



Table Mountain Masonic Lodge #124, Paradise **Dec 2022 Journal and Trestleboard**



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Website: <https://lodge124.freemason.org>
Building and Room Rentals



Worshipful Master's Corner

Hello Brothers and Friends,

This month we begin with the **calendar of events**, followed by a **summary of our last stated meeting**. Then, an important reminder for brothers to **pay your yearly lodge dues (due by Dec 31)**, and **options for paying your dues**. Then there is information and pictures about the recent **Eastern Star Installation**. Then we have a new section: **Questions that you might be asked about Freemasonry: With answers**. Also, this month we have two Masonic Formation essays. The first essay is **The Masonic way, a superior approach to leadership**. The second essay is **Those criticizing Freemasonry: Some disturbing conclusions**. This month our focus on Freemasonry around the world is **Freemasonry in Italy**. There is also information about **obtaining your own custom Lodge polo shirt**, getting a copy of our unique **150 year history of Table Mountain Masonic lodge**, and on **how to print your dues card** using your personal computer. Finally, there is **contact information** for our lodge and other Masonic organizations. Please feel free to share this PDF with other lodges and brothers.



This Journal / Trestleboard is posted in our lodge's message board at the Grand Lodge website and at also the Table Mountain lodge website: <https://lodge124.freemason.org>

Calendar of Events

Table Mountain Masonic Lodge

- Dec 3, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.
- Dec 10, Saturday, 1st Degree, starting at 2 pm.
- Dec 14, Wednesday at 6 pm, Christmas/Holiday gathering at the Handle Bar Grill in Chico.
- Jan 7, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.
- **Jan 21, Saturday, Lodge installation of the 2023 officers and Hiram Award ceremony.**
- Jan 28, Saturday, Tentative Degree, starting at 2 pm.
- Feb 4, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.
- Feb 11, Saturday, Sweetheart Dinner starting at 5 pm.
- Feb 25, Saturday, Tentative Degree, starting at 2 pm.



Other local area Masonic Events

- **DeMolay** – Dec 2 Installation of Officers, Paradise at 6 pm. Stated meeting Dec 15 at 7 pm at the Chico Masonic center.
- **Rainbow** – Dec 5 and 19 at 7 pm at the Chico Masonic center.
- **Ben Ali Shrine, Sacramento** – Dec 3, Holiday Craft Fair. Dec 10 Woodland Parade, Dec 13, Stated Meeting at 5:30pm.
- **Golden Feather Eastern Star** (Paradise and Oroville) - Dec 7, in Oroville at 7 pm.
- **Scottish Rite** – Dec 20 stated meeting at 6 pm at the Sacramento Scottish Rite center.
- **Chico Leland Stanford lodge** – Stated Meeting, 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm.
- **Oroville Lodge** – Stated Meeting, 1st Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.
- **Gridley Lodge** - Stated Meeting, 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm.
- **Forbestown lodge** - Stated Meeting, 1st Saturday of the month at 7 pm.
- **Orland Lodge** - Stated Meeting, 1st Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.

Other Scheduled Community Events at the Table Mountain Masonic Center

- Paradise Rod and Gun Club – Executive meeting first Wednesday of every month at 6 pm. General membership meeting third Thursday of every month 6:30 pm
- Butte County Family Health classes and counseling, Every Wed until Dec 2022, 4:30 to 9 pm.
- Crockett Christian Fellowship, Sundays 11 am to 2 pm, Dec through Jan.
- The Ridge Arts and Crafts Community will soon be having monthly events in and outside of the building.
- PG&E and contractors are having regular work meetings in our facility.
- Intermittent use by various private parties. Check with Woody Nelson for available dates

Table Mountain Building/Rooms Rentals

Woody Nelson, (530) 877-7852 email: paradisefreemasons@gmail.com

Our Recent Nov 5, 2022, Stated Meeting

At 1 pm, just prior to our Saturday Nov 5, 2022, Stated Meeting, the brothers, their families and guests met for a delicious lunch provided by Brother Cole Hamilton and his wife Lisa. Everyone greatly enjoyed themselves and there were lively conversations and good fellowship.

Then at 2 pm, Table Mountain Masonic Lodge opened on the 1st degree of Masonry, for the purpose of conducting the stated meeting business. Worshipful Woody Nelson presided, and all positions were filled.

Our Secretary Brian Grandfield (PM) read the minutes of the previous meeting, and later presented the secretary's report and bills to be paid. All bills were paid.

Our Treasurer Rich Gingery presented our financial situation, and discussed when the funds would be available from the estate of Brother Moore. This lead to a discussion of the yearly increases in the Grand Lodge's per member assessment and how it has affected the lodge's finances. It was agreed that we must consider raising the lodge's yearly membership dues, although any change made now would not go into effect until 2024. It was also agreed upon that we should be sensitive to the needs of our older brothers on a fixed income, and therefore we will have to create a working system to assist them with their dues when needed. It was decided that brother Doug Campbell would do a financial analysis and report his findings and make a recommendation at the December stated meeting.

Additionally, Worshipful Nelson discussed the number of brothers that have not paid their dues in years, and have not responded to our efforts to contact them. He explained how that after the Camp Fire and the resulting population movement, the lodge had decided to give many of the brothers time to establish their lives, and reconnect with us and pay their dues. While many have done so, many have not. He then explained the steps the lodge would now take to suspend delinquent members. There was agreement among the brethren that the lodge had shown appropriate patience, but that now it was time to act.



Worshipful Woody Nelson gave an extensive report on the building association, which included finances, renters, recent repairs and an extensive list of maintenance and repairs that we will need to address in the coming year. Worshipful Woody also updated the brethren on our preparations for our next project with the elementary schools. Specifically, the birthday gift project. Worshipful Woody also updated us on our Camp Fire memorial project. Specifically, that he is now working with appropriate operative stone masons, and the materials were being priced. We should have a good idea of the total cost by our December stated meeting. Brother Cole Hamilton expressed some concern about whether our chosen location in the Magalia Community Park could in fact serve as the long term location for the memorial. Brother Gingery expressed confidence that the ownership of the location of the park will soon be resolved and that the title will be transferred to the park association in the foreseeable future.

Brother Cole Hamilton gave an excellent update on the activities and plans of DeMolay, and the future timeframe for starting a separate DeMolay chapter on the ridge. He also shared the amount of money that DeMolay earned for helping with the dinner for the outdoor 3rd degree. Most importantly, the Chico / Paradise (Ridge) DeMolay chapter will have their installation of officers on Dec 2, here in Paradise. Several brothers said that they would attend.

Brother Cole also updated the brethren on his progress getting the appropriate authorizations to have regular community arts and craft sales inside and outside of our facility. He is making good progress, the project is looking very feasible and the arts and craft community is fairly enthusiastic about it.

Brother Oso Harju gave a fine summary of the status and plans for the restarting of Boy Scouts on the ridge. Our lodge stands ready to assist in any way we feasibly can. As of now the VFW will be sponsoring the Boy Scouts, Brother Harju and Brother Haggerty (PM) will be working with the scouts, and our building association will provide meeting space as needed.

