

Risen from the Ashes



Trestleboard

Worshipful Master's Corner

Brothers and friends,
We hope you will enjoy our first full Trestleboard since the horrible fire that savaged our ridge communities. In this Trestleboard we have a summary of the last three years, a calendar of events, a short summary of our November stated meeting, an informative Masonic formation essay, some Masonic art history, some interesting information about Freemasons in history, an *in memorium* for a recently passed brother, and a list of contacts.

As you will read about in the below information, Table Mountain Lodge, through the hard work of a core group of brothers, is for now financially stable and fully



functioning. The recent stated meetings and the recent triple first degree are evidence of that. For those who have stepped forward and stepped up to help, it has been a deeply rewarding experience. However, it is now time for more of our brothers to participate. This is noble work. You have the rare opportunity to help rebuild something worthwhile and important. We can build it better, jettison the old habits and build a more enjoyable and relevant organization – if you join us. We moved the stated meeting to the first Saturday of every month to facilitate participation. Please attend our next stated meeting.

Recent History

The Story of Table Mountain Masonic Center

Nov 8, 2018 is a date burned into the memory of Butte County California residents. Fed by very high winds, uphill terrain, and unusually dry conditions, what became known as the Camp Fire burst to life and roared into the “ridge” communities. Paradise, Magalia, and several smaller communities were suddenly and without warning engulfed in a firestorm of epic proportion. More than 70,000 people had to be evacuated into nearby cities.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of first responders and innumerable private citizens, only 85 people were killed, although more were injured, and many suffered permanent damage to their health. For several days the daytime was turned to night by dense dark smoke and a rain of ash as the fire consumed the ridge communities and spread outward into the mountains. When the toxic smoke somewhat abated and access to the ridge was allowed, returning residents beheld utter devastation.



Paradise after the fire

Nearly 19,000 structures were destroyed, primarily homes and businesses. The power, water and sewer systems were mostly destroyed. The landscape was smoking embers and dead trees, and ground covered in toxic materials. The remaining homes and businesses would need extensive repairs and cleaning before they could be safely occupied. However, among the smoking ruins of the community stood Table Mountain Masonic Center, singed, now devoid of landscaping, inundated by toxic smoke, surrounded by the smoldering ruins of businesses, but intact like a beacon of hope. Providence had provided for the Craft.

Before this fire, Table Mountain Masonic Center in Paradise was the center of a healthy and vibrant Masonic community. Both Table Mountain Lodge 124 and Eastern Star Chapter 549 were doing well. Through the extraordinary efforts of the Masonic community, both during



Picture of Table Mountain Masonic Center prior to the 2018 Camp Fire

and after the fire, every family member of these organizations was eventually located and provided with shelter, basic needs and services. Assistance in the form of supplies and money flowed forth from the hearts of the greater California Masonic community and from many masonic lodges in nearby states. This outpouring of generosity was emotionally overwhelming to the now former ridge residents that were more comfortable with giving assistance than taking assistance. In the midst of tragedy, we saw Masonry at its best, generously providing relief.

The devastation of the fire necessitated some tough decisions. Many members of the ridge Masonic community had to leave Butte County entirely to live elsewhere with family members, enter retirement homes, find permanent housing for their family and themselves, and to find work due to their business or workplace having been destroyed. Table Mountain Lodge (Paradise) was reduced to perhaps 20 functional members in the area. The Paradise Eastern Star Chapter was even more impacted. The building itself would require months of cleaning, replacement, and repairs, and would have to wait months before community water and power services were restored. It would have been easy to just give up and close the lodge and sell the building, but that was never seriously considered. Instead, at our first lodge meeting a few weeks after the fire, in the nearby Chico Masonic Center, the remaining

members committed to the full restoration of our Paradise facilities and that Table Mountain Lodge 124, chartered in 1857, would not die, but instead would be renewed and rebuilt.

Worshipful Charles Haggerty, himself a fire fighter, provided inspiring leadership, as did the incoming master Worshipful Harwood (Woody) Nelson. Brother Bill Spencer PM, spent many long hours working with our insurance companies, overseeing the work of contractors, and coordinating the restoration of power and water services providers. During this time the center had no appreciable rental income because of the building's condition. This created a challenging financial situation because the county still expected its property taxes. However, Worshipful Harwood negotiated a contract whereby our large parking would be used as the central dispatch center for the hundreds of trucks and other equipment that arrived daily to remove debris, contaminated soil and burned trees. This income was critical to the survival of the facility. Finally, in September 2019 Table Mountain Lodge again met within its newly cleaned building, although most members no longer lived on the ridge, and some had to drive considerable distance to attend. Soon thereafter brother Richard Gingery received his third degree, with much appreciated assistance of Scepter Lodge from West Sacramento. The new officers of Table Mountain 124 were installed in January 2020. The future looked promising, and then the pandemic arrived, and the world changed again.

