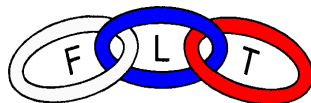


Established 1987



The 22nd Annual Festival of Trees

The 22nd annual Festival of Trees returned once again to the Cinnabar Hills Golf Club in Morgan Hill on November 22nd. This is the premier fundraiser for Rebekah Childrens Services of Gilroy, and the gala is always a veritable who's who of the business and political leaders of the area. Local Morgan Hill business owner Jayson Stebbins reprised his role as emcee once more. The VIP's this year included speaker of the California State Assembly, Robert Rivas, who was pleased to recount his experience presenting Rebekah Children's Services with an award last year as non-profit of the year for California, and there were plenty of stories about the good work that's been done in our county by this organization. Two of our district lodges were specifically thanked for their donations: Mountain View 244 and True Fellowship 52 each brought checks to present. Plus, both Saratoga 428 and Cupertino 70 showed their support by each purchasing entire tables (each one a \$2000 donation in its own right).

The headline sponsor was none other than Rebekah **Gayle Joslin** from Stella #22, who also won a beautiful gift basket by turning in the most gaming chips from the casino portion of the event (she didn't even play the casino games herself – she just asked people for their chips!).

The meal was excellent, as usual, including a juicy and tender pork loin stuffed with asparagus tips. The vegetar-



ians enjoyed a pasta dish that smelled amazing, but this writer didn't taste it.

Most of the attendees were employees and owners of the different businesses that supported RCS's mission, many of them honored in the program as sponsors, but there were a lot of Odd Fellows and Rebekahs as well. It was enjoyable being able to meet the other attendees, and several of them were curious about the Odd Fellows, and even asked for information on how to contact lodges in their area in order to find out more about them.

Throughout the evening, the various auctions raised tens of thousands of dollars for RCS, and the celebrants had a wonderful time.

Next year's Festival of Trees will be on Saturday, November 21st 2026.

-- by *Mason Wolf*

Wendell's Visit to Barnes

On Thursday, November 13th, Barnes Encampment #77 hosted Grand Patriarch, **Wendell Watson**, and Grand Marshall, **Shirley Watson**.

The evening kicked off with a delightful dinner with a Thanksgiving theme. The beautifully decorated room and table scape put everyone in a festive mood to welcome all of our guests. A chicken-centered potluck dinner was enjoyed before the meeting in our beautiful Odd Fellows Hall, and the dessert buffet had tasty treats and even had See's candy at each plate! The delicious meal was second only to the lively conversation.

Following the social dinner, a formal Encampment Meeting was held. We were fortunate to have our musician, **Jon Hart**, play the odes as we sang along. Almost all members of Barnes Encampment #77 were present to welcome Grand Patriarch Wendell and Grand Marshal Shirley Watson. Grand Patriarch Watson shared his goals for 2025-2026. Grand Patriarch Wendell was presented a blue glass elephant wearing a miniature fez.

Barnes Encampment donated \$200 to the Grand Patriarch's project for Visual Research. All in attendance left the meeting uplifted and excited for the coming year.

-- by *Debra LaVergne, Katrina Hazen, and Mary Jane Shabalin*

Upcoming Live Degrees:

12/9: Second Degree - Saratoga 428
12/15: Initiatory - Cupertino 70

AMOS on Excursion

The Sheikhs and Samaritans of Xanadu #321, AMOS, normally of Mountain View, instead had their November meeting on location in Knights Ferry, generously hosted by Stanislaus Lodge #170. The change of venue meant a LOT of driving for those coming up from the Bay Area, but it also meant the chance to view (and ride) one of Samaritan **Fred Dolling's** fascinating fraternal props – a wooden camel that had once been wired up to deliver an electrical shock to whatever prospective member sat on it. Today's initiations seem rather tame compared with what our forebears must have experienced. Probably for the best, though.

The meeting also featured an election of officers. Samaritan **Ernie Albice**, previously nominated for nearly every office in the Sanctorum, eventually narrowed down his options by declining them all, save for Grand Counselor, which he, **Fred Dolling**, and Sheikh **Chuck Schubert** all contended. The offices of Grand Monarch, Vice Grand Monarch, Registrar, and Banker went uncontested, and were filled by **Joseph Ouellette Jr.**, **Tom Blackburn**, **Michael Greenzeigher**, and **Mason Wolf**.

The contest for Grand Counselor was close, requiring multiple ballots, before finally being won by Fred Dolling. Ernie Albice did not leave without an office, however, as Sheikh Potolsky successfully convinced the Sanctorum to create the new office of "Ernie Albice" by standing rule, and then nominating Ernie Albice to it. He then won the office unopposed, though it is not yet known what responsibilities the office entails.

