

Trestle Board

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South Pasadena Masonic Lodge of F&AM

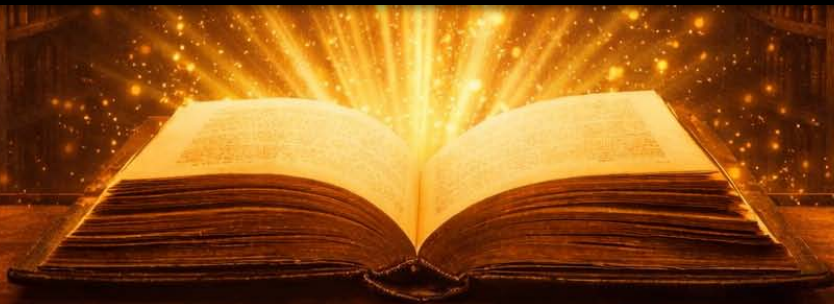
BE ILLUMINATED



ILLUMINATION

LECTURE SERIES

SEE OUR 2026 GUEST SPEAKERS LIST



WWW.SOUTHPASADENA290.ORG

FEBRUARY



4

WEDNESDAY

Stated Dinner & Meeting

6:30pm

8

SUNDAY

Super Bowl Potluck Viewing Party

2pm

11

WEDNESDAY

Officer School of Instruction at

SPML 290

6:30pm

12

THURSDAY

Illumination Lecture

Set-up

7pm

13

FRIDAY

Illumination Lecture
Asst. Grand Lecturer
Bro, Narbeh Bagdasarian

7pm

14

SATURDAY

Valentine's Day
Sweethearts Dinner

5pm

18

WEDNESDAY

Officers Quarterly Meeting

7pm

19

THURSDAY

SPML
Book Club Meeting

7pm

25

WEDNESDAY

Gentleman's Night

7pm

28

SATURDAY

Masonic Meditation

9am

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Mike Babayan (02/02), Rafael Kochar (02/03), Rick T. Rosing (02/05), Nelson Blanton (02/08), Lincoln Y. Tanaka (02/12), Robert W. Miller, Isaac Taylor (02/14), Richard A. Fritsch (02/16), Marwan Fawal (02/17), Mark M. Batatian, Stuart W. Holst (02/18), Pascal P. Davayat (02/19), Omar Sadek (02/20), John Acosta, Harold G. Knowlton (02/22), James A. Eddy (02/23), Thomas A. Malone (02/24), Philip N. DeCaro (02/26), Sameh Hammoude (02/28).



HALL ASSOCIATION MEETINGS
TUESDAY February 17, 2026
Meeting @ 6:30pm



ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR
MONDAY, February 9, 2026
Quarterly Meeting @ 7pm



From The East

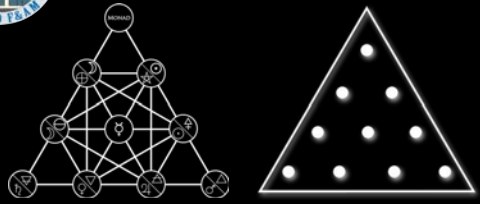


Worshipful Nate Brown

Greetings Brethren:

Thank you for another wonderful installation brethren! I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as the “first lady” and I did. Last year was the 175th anniversary of the Grand Lodge of California, and this year is the 250th anniversary of the birth of our country. At the installation I was honored to wear the Past Master’s jewel of my ancestor, Wor. Royal Scott, PM, who was the Master of his lodge exactly 130 years earlier. Realizing such historical synchronicities can make our journeys all the more fascinating!

My theme for this year is the Pythagorean *Tetractys* hieroglyph, which is related to my sub-theme of *Ain Soph Aur*. *Ain Soph Aur* (אין סוף אור); it refers to the three *Qabalistic* veils of negative existence—the limitless primordial “Light” source of all creation—which formed the energy emanations (*sephiroth*) of the Tree of Life (*sepher yetzirah*). This



Examples of Tetractys

manifestation occurred through Tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of God (YHVH), a Word composed of four letters (יהוה) and three syllables. The famous Greek philosopher and brother, Pythagoras (cir. 570-495 BC), encoded the Tetragrammaton within a four-legged hieroglyphical triangle of ten dots, called a *Tetractys*, concealing an ancient formula which he passed down as his most valued teaching to the members of his Mystery School. They were taught that, when the ten dots of the *Tetractys* were correctly replaced with the four Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton, a mathematical key would be revealed.

