

Trestle Board

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Issue #8

South Pasadena Masonic Lodge of F&AM

A Hot and Busy Summer



www.southpasadena290.org



AUGUST



5

WEDNESDAY

Stated Dinner: 6:30pm
and Meeting: 7:30pm



8

SATURDAY

Covina Masonic
Homes Visit & BBQ
9am

12

WEDNESDAY

Masonic Fellowship
Night
7pm

14

FRIDAY

Illumination Lecture
Bro. Rene Perez
7pm

19

WEDNESDAY

Officer Quarterly
Meeting
7pm

22

SATURDAY

Masonic Meditation
9am
Family Lodge BBQ
6pm

26

WEDNESDAY

Gentlemen's Night
7:00pm

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Michael Merced (08/02); George Amirian (8/03); Gary Norgaard (8/06); Thomas Kuenster, Gabriel Segura (8/07); Edward Vasquez (8/08); Ronald Harris, Julio Luna (8/09); Phil Donlon, Steven Klein (8/10); Park Eddy (8/13); Raymond Hesser (8/14); David Berghorn (8/16); Bryan Noakes (8/17); Eugene MacIsaac (8/20), Daniel Lopez (8/21), Christian Montenegro (8/23); Mark Towne (8/24); Thomas Carson, Ronald Evans, Eric Hamilton, Gus Lopez, George Montoya (8/29).



HALL ASSOCIATION MEETINGS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026
In Person Meeting @ 6:30pm



EASTERN STAR DINNER and MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2026
Dinner @ 6:30pm Meeting @ 7:30pm

From The East



WORSHIPFUL NATE BROWN

Greetings Brethren,

The core teaching of the Buddhist tradition is that of achieving Enlightenment during one's life on earth (AKA: *gnosis*, *satori*, *nirvana*, *bodhi*), via the practice of meditation, morality, and the cultivation of inner peace. In this context, Enlightenment refers to spiritual awakening, inspired insight, and liberation from suffering. This in turn results in profound wisdom, compassion and a sense of inner peace. The Enlightened One experiences a higher level of consciousness, and realizes the true nature of reality through a connection with the divine. Furthermore, the Buddha taught that *anyone* can achieve such Enlightenment if they follow the teachings he prescribed.

Among the teachings of Buddha ~2,600 years ago were strong and repeated warnings about the choices we make in whom we associate with. He understood that such choices affect one's morality and inner peace, and as such, effect one's ability to reach Enlightenment. Even if we



Consider morality as being a more innate quality than learned, those of bad character can influence us to question and override our moral compass, and thus, violate our own principles. Those who are like minded and moral facilitate our path, while those who are not, block the Light, inhibit our development, and cause suffering. In the opinion of many, the energy and influence of others can be experienced at both conscious and unconscious levels. For example, it is suggested there is an unconscious synchronization, or energy transmission, that occurs between those who are in close proximity of each other, analogous to the Near-Field Communication (NFC) technology which allows smart devices to transfer data when near each other, without the need for physical contact.

Freemasonry also strongly emphasizes the quest for greater Light, as well as the cultivation and preservation of a harmonious Lodge of brethren in which to associate with. Those who best work and best agree. I hope our Lodge can continue to provide a place for good and like-minded men to dwell in Light and Harmony for many more years to come.

Fraternally Yours in L.U.X.,
Wor.: Nathaniel Brown, PM
2026 Lodge Master



David VanderSmith

Greetings, my Brothers,
As I reflect on our recent Entered Apprentice degrees, one idea continued to return: attention.

In a world increasingly driven by an “attention economy,” countless sources compete for our focus every day. Our devices, our work, the news, and an endless parade of notifications all vie for our most valuable and finite resources: our time and our attention. Freemasonry offers us the opportunity to cultivate what could be our greatest strength. Rather than competing for our attention, Masonry teaches us how to govern it.

A meaningful Masonic degree is never the result of one person alone. It is the product of many people directing their attention toward a single beneficent purpose. Officers perform their work, brothers on the sidelines bring their focused presence, and a truly prepared candidate stays receptive to the experience. Individually, these contributions may seem small, but together they create something far greater than the sum of their parts.

Perhaps this is one of Freemasonry's quieter lessons. Before we can improve the world around us, we must first learn to govern our own attention. Ritual, contemplation, fellowship, and service all strengthen our ability to remain present, focused, and intentional. These are not simply Masonic activities; they are exercises in becoming more attentive, better men.

Whatever consistently receives our attention has a tendency to grow. When we direct it toward learning, our understanding grows. When we direct it toward our brethren, our brotherly love deepens. When we direct it toward our communities, opportunities for service reveal themselves.

