
about Masonry**

Masonry is in the public eye – and, thanks to “The Lost Symbol,” on coffee tables worldwide – making it more common than ever for non-Masons to step forward to find out more.

Such inquiries are a chance to correct misperceptions. They’re also a rare opportunity to explain what Masonry is really about.

Here’s how your Grand Lodge responded to common questions after the release of “The Lost Symbol.”

At press time, California lodges had received more than 90 inquiries as a result of "The Lost Symbol."

Q. What do Masons believe?

A. Freemasonry is based on the belief that each man can make a difference in the world by improving himself and taking an active role in his community. It is a charitable, benevolent, educational fraternity. The only spiritual requirement is that Masons believe in a Supreme Being. The nature of that belief is entirely up to the individual.

Q. What do Masons do?

A. Charity is at the heart of most Masonic activities. Each year, California Masons donate millions of dollars and thousands of hours to both small and large philanthropic causes. Masons were instrumental in establishing the public education system in the United States and also have an ongoing commitment to public schools. The California Masonic Foundation has awarded more than \$5 million in scholarships the past four years.

Q. What happens in the degree rituals? Is there really a "death ritual"?

A. Masons promise not to discuss the specifics of contemporary Masonic ritual outside the fraternity. In general, though, the rituals described in "The Lost Symbol" are not accurate. Dan Brown appears to have drawn his content from

various anti-Masonic exposés from the 18th and 19th century, which were originally published to cast the fraternity in a negative light.

Q. Is there a worldwide governing body in charge of all Masons?

A. No. Freemasonry is a universal brotherhood in that Masons share the same ideals, but there is no universal governing body for Freemasonry. In the United States, each state has a grand lodge that oversees all the Masonic lodges in the state. There is no higher authority than the grand lodge of a state and there is no national headquarters. Outside the United States, there are one or more grand lodges in virtually every country, which operate as independent and sovereign organizations. While all lodges follow the same principles of Freemasonry, there is no international governing body.

Q. Are Masons the keepers of the "ancient mysteries" discussed in "The Lost Symbol"?

A. No. The ancient mysteries generally refer to a series of religious practices conducted by religious fraternities in the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. Although some people

theorize that Freemasonry grew out of these fraternities, there is no known historical connection.

Q. Were Freemasons involved in the formation of Washington, D.C.?

A. Yes. Individual Freemasons were involved in designing and building the new city. Pierre L'Enfant, the architect of the city, was a Mason. George Washington wore his Masonic apron while laying the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol in 1793, and local Masonic lodges laid the cornerstones at other important buildings such as the Washington Monument and the White House.

Q. What is Masonry's history in California?

A. Some of California's first Masonic lodges were established in mining towns during the Gold Rush. Over the years, the Masons have played a key role in shaping the history of California. To date, 19 California governors have been Masons, and at least four California Masons have been elected to the U.S. Senate. Today, the Grand Lodge of California has more than 62,000 members and about 340 lodges located throughout the state, making it one of the largest grand lodges in the world. 



The wealthy aristocracy of 18th-century France and Germany, eager to join Freemasonry but disenchanted with its working-class roots, embraced a legend of the fraternity's chivalric origins.



THE TEMPLAR CONNECTION

by John L. Cooper III, Past Grand Secretary

THE HOAX BEHIND ONE OF MASONRY'S MOST POPULAR MYTHS

Everyone loves a good story, and the Templar connection with Freemasonry is a good story – even if it is just that – a story, with no historical foundation.

Books such as John Robinson's "Born in Blood" suggested that Freemasonry is really the Medieval Order of Knights Templar in disguise. According to that story, the Knights Templar joined stonemasons lodges in Scotland after the order had been suppressed in 1307, and eventually took over these lodges. As the story goes, the Templars thus survived underground until they emerged into public light with the creation of the first Grand Lodge in England in 1717.

It makes an interesting tale,

but there is no real evidence to support the idea. However, the real story of how Freemasonry came to be associated with the Templars is even more interesting. And this one is true.

THE LEGEND

Whatever the origin of Freemasonry in England and Scotland (and there are many theories besides that of the fanciful Templar connection), we know that four lodges in London formed the first Grand Lodge in 1717. Over the next few years, other lodges either joined the new Grand Lodge, or received charters from it to form new lodges.

It was not long before Freemasonry spread to the continent of Europe, including France and Germany. When it spread to the continent, the simple structure of three degrees

that we know as "Ancient Craft Masonry" became embellished with many additional degrees, some of which were subsequently organized into "rites" of one type or another.