Initially Butte County was spared the worst of the pandemic, but of course all Masonic organizations had to comply with the Grand Lodge directives. Hopes of reviving a sustaining rental income looked bleak. However, even during the pandemic the rebuilding ridge community needed a place suitable to receive community services, hold necessary meetings and distribute relief supplies to the hard hit residents. Working within the county protocols, the Lodge was able to provide those necessary spaces and continue its charitable activities. However, the hits kept coming. The restored community water system still had dirt in the water lines which damaged the air conditioning system, and a fire inspector (the irony was not lost on us) informed us that regulatory changes required we replace the commercial kitchen's entire fire suppression system with the latest design. These were unanticipated expenses, yet Worshipful Nelson, now acting as our facilities manager, cobbled together the necessary funds for the work.

Unable to meet in the building, Table Mountain Lodge, like many others, held monthly online zoom meetings for comradery, mutual support and to make necessary decisions. The Paradise Eastern Star Chapter combined with the Oroville Chapter to form a new Paradise/Oroville Golden Feather Chapter that also met online throughout the worst of the pandemic. As the worst of the pandemic seemed to lift and the county protocols were removed, Table Mountain Masonic Center became the central place on the ridge for events of all types. Keeping the cost as low as possible the center has hosted various organizations, churches, governmental

events, private events and business events. Never was the center more central to the community. Thanks to generous donations, Table Mountain Lodge provided gift cards to numerous needy families throughout the school system. At one school visit, a smiling student came up to Worshipful Nelson and shouted, “Masons rock!”.

In September 2021 the Butte County International Order of Rainbow for Girls held their regional event in the large lodge room in Paradise (at no cost to the girls), and in October 2021 Table Mountain lodge held a triple first degree, initiating three new members, with the much appreciated assistance of Elk Grove lodge. Also in October, the Eastern Star chapter initiated two new members in Paradise, and the Butte County DeMolay chapter began using (at no cost to the boys) the Paradise facilities for some events. More events are scheduled such as more degrees, corner stone laying for new schools, school awards night and a building rededication. While there will certainly be challenges ahead, the future of Masonry on the “ridge” is now bright.



Officers and candidates after the recent triple first degree.



The initiation team and the latest Eastern Star member.



Some of the Rainbow girls at their recent event

All good stories end with an important lesson, and this true and continuing story also has an important lesson. Freemasonry does not depend on a building, instead it lives in the hearts and minds of every true Mason. And if good Masons put their hearts and minds together, they can face any challenge, overcome all obstacles, repair or replace any facility, and keep Freemasonry alive and active.

Calendar of Events

Table Mountain Masonic Center (Nov 2021, Dec 2021, Jan 2022)

Table Mountain Lodge Events

- Nov 6, Saturday, Stated Meeting at 2 pm, luncheon starting at 12:30.
- Nov 13 Saturday, Funeral at 2 pm for brother Friedrich M Fuchs, PM
- Nov 18 and 25, Lodge Practice starting at 6:30 pm.
- Dec 2, 9 and 16, Lodge Practice starting at 6:30 pm
- Dec 4, Saturday, Stated Meeting at 2 pm, luncheon starting at 12:30
- Dec ? – Possible 1st degree.
- Jan 8, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting at 2 pm, luncheon starting at 12:30
- Jan 15, 2022, Saturday, Installation of 2022 officers at 2 pm.
- Jan 29, 2022, Saturday, 2d degree starting at 2 pm.



Golden Feather Chapter Eastern Star

- Nov 20, Saturday, Eastern Star Installation at 2 pm (practice Nov 19)
- Dec 1, Wednesday, Eastern Star Stated Meeting at 7 pm

Other Masonic Events in the Area

- Nov 12 and 13, Friday and Saturday, Sacramento Scottish Rite Degrees at the Sacramento Scottish Rite Temple.

Community Events at the Center

- Nov 12 and 13, Friday and Saturday, Homespun Holidays Craft Fair from 11 am to 5 pm.
- Paradise Rod and Gun Club - First Wednesday of every month at 6pm
- Butte County Family Health Classes, Every Monday through Dec 2021, 4:30 to 9 pm.
- Homespun Holidays will also be March, July



November 2021 Stated Meeting

Table Mountain Lodge (Paradise) held its monthly luncheon and stated meeting on Saturday November 6. Green chili beef enchiladas, fried chicken and other donated dishes were available for lunch. Here are the results of the election of officers for 2022,

- Master – Harwood (Woody) Nelson,
- Senior Warden – Scott Miller,
- Junior Warden – Douglas Campbell,
- Treasurer – Richard Gingery,
- Secretary – Brian Grandfield.