As we step beyond the doors of our lodge, perhaps one of the greatest gifts we carry with us is not simply gaining more knowledge, but a greater capacity to direct our attention toward what truly matters. In an age where our attention is increasingly treated as a commodity, Freemasonry reminds us that how we choose to direct our attention might be one of our greatest responsibilities. What we choose to attend to shapes not only who we become as individuals, but also helps create the kind of society and world we want to be a part of.

Fraternally,
Bro. David VanderSmith
Senior Warden

From The South



Sebastian Schmidt

Brethren, please consider my Reflections from the East: A First Degree Remembered.

Serving in the East for my first Degree as Worshipful Master was an experience unlike any other in my Masonic journey. I have been a part of many Degrees, serving as an officer, but nothing prepared me for how different—how much fuller—the experience becomes when the responsibility, and the privilege, of leading the work falls upon you.

What struck me the most though, wasn't the weight of the ritual or the pressure of the East. It was something deeper: for the first time, I felt in a truly tangible way what it means to say that Masonry is a brotherhood, and a craft. A Lodge, much like the ashlar we speak of in our teachings, cannot stand as a single stone alone. It is only through each stone supporting the next, each Brother lending his effort to the one beside him, that the structure holds. Conferring a Masonic Degree is no different. It cannot be

accomplished by one man, however capable, standing in the East. It requires officers who know their parts, Brethren willing to fill gaps, and a collective will to see the work done with dignity and care.

This truth became even more apparent to me when we faced last-minute changes to our lineup just before the Degree began. What could have been a source of real difficulty instead became a demonstration of exactly what our Craft is meant to embody. Several Brethren stepped forward without hesitation, learning their parts on short notice and giving freely of their time to ensure the evening's work was not diminished. I am deeply grateful to each of them.

To commence the evening, we shared an excellent dinner together—my own small way of showing appreciation for the goodwill and generosity every Brother brought to that night. Between the fellowship at the table and the quality of the work in the Lodge, it became an unforgettable experience for our newly initiated candidate, and one I will not soon forget myself.

My sincere thanks go out to every Brother who showed up and gave of himself that night. All of you exemplify the very spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood that our ancient institution holds most dear.

Fraternally,
Bro. Sebastian Schmidt
Junior Warden

Lodge News & Notes



Fourth of July Day

July 4, 2026

This year, 18 brothers, family and friends, partook in South Pasadena's 4th of July Balloon Parade. This was the second time since the mid-1990's that our lodge was reunited with the historic city parade. Thanks go to committee chair Jeffrey Rewald, who led the charge over two years ago to reinstate us in this city-wide tradition. Armed with American flags and our signature banner; our 290 brothers, family and friends walked and waved all through the 1.5-mile route, that ended at Garfield Park. Afterwards, we retired to the lodge for an Independence Day BBQ style celebration. It was a nice way to gather and celebrate our country's 250h Anniversary.





Gentlemen's Night July 29, 2026

A bit over 50 Brothers and guests gathered this month for a Gentlemen's Night; as prospective member Mario Christerna, a professional chef, returned with his culinary expertise this time cooking up an authentic Mediterranean meal.

While the menu was impressive, what made the evening truly special was the spirit in which it was shared. Mario's generosity, craftsmanship, and attention to detail transformed a simple dinner into a memorable experience enjoyed by all in attendance. Thank you, Mario, for an evening of fellowship, friendship, and unforgettable food.



Meet Our Newest Brothers



Entered Apprentice Degree
July 8, 2026

Congratulations to Brother Brian Sadamoto on being entered into the First Degree of Masonry. This degree, in particular, was delivered by the same degree team from our British Isles Trip this past June. After his degree, we toasted in the study, where Bro. Sadamoto reflected on his degree, which he called "impressive."





Entered Apprentice Degree

July 22, 2026

Congratulations to Brother Blayden Kutik on being entered into the First Degree of Masonry. During our traditional toast, after his degree, Bro. Kutik thanked the officers on a "memorable night that I will never forget."



ILLUMINATION LECTURE SERIES

REVIEWED BY PAUL T. BRADLEY



THE ILLUMINATION LECTURE COMMITTEE WELCOMES BRO. ANGEL PEREZ

Our 2026 Illumination Lecture Series continued Friday, July 12, as 38 Brothers and guests gathered at South Pasadena Masonic Lodge to hear our own Brother Angel Perez present Shakespeare and Freemasonry. The problem with asking whether Shakespeare was a Freemason is that we Freemasons are unusually good at finding Freemasonry in things. A pair of pillars? Masonic. A compass? Obviously Masonic. Light, darkness, stone, builders, secret words, death, rebirth, three suspicious-looking guys standing near a body? At a certain point the Western canon starts looking like it was tiled by the same lodge committee. That was the danger hanging over our latest Illumination Lecture, where the astute Bro. Perez took on Shakespeare, early speculative Masonry, and theories trying to replace the glover's son from Stratford-Upon-Avon with somebody richer, better educated, or more conveniently mysterious.