Many of these additional degrees added new stories and legends to Freemasonry, one of which was the idea that Freemasonry had originated with the Crusades when knights brought back some form of secret knowledge from the Holy Land. One of the earliest degrees to offer this explanation of Freemasonry was that of the "Scots Master" degree. According to the legend that formed the substance of the degree, knights from Scotland found a great secret buried in a vault in Jerusalem, and brought it back with them to Scotland.

Continued on next page

At this stage of development there was no suggestion that these knights were Knights Templar. That had to await a further addition to the story.

THE SETTING

The popularity of Freemasonry in France and Germany in the last half of the 18th century was

It was natural that they would prefer to belong to an organization with an aristocratic heritage rather than one that came from a working class background, and so these upper-class Masons seized upon the story of a chivalric origin for Freemasonry with great passion.

enormous. The additional rites and degrees were especially of interest to the wealthy aristocracy in those two countries, and the idea that Freemasonry had its roots in the chivalric class of noble warriors in the Middle Ages held much greater attraction for them than the idea that Freemasons grew out of guilds of stonemasons. It was natural that they would prefer to belong to an organization with an aristocratic heritage rather than one that came from a working class background, and so these upper-class Masons seized upon the story of a chivalric origin for Freemasonry with great passion.

One such Mason was Baron von Hund in Germany. Karl Gotthelf,

Baron von Hund und Alten-Grotkau, to give him his proper name, was born in 1722. In 1742 he became a Mason at Frankfurt, and the next year traveled to Paris, where he became the senior warden of a lodge at Versailles.

In order to understand what happened next, we have to go back a bit into English history. In 1685 Charles II of England died, and his younger brother, James, came to the throne. A convert to the Roman Catholic faith, he appointed Catholic friends to high positions. In short order civil war broke out over this issue, and James fled to France.

James, however, did not give up. He settled in France, and tried to regain his throne through conspiracy and intrigue. His son continued the effort, and then his grandson, Charles, who was also known as “Bonnie Prince Charlie.”

THE HOAX

While von Hund was in Paris, he was contacted by someone that he believed to be Bonnie Prince

Charlie, but who had disguised himself as the “Knight of the Red Feather.”

To this day we don't know if von Hund was actually contacted by Prince Charlie himself in order to sign him up as a supporter (along with his considerable fortune), or whether this was a hoax perpetrated by someone who had no connection to Charles. In any event, this Knight of the Red Feather told von Hund that he was the the grand master of the Order of Knights Templar, and showed von Hund a list of grand masters that supposedly had hidden themselves from the authorities for hundreds of years since the death of DeMolay in 1314. He was also told that the Knights Templar had escaped to Scotland and helped Robert the Bruce win the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, and from that date forward had remained as close allies of the kings of Scotland (and Charles maintained that he was the true king of Scotland).

Von Hund was also apparently told that the Knights Templar



The Rite of Strict Observance began with the mysterious “Knight of the Red Feather,” who duped an influential Mason into believing he was the descendant of Knights Templar.

had secretly joined lodges of stonemasons in Scotland so that they could remain in hiding for centuries, and that Freemasons were actually the surviving Knights Templar.

Von Hund gullibly swallowed this story, and returned to Germany, eager to share his new knowledge with his fellow Freemasons. All this was in 1742 – four years before the disastrous defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden Moor in 1746. If he was behind the attempt to recruit von Hund to the cause, any such efforts collapsed after the battle, for von Hund never again heard from the Knight of the Red Feather. But to his dying day, von Hund believed that the person he had met as the “Knight of the Red Feather” was Charles III of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and that the Freemasons were the descendants of the Knights Templar.

THE IMPACT

The Masonic rite that is associated with von Hund is the Rite of Strict Observance. He did not found the organization, but became its most prominent member, and it was through this rite that he propagated his “secret knowledge” that Freemasons were actually the surviving Knights Templar. The name “Strict Observance” came from the fact that Masons who belonged to this rite had to swear allegiance to “unknown superiors” – presumably the secret leaders of the Templars that had purportedly contacted von Hund in Paris.

To the basic three degrees of Masonry that we know of today, von Hund added four: Scottish Master, Novice, Templar, and Professed Knight. And the new Rite of Strict Observance took off like a rocket!

Within a few years the Rite of Strict Observance had become so popular that almost all other Masonic rites and degrees in Germany were pushed out. Gone were the simple degrees known to Freemasons the world over as “Ancient Craft Masonry.” The Rite of Strict Observance replaced these simple degrees with high-sounding titles and pageantry to which Masons flocked. There is no doubt, also, that they were intrigued with the idea that they were the descendants of the Knight Templar of old. After all, these knights were the cream of the aristocracy in their day, enormously wealthy, and very powerful. How nice to belong to an organization which shared that heritage!