Please note that we have a 2d degree scheduled in January at which we might have multiple EAs ready to advance. We also have a possible 1st degree sometime in December. Installation will be on Jan 15, 2022.

Masonic Formation

Relief and **Charity** are two words present in our instructions and publications. However, many people have a serious misunderstanding of what these words fully mean.

The most common image of **Relief** is just of providing assistance in the form of food, clothing, money or housing. However, we as Freemasons know that there are other aspects of **Relief**. They are **the kindness of providing another person with sympathy in their sorrows, advice with their problems, and**



moral support and friendship when they are in needful of these things.

Today, people are often taught that **Charity** refers only to giving something material to a person or non-profit organization. Also, that the **duty of Charity** is somehow fulfilled merely by selecting the dollar donation button when purchasing something at the grocery store. However, we as Freemasons know that the **act of being Charitable** is much more than that. **To be Charitable is to be tolerant and patient of others' mistaken passions and ignorance. It is to be magnanimous and forgiving of the mistakes and flaws of others. It is to show leniency and compassion while judging others. It is giving the benefit-of-the-doubt when considering a person's intent or explanation for their mistake.** These are what we do as Freemasons.

Masonic Art History

As demonstrated by the 3 pictures found below, Masonic influence and concepts could be found in art long before the creation of the first Grand Lodge in the 1700s.

The first two pictures below present *God* as the creator-architect of heaven and earth.

The first one was created in the year 1411 by Guyart des Moulin. It is titled “God the Geometer”. A geometer is someone skilled in Geometry. Behind the head of *God* shines the representation of the effulgent sum commonly found in the East of Masonic lodges. Effulgent means radiant and emanating joy or goodness. In the lower hand of *God* is a compass, which is familiar to all Masons.



The next picture is from a French religious manuscript created in 1220. It depicts *God* as the architect of the universe, which is the way Masons think of and often describe our Creator, the Great Architect of the Universe.



In the last picture, from the eastern Mediterranean region, Christ is portrayed with a compass, circumscribing the world to keep peoples' passions within due bounds.



Freemasons in history (George Washington and Thomas Paine)

In late November 1776, during the Continental Army's darkest hour, Brother Thomas Paine again picked up the pen with the hope of recreating the enormous success of *Common Sense*. "It was necessary" he later wrote, that "the country should be strongly animated." As the wrecked army crawled across New Jersey, Paine took advantage of every stop to put words to paper. He often wrote late into the evenings by the flickering light of a campfire, as exhausted soldiers slept huddled nearby. As Brother George Washington's army crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania, he put the finishing touches on his latest pamphlet – *The American Crisis No. 1*.

First published in Philadelphia on December 19th, *The American Crisis No. 1* was an appeal to the patriotism and resolution of the American people. It's opening lines are some of the most well-remembered and oft-quoted in American history

George Washington was an active and visible Freemason, and today remains a recognized exemplar of Masonry. The two lodges that he is most closely associated with are Fredericksburg Lodge at Fredericksburg, Virginia (his Mother Lodge) and Alexandria-Washington Lodge at Alexandria, Virginia, where he was elected Charter Master under the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

The Masonic lodge of **Thomas Paine** is not known. However, he is generally recognized as having been a Mason, most likely initiated into a lodge of French Masons. After the American Revolution, he wrote several essays concerning Masonry, most of which reflected the ideological path of the French Masons in the very early 1800s. Even then French masonry was moving away from the acceptable doctrine and practices of regular Masonry.

