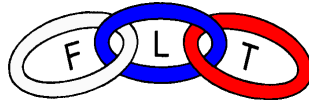


Established 1987



15 Members Receive Degree of Love at Saratoga

The Second Degree was conferred at Saratoga Lodge #428 on September 12. 14 people assisted in conferring the degree, including **Paul Milleson** as Noble Grand, **Mason Wolf** as Conductor, and **Jane Beckman** as Warden.

In addition to the degree team, 11 candidates received the degree live, as well as 4 who participated over zoom, for a total of 15 new members of our district who have now joined the degree of love, and are entitled to wear the blue collar at meetings.

In total, 9 members of True Fellowship (San Jose), 4 members of Cupertino, and 1 each from Mountain View and Bay View (Redwood City) received the degree. And but for a last minute emergency, 1 member of Saratoga had also planned to receive the degree. We very nearly had candidates from all 5 lodges in our district. But counting both the degree team and the candidates, every lodge in the district had at least 1 person represented, which is an exciting example of sister lodges pulling together for a common purpose.

As for the degree itself, the candidates were deeply affected. During Good of the Order following the conferral, **Paul Klunder** of True Fellowship described the experience as powerful and moving. **Randee Chin** of Cupertino later described having tears during it. **Honor Wolf** of True Fellowship was shaken. She said the degree was well done and she was glad to have received it, but wouldn't want to experience it again. And that's as it should be.

The lesson of the second degree is probably the most difficult to truly learn and put into practice. It is a lesson about having compassion for people you would normally never want anything to do with, in their greatest time of need. If you haven't received it, or have only received it as a lecture, my advice to you is to get it (or observe it) the next time it's being performed.

As for the newly-minted members of the second degree, the next conferral of the third degree will be at True Fellowship #52 in San Jose, on Wednesday, November 29th, at 7pm.

By *Mason Wolf*



Life Line Screening

4 Preventive Health Screenings for these Diseases

Carotid Artery Disease:

an ultrasound is performed to screen the carotid arteries (a pair of blood vessels in the neck that deliver blood to your brain) for buildup of fatty plaque. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of stroke.

Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD):

an Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test is performed using blood pressure cuffs on the arms and legs. It is important to screen for PAD because it increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke.²

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA):

an ultrasound is performed to screen the abdominal aorta for the presence of an enlargement or aneurysm. AAA can lead to a ruptured aortic artery, which is a serious medical emergency.

Atrial Fibrillation (AFib):

an electrocardiogram (ECG) is performed by placing sensors on the arms and legs to screen for irregular heartbeat. AFib can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure, and other heart-related complications.³

These 4 vital screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. They will take place at the Cupertino Lodge 70, at 20589 Homestead Rd, Cupertino on Wednesday, October 18, 2023. Register by calling toll free 1-888-653-6441, text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607 or online at <https://lisa.social/Hc>

By *Don Lang, editor*

Notice

Due to lack of partition, the Odd Fellow Fall School of Instructions, "A meeting of the Minds", held at the Basque Cultural Center in South San Francisco, had to be cancelled.

By *Don Lang, editor*

Silicon Valley Odd Fellowship

Live Degrees, for a Living Order

Think back to your first experience receiving the initiatory degree. Was it mysterious? A little frightening? Did you get the sense that something dreadful, but somehow important, was about to be imparted to you? Did it feel like you were entering an ancient order with hidden knowledge and wisdom that you were about to learn?

Or did you watch an hour long video of men in robes recite a lot of monologues at you?

For me, I had the first experience, and I will never forget it. But my wife joined during COVID, and we had no way to give her that experience, so she got the DVD. It was boring, but she wanted to do Odd Fellows with me, and that was the only way she could join at the time. It was adequate, but it wasn't special.

I'm a huge believer in the value of conferring our degrees live, with full props and costumes. And I know how hard it can be, especially for lodges without enough members to put together a degree team, or when they don't have access to the props already. If the only way to confer a degree is with a video, or by giving the lecture form (for those that have one), some degree is better than none. But not by much.

The Time and Effort IS the Value

Putting time and effort into something makes it valuable, because it proves that we value it so much that we're willing to spend our precious time and effort. It's circular, but it's true. And candidates get that. They know the difference between a pre-packaged experience and one that is lovingly tailored just for them. Doing the degrees, in full, is how we tell candidates how much we value them, and how much we value the lessons we have to teach.