But just as the Rite of Strict Observance quickly rose to prominence, it quickly subsided into obscurity. Torn apart by quarrels amongst its leaders, it did not survive the death of von Hund in 1776 – at least, it did not survive as the large and popular Masonic rite it had been.

That same year, the “Young Pretender,” Bonnie Prince Charlie, was finally asked if he was the founder of the rite, and he denied any knowledge of it. By this time it was evident that von Hund had been taken in by charlatans, and



Jacques DeMolay was the last official grand master of the Knights Templar, the most famous of the Western Christian military orders during the Crusades. In Freemasonry, various Templar degrees celebrate his life.

that all the claims of his rite were bogus. Only his death in 1776 saved him from disgrace.

THE PRESENT

And that’s how the “Templar Legend” entered Freemasonry. We still have Templar degrees in Freemasonry – the 30th degree of the Scottish Rite is one such degree, and the Order of the Temple is another, as well as the Order of DeMolay. However, none of these degrees and orders make the outlandish claim that Baron von Hund made about the secret survival of the Templars and their association with Freemasonry. They celebrate one aspect or another of the chivalry of the Middle Ages, or tell the story of Jacques DeMolay.

So if someone today tells you that Freemasonry is descended from the Knight Templar of old, you now know the real story. The real story is also an interesting tale! ✨

by Cason Lane



Spotlight on FREEMASONS

Today's pop-culture conversation is full of the familiar gab on sports, movies, and politics. But there's another topic that's gaining ground – and in a positive way. That topic is Freemasonry.

One reason is because novelist Dan Brown is at it again with another bestseller released in September, “The Lost Symbol.” And this time, the dominant theme is Freemasonry – which Brown portrays as important, benevolent, historically significant, and, of course, a little mysterious.

Whereas Brown's previous books have mentioned Freemasonry only in passing, “The Lost Symbol” uses the mystique of Freemasonry as the backdrop for the entire plot. In this fictional story, set in Washington, D.C., Harvard symbology professor Robert Langdon races against the clock to crack codes, uncover ancient mysteries, investigate the symbols and tenets of Freemasonry, and locate a legendary “Masonic pyramid” with the secrets to human potential.

While Brown certainly takes some dramatic license for his story, overall he is very respectful of Freemasonry, calling it “one of the most unfairly maligned and misunderstood organizations in the world.” The book goes on to make many other positive references to Masonry, such as this one:

“In this age when different cultures are killing each other over whose definition of God is better, one could say the Masonic tradition of tolerance and open-mindedness is commendable. Moreover, Masonry is open to men of all races, colors, and creeds, and provides a spiritual fraternity that does not discriminate in any way.”

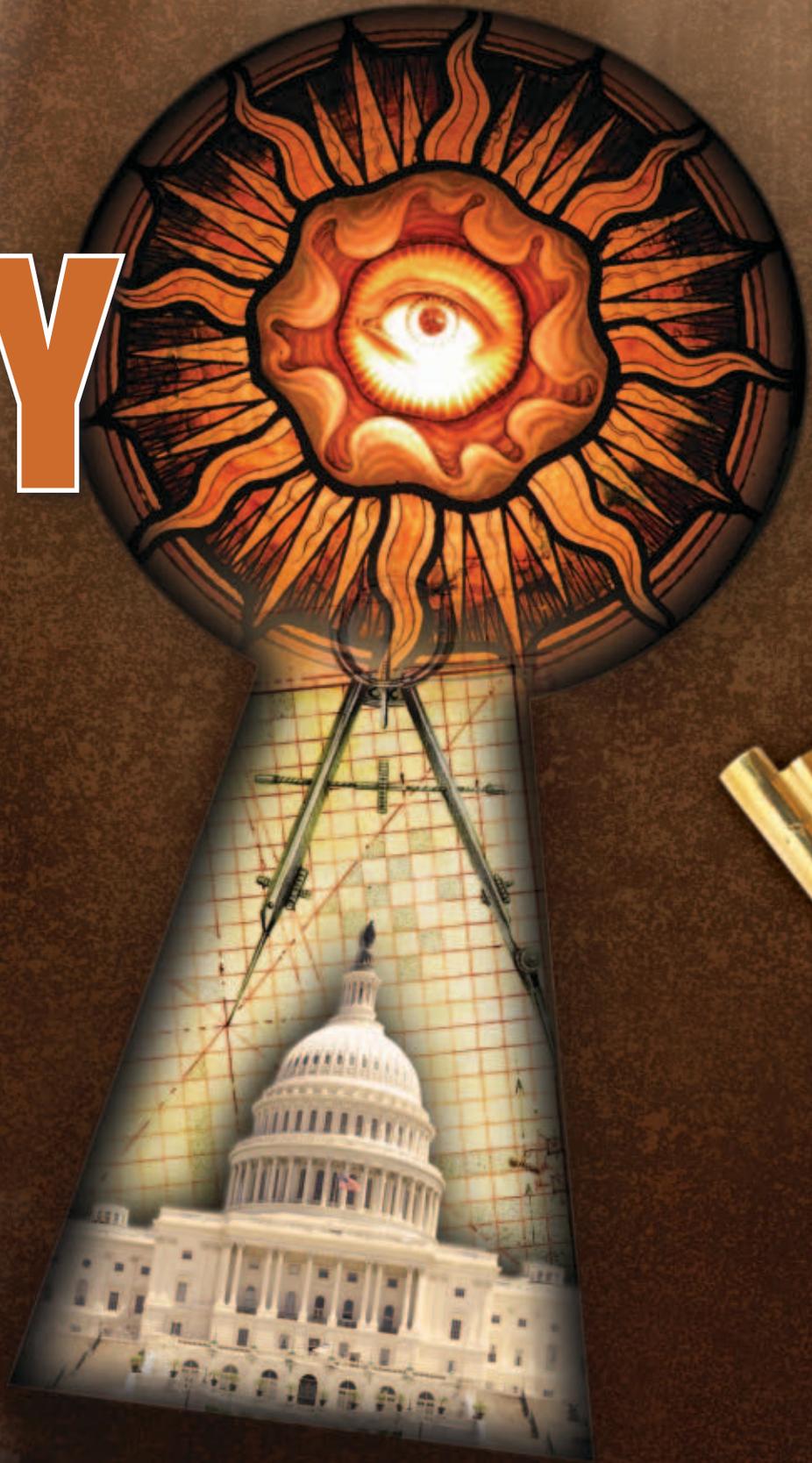
At the end of the day, “The Lost Symbol” may well do for Masonry what “Top Gun” did for the Navy – send droves of men to inquire about membership.