The more obvious numerical relationships apparent in the *Tetractys* are 3 (triangle shape), 4 (dot lines and rows) and 10 (total dots), all three numbers of which are strongly associated with Deity. However, this Pythagorean teaching also alludes to the arrangement of three lines of four dots surrounding a center dot. Observing and decoding the ordering of these dots correctly is the secret to revealing the intended (Continue on page 12)

From The West



David VanderSmith

Greetings my Brothers,

With the installation of our 2026 officers now complete, the work of the Lodge enters a different phase. The structure is in place; what follows will depend on how we approach the labors before us.

February might feel like a quiet or in-between month. Meetings continue, business is conducted, and familiar patterns resume. Yet it is precisely in these moments of familiarity that we risk allowing our ritual to slip into routine. When words are anticipated rather than attended to, when movements are executed by mechanical habit rather than with intention, something essential is lost. Ritual, by its nature, asks more of us than mere repetition. It requires our focused attention and internal presence. Without these, even the most carefully preserved forms can become hollow. With them, even familiar work can become engaging and instructive again.

“February, then, is not an empty month. It is a preparatory one..”

One of the most overlooked expressions of Masonic charity is this very act of attention. To show up fully—to listen, to observe, and to participate with focus and intent—is to offer something of greater value. It is charity; not measured in dollars, but in the awareness and engagement of our very being. Before a word is spoken or a lesson conveyed, the mind must be prepared to receive it.

February, then, is not an empty month. It is a preparatory one. It is an opportunity for us to examine how we show up to our work, how we listen, and how we participate in the world around us—through shared presence and active engagement. As we ready ourselves for all that lies ahead, the posture we adopt now will shape what follows.

May we approach the coming months not out of habit, but with a renewed sense of focus on the depth and meaning in all we do together.

Fraternally,
Bro. David VanderSmith
Senior Warden



Lodge News & Notes



Group Photo (L-R): Dago Rodriguez, PM, George Amirian, Robert Kant, Esteban Lopez, Sergio Gomez, PM, Wor. Nate Brown, Jeffrey Rewald, Art Amadian, Phil Donlon, Jeriel Smith, & David VanderSmith.

2025 Masonic Awards

January 7, 2026

At our January Stated Meeting Dinner, Wor. Nate Brown presented eleven worthy brothers with Service Awards, as voted on by their lodge peers, along with a description of their contributions. The Service Award ceremony was received with much adoration and love for those honored. The two biggest awards of the night—Mason of the Year and Past Master of the Year—were awarded to Brother Jeffrey Reward and, Wor. Sergio Gomez, PM, for their excellent lodge service this year. Please see the side bar for a list of all the award winners.

AWARDS LIST:

- 2025 Mason of the Year – Jeffrey Rewald
- 2025 Past Master Mason of the Year – Sergio Gomez, PM
- 1st Craftsman in the Quarries – Robert Kant
- 2nd Craftsman in the Quarries – George Amirian
- 3rd Craftsman in the Quarries – Phil Donlon
- Best Event – Dago Rodriguez, PM (Masonic Con)
- The Light Bearer Award – Esteban Lopez
- Best Ritualist – David VanderSmith
- Most Reliable Brother – Jeriel Smith
- Best New Mason – Art Amadian
- Artificer of the Year – John Seletos

Past Master of the Year

Sergio Gomez, PM



Worshipful Sergio Gomez, PM was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in late 2014, and served two terms as Worshipful Master of our Lodge in 2020 and 2021. His expertise as a bank branch manager and insurance agent has proved him to be an invaluable asset to our Lodge as our Treasurer, and to both Hall associations. When I asked him to fill the position of Treasure of our Lodge, on very short notice, he stepped up; and did so again when I asked him to come onto the Hall Associations and serve there as well; again on very short notice. He has proven to be extremely reliable and efficient as our Treasurer and was also invaluable in aiding our Audit Committee during our various audits, conducting himself transparently and with most integrity. Brother Sergio was a lifesaver to our lodge this year; and his efforts are greatly appreciated! Brother Sergio, thank you for your selfless service! —*Wor. Nate Brown*