Then our Chaplain Bob McElroy updated the brothers on the status of our known sick and hospitalized brothers and family members. It was also announced that Brother Doug Campbell would undergo shoulder replacement surgery on Dec 8.

The lodge voted on an additional three affiliations and two petitions. All were accepted. Additionally, another petition was read. This brings the total of new lodge members to 15 for 2022, making Table Mountain Masonic Lodge, in terms percentage of active members in good standing, one of the fastest growing lodges in California.

Brother Doug Campbell reported on our expenses for the dinner prior to our recent outdoor 3rd degree, along with the leftover supplies and the small profit. Sufficient leftover supplies are available for another luncheon. The money currently available in the Junior Warden's

fund should be more than sufficient for the remainder of the year, and perhaps through February 2023.

Brother Campbell also reported that our 2023 outdoor nighttime 3rd degree is now scheduled for Saturday, September 16, 2023. Also, that the Scottish Rite / Shrine degree past masters degree team has tentatively agreed to perform the degree for us. This news was received with much excitement and pleasure from our brothers. A few brothers shared that they had seen that degree team perform and that they are exceptional. Brother Campbell will place the event on the Grand Lodge calendar.

Elections were then held for our 2023 officers. The brothers that were elected and appointed are as follows:

Master – Doug Campbell
Senior Warden – Justin Purcell (PM)
Junior Warden – Ehren Hawkins
Secretary - Brian Grandfield (PM)
Treasurer – Rich Gingery.
Chaplain - Bob McElroy
Senior Deacon - Cole Hamilton
Junior Deacon – Justin (Oso) Harju
Senior Steward - Phil Howard
Junior Steward - Steve Kane
Marshall – Matt Sutter
Titler – Caleb Chinn (PM)

The lodge's calendar of events for the next 3 months was reviewed. **Highlights** are below:

- The date and time for our next degree conferral was discussed. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday and the Scottish Rite Reunion in November, the Eastern Star Installation of the same date as the tentative degree, and the resulting limited time to prepare, it was decided that the next degree conferral was rescheduled to December 10, a Saturday, at 2 pm. Our Junior Warden elect will be presiding for the double, perhaps a triple, first degree. The other line officers will also be at advanced positions. Our newly affiliated brother Glenn Story, volunteered to present the lecture of the first degree.
- Our Holiday / Christmas gathering on Wednesday Dec 14, to be held at the *Handlebar Grill* in Chico. RSVP's to Worshipful Nelson or brother Campbell.
- The 2023 lodge installation of officers is now set for January 21, a Saturday, at 2 pm. First the Hiram Award will be presented, and then the installation of officers. Family and friends are invited. There will be food and refreshments afterwards.

- Our Sweethearts dinner, to say thanks to our wives and significant others, will be on February 11, 2023. We will explore a catering option.

The lodge was then surprised when Worshipful Miles Mallette, inspector of the 226 Masonic district, acting as a representative of the Butte County chapter of Knights Templar presented Table Mountain Masonic lodge with a check for \$20,000, to be used to support our educational projects. Their gift is much appreciated and will be put to good use on the ridge. It was suggested that this money might be used to provide rewards or incentives to the winners of our annual students, teachers, administrators and staff award winners.



Then newly affiliated brother Glenn Story, current Master of Chico Leland Stanford lodge, invited our brothers to their next stated meetings, and to their lodge Christmas party on December 17th.

Brother Ehren Hawkins volunteered to provide the December stated meeting lunch.

The lodge was then closed in good order, brotherly love and harmony prevailing.



Time to Pay your Table Mountain Lodge Annual Dues!

First option for paying your dues – Paying by check.

Write a check for **\$189** to Table Mountain Masonic Lodge #124, and mail it to:

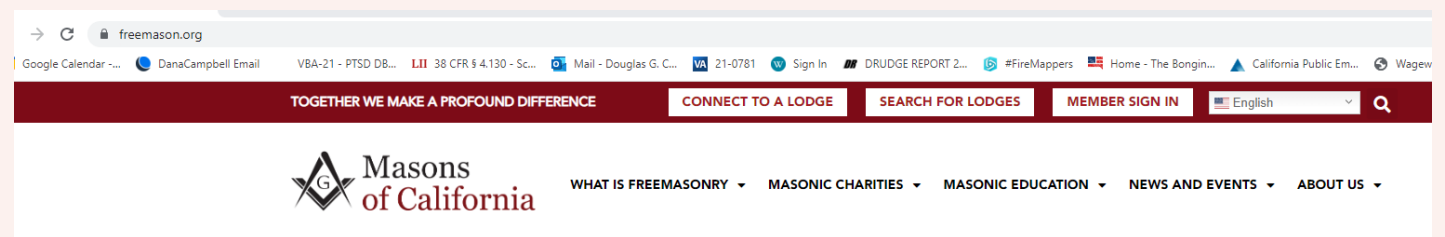
P.O. Box 212, Paradise, CA 95969

Our secretary will send you your dues card.

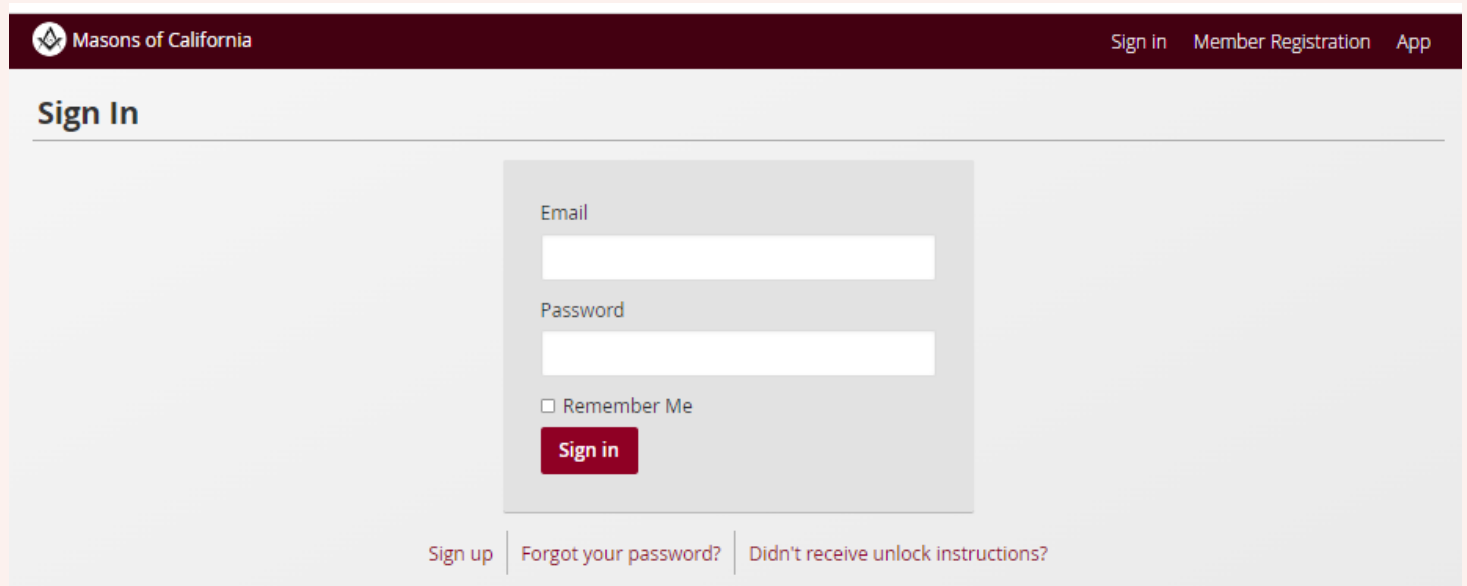
Second option for paying your dues – Do it Online with a credit card.