Sorting fact from fiction

While “The Lost Symbol” casts Freemasonry in an overall positive light, the book does include a few inaccuracies – and not surprisingly, many hail back to popular Masonic myths. Brother Brent Morris, managing editor of the Scottish Rite Journal, was asked to dispel four Masonic myths perpetuated by Brown.

Continued on page 14

ONRY





False: Masons drink wine from human skulls and do other evil things as part of their degree rituals.

The first scene in “The Lost Symbol” features a Masonic initiate drinking wine from a human skull in the Scottish Rite House of the Temple. Morris says this ritual description can be traced back to an 1887 book called “Scotch Rite Masonry Illustrated” by Jonathan Blanchard, who believed that Masonry was evil and should be destroyed.

“He started a group called the National Christian Association dedicated to the destruction of fraternal organizations and secret societies, and he published all the rituals he could get a hold of,” Morris says.

He adds that many of the rituals that Blanchard exposed, including the drinking from a human skull, came from the Cerneau Scottish Rite, a rogue branch of Scottish Rite that was established by Frenchman Joseph Cerneau. Morris says the Cerneau Scottish Rite operated in direct competition with the Scottish Rite’s Southern and Northern Masonic jurisdictions until about 1890 when it finally died out.

False: The 33rd degree is the pinnacle of Freemasonry.

“The Lost Symbol” makes a common mistake by confusing the degrees of Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite. For example, Brown portrays one of his central characters as a 33rd degree Mason, part of the “highest echelon of the world’s oldest surviving brotherhood,” where only an elite few members know the secrets of mankind.

The truth, of course, is that there’s no Masonic degree of higher rank or importance than the third degree, that of the Master Mason. Contrary to “The Lost Symbol,” a Mason with the 33rd degree is not at the zenith of all

Freemasonry but instead has gained an honorary title within the Scottish Rite, recognizing his significant contribution to society or Masonry in general.

Brown has fun with the origin of the 33rd degree, suggesting that the number was chosen because Jesus was 33 years old when he was crucified, God is mentioned 33 times in the book of Genesis, there are 33 vertebrae in the spine, and so on. True? Morris says the reason for the number 33 is a mystery.

False: There is a Masonic pyramid in Washington, D.C., that leads to “ancient mysteries” buried long ago.

Morris says that despite age-old beliefs to the contrary, the pyramid is not a fundamental part of Masonic symbolism, and there is no Masonic pyramid – be it a building, a map, or a handheld object – that leads to lost wisdom as described in “The Lost Symbol.”

“The Lost Symbol” suggests that Masons are the last remaining of secret fraternities that were developed to protect mystical wisdom.