Mason of the Year

Jeffrey Rewald

Brother Jeffrey Rewald, who was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in early 2023, is a member of several appendant bodies; and has been serving this year as a Marshal of our Lodge, and the Chaplain of Pasadena Lodge No. 272. He completed the Grand Lodge LMCP training program, and his expertise as a court-qualified real estate law expert and landlord-tenant arbitrator has served as a valuable asset to our Lodge. In regards to his work this year, he became a new member of the Audit Committee; and now, he is a director of our South Pasadena Hall Association. His friendly demeanor has made him easy to work with, and his integrity, hard work ethic, and attention to detail have been invaluable to our Lodge. He completed the reports for both audits this year, which were extremely critical to the well-being and longevity of our Lodge. Lastly, Brother Jeffrey is an excellent ritualist, who can, and often does, volunteer to fill nearly any officer chair if needed without advanced notice. Brother Jeffrey, thank you for your selfless service to our lodge this year! —*Wor. Nate Brown*



The Illumination Lecture Series

WRITTEN BY DAGO RODRIGUEZ, PM

The thirteenth year of SPML's *Illumination Lecture Series*, now the longest continuing Masonic lecture series in our State, kicks off this month, on Friday, February 13 at 7pm, with California Grand Lodge Assistant Lecturer, Bro. Narbeh Bagdasarian, PM, and his talk on *The "Forget-Me-Not" Symbol of Freemasonry*. This talk will be open to all. Bro. Narbeh is the first of an exciting list of 2026 speakers, some traveling from across the Country (Virginia, Colorado, New York and Texas) to share their Masonic knowledge and insights with our lodge and guests. Their topics will range into Masonic Symbolism, Astrology, History, Philosophy, and Self-Improvement.

This year, all of our six speakers are Past Masters of their respective lodges, and six of them are first time presenters at our lecture series. Some speakers are visiting us all the way from New York, Virginia, Colorado and Texas.

The Illumination Lecture Committee—Lodge Master Nate Brown, and Brothers Dago Rodriguez, PM; Geno Nadirov, PM; Jeriel Smith; Max Mironenko, Angel Perez and Art Amadian—have all been hard at work, seeking out the most unique and exciting Masonic speakers to visit our lodge and spread the light that they have researched, to share with the brethren of 290 and surrounding lodges, and interested guests in the community.

Our Illumination Lecture nights will continue on the **second or third Fridays of the month** at 7pm (Dark in January, June, and December). All of the talks will be open to the public and will be live streamed through our Instagram page. Please continue reading for a detailed list of this year's confirmed guest speakers and their topics. In 2026, we recommit to this important part of our lodge's vision for Masonic education. Please join us during this 13th Anniversary year of our Illumination Lecture Series!

2026 GUEST SPEAKERS*

February 13th, **Narbeh Bagdasarian**, *The “Forget-Me-Not”
Symbol of Freemasonry*

March 20th, **Robert Marshall**, *On Aesthetics: Exploring Sensory
and Perceptive Impacts of Masonry*

April 17th, **R. Stephen Doan, PGM**, *TBD*

May 22nd, **Ben Williams**, *The Knights Templar and Masonry*

July 17th, **Angel Perez**, *Shakespeare, The Freemason?*

August 14th, **Rene Perez**, *The Age of Aquarius and Masonry*

September 11th, **Chris Ruli**, *Masons in Congress*

October 16th, **John Michael Greer**, *An Introduction to
Geomancy*

November 13th, **C. Douglas Russell**, *Esoteric Art of Memory*

**Speakers and Talks subject to change without notice.*

ILLUMINATION LECTURE SERIES

BY JERIEL SMITH



THE ILLUMINATION LECTURE COMMITTEE WITH BRO. JERIEL SMITH

On November 14, I had the distinct honor of delivering the final of our lodge's 2025 Illumination Lecture Series. The event started half an hour late, by which time a rather small gathering of two dozen brothers and guests had braved the proverbial "dark and stormy night," to hear me deliver a rather lengthy reading of my paper, titled *Abraham Lincoln: The Mason Who Was Not Mason*. The inspiration for the talk came from Larissa P. Watkins, who, when I visited the Scottish Rite Temple in Washington, D.C. in 2016, was its Assistant Librarian. She gave to me a book, titled *Our Very Illustrious Brother: Abraham Lincoln*, her compilation of "A Bibliography of the Louis D. Carman Lincolnian Collection in the Library of the Supreme Council, 33° of the Southern Jurisdiction."