In truth, despite the remoteness for many of the attendees, the November 16th meeting in Knights Ferry was actually the best attended meeting all year. In addition to **Fred Dolling**, who lives in Knights Ferry, we also saw **Mason Wolf**, **Michael Crile**, **Michael Greenzeigher**, **Paul Milleson**, **Ernie Albice**, **Ron Myres**, **Joe Brennan**, **Adam Potolsky**, and by zoom we had **Andrew Crockett**, **Joseph Ouellette Jr.**, **Chuck Schubert**, and **Henry Rosenthal**.

-- by *Mason Wolf*



Rita Cooper visits Gilroy

On November 18th, the Grand Master of California, **Rita Cooper**, visited Gilroy 154 for her official visit. We had a delicious steak and shrimp dinner, cooked by **Mark Ellender** of Emerald Bay 50. For the visit itself, Grand Instructor **Zoe Timmerman** acted as Marshall, with **Donna Miller** (Secretary of the Rebekahs), **Debbie Shuler** (Past Grand Patriarch), **Adam Potolsky** (Grand Warden) and **Richard Gunnels** (50+ year member) joining as dignitaries. **Ben Shuler** was also acknowledged as a long-time member.

The meeting itself included a review of the bylaws, as well as the reading of three new applications. As it was an open meeting, one of the prospective members was able to sit with us and hear what we're about. Fortunately, he still wanted to join by the end.

For Good of the Order, Sister Rita shared a passage about the history of Gilroy #154. What was particularly interesting to learn was that Gilroy #154, Knights Ferry – if you know, you know! – so recently back from the dead, as it were, actually had a near-death experi-



ence in the 1980's, where they lost their charter, but then managed to recover it before the 3 years' time limit that would have forced them to give up their assets, exactly like what happened between 2023 and 2024. The members appreciated hearing about their lodge's story. Rita also shared the details of her programs, and the lodge made a \$200 donation in her honor.

Gilroy 154 really enjoyed their visit with the Grand Master, and before leaving, everyone shared in a delicious selection of desserts, including some of the best cheesecake in existence (from the Rebekahs of

Knights Ferry – if you know, you know!)

-- by *Mason Wolf*

Artists Mountain View Returns

The Mountain View Odd Fellows launched the holiday season with a three-day art pop-up art sale that packed the lodge with color, creativity, and enough foot traffic to make Castro Street wonder if we'd started giving away free parking. Fourteen artists showed off paintings, stickers, ceramics, postcards, jewelry, embroidery, and even comic books (for anyone who prefers their holiday reading with a few more action lines). Not bad for a holiday weekend when most people were still digesting approximately 2.3 pounds of turkey and stuffing.

The Artists Mountain View group (our neighbors who gather monthly at Red Rock) collectively earned about two thousand dollars! Even better, 25% of those proceeds are going straight into their "Let's Finally Get a Mural Downtown" fund. Soon, the blank wall of the MV lodge may transform into something far more exciting than beige stucco... actual art!

Visitors streamed in, drawn not just by the art, but also by the chance to peek inside the "mysterious Odd Fellows building." Many asked questions about our history, our mission, and whether we were some kind of friendly secret society. (Answer: yes, except the secret is mostly how to find the light switches.)

These pop-ups always turn out to be incredible outreach opportunities. With our unbeatable location on Castro Street, there's no reason we can't keep the momentum going. Whether it's art shows, classes, meet-ups, or even clothing swaps, a personal goal is to work towards having the lodge open and active EVERY weekend. Much like **Ria's** charming window displays, these events really brighten downtown Mountain View. And if these lead to more art, more community, AND the occasional new member who wandered in "just to look around"...? All the better.

-- by **Mark Flider**



Mountain View 244's November Window Display

This month our window was given over to Fall, Thanksgiving and an Art Show.

Passersby could look in the window and try to answer the thanksgiving puns!

Would you be able to answer any?

- The police arrested the turkey... They suspected fowl play
- We didn't cook a turkey... because we didn't have thyme

You get the idea. It was a fun display that hopefully made a few people smile as they walked past.

-- by **Ria Toolis**



High Tea in Cupertino

The Philotesian Rebekahs of Cupertino hosted a High Tea on November 16th. We had guests from Saratoga, Fremont, and San Francisco join us.

We love our tea parties and are grateful to Cupertino Lodge #70 for their support and use of the hall.