The DVD's are actually very well done, but the experience is not special. The lesson isn't imparted as a conversation. The Vice Grand in a recording doesn't wait to hear whether the candidate has actually taken the obligation before the degree proceeds.

If we won't demonstrate that we think the lesson is valuable enough to give it properly, we can't be surprised when the member doesn't find the lesson valuable either (or even remember it).

It Doesn't Have to be Perfect

The occasional thespian may join a lodge, but most of the time, everyone's an amateur. But so were most of the Odd Fellows who went before us, and that's okay. If you practice your part enough that the candidate can hear you clearly, and you know when to speak and when to stop, then trust that the words themselves are capable of doing the work.

I started thinking about this topic last weekend when I was one of the candidates taking the Encampment degrees live at Hahn Farm in Oregon. The people putting on the degrees weren't all perfectly polished, and there was the occasional stumble over a line. They were reading from scripts most of the time.

Continued on Page 5, by *Mason Wolf*

Initiatory Degree Monday Oct 30

The District degree team will be conferring the Initiatory degree at the Cupertino Lodge 70 on Monday evening, October 30, at 7:00 PM: Degree team, Candidates and possible helpers should be there at 6:30 PM. By reading the adjacent article by **Mason Wolf** on the importance of seeing the Initiatory degree as a live degree, this will give you a chance to see what Mason is talking about.

I hope to see you there.

By *Don Lang, Editor*

Octoberfest Social 9/21

The Cupertino Odd Fellows are pleased to present this year's Oktoberfest dinner along with a screening of the new film *Join or Die*. This will be our first Octoberfest after the pandemic.

Date: Saturday, October 21st

Time: Doors open at 5:30, with food served at 6.

The film screening will begin at 7:30, followed by a live Q&A with the filmmakers over zoom.

Dinner Menu for Octoberfest :

Cheese & Meat Platter

Assorted Sausages with Sauerkraut, Mustard and other toppings

Potato Salad

Green Salad

German Apple Cake

Chocolate Cake

(Vegetarian Options Available)

About the film*:

In this feature documentary, follow the half-century story of America's civic unraveling through the journey of legendary social scientist **Robert Putnam**, whose groundbreaking "Bowling Alone" research into America's decades-long decline in community connections could hold the answers to our democracy's present crisis. ... Join Bob as he explores three urgent civic questions: What makes democracy work? Why is American democracy in crisis? And, most importantly... What can we do about it?



20589 Homestead Rd.
Cupertino

FREE ADMISSION

To learn more, visit us at
cupertinooddfellows.org.

See the trailer at joinordie.film.

*description taken from Rotten Tomatoes, where the film enjoys a 100% fresh rating

RSVP online:

<https://www.cupertinooddfellows.org/oktoberfest>

By *Simona Benjamin, Noble Grand of Cupertino 70*

Live Hawaiian Music by Ben Kaili from Hilo

Guest stars:
Dwight Tokumoto on steel
Special Guest on bass
Hula Guest: Kumu Meleana Manuel
Friday Oct 20, 2023
Cupertino Odd Fellows Lodge #70
20589 Homestead Road
Cupertino, CA 95014



Doors open at 6pm
Show 6:30 to 8:30pm

\$20 paid in advance
\$25 at door

Seating is limited so Please RSVP # of seats to:
les.maverick@gmail.com

Please also indicate payment method:
Please also indicate payment method:
PayPal, Venmo, check or cash.

I will reply with payment instructions

CDs will be on sale \$20 each

By *Les Wong, VG*



Spooky Pirates during Halloween at Mountain View Lodge (#244)

This Halloween, Mountain View Lodge plans to dress up its lodge to host a crew of pirates and miscellaneous strays who wander in to gape in awe at our spooky establishment. If you'd like to dress up and come, please mark October 31st in your calendars.

We're looking for actors for our scary set piece upstairs, for tour guides to lead groups of visitors, we're looking for game hosts downstairs and help setting up and breaking up the haunted house the weekends before and after Halloween.

This Haunted House is a fundraiser for the Community Service Agency, who serve the most vulnerable in our community. If you're interested in helping, please shoot a message to the Outreach Committee at the Mountain View Lodge (#244)
(jessica.dickinson.goodman@gmail.com).