Using your computer, open your browser and go to <https://freemason.org/>

You will see the following at the top of the internet page, go to **Member Sign in**



Member Sign in will take you to the following page. If you have not already used the Sign in and this Grand Lodge webpage, then go to **Member Registration**.



At **Member Registration** you will see the below page. Note that you will need your **Lodge number (124 for Table Mountain Lodge)** and your **Member ID (which is on your dues card, or you can get it from the lodge secretary)**. There is a video to show you how to do all this.

Membership Registration

Lodge Number

Member ID ~ Exclude Leading Zeroes ~

Last Name ~ Case Sensitive ~

Check Membership Status

Once you are properly signed into the system, you will see something similar to the following page. It will show each lodge that you are a member of, and how much you owe. Go to the right and push **PAY NOW**.

MASONS OF CALIFORNIA

Menu
My Portal
Lodge

You have an outstanding balance of **-\$276.75** for **Naval No. 87**. [Print Dues Notice](#)
PAY NOW

You have an outstanding balance of **-\$189.00** for **Table Mountain No. 124**. [Print Dues Notice](#)
PAY NOW

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Grand Lodge

On the next webpage you will be able to **pay your dues with a credit card**, and **print a receipt and your 2023 dues card**.



Paradise / Oroville Eastern Star Installation

On Saturday November 19, the members of the Golden Feather Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star (Paradise and Oroville) held their 146th annual *Installation of Officers*. This event was attended by representatives of varies Eastern Star chapters, and guests. The event was held in our large downstairs lodge room in Paradise. Afterwards there were refreshments.



Questions that you might be asked about Freemasonry: With answers.

If Freemasonry is not a religion, then why are some Masonic buildings referred to as temples?

The stones masons who built King Solomon's temple, from whom modern Freemasonry descends, met in a room on the side of the temple to receive their guidance and wages. However, there are several meanings or uses of the word *temple*. A temple can be a structure, a location dedicated to God. In our ceremonies, any Masonic lodge is described as "erected to God". Because, above all, Freemasons give their greatest reverence and loyalty to God, by any name appropriate to the faith of the individual Freemason. Whether the Masons have convened for a business meeting (stated meeting) or an educational event (degree conferrals), all meetings begin and end with a non-sectarian prayer for guidance and wisdom. This is similar to many types of service organizations, as well as government legislative bodies. While we are an organization of religious men, in a Masonic lodge there can be no discussion of religion, politics or any issue that is potentially divisive.

Why are Freemasons so secretive?

We are not really secretive, but many people prefer to think of Freemasons as secretive or mysterious. Our buildings are very visible in their communities, and are open to the general public. No part of our buildings are off limits to visitors. Most lodges have websites or Facebook pages with a public calendar of events and most often with pictures and stories of recent events and activities. Like many other private organizations, our business meetings (stated meetings) are private. Keeping all discussions of our finances, projects and future events private is appropriate. Explanations of our principles and symbols are available to anyone from a variety of legitimate sources, and Freemasons are very willing to discuss those things with anyone who has a sincere interest in understanding us. Our educational ceremonies are best described as private. They are very old, impressive and impactful ceremonies that are designed to impart serious and sophisticated truths. For the candidate to get the full spiritual and intellectual effects of the ceremony we like to keep the details private so that there is an element of surprise. However, many people have written about various aspects of our educational ceremonies. Unfortunately, on the internet there are also many sick made up stories about our educational ceremonies. The only thing that we refer to as secret are our modes of emergency recognition, and this is because in many places in the world Freemasons still must hide, as they face arrests, beatings, and even death from the local despots, tyrants, fascists and fanatics that fear our commitment to brotherly love, charity, truth, freedom of religion, and the God given right of humans to be self-determining.

Masonic Formation

The Masonic way, a superior approach to leadership.

For most of my life I have been a student of leadership. First as a military officer, and later as an academic, researching and teaching at several universities. As a result, I can still recite all the various so-called theories and models of leadership, although I no longer see much value in any of them. Long ago I concluded at the core of all so-called leadership theories, models, processes and training programs is the idea of *motivating* people.

The word motivation is derived from the Latin term *motivus* (“a moving cause”), which suggests the activating properties of the processes involved in psychological motivation. The ancient philosophers observed and recorded various categories of reasons for people’s action or inaction. Much later, psychologists sought to understand motivational forces to help explain observed changes in human behavior. From ancient times to the present times, leaders and hopeful leaders in all of life’s pursuits, have sought to understand how to get others to enthusiastically do what they want them to do. It has been referred to as *motivating others*.

However, I have come to understand, that in the context just described, that the phrases “I want to motivate someone” and “I am motivating him”, are just *euphemisms* used by people to fool themselves about what they are really seeking or attempting to do. The definition of a euphemism is “a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing”. Euphemisms are commonly used, such as referring to a used car as *pre-owned*, calling a prison a *correctional facility*, and instead of accusing someone of lying, saying that they were *creative with the truth*.

When someone says that they are attempting to *motivate* someone, sounds nice, but psychologically bending other people to do what you want done, even if done nicely, or gently or with best of intentions, is still the act of *manipulation*. The definition of manipulation is “any attempt to sway someone to get them to act or feel a certain way for your purposes”. Good intentions or clever techniques do not change the essential nature of the act of manipulation. An attempt to motivate / manipulate someone is at its core a disrespectful act. It is an attempt to impose your opinion or will upon another person. Even if you feel you must do this in your professional life, it certainly has no place in Freemasonry.

A logical, factual and balanced discussion of a proposal or idea to generate real and open discussion is not attempted manipulation because it is an honest approach that is respectful of the intelligence, logic and knowledge of the other individuals. However, the use of false logic, partial information, inaccurate or misleading information, emotional arguments or

rewards is attempted manipulation. Good intentions do not justify attempted manipulation. Nor does supposed expediency justify attempted manipulation. Manipulation is still not ethically acceptable even if the person you are dealing with is simple minded and may prefer to be emotionally manipulated, instead of being given a factual presentation.

The first victim of succumbing to the pressures or argument for expediency, is always truth. Without truthfulness, there is no honor, there is no reliability, and there is no respect. Being less than totally honest and transparent, is always disrespectful and is not Masonic.