In 1932, Dr. Louis D. Carman, 32°, had donated his entire Lincoln collection, containing 567 volumes and 600 pamphlets, including the text of his own speech, entitled *Abraham Lincoln Freemason*, that he delivered in 1914 before Harmony Lodge No. 17, F.A.A.M., in Washington D.C. This evening, I began by reading an abridgement of Brother Carman's Address, which began by quoting Lincoln's speeches that bristle with ideals and assertions evocative of Masonic values and continued with fact that, while Lincoln never took the degrees of Masonry, he had petitioned a Lodge in Illinois prior to being nominated for the Presidency in 1860, and stated his intent to apply again after his term in that office. He concluded that Lincoln's thought, speech and actions showed him to be an extraordinary man who so clearly exemplified the qualities of a Freemason that he was hailed by numerous Masonic Bodies, here and around the world, as their "Brother" and "Illustrious Brother," in response to the news of his untimely death on April 14, 1865.

Emulating Brother Carman's example, I added considerable further details, based on my own and other Masons' later research. First, quoting even more of Lincoln's speeches, I related them to the Three Tenets and the Virtues of Freemasonry. Elaborating on the events of Lincoln's life and career, I noted his Masonic relationships, especially that of his friend and mentor, Bowling Green, a prominent Illinois Freemason; and I quoted from Carl Sandberg's biography *The War Years* to describe Lincoln's eulogy at Judge Green's funeral, at the behest of the local Masonic Lodge.

After talking about the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates during their 1858 Senate race in Illinois, I turned to their Presidential campaign in 1860, to note these Masonic connections: All three of the Democratic Party's 1860 candidates were Freemasons (as was the sitting President, James Buchanan). When Lincoln was apprised that Douglas, his chief rival, belonged to the Masonic Lodge in his home town of Springfield, he was said to have replied: "I am not a Freemason. Dr. Morris, though I have great respect for the institution." Ironically, all three of the Republicans who had been Lincoln's chief rivals for their party's nomination that year did not share his "great respect for the institution" of Freemasonry. Indeed, each one of them had been Anti-Mason Party sympathizers—William Seward of New York; Salmon P. Chase of Ohio;



and Edward Bates of Missouri.

As Lincoln's entire term as President was occupied by the Civil War, I noted two excellent books about Masonry during that conflict: *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Freemasonry in the American Civil War*, by Brother Michael L. Halleran, whose title comes from Lincoln's First Inaugural Address. Another, by Brother Allen E. Roberts, takes its title, *House Divided: The Story of Freemasonry in the Civil War*, from Lincoln's famous "House Divided" speech, given in 1858, prior to the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. I emphasized incidents from both books where Masons extended aid to brother Masons, friend-and-foe alike; as was Lincoln's likewise commuting of death sentences to soldiers of both armies. I concluded with my own efforts, as a Mason and as a lawyer, to emulate Brother Lincoln; and I suggested to those present—Masons and non-Masons—to likewise follow his Masonic-spirited example.

SUPER BOWL VIEWING PARTY

2PM - OPEN TO ALL POTLUCK STYLE



(From page 3.)

meaning. The main teaching concealed within this triune of ten “perfect” dots is the “Seventy-Two Names of the Expounded Name of God”: (he: Shem ha-Mephorasch), an extension of the Tetragrammaton. In Freemasonry, Shem ha-Mephorasch is represented by the biblical symbol of Jacob’s Ladder (Genesis 28), a theological ladder introduced in the full-form lecture of the Entered Apprentice degree.

Although Masonic tradition informs us that Pythagoras was initiated into several orders of Priesthood, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, his *Tetractys* hieroglyph was not preserved within the teachings of Symbolic Craft Masonry for some reason. May all of us each discover the Lost Word, and through it, ascend our own Ladder of Lights, uniting our spirits, or souls, with the Great Architect of the Universe!

Fraternally Yours in L.V.X., Bro. Nathaniel Brown
2026 Lodge Master

South Pasadena Masonic Lodge No. 290 Meets On the First Wednesday of Every Month At 6:30pm.

Please make a reservation at (626) 799-2695 if you wish to visit our Lodge.

1126 S. Fair Oaks Ave. South Pasadena CA 91030