By *Aer van de Water*

50-Year Jewel Presented

Congratulations to Jackie Brown, member of Hermania Rebekah Lodge #49 in Mountain View who received her 50-year member jewel on Monday, September 18, 2023 at the Official District Meeting of District #24 held in Fremont, CA.

In our world where it is easy to be served, the call of Jesus and the mission of the Rebekah degree, tells us to be the servant, to develop a spirit of helpfulness to do good and kind deeds. In the ceremony of the Rebekah Degree, we learn about practical instructions of Odd Fellowship which shape who we become and how we care for our community and our neighbors.

On September 11, 1973, Hermania Rebekah Lodge #49 received sister **Jackie Brown** into their membership and since then she has been a very active member in the lodge and doing whatever it takes to help keep it going. Over the last 50 years, sister Jackie has accomplished many things and has traveled many miles and through it all continues to honor the watchwords of our order. Her resume includes various offices in the lodge including PNG, and secretary for who knows how long, PDDP, Theta Rho Advisor, appointed Chaplain of RA, Director for the RA, and of course numerous committee appointments.

I believe she has been able to do this because of her strong faith in our Lord, Who has called her to be a blessing to others.

On behalf of Hermania Lodge, it gives me great joy to present sister Jackie Brown, my mom, with her 50-year jewel.

By *Jodie Signes, Jackie's Daughter*

Grand Warden Rita Cooper's Visit

On September 21st Mountain View Lodge 244 welcomed **Grand Warden Rita Cooper** to their Lodge.

Our Grand Warden arrived early and was given a detailed tour of our newly updated lodge by **Sister Sinéad Toolis**. Since we haven't had a visit from Grand Lodge in quite a few years due to Covid, Rita's visit was the impetus for Lodge 244 to do a long overdue cleanout and update of the interior of our lodge. You would not believe the sheer number of paper napkins we found in our cupboards! **Brother Joseph** and **Brother Dwayne** from Morning Star lodge have been painting and repairing our lodge and Sister Rita said that she appreciated our efforts.

Due to the rising Covid numbers in California, we were originally going to meet for dinner outdoors at Café Baklava on Castro Street just down the road from our lodge, however the recent fires and bad air quality meant that we decided to meet indoors in the very nicely decorated back room at Café Baklava. Due to this, all members were asked to take Covid test before coming.

We ate a lovely family style Mediterranean meal, which was delicious, and **Sister Debra LaVergne** brought Sister Rita's favorite cake to celebrate – chocolate with raspberry, it was equally delicious!

The meeting went well. The officers wore special sash regalia generously provided by Cupertino Lodge. Some of us wore our newly acquired polo shirts that Sister Debra LaVergne had ordered and embroidered. **Sister Jessica Dickinson Goodman**, who is a trained opera singer, led us in singing the Odes. It was magical. Our Grand Warden spoke eloquently of the goals of the **Grand Master, Fred Dolling** and we presented her with a beautiful orchid and a copy of "The Oddfellow's Primer," a book by our own **Brother Michael Greenzeiger**, as a token of our appreciation for her taking the time to come and visit us. Afterwards, Sister Rita told us it was a well-run meeting, which was a relief since it had been so long since we'd had an official visit. Our lodge is very grateful for the practice runs we had with Brother Michael Greenzeiger and our **DDGM Zoe Timmerman** at previous meetings.

By **Ria Toolis, Noble Grand, Lodge 244**

Photographs by **Sinead Toolis, LSNG, Lodge 244**



Congratulations to Ashley & Jun

Ashley Searby and Jun Alcid, both members of Mountain View #244, welcomed their new son **Richard Michael Searby** on September 22nd at 2:08am. He's their first child, and was born a healthy 6 pounds, 12 ounces. The entire Mountain View lodge extends its heartfelt



congratulations to the new mothers.

By **Mason Wolf**

Reception Honoring Grand Patriarch Debbie Shuler

Saturday, November 4, 2023
At
San Jose Odd Fellows Center
1035 Emory Street
San Jose, CA 95126

Hamburger Luncheon \$15
Luncheon 1:00 PM in Dining Rm
Reception 2:00 PM in Lodge Hall
Followed by Sock Hop!

Contact Debra LaVergne
650 575-4565
Debra.ella@gmail.com



End of Summer Barbecue at True Fellowship

On Wednesday, September 13, we turned our monthly picnic into a community barbecue, free to anyone who wanted to attend. At one point, every seat in the dining room was taken, and a few people sat outside. We estimate that at least 60 people attended, but it might have been more.