Some people claim that the truth can be hurtful, therefore it is better to omit or lie a little to spare a person's feelings. However, in general, the people who make such an argument are primarily wanting to spare themselves the ordeal of being truthful. Some claim that if you always tell people the whole truth, they may make the wrong choice. People who say that do not respect the minds and freedom of others. Instead, they want to control. The truth has a way of eventually becoming known, and no sane person will ever truly trust someone who they have caught lying to them, or being less than entirely truthful and transparent.

For Masonic leaders this means that our only ethical option is to be truthful, respectful, transparent, accurate and balanced in all our communications, without exception. This approach aligns with the spirit of our Masonic obligations, and directly aligns with our Masonic principles. However, this approach cannot be an act or put-on, instead it must be an *authentic* reflection of the Masonic leader. **Being authentic means that "in all your conduct and communications you are true to your own personality, values, and spirit, regardless of the pressure that you're under to act otherwise. You are honest with yourself and with others, and you take responsibility for your mistakes. Your values, ideals, and actions all align".**



A Masonic leader that truly follows Masonic principles, will never need to try to manipulate anyone. Instead, the brothers will find their own internal motivation, because they will want to be involved with the work of that leader, and they will be happier, more reliable, and they will feel respected and valued.

Some leadership theorists have described leadership as a process, sort of a checklist of things to do and techniques for doing those things. Such a description of leadership is seriously misleading. Just following a list of actions does not guarantee success. A person cannot successfully imitate a leader by following a checklist, instead a person must authentically have the honest and ethical values of a leader to function successfully over time.

I have watched people who were placed in leadership positions in various organizations attempt to succeed by following a leadership process checklist. They generally fail because they most often are trying to appear to be something that they are not. Examples: When they have tried to praise their employees or members to increase morale (from the checklist), their employees or members have instead seen it as disingenuous and manipulative behavior because they sensed that the leader was not sincere. When those employees or members received a recognition award (an attempt to make them feel appreciated), they instead viewed it as a cheap attempt at manipulation because they sensed that the leader was not sincere. People see right through insincerity, perhaps not immediately, but over time they will and they will be disgusted by it, and seldom forgive it. Real sincerity shines forth for every person to see.

Brother Albert Pike long ago noted that many people give lip-service to the principles of truth, honesty, respect, brotherhood love and charity. Also, that such people are often blind to their own insincerity. However, a true Freemason has taken Masonic principles to heart and lives according to them. A true Freemason doesn't have to act as if he cares about others, because he truly does care about other people and their opinions. His true sincerity is apparent to other people. A true Freemason is always authentic in his conduct and communications.

Unfortunately, there will also be people that will act or encourage behavior that is not Masonic, for the sake of expediency. A person that encourages unethical behavior will never be fully trusted by the people who heard him. They cannot help but wonder when he would be less than truthful to them, just for the sake of expediency or to just to get what he wants.

Another example are those leaders that have made organizational decisions without consultation with the members, and then presented those decisions to the members as if they had a choice, when in fact it was a *fait accompli* (a course of action already been initiated or having no other option than agreement with it). Such conduct is not Masonic.

Truly Masonic leaders encourage discussion and the exchange of ideas in stated lodge meetings. However, some people argue that subtly discouraging is an acceptable way to make a stated meeting as short as possible. I contend that in the lodges that do this, members often skip stated meetings because there is no real opportunity for real discussion and involvement. Members do not like to go to rubber stamp meetings, because they know them to be inherently disrespectful of the members, so they lose interest in the lodge. Being manipulative is always unethical and eventually self-defeating.

One of the strengths of Table Mountain Masonic lodge is that our leaders are authentic Freemasons that naturally **strive to be honorable and faithful to their word and obligations in everything that they do, and they truly respect people.**

The complete recipe for Masonic leadership, and it is also the complete recipe for success in any honest endeavor, is that **Real Masonic leadership is *principle centered leadership*.** **Principle-centered Masonic leaders are always scrupulously honest, transparent, respectful and reliable. Principle-centered Freemasons have the confidence and strength to resist any pressures to compromise their ethical principles for the sake of expediency. They are truly participative, involved and respectful in decision making processes. They build agreement, they collaborate, and cooperate. They are peace makers. They keep their passions within due bounds, and thus don't overreact to negative behaviors, criticism, or human weaknesses. They remember their obligations and never let their brothers or lodge down. They live by honor in all that they do. Any person who does these things will eventually be successful and respected.**

We tell men who are interested in Freemasonry that “we help good men, become better men”. It is true, by our processes we help good men become better leaders, better followers, better co-workers, better citizens and better husbands and fathers.

The teachings of Freemasonry are based on ethical principles that are acceptable to all good men. Freemasonry teaches understanding and charity for all mankind. It proudly proclaims that it consists of men that are obligated to extend Brotherly Love and Affection to all men everywhere. It dictates to no man as to his beliefs, either religious or secular. It seeks no advantage for its members through business or politics. As such, neither religion nor politics may be discussed in the Lodge room. Freemasonry is kindness in the home, honesty in business, courtesy in society, fairness in work, pity and concern for the unfortunate, resistance toward evil, help for the weak, forgiveness for the penitent, love for others and, above all, reverences and love for God.

Masonic Formation

Those criticizing Freemasonry: Some disturbing conclusions.

As long as there has been Freemasonry, there have been people that have opposed Freemasonry for nonsensical reasons. Modern Freemasonry, especially in the USA, is very visible and transparent about our principles and our activities. However, even today there are still some people who claim that Freemasonry is some sort of occult religious group, devil worshiping organization, anti-religion movement, sex cult, a separate religion or a worldwide conspiratorial secret society that covertly controls world events. Some of the people that make these ridiculous claims even hold leadership or influential positions in religious organizations, political organizations or in the media. The central question is why do some people promulgate such disproven and often ridiculous ideas?

As Freemasons we strive to be charitable toward all people, and therefore we tend to give those who say or write erroneous things about Freemasonry the benefit of doubt about their motives. As a result, it is natural for us to patiently and respectfully respond to our critics with truth and logic in hopes that those are sufficient to correct their misunderstandings.

After many months of diligent research, I have come to some disturbing conclusions. The reality is that good, logical, and honest people do not believe or spread lies about Freemasonry. Instead, they, like us, tend to give people the benefit of doubt about their character and nature, and they also try to seek out the truth. Reasonable persons will ask reasonable questions, seek out reliable sources of information and consider the evidence. While they may conclude that they are not interested in associating with Freemasonry, their inquiry will at least have been a respectful process.

People that believe and spread lies and misinformation about Freemasonry are not sophisticated thinkers. Additionally, some of the opponents of Freemasonry are people who suffer from cognitive or emotional issues, and others have a very self-serving interest in attacking Freemasonry. In this essay I will detail my observations and analysis, most specifically the categories of intellectual and behavioral flaws, the aberrant human psychology and the sometimes selfish interests of our opponents.

Conspiracy Believers

A conspiracy theory is defined as:

“A belief that some covert but influential organization is responsible for a circumstance or event” ... and “a false explanation for an event or situation that invokes a conspiracy by sinister and powerful groups, often political in motivation, when other explanations are more probable”.