“Part of this goes back to the long-held belief that the Great Seal of the United States secretly contains Masonic emblems and that the uncompleted pyramid with the all-seeing eye is a Masonic emblem,” Morris says.

He adds that the Great Seal myth is promoted not only by naive non-Masons, but also by mistaken Masons who think it’s a cool story. The truth, Morris explains, is that three committees designed the Great Seal, and the only Masonic committee member – Benjamin Franklin – contributed no Masonic emblems to the design process. Furthermore, both the uncompleted pyramid and the all-seeing eye were added by non-Masons.

As for the ancient mysteries, “The Lost Symbol” suggests that Masons are the last remaining of secret



fraternities that were developed to protect this mystical wisdom, said to contain power for elevating man to the realm of the gods.

“The ancient mysteries generally refer to a series of religious practices in the Mediterranean Basin,” Morris says. “These were basically religious fraternities where you would go through an initiation process. At one time there was a theory that Freemasonry was a descendant of the ancient mysteries, because here you have a fraternity... and they’re teaching their members to know more about god and the world and themselves. But it turns out that while that’s a nice theory, there is no historical connection.”

False: To hide the ancient mysteries, early Freemasons used an encoded language called the “Masonic Cipher” that was legible only to the worthy.

Morris says that by 1745, Freemasons had started using a cipher, which he describes as essentially a tic-tac-toe grid with the letters of old-world alphabets. But that cipher was used merely as a symbolic gesture, not as a secret language. Today, he adds, a Mason might be shown how to use the cipher as part of receiving, say, a Royal Arch degree.

“It’s very much like giving you a key to the city,” Morris says. “The key to the city doesn’t really unlock anything. It’s a symbolic presentation.” ❖

Past Grand Secretary John Cooper sets the record straight on four more myths perpetuated by Dan Brown novels “The Da Vinci Code” and “Angels & Demons.”

1. MASONIC KEYSTONES CONTAIN SECRET INFORMATION ABOUT THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL.

A keystone, as the link between two points in an arch, plays a critical role in architecture, and that’s why the early Freemasons adopted it as a symbol.

“We took the concept of the keystone and expanded it to understanding the importance of a key person or a key act in time,” Cooper says.

However, in Freemasonry, the keystone has never been based in secrecy, and there is no Masonic correlation between a keystone and the search for the alleged Holy Grail. Cooper says the idea may have come from the degree ritual for Royal Arch Masonry, which features a white keystone that can symbolize personal responsibility and spiritual development.

2. MASONS UNKNOWINGLY HARBORED A SECRET SOCIETY CALLED THE ILLUMINATI.

Cooper explains that in 1776, Adam Weishaupt, a professor at Ingolstadt University in Bavaria and a student of the Enlightenment, created the Illuminati, a secret

society that would work behind the scenes to drive change through scientific thinking. To build membership in his organization, Weishaupt became a Mason, and he used Masonic lodges in Paris as a recruiting ground. In fact, Cooper says, Illuminati historian and author Terry Melanson identified about 1,200 Masonic lodge members in Paris who joined the Illuminati.

Cooper clarifies, however, that while the Illuminati did use Masonry to advance its ideas, the organization did not infiltrate the lodges and take over positions of power, as reported in “Angels & Demons.” Rather, the Illuminati simply sought members within Masonry, because, at the time, both groups were interested in ideas of the Enlightenment – ideas like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and education that’s separate from the church.

3. MASONS HAVE BEEN IMPLICATED IN SHADY FINANCIAL DEALS WITH THE VATICAN BANK.

Cooper says this claim is partly true. In the 1960s, he explains, a Masonic lodge in Italy – called the Propaganda Due (P2) Masonic Lodge – was taken over by the Italian Mafia, and the lodge became involved in financial

dealings with the Vatican and the Italian government. In 1976, the Grand Lodge of Italy suspended the charter of the P2 lodge, but the lodge continued operating underground until it was exposed in the 1980s.

Ultimately, while the P2 lodge indeed was tied to clandestine activities in Italy, those activities were the actions of one illegal lodge and not all of Freemasonry.

4. MASONS CONTROL POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS.

As for this longstanding myth, Cooper dispels it with this analogy: Many U.S. leaders have been Episcopal, but that doesn’t mean they’re secretly running the Episcopal church. Likewise, many Masons have been involved in political and financial organizations, but that involvement doesn’t mean Masons are controlling them.

Instead, the truth is that Masonry is not about power; it’s about the belief that each man can make a difference in the world. Throughout history, Freemasons have upheld the tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth to make important contributions to society – whether in government, business, education, philanthropy, or simple goodwill. And the tradition continues.