He opened with "Friends, Romans, countrymen," then tested the room: "Et tu, Brute?" and "To be, or not to be." The audience knew them immediately. Shakespeare is not merely a playwright. He is a quote, deeply embedded in contemporary English language. We quote him while complaining about airport parking. We quote him sometimes without even knowing we're quoting him. Brother Perez's route into the subject was deeply personal. Shakespeare led him from a small Texas town into classical theater, across the country as an actor, and eventually to Los Angeles. After entering Freemasonry, he began noticing familiar shapes in the plays: oath-bound men, moral testing, architecture, hidden knowledge, light against darkness, and the project of turning one's defects into something less embarrassing.

His lecture was imbued with that zeal. First came the documented Shakespeare. Baptized in Stratford in 1564. Probably educated at the local grammar school. Married at eighteen to an already-pregnant Anne Hathaway, eight years older. Then

came the lost years, a seven-year documentary pothole into which scholars have dumped, deer poaching, soldiering, espionage, and whatever else the theory required that week. By 1592, Shakespeare had surfaced in London as an actor and playwright. He became a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, helped build the Globe, made real money, and bought property. He was not only a genius staring into the human soul. He was a theater owner watching the gate receipts.

The Masonic question gets harder once we start to look at dates and documents. Shakespeare died in 1616. The Grand Lodge of England appeared in 1717. The familiar speculative system arrived somewhere before then. So no, Shakespeare was likely not sitting through a modern stated meeting, waiting for somebody to finish reading last month's minutes.

The serious version reaches backward, toward operative guilds and early lodge culture. Bro. Perez brought in historian David Stevenson's work and the Schaw Statutes of 1598 and 1599, which regulated early Scottish lodges during Shakespeare's lifetime. Those lodges had secrecy, discipline, and recognition practices. That does not put Shakespeare inside one. It only removes the theory from chronological confusion.

The textual evidence is more slippery. Alfred Dodd found ciphers, numerology, grips, whispers, and enough hidden machinery to make the plays resemble a Renaissance escape room. Frances Yates offers

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firmer ground. Her work on John Dee, Hermeticism, symbolic geometry, and the Renaissance magus helps explain Prospero and the occult atmosphere around Shakespeare's late plays. But "Masonic" and "later adopted by Masonry" are not the same thing. Builders, stones, temples, sacred light, moral death, and rebirth were already loose in biblical tradition, guild culture, classical literature, and Renaissance esotericism. Freemasonry inherited a crowded warehouse and deftly arranged the boxes.

Bro. Perez then masterfully introduced us to the authorship candidates. Edward de Vere had the education, court access, and Italian travel, but died in 1604, before several plays seem to have been written. Oxfordians solve this by redating the plays or treating chronology and fact as rude interruptions. Francis Bacon had the learning and the ciphers. Unfortunately, as Bro. Perez pointed out, the ciphers did not cooperate. William and Elizebeth Friedman examined the Baconian claims and found no stable hidden message in Shakespeare's *First Folio*. Christopher Marlowe remains the only alternative who does not require pretending he

could write like Shakespeare. He plainly could. He very likely collaborated on the Henry VI plays—so much so that he's now regularly credited as a co-author of those works. But the larger theory on all of Shakespeare's work requires Marlowe to fake his death in 1593, continue writing for decades in secret, and leave no useful trail. That is the sort of possible that keeps hotel bars busy and boozy after history conferences.

During the lively questions, the room kept circling those key problems. Did Shakespeare borrow from early ritual? Did later ritual borrow from Shakespeare? Did both borrow from something older? Could the lost years contain the missing explanation for genius? Genius has always offended people who believe credentials should explain outcomes. Lincoln barely attended school; Shakespeare lacked a university degree. Somewhere, a perfectly educated nobleman must be hiding behind the curtain, right? The connection between Shakespeare and Freemasonry requires no hidden lodge record and no cipher. Both are obsessed with the same human animal: vain, frightened, ambitious, loyal, treacherous, ridiculous man, forever trying to build a temple out of whatever rubble he has left. Shakespeare may not have been a Mason as we are now, but he understood our work, and Bro. Perez made that connection much brighter.

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Intent to Amend By-Laws:

In order to better cover candidate education costs, the Lodge is proposing an increase in degree fees from \$495 to \$620, which requires an amendment to our By-Laws. Be advised that a vote will take place on the amendment at the Stated Meeting of August 5th, 2026. Let this email also serve as your due and timely notice.