Some conspiracy theories are even presented as pseudo academic *theories*, but no matter how conspiracy theories are dressed up or presented, they mislead and manipulate the minds of some people and instill fear and hate. Conspiracy theories are especially attractive to individuals with mental health issues, especially those with anxiety, insecurities, societal or social fears, and even minor forms of paranoia, all of which can be brought on by trauma and distress, and made worse by the use of drugs and mind altering substances. Typical of these conditions is the person's constant references to *they*, who are supposed to be doing something to harm them or their lives. Thus, some people with clinical and nonclinical mental health issues are drawn to rather absurd conspiracy theories about Freemasonry.

Other people take pleasure in conspiracy theories. They find the idea of hidden cabal or sinister organizations doing things in secret to be exciting and mysterious. Spreading a conspiracy theory can even be profitable. Some TV shows, movies and novels often use a conspiracy theory as a basis for an exciting story. A disturbing number of people consider these shows, movies and novels to be reliable sources of information, when in fact they are primarily fiction. Numerous successful novels have left the general public with some very odd ideas about Freemasonry.



Some people take great personal comfort in conspiracy theories. The idea that someone or something is secretly preventing them from achieving success is very comforting, provides them with a scapegoat on which to blame their lack of success or personal failures.

Conspiracy theories are also popular with lazy thinkers. A conspiracy theory provides a simple explanation for people who are attracted to simple and uncomplicated explanations that portray individuals and organization as either clearly evil or clearly good. For such people a conspiracy theory eliminates the need to work at understanding the nuances and elements of a situation, various factors and complex possibilities. This is why many of the most unproductive people in society believe conspiracy theories.

Conspiracy theories are also attractive to people filled with hate, anger and jealousy. Thus, pushing a conspiracy is a significant tool of those in politics. As early as the 1790s the leaders of the Roman Catholic church promulgated the idea that the masses of people in Europe and the Americas who overthrew the supposed divinely ordained monarchs aligned with the Catholic church, were just dupes of an international conspiracy of Freemasons. One version of that conspiracy theory portrayed Freemasons as satanists, trying to destroy Christianity. Another version of that conspiracy theory portrayed Freemasons as descendants of the Knights Templar, who had gone underground in the Middle Ages and since returned to avenge themselves on the church and monarchy that had expelled them. Pope Pius IX

included Freemasonry along with liberalism and freedom of conscience as evils that Catholics must oppose in his *Syllabus of Errors of 1864*. In the last 200 years the Catholic hierarchy has had a role in the persecutions of Freemasons in various countries.

The German book, *Enthüllungen des Systems der Weltbürger-Politik* ("Disclosure of the System of Cosmopolitan Politics"), published in 1786, whose author was Prussian, claimed that there was a conspiracy of Freemasons and Catholic Jesuits plotting world revolution.

The antisemite Fascists, Nazis and Communists of the 20th century claimed that Freemasons were in league with the Jews in a conspiracy against European peoples and culture. Franco (Spain) and Mussolini (Italy) persecuted and murdered them. The Nazis (Germany) forced Freemasons to wear red triangles and later murdered thousands of them. In Imperial Japan the attacks on Freemasonry mirrored the Nazis. The Communists (Lenin and Stalin) of the Soviet Union outlawed Freemasonry and persecuted anyone expressing faith in God. And some leaders in the Eastern Orthodox churches and Franco in Spain claimed that Freemasonry and Jews had helped the Communists overthrow the Russian monarchy. As you can see, these various conspiracy claims were often contradictory and always baseless.

Today, Freemasonry is still the subject of conspiracy theories. Radical Islam as represented by *Hamas* says the Freemasons are in an alliance with the Jews (Israel), the Rotary Club and the Lions club against Islam. The *Catholic Herald*, a London-based monthly magazine and website, voices the conspiracy theory that Freemasons had infiltrated the Vatican and were subverting the Holy See from within.

One of the most common conspiracy theories about Freemasons is that there is supposedly an international cabal of the elite and wealthy individuals led by Freemasons and calling themselves the *Illuminati*, that are seeking to secretly establish a *new world order*. Time and again, this conspiracy theory has been convincingly refuted, yet some opponents of Freemasonry cling to it because it satisfies some need in them. Additionally, the film industry has made many films about the supposed current existence of the *Illuminati*, tying it to current Freemasonry.

This is only a short summary of the many conspiracy theories about Freemasonry. There are so many conspiracy theories about Freemasonry that Wikipedia has devoted several pages to them. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masonic_conspiracy_theories

Heavily Biased People

Unfortunately, some people with personal problems seem to be attracted to negative representations of people and organizations. Thus, they read or listen to negative claims and outright lies about Freemasonry, and then develop a deep negative bias against anything truthful about Freemasonry. They also prefer to retain their bias against Freemasonry, rather

than make the effort to seek the truth. In a very real sense, these sad people feel empowered by their hateful behavior toward Freemasonry. Their self-righteous hate makes them feel less guilty about their own personal failures, and gives them an excuse to avoid self-examination.

Biases are the *blinders* that prevent people from seeing or accepting fair and unbiased evidence reality. A person's or group's bias prevents them from seeking, recognizing or even giving serious consideration to any evidence or logic that doesn't align with their biases.

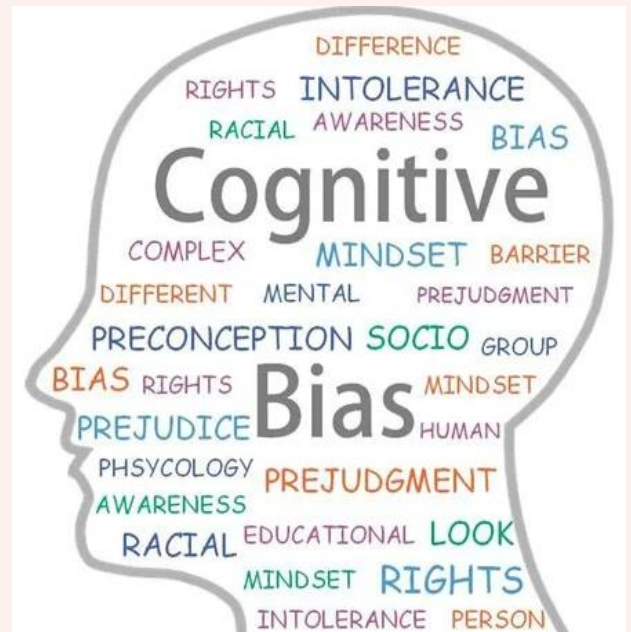
Dictionary definitions of bias include;

...prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair, and what causes a to feel or show inclination or prejudice for or against someone or something.

Preconceived ideas, also sometimes referred to as biases, are opinions that are formed with incomplete data or evidence. Preconceived ideas result in unfounded prejudices, stereotypes, false perception. This sort of bias can be the foundation of self-righteous indignation, anger and hate.

A person trying to prove themselves right about something has introduced bias into the process, which limits their ability to find and recognize significant evidence that is contrary to their preconceived ideas. To see the truth and to obtain a fresh understanding about the past and present, requires a person to broaden their perspectives, and to be willing to set aside their biases,

expectations and egos. Seeking the truth is then an intellectual journey to override the negative emotions attached to their biases and ego.