Masonry on the Map

The truth about four D.C. landmarks featured in “The Lost Symbol”

I. Washington Monument

The plot of “The Lost Symbol” culminates at the Washington Monument, but the building actually has little Masonic significance beyond Masons’ laying of the cornerstone in the 1840s. Notably, explains Brent Morris of *The Scottish Rite Journal*, George Washington’s stepson took a Masonic apron to the cornerstone ceremony, identifying it as the apron that Washington wore while laying the cornerstone at the U.S. Capitol about 50 years prior. That apron is now in the possession of Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22.

2. The House of the Temple

The mystique of this 16th Street landmark, featuring grand columns and two 17-ton sphinxes, may lend itself well to shadowy scenes in “The Lost Symbol,” but it serves mainly as the headquarters building for the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. Completed in 1915 and located about six blocks from Dupont Circle, the House of the Temple was inspired by the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The House of the Temple includes a museum and Masonic library.

3. George Washington Masonic Memorial

This landmark in the suburb of Alexandria, Va., features several Masonic exhibits and a bronze statue of George Washington wearing his Masonic apron. Memorial officials report that in 1909, Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22, of which Washington was a member, organized an association to build the memorial and raise the funding, which came entirely from the donations of Freemasons around the country. At the cornerstone ceremony in 1923, more than 40,000 Freemasons reportedly were in attendance. Alexandria-Washington Lodge continues to hold its lodge meetings in the memorial building.

Symbols in the Streets

When it comes to Masons and Washington, D.C., one of the greatest myths of all is that city designer Pierre L'Enfant, a Freemason, embedded Masonic and occultist symbols into the street plan.

Some say there's a five-pointed star that connects Dupont Circle, Logan Circle, Scott Circle, Mount Vernon Square, and the White House. Others point to a Masonic compass formed by the Capitol (the top) and Pennsylvania and Maryland avenues (the legs).

But the thing to consider, says Past Grand Secretary John Cooper, is that anytime you have a number of lines emanating from a hub and a network of circles – as with D.C.'s hub-and-spoke street grid – you can find designs in the map.

“If you use your imagination, you can spot triangles, squares, a compass,” Cooper says. “Anytime you take a ruler and draw some lines that cross one another, you run the risk of creating a Masonic emblem.”

The hub-and-spoke model, Cooper explains, was L'Enfant's response to several geographical challenges at the time, namely the Potomac River running smack dab through the middle of the city, along with a swamp that covered much of the area. So, when L'Enfant designed the city in 1791, he chose the highest point of the land for the Capitol Building, as the hub, with the streets, or spokes, running away from it.

This hub-and-spoke approach was used to design many cities in the 18th century, including Paris, Rome, and Edinburgh. And Washington, D.C., borrowed another concept typical of the time – a system of traffic circles, each with a statue in the center. Cooper explains that such circles in Europe had a military purpose: Since streets at the time were vulnerable to cannonades, the statues in the circles blocked enemies' line of sight, preventing them from blowing up entire streets.

While there may not be a Masonic message in the street plan for Washington, D.C., Masons were, of course, involved in the city's beginnings in other ways. In addition to laying the cornerstones at important buildings, local lodges dedicated some of the boundary stones for Washington, D.C., in the early 1790s.

4.

United States Capitol

In 1793, George Washington donned his Masonic apron to lay this building's cornerstone, which was later called the cornerstone of democracy for the world. The U.S. Capitol building features numerous statues of Masons, and the ceiling in the rotunda features The Apotheosis of Washington, a fresco depicting George Washington ascending into the heavens. Despite claims in “The Lost Symbol,” the Capitol does not have a Masonic “chamber of reflection,” which is a room – common in some European lodges – where Masons can contemplate the shortness of life.



Coming HOME

February 2010

Coming Home is a fraternity-wide effort to bring all members, new and senior, active and inactive, back to their blue lodge, beginning with the February stated meeting.

THE NEED

We took a vow to care for our brothers – and that includes helping each other stay connected to the fellowship and shared values at blue lodge. Active, participating members are critical for a viable lodge. To achieve a high level of engagement, we must plan programs that bring men back to the lodge.

THE GOALS

If you haven't been to blue lodge in awhile, consider attending the Coming Home event. When a brother contacts you about the event, share your reasons for not attending lodge in the past. Think about why you first joined Masonry, and how you might rekindle that sense of excitement and devotion to your craft lodge. Suggest programs that would engage you again.

If you are active in your blue lodge, take time to reflect on how the fellowship, community, and shared values there have shaped you. Make a personal commitment to live your fraternal vows every day. Reach out to your inactive brothers and remind them that they are valued members of the fraternal family. Support lodge programs that bring them back to the lodge.