And True Fellowship lodge knows how to throw a party! Everyone ate their fill of delicious food, provided by the members of the lodge, with special recognition to grill-master **Ben Shuler** who treated us all to delicious tri-tip steaks and chicken thighs (and plant-based burgers were available on request, of course). Plus, worried we might still not have enough meat for everyone, **Debbie Wolf** brought barbecue ribs tender enough to literally fall off the bone. And it's a good thing she did, because at the end of the night, we had exactly ONE serving of meat left, proof that we fed everyone, but still the first time one of our pot lucks didn't end with everyone divvying up the leftovers.

In addition to the members of the lodge, we had members from other lodges in our district, and many strangers who were learning about Odd Fellows while they were there (but weren't we all strangers, once?).

We gave tours, proudly showing off our beautiful old meeting hall, and explained who we are. By the end of the night, we'd handed out about a dozen applications that we may or may not see again (we can hope). But more exciting than that, we collected two applications, along with application fees, from two soon-to-be members!

Everyone who came truly seemed to have a fun time. We broke out some party games, had some tunes going in the background, and had a truly stunning selection of desserts to chow on, for once the initial courses had finished settling in our bellies.

From my point of view, the best thing about that night was having the hall filled with people again. The whole point of having a lodge, or any other building, is to create a space where people can gather together and enjoy each other's company. And that's exactly what we did.

By *Mason Wolf, Noble Grand
True Fellowship*

Live Degrees, Continued from Page 2

And none of that mattered to me.

What I experienced that day was genuine love for the Encampment, and the willingness to come together (a long journey for many of the participants) and teach lessons that have been passed down, unbroken, for the better part of two hundred years.

Could it have been done better? Of course! But will I ever forget the experience? I doubt it. Because while I was listening to the words and following the actions of the degree ceremonies, my mind was filling in the detail, connecting the words with the principles, and recognizing the common thread that unites every member of each of the degrees I experienced.

The Shared Experience is the Point

As Odd Fellows, we accept people who come from all backgrounds, classes, professions, races, geographical areas, religions, and so on. To make it work, we need to have something that unites us that we're all willing to agree is more important than our differences. Odd Fellowship is all about recognizing that we are all brothers and sisters, and that it's our duty to care for each other as fellow-siblings, looking past the false distinctions that others see.

Part of the way we learn to look past those false distinctions is by having that experience of joining the Order, and then each degree we take. If I go to another part of the world, and there's an Odd Fellows lodge, even if I don't speak the language or know the customs, I know we share a set of values. And hopefully, we've shared the same experiences partaking in the live degrees. That is a starting point on our journey to viewing one another as family, and the more we can share through our rituals and degree work, the more of a common foundation we have to build on.

What We Teach, We Also Learn

The last reason I love the live degrees isn't for the value they confer to the candidates, as much as to the instructors. If the only experience you had with the degrees is when you received them as a new member, and now it's 30 years later, that's a lot of time to forget what your lodge taught you. When we stop doing the live degrees, we forget what they mean.

I think every member should either confer, or spectate, all of our degrees on a semi-regular basis. Especially with the initiatory, there's something powerful about watching someone go through it for the first time. There's that moment of surprise that will hopefully start them down the journey of Odd Fellowship, and seeing it in others helps us remember why it is that we're all doing this.

Conclusion

If your lodge isn't doing the live degrees, form a degree team. If you have to double up on parts, do that. And when it comes to the initiatory degree in particular, Sovereign Grand Lodge has approved a live form that teaches all of the lessons of that degree with only 5 roles, so contact your grand secretary if you need that degree script. Ask for the 2017 short form, known as the Feast of Odd Fellowship.

If you need to read from the book, do your best to speak clearly and read. If you don't have all of the props, do what our forebears did and make some (or partner with another lodge that has them). The point here is just that you should try. It's worth the effort.

If you have candidates for the degrees, that's wonderful! It means that your lodge has already done the work that it takes to attract new members and help them to advance. You should keep doing it! But the work of putting on the live degrees is a huge part of what it takes to turn them into Odd Fellows. It proves that you value them, and you value our teachings, and it passes those teachings along in a meaningful way they won't easily forget.

And best of all, it's actually fun!

By *Mason Wolf, Noble Grand #52*