Flawed Thinkers

Have you ever listened to someone express their opinion about something, and then wondered how a sane person could ever arrive at such a conclusion? Have you ever asked someone to explain their reasoning, and they were unable to express anything other than disconnected thoughts and strident emotions? These are flawed thinkers, or rather people that either because of lack of proper education in thought processes, or an inherent lack of intellectual capacity cannot organize a chain of valid logic and then carry it to a reasonable conclusion.

The word **Logic** means *right thinking*, and refers to the process of right thinking. Many

people assume that most people can be logical, or can recognize valid logic. Unfortunately, that is a very false assumption. False logic is present in almost every public argument and debate, and nowhere in the standard American education is logic specifically taught. As a result of this, much of the population can be easily misled by false logic, emotional appeals and aggressive tactics. For the purpose of this essay, we will look at the four common errors that result in flawed logic and flawed thinking.



Relying on unreliable information sources: At the heart of this type of thinking error is relying on the opinions of others instead of seeking and analyzing the actual and viewable evidence. Some people tend to believe almost everything they read on the internet, and many people tend to believe every news report about some supposed event or scientific finding. Unfortunately, many people, including many university graduates, lack the knowledge to see the inaccuracies and flaws in these reports. Most internet websites and news reports are not entirely accurate, and some are completely false. Whether intentional or unintentional, fake news is an unfortunate reality. It may surprise you that many opponents of Freemasonry assume that movies and TV programs are accurate representations of people, places and events. In fact, movies and TV, as well as news shows, are about entertaining people, and outrageous ideas can be very entertaining.

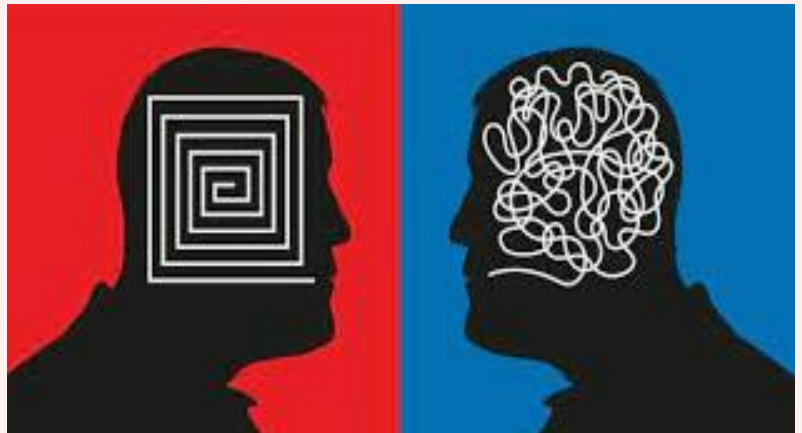
Accepting false definitions: Creating a false definition is a purposeful attempt to mislead people. It is a common technique and unfortunately it is often successful in misleading people. A dishonest person begins by selecting a word that already has a common and deep negative connotation to much of the population. Then a new definition is created and spread by the dishonest person and their colleagues. Using social media and the unwitting entertainment industry, a false definition can spread very quickly. Here is an example: in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) the word Deism carries a very negative image. Regular Freemasonry does not allow deists or atheists to join. However, some of the angry opponents of Freemasonry have chosen to spread an incorrect definition of deist. Thus, they paint Freemasons incorrectly as deists by sharing that incorrect definition of deist to people who are less knowledgeable. Some of our opponents have even redefined nonsectarian prayer as deists, and even redefined praying with non-Christians as a rejection of Christ. Many of our opponents claim that Freemasonry is a mere social club, or a just a service club, or harsher things such as elitist, anti-religion, a religion, or a cult.

Some Masonic authors have defined Freemasonry as a society of *religious men seeking to be better men*. Unfortunately, some of our opponents have claimed that “religious” in the

context means belong to the same religion or church. This is another example of using a false definition. Religious in the before described context means, *believing in the existence of God*. When seeking to learn about something, most people prefer a simple definition rather than a complete explanation. False, but short and easy-to-remember, definitions can stick in the minds of people, and then bias their interpretation of any additional information.

Using inductive thinking to come to absolute conclusions. I call this false logic because among researcher scientists it is accepted that proof of something can never be obtained by the *inductive* thinking process. To understand *inductive* thinking, imagine a complex puzzle where only ¼ of pieces are in place, and then a person decides that beyond a shadow of doubt they know exactly what the entire picture is based on that limited information. That person's mistake was deciding that their concept of the picture had to be correct, instead of realizing the picture could be something else. Of course, several more puzzle pieces might hint that it could be something else, but once a person with an overly strong ego or fragile ego has decided what the picture must be, they tend to resist letting go of their conclusion, even when presented with contradictory evidence. Most of us have met people who think they know all about Freemasonry, although they have very incomplete or flawed information, and refuse to listen to anything that doesn't align with their conclusions.

Rationalizing: The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle supposedly said that "man is a rational animal". However, the American writer Heinlein corrected noted that without specific training in logic, humans do not come to *rational* decisions, instead they *rationalize* about things. In this context, there are significant difference between being *rational*, and



rationalizing. To make a rational decision or judgment a human must consider all the evidence without bias, seeking truthful clarification and accurate information, and then by the correct application of *logic* come to a *rational conclusion*. However, most people instead *rationalize*. Driven by their biases, they start with bits of information that they can interpret as support for their preconceived options or desired outcome. They mistakenly proceed by looking for limited evidence that seemingly supports their preconceive opinions or designed outcomes, while rejecting or ignoring anything that is counter to their preconceived bias. Such people truly believe that they are rational, and are often very resistant to the idea that they are only rationalizing. Time and time again I see the opponents of Freemasonry rationalizing their biased preconceived opinions or desired outcomes by focusing on disconnected and out-of-context quotes and representations.

The Jealous and Envious

Some people assume that all Freemasons are very economically and socially successful people, and such a perception is enough for some angry people who are not economically and socially successful to be exceedingly jealous and envious of Freemasons. This group is often people that are looking for an excuse for their lack of success. To soothe their insecurity they imagine Freemasonry to be some sort of business club consisting of men that take advantage of others who are not Freemasons. This is a variation of a conspiracy theory.

There are some people that hate or resent any success that anyone has at being a more moral or virtuous person. These people have failed during most of lives at meeting any reasonable standard of morality, and they thrive on hate, anger, jealousy and vices. Some of these people mount cynical attacks on Freemasons. They specifically accuse Freemasons of personal hypocrisy, and denigrate the very idea that any man can live to such high moral and ethnic standards as Freemasons seek to live. Such people make these cynical and often vicious attacks because the very existence of Freemasons, men who live to a high moral and ethnic standard, makes a mockery of these people. Just by existing as a body of good and virtuous men Freemasonry is a repudiation of those who for self-serving reasons claim that no one can meet such a high standard.