THE REWARD

When we Come Home in February, we will prove our enduring commitment to each other and to our craft lodges. It's an event that will reaffirm our fraternal vows, celebrate our shared Masonic experiences, and reach out to inactive brothers.

Let's make this the largest California blue lodge gathering in decades!

the Road Home

by Laura Normand

An MOS client shares her transition into the Masonic Homes

Mildred Oberg remembers her first glimpse of the Masonic Home at Union City. She and her husband, Harold, moved to San Jose in 1944. As a young couple, they drove past the Home on a trip to Oakland.

“Harold pointed out the Masonic Home to me, and told me that if I ever needed to, I could go there,” Mildred recalls.

Harold, a member of Golden Rule Lodge No. 479, passed away in 1964. Their one child, Steven, was just 12 years old. Over time, as Mildred’s vision deteriorated from macular degeneration, Steven stepped in to help. When he passed away in January 2008, Mildred, then 90, felt truly alone. She turned to her fraternal family.

On September 23, some 60 years after Harold first showed her the Home on the hill, Mildred moved in.

As fate would have it, it was the day of Harold’s birthday.

Thanks to Trestleboard articles and a personal letter from her husband’s lodge, Mildred Oberg knew she could turn to the Masonic Homes when she needed support.

Continued on next page

PICKING UP THE PHONE

Born and raised on a Nebraska farm, Mildred, now 92, exudes Midwestern toughness. But when she needed help, a few things made it easier to ask: a holiday letter to widows from the master of Golden Rule Lodge, and a Trestleboard article about fraternal outreach services.

“I didn’t know where else to turn,” she says. She called friends from Golden Rule Lodge, James and Sharyl Leggate, now residents at the Union City Home. Hearing their experience convinced her to call the Home.

As a first step in the Homes admission process, applicants meet and discuss their needs with Homes staff. For Union City, Mildred visited with Admissions Coordinator Soledad Martinez. At the Covina Home, applicants stay in a guest room on campus for a three-day visit.

While applicants are on the wait list, a Homes representative calls monthly to check on their well-being and, if needed, refer them to Masonic Outreach Services (MOS).

Mildred was connected with MOS Care Manager Laura Strom, who would become a dear friend and a source of strength in the months ahead, helping Mildred deal with her grief and move into an assisted living facility until a room became available, about a year and a half after her first phone call to the Masonic Homes.

PREPARING FOR THE MOVE

In August, Mildred received the call announcing the Home had a

room for her. The wait was over, but another transition lay ahead.

“When Soledad called, I dragged my feet,” Mildred says. “I’d had so many changes in such a short time.”

But she decided that it was the right thing to do. “I felt that once I got to the Home, I could finally be safe and secure,” Mildred says.

Applicants can elect to wait for a different room if the one that’s available doesn’t meet their preferences, but Mildred’s suited her perfectly: it’s a short walk down the hall to a medical area and satellite dining hall, giving her everyday ease and peace of mind.

MOVING IN

The night before moving day, resident volunteers Irwin and Jeannie Fershleiser welcomed Mildred to the Home and showed her to a guest room. The next morning, Laura Strom and Homes staff moved her in with the help of an outside moving company, set up by the Home. After a few tries, her furniture fit. All in all, reports Mildred, it was easier than she’d expected.

One of her concerns was changing doctors, but this, too, proved easier than expected. She’s been assigned area doctors on a trial basis and if she decides to return to her doctors in San Jose, the Home will provide transportation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WIDOW OUTREACH

Mildred knew about the Homes and Masonic Outreach Services because her husband and his lodge did a few important things:

- ❖ Reminded her about support available from the Homes
- ❖ Included outreach information in the lodge Trestleboard
- ❖ Maintained updated contact information
- ❖ Continued sending lodge Trestleboards and correspondence
- ❖ Sent a yearly holiday letter

Like all new Union City residents, Mildred’s first two weeks were loosely scheduled for orientation, including introductions to the director of resident services, pharmacy, dining services, accounts, and other departments. At Covina, these introductions happen during the initial three-day visit.

The Homes also assign resident buddies, or “special friends,” to provide answers, advice, and a friendly face.

“I left San Jose, where I’ve lived since 1944. I came into a strange place. I had to leave all my friends,” Mildred says. “But I’ve made new ones.”

MEETING THE FAMILY

Mildred looks forward to exploring the library for historical nonfiction, taking a balance class, and joining a Bible study group. She’s also excited about taking art

and music appreciation classes.

As a farm girl, she has high standards for farm-fresh food – and she's impressed by the produce grown on campus and served by dining services.

Perhaps most importantly, she's impressed by how friendly and welcoming everyone is.