-- by **Debbie Wolf**



True Fellowship at Christmas in the Park

Members of True Fellowship 52, **Sara Bruce, Kat Powell, Scott Spence, and Debbie and Mason Wolf**, decorated a tree in the Enchanted Forest at San Jose's Christmas in the Park. This was our second year participating, and again we decorated our tree with Odd Fellows symbols, a triple-links chain, and a skeletal Santa. Our location this year is #737, on the east-side center aisle. Come and see our tree and experience the magic of this event through December 31.

Our tree is located near a Ukrainian women's organization, and one of the women struck up a conversation with us to inquire about Odd Fellows. It turned out she is from Lviv, where the first Ukrainian Odd Fellows lodge was planned before the war! We hope she may join us in the future.

-- by **Sara Bruce**



Odd Fellows Outing to Dickens' London!

On November 23, 2025 some 30 California Odd Fellows travelled through time and space to arrive in London on December 24, 1856 - the perpetual date frozen in time and sentiment at the charming Great Dickens' Christmas Fair, located at the Cow Palace in South San Francisco, CA.

The yuletide Odd Fellows came dressed in our finest collars - or borrowed one for the day courtesy of True Fellowship Lodge no. 52. And while we turned heads taking high tea, and getting our boots polished: the highlight was when we were received with great fanfare at the Athenaeum Club stage! Sister Jane Beckman pulled some strings to get us this reception, as she is performing this season as a cast member of the Athenaeum Club stage, portraying the first female Egyptologist Madam Sarah Belzoni.

At 2:40pm on the dot, our brilliant assemblage processed orderly into the Athenaeum Club, where we proceeded to present our hosts with a scepter of Friendship, Love, and Truth in appreciation of their hospitality. Our "Tour Director" Brother Andrew Crockett proceeded to explain that we had come to London to sample the "clublife terroir" that gave rise to our Grand Sire Thomas Wildey - the English immigrant founder of the Independent Order of Odd Fel-

lows. We shared how he was born in London in 1782, orphaned a few years later, and due to the merciful education he received was able to become a journeyman of the coach spring trade. In 1804 he was initiated into Odd Fellows London Lodge no.17, went on to serve in every office therein, only to press on and found Morning Star Lodge No.38 in 1807. He was then involved in founding the Independent Order of Oddfellows Manchester Unity in 1809-1810. And with all this experience of English club life, he came to America in 1817, with all the knowledge necessary to launch the continent-spanning iteration of fraternal life called the IOOF.

To signal our imminent departure, Sister Debbie Wolf led our proud assemblage in our fraternity's Opening Ode to great affect. After which we processed out of the Athenaeum Club and into the perpetual Christmas Eve twilight of Dickens' Fair London.

I hope you will join us for next year's Happy Christmas Odd Fellows outing.

-- by **Andrew Crockett**



Upcoming Featured Events:

- December 5th - 6-10pm True Fellowship Board Game Night
- December 6th - 8-9am Bagel Breakfast and Cookie Sale at Grand Lodge, ahead of the Board Meeting (replaces the usual pancake breakfast)
- December 6th - 5-8pm True Fellowship 52 Roll Call Dinner
- December 9 - 7-8pm Second Degree in Saratoga
- December 13, 5:30 - 8pm Cupertino 70 Holiday toys for tots fundraiser
- December 14 - 2-4pm District Planning Mtg at Cupertino 70
- December 15 - Initiatory Degree at Cupertino 70
- December 18 - Mountain View 244 Holiday Party
- December 31 - 6 - 9pm Kani ka Pila New Year's Eve Party and Hawaiian Music Jam at Cupertino 70
- December 31 - 7pm-LATE New Year's Eve Party at Saratoga 428
- January 2nd - 6-10pm Board Game Night at True Fellowship

For the latest events info, visit:
Siliconvalleyoddfellows.org

Barnes Encampment 77
 Invites You To Enjoy

Bagels and Cookies at Grand Lodge

Saturday, December 6th
 8 - 9 am

Have a Bagel for
 Breakfast and Bring
 Some Cookies Home!

122 Race St,
 San Jose, CA 95126



Mason, Mary Lou, Debbie, and Katy - the Mountain View 244 contingent at Festival of Trees - November 22, 2025



Andrew introducing the Athenaeum Club to the Odd Fellows at Dickens Fair. (click the link for video)



Paul Milleon and Connie Hall at the Festival of Trees - November 22, 2025



Mae Serrano leads a dance lesson at the Cupertino Veterans Day Dance - November 9, 2025



November Picture of the Month - True Fellowship 52's Christmas in the Park tree, featuring our friendly (fake) Skeleton Santa Claus, putting a festive all-seeing eye on top.



Paul, Debbie, Mason, Serenity, Katy, Mariko, Andrew, and Bex: Just some friends enjoying tea service at Cuthbert's Fine Tea Emporium at Dickens Fair, November 23rd, 2025.