The Self-Serving Critics

First, let us acknowledge that most clergy of whatever religion or denominations are sincere people of faith that have felt the calling to serve or promulgate their religion or denomination in a professional capacity. Let us also acknowledge the many clergy who have been or are Freemasons, and we should acknowledge their great contributions to our Craft. However, we must also realize that some of the leaders of large religions and denominations have been the most unjust critics of Freemasonry, promulgating misinformation, and stirring mistrust and hatred. Obviously this doesn't seem logical. Why would people of faith be engaged in such clearly immoral behavior? If the reason was merely ignorance, then why would supposedly learned people choose to remain ignorant when accurate information and observable evidence is readily available? There is an explanation for these contradictions , but one that requires us to first look at the past to understand the present.

In the distant past, and not the recent past, the hierarchies that oversaw the dominate or official religion of a nation, were far more than just theological thought promulgators. They were in fact extensions or partners of the ruling elite. In supporting the secular leaders, the religious hierarchy received power, some authority and great wealth. The exclusive relationship between the secular authorities and the religious authorities was mutually beneficial. This type of relationship existed in Europe, and many European colonies. The dominate religious authorities tolerated little deviance in doctrine, and absolutely no tolerance to any challenge to their power and wealth. The dominant church of each country

controlled educational access and content, they also controlled vast income earning properties, received taxes, and had a significant influence on government policies and decisions.

The *Reformation* was a religious reform movement that swept through Europe in the 1500s. It resulted in the creation of a branch of Christianity now called Protestantism, a name used collectively to refer to the many religious groups that separated from the Roman Catholic Church due to differences in doctrine. During the reformation period, long religious wars racked Western Europe as the new religious groups and their government supporters fought the governments most closely aligned with the Roman Catholic Church. After more than 100 years the wars ceased, but the dominant churches on all sides were left hypervigilant to anything that might challenge their remaining authority, power and wealth. When Freemasonry appeared and grew, it was quickly perceived as a possible threat.

The rapid spread and growth of Freemasonry coincided with the *Enlightenment* period, sometimes called the 'Age of Enlightenment', a late 17th- and 18th-century intellectual movement emphasizing reason, individualism, equality, skepticism of authority and the right of man to self-determination. Many Freemasons gravitated to this movement and became its leaders. The Roman Catholic Church, along with the Eastern Orthodox Churches were particularly appalled by Freemasonry support for free and secular public education, freedom of thought, freedom of religion, religious tolerance, and self-government, because the institution of these things would spell the end of their monopolies, the political status quo, and would reduce their influence and their sources of wealth. And that is exactly what happened in parts of Europe. After the European and colonial revolutions of the 1800s the economic power of those churches declined, except in those nations where the leadership embraced Freemasonry. The Roman Catholic Church in particular blamed Freemasonry for its loss of privilege and wealth. Today, there are many Catholic Freemasons, including clergy, but unfortunately a distrust of Freemasonry and a fear of Masonic conspiracy remains well embedded in the leadership of today's Roman Catholic church. Old wounds sometimes heal slowly and an institution such as a church is sometimes loath to admit that its past or most current leaders made errors. The situation is not helped by the existence of those **non-regular continental** lodges of French origin that claim to be Masonic, but allow atheists to join, engage in politics and have an anti-clerical stance.

In earlier times in the US preachers and church leaders were often part-time clergy. They exercised their calling on Sundays, Holy days, and for births, weddings and funerals. Especially during the westward migration, many of these *preachers* were not officially aligned with any denomination, and therefore doctrinally had a great deal of flexibility. Additionally, there might be only one preacher in a community, so people of different church backgrounds might attend the same church because there was no other option for community worship. In that era, it was very common for preachers or clergy to be Freemasons. It seemed entirely normal

to work together and socialize with men of different religious opinions, as long as there was no conflicting religious or political opinions expressed in lodge.

However, the situation today in the US is very different. I am not being critical when I say that today's denominations and churches are by necessity, serious businesses. Technically they are not-for-profit businesses, providing services, collecting revenue, paying bills and some taxes, and generating "profit" to be used to expand, or better compensate the church's employees (including the clergy). The reality is that today's denominations and churches must compete in the market place of ideas, services and facilities for customers and money. That is not an easy thing to do, and many churches are financially challenged, and the clergy poorly compensated. This results in a *self-serving bias* among some clergy. They don't like what they see as competitors. While Freemasons do not meet on Sundays, one can see how struggling clergy might be envious of a successful Masonic lodge, and misperceive that the time and donations going to Masonic activities as drawing from their business. Especially if the idea is planted in their mind by someone from their denomination's headquarters. As previously described, once with a bias in place they will look then for resources that concur with their bias and also misperceive events and statements. Their supposed theological objections to Freemasonry often echo intolerance. Some denominations and churches object to

Freemasonry because it does not specifically endorse Christianity as the only correct religion, or a specifically a perspective on individual salvation. Christian churches are not alone in this. Some Muslim clergy object to Freemasonry because it does not specifically endorse the Muslim religion as the only acceptable religion. Of course, it is not a purpose or right of



Freemasonry to endorse or be critical of any specific religion. As a result of Freemasonry's refusal to endorse or criticize any specific denomination or religion, some denominations and churches claim that by refusing to endorse a specific religion it is actually endorsing all religions as equal. They point to non-sectarian prayers as evidence of that. That is of course, false and flawed logic. The pro and cons of any religion or even the specific doctrines of any religion are never discussed in a Masonic Lodge or Masonic literature in the US. Individual Freemasons do have strong attachments to their own particular faith or church.

At heart of many denomination's and churches' complaints about Freemasonry, is their desire for Freemasonry to serve as an advocate or extension of their own religion or church, and thereby excluding members of other faiths. Such an expectation is at odds with the basic precepts of this nation, specifically freedom of religion, freedom of association, and freedom of thought.

Conclusions

After reading all this you might be thinking, “Is anyone intelligent or honest?” Well, there are many intelligent and honest people but perhaps not as many as we would like there to be. The standard estimate is that about 30% percent of the population has some mental or emotional issue, and about 70% of the total population of adults primarily come to conclusions and make decisions based on emotional reactions and fears, rather than by rational thinking using valid logic. All this means that there will always be a portion, perhaps a significant portion, of the population that can always be easily mislead and are attracted to irrational ideas and conspiracy theories about Freemasonry. Also, we can expect social media to remain an avenue used by some people to spread their flawed conclusions and conspiracy theories about us to vulnerable minds. Also, we should expect the entertainment industry to continue to invent new and crazier stories about Freemasonry to attract TV and film watchers. Additionally, there will always be those sad souls that will be jealous and envious of what that they imagine we have. Finally, we will always be attacked by some academic and religious hypercritics seeking personal gain.

So, what are we to do? **The answer is that first and above all we should be exemplary Freemasons.** By that I mean that each one of us should strive to be exemplars (excellent models) of *faith, charity* and *brotherly love*. We should be exemplars of *rationality* and *logic*. We should be superb models of *tolerance, kindness, patriotism* and *good citizenship*. We should be exemplars of *patience, calmness* and *self-control*. Exemplars of the Masonic virtues of *Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance* and *Justice*. We should be exemplars of every *high standards of private and public conduct and self-improvement*. We should always live and act *honorably* and *honestly* in all we do, thereby becoming admired role models for our communities. And if we do this, our light will shine forth and be seen by those people who are emotionally, intellectually and morally prepared to recognize that light. If we do this, good men will continue to come to us seeking to become better men.