As is often the case, Mildred moved to the Home knowing a few fellow residents; Besides the Leggates, cousin Margaret Lewis lives at the Home. But new neighbors and staff have made a special effort to welcome her, too.

"They say it's like a family here." Mildred says. "It truly is. And I think that's what I need."

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Today Mildred is settled in a sunny, cozily furnished room in the Adams building. In one corner is a cabinet built by her great grandfather. Pictures of Steven and Harold decorate the window sills and shelves. A low-vision reading machine is set up on a desk.

Taped to the phone is Laura Strom's phone number. As a Homes resident, Mildred is no longer Laura's client, but they remain close. Laura describes Mildred as a personal inspiration.

Two weeks after Mildred moved in, a storm buffeted the area with downpours and heavy winds.

"I thought about the last facility I lived in, how worried I would've been about power outages, how I would've needed a flashlight in case the generator didn't work," Mildred says. "But here, I felt so safe."

After two years of turmoil and difficult changes, she says, "I feel more at home." ✨

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This is just one story about the life-changing support of the Masons. Share yours: e-mail editor@freemason.org.

Mildred describes her MOS care manager, Laura Strom, as an angel. Laura describes Mildred as an inspiration. During the wait for a room at the Home, their relationship was a source of strength and joy for Mildred.



Connecting With the Homes

MASONIC OUTREACH SERVICES (MOS)

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

These services include:

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

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

ACACIA CREEK

To learn more about Acacia Creek, visit acaciacreek.org or contact **888/553-7555** or **dwiley@acaciacreek.org**.

MASONIC FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

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

MASONIC HOMES

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

To learn more about residential services on our two campuses, arrange a private or group tour of the Home nearest you.

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

Masonic Assistance *Fraternal care based on Masonic values*

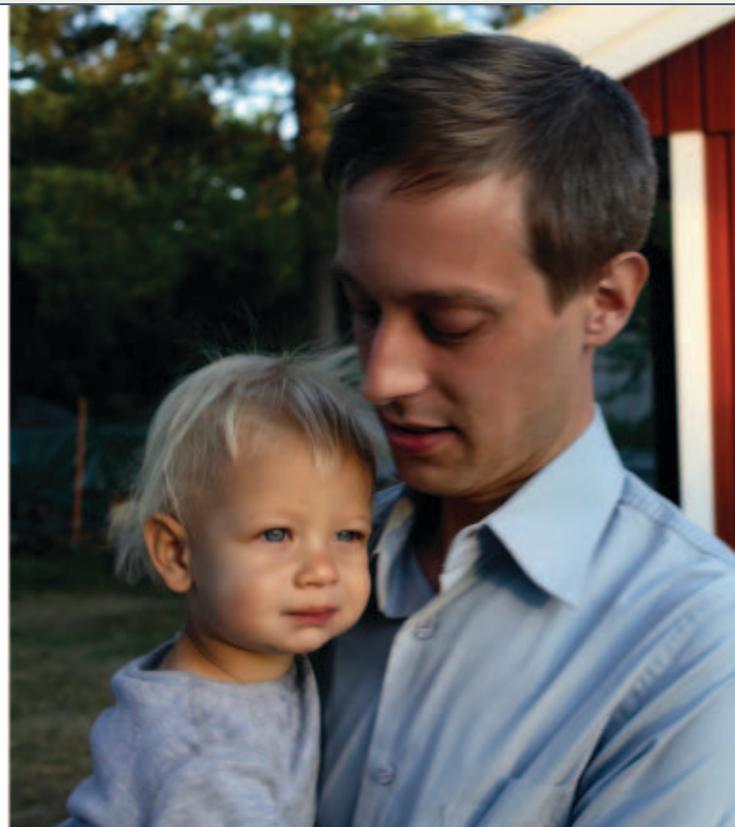
We support and serve the whole family

- ▶ **Masonic Homes of California**
- ▶ **Masonic Outreach Services**
- ▶ **Masonic Family Resource Center**

CALL

888/466-3642

for information and support



BOARD AND COMMITTEE PROFILES



GET INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

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

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

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

Membership Development Committee, 7 members

The committee's purpose is to assist lodges with membership development programs and provide resources to generate membership interest and to engage and retain members, including *On The Level, Pass It On*, and Engage and Retain: Guide to Member Retention.

Jurisprudence Committee, 7 members

The committee advises the grand master and Grand Lodge on matters of Masonic law, and reviews all Grand Master Decisions, Grand Master Recommendations, proposed amendments to the California Masonic Code, and other proposed legislation.



Masons of California

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE
PAID
AT SAN FRANCISCO CA
AND AT ADDITIONAL
MAILING OFFICES



2009-2010 Grand Lodge Officers

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