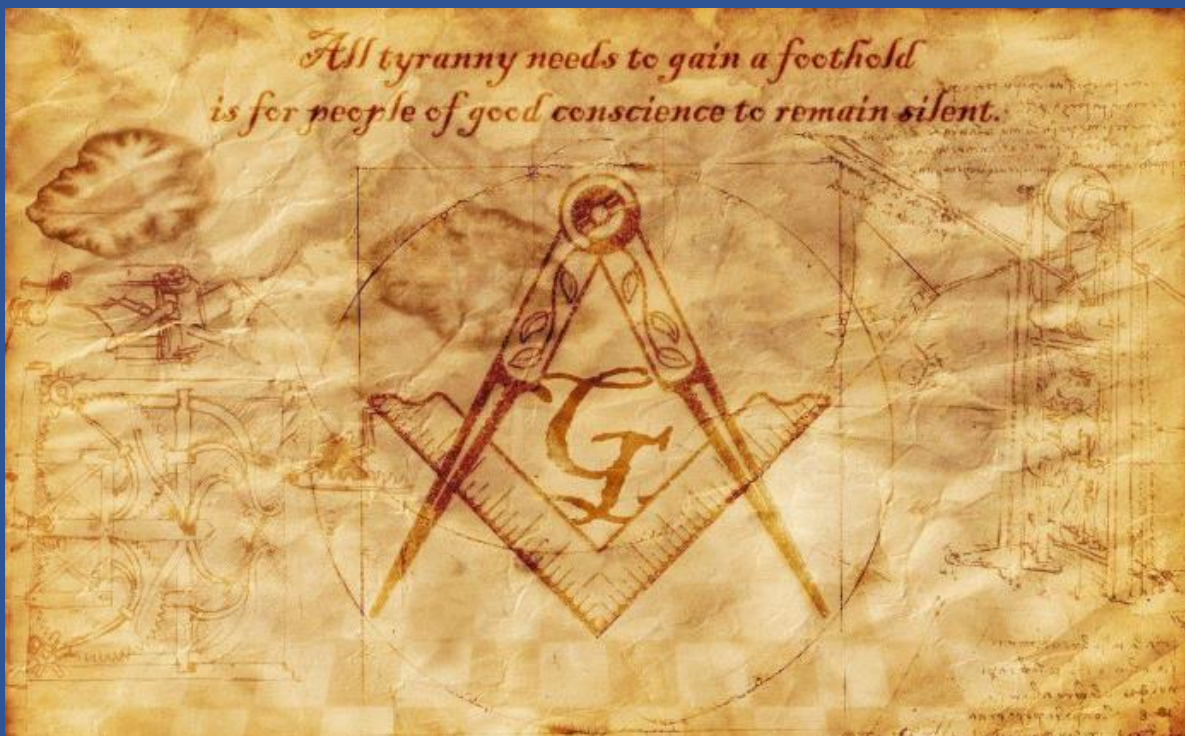
"THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated."

The words electrified the demoralized army and became the rallying cry that Brother Paine had hoped for. Within a day, copies were printed and distributed throughout the Continental Army, and officers read it to their assembled men. Militiamen who had returned home in disgust just a month before took up arms once again. Civilians up and down the Delaware River Valley reaffirmed their commitment to the cause of independence. Desertions among the Continentals slowed, and soldiers quoted *The Crisis* in their watchwords while on picket

duty. On the night of December 25th, as Brother Washington prepared to make a strike on Trenton, he ordered that Brother Paine's words be read to the entire army as a reminder of the importance of their task.

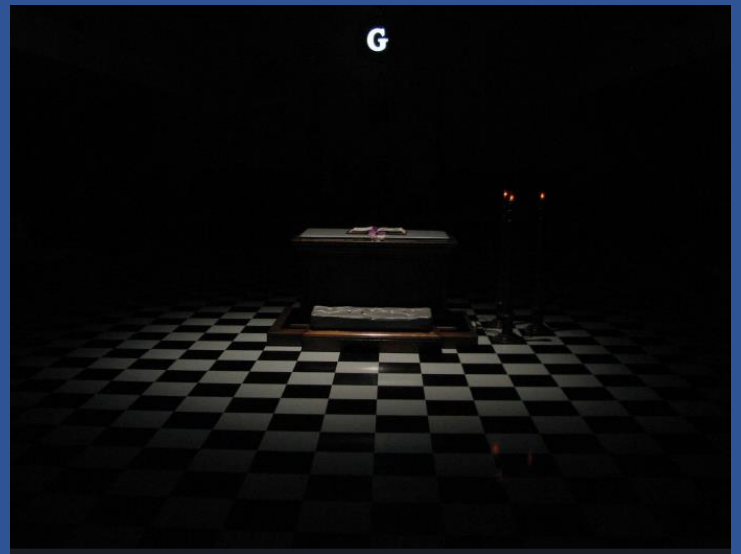
"I call not upon a few, but upon all: not on this state or that state, but on every state: up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it."

Their resolve renewed, the battered but not broken Continental Army went back on the offensive. The "Ten Crucial Days" that followed saw Brother Washington and his men victorious at Trenton and Princeton, forcing Howe to abandon much of New Jersey. Loyalists, emboldened by Howe's earlier success, now found themselves abandoned to the wrath of their patriot neighbors. As winter gave way to spring, new enlistments from throughout the colonies poured into Washington's army. The military victories at Trenton and Princeton changed the course of the war in a strategic sense, but *The American Crisis No. 1* provided the ideological motivation that made them possible.



In Memorium

On October 21, 2021, brother Friedrich M Fuchs, PM passed from this earthly existence to the great celestial lodge. Brother Fuchs was Master of Hermann Lodge 127, in San Francisco, for the Masonic year of 1972. Hermann Lodge was founded in 1858 as a German language lodge and all degrees, work and meetings were done in the German language. Brother Fuchs was a long time resident of Paradise and member of Table Mountain Lodge. His Masonic funeral service and reception was held in our upstairs lodge on October 13, 2021. His daughter, Delina Fuchs, appreciates the support our lodge provided to her during this difficult time.



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