Our detractors should not go unchallenged in the arena of public opinion. We should all strive to increase our knowledge and understanding of all aspects and tenets of Freemasonry, and through an increased knowledge of the seven liberal arts, develop the skills to successfully counter the false information of our detractors. Of course, we should never slip into boasting or self-adulation. However, we are what we are, and should not hide our Masonic values and projects.



Freemasonry around the World

Freemasonry in Italy

Today, Italy is a nation of many regions, a vibrant democracy with free speech and intense national debates on almost every subject. However, after the fall of the Roman empire, and until the mid-1800s, Italy degenerated into a place of many small and often changing city or regional states, tightly run by totalitarian families, local royalty, foreign invaders, or the Catholic Pope. Power and boundaries often changed due to wars, marriages, invasions, economic success or failure, and relationships with the Catholic Pope. This accounts for Italy's failure to establish any significant foreign or colonial possessions in the age of colonial expansionism. Individual states, focused on maintaining their borders, had no significant resources or manpower to spare on colonialization. Instead, the more unified nations of Spain, Portugal, France and Great Britain acquired most of the colonies.

However, Italians found ways to thrive. Blessed with natural resources, good weather, skilled artisans, fertile lands for in demand products, a history of trading contacts, and an advantageous central location on the shipping lands of the Mediterranean Sea, the wealth of the Italian city states were based on business and trade. Additionally, the Catholic church based in Rome received wealth from overseas, primarily the colonial extensions of their church, which funded much building and art in the Papal-controlled areas, and purchases from other parts of Italy.

With contact with other lands, many influences and ideas arrive. In some ways Italy was a land of innovation, but in other ways it was backwards. Much of the population did not share in the wealth of the leading families and the Catholic church. As a result, Italy was long a cauldron of small revolts and conspiracies, which for the most part were viciously put down. This resulted in many so-called secret societies created for various purposes and causes, and these grew in number as the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment penetrated the Italian states.

Assemblies of operative Masons had long existed in Italy. During the Roman Empire the various craftsmen, especially stone artisans, had officially sanctioned societies that ensured craft and societal standards were taught, and which provided for the sick, elderly, widows and orphans. These also existed in the Eastern Roman Empire, even after the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

In the later divided Italy, small assemblies of operative Masons continued to meet for the good of their profession and social purposes. Pictures and other art depicting them, show them displaying most of the same tools and symbols used in modern Freemasonry. Beyond this information, we know very little about the activities of these assemblies. We don't know if or how much those artisans were in contact with operative Masons in France or England.

However, we do know that architectural designs and building techniques were spreading beyond borders.

The early history of Freemasonry in Italy precedes the unification of the country in 1861 and is described below as it occurred in the many separate states in the Italian peninsula. In tracing the history of Italian Freemasonry, the lack of records is a major problem. Many Masonic documents and records were burned by Fascists in the 1920s. Please note the courage and dedication to Freemasonry that so many brothers had, to risk their lives to try to keep Freemasonry alive in Italy during such dangerous times.

We know that a lodge of Freemasons name Fidelitas was established in Calabria in 1723. This is often cited as the first Masonic Lodge in Italy. In the independent state of Tuscany, a lodge was founded in Florence in 1723, however its founders were later imprisoned and tortured to death. Two lodges were formed in Livorno in 1763 and 1765 under the Ancient Grand Lodge of England, and the Premier Grand Lodge of England produced two more in the same city in 1771. Lodges were also formed when French troops were quartered in Leghorn in 1796–97, but all were closed by the authorities in 1800. Lodges were again formed in Florence and Leghorn in 1807-09 after it was annexed by France, but when French rule ended in 1814, so did Freemasonry. Freemasonry appears to not have returned to Tuscany until 1859 when the united Italian state was established.

In Rome and the Papal States, a lodge was established by Scottish and French influencers in 1724 which seems to have survived until 1735. In 1733 an English-speaking lodge was established. However, in 1737, the first Papal Bull (pronouncement) against Freemasonry was issued, making it illegal in the Papal States. That officers of the lodges were then arrested by inquisition officials and the lodges closed. However, foreign Freemasons continued to meet in secret. A permanent lodge was established in Rome in 1787, but was erased by the inquisition after just two years. After the French invasion of 1809, Freemasonry flourished in Rome, but was later suppressed by the Pope in 1814. The Grand Orient of Turin managed to establish a lodge in 1861, but it was not until 1870 and the incorporation of the Papal States into the Kingdom of Italy that Freemasonry was again permitted.

There is evidence of a Masonic lodge in Naples in 1728, and another lodge in Naples in 1731, but very little is known about them. It is likely that they limited their record keeping to conceal their existence or that most evidence of them were destroyed by the authorities. Another lodge was founded in Naples in 1750, but in 1751 the foreign ruler of that area, the Spanish monarchy, banned all Masonic activity. However, that Spanish leader changed his mind the next year, entrusting his son's education to a Freemason and a priest. As a result of that, in 1764 a national Grand Lodge was established and Freemasonry seemed firmly established in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. However, in 1775 the ban on Freemasonry returned. Some Masons continued to secretly meet which eventually resulted in their arrest.

Queen Caroline intervened on behalf of those Masons, convincing her husband to revoke the edict. However, in 1781 the ban was again renewed, and then again revoked two years later, but with such restrictions on activities that Masons couldn't effectively operate. Freemasonry flourished briefly during the French occupation of 1804 to 1814, However, upon their departure the ban was again imposed. From then on Freemasonry in the two Sicilies had a clandestine existence, the last functioning lodge was in Palermo in 1848.

Concerning Genoa and Liguria areas, between 1745 and 1749 there were at least two lodges, one in Bordighera and the other in Genoa. Both were connected with the presence of French troops. Towards the end of the 18th century, two more lodges were formed in Genoa. Two more came into existence under the Grand Orient of France when Liguria was annexed by Napoleon, but in 1814 the region was given to Sardinia and Freemasonry ceased to exist.

In 1746, a lodge was founded in the independent Republic of Venice. It survived until 1755 when its leaders were arrested. A lodge were founded in 1772, which remained active until 1777. The Rite of Strict Observance established a lodge in Padua in 1781, and shortly thereafter another in Vicenza. However, all Freemasonry in Venice was suppressed in 1785.

Milan and the Lombardy region was for some time under the control of the Austrians. The lodge founded in Milan in 1756 was quickly discovered by the authorities, which led to an edict banning Masonic meetings throughout Lombardy. However, this lodge somehow continued in secret. Later the ban was removed and In 1776 a lodge was open in Cremona.

In 1797, most of Northern Italy east of Piedmont and north of the Papal States became the Cisalpine Republic. In 1801, it became the Italian Republic and in 1805 the Kingdom of Italy, with Napoleon as King. The Grand Orient of France formed the new state's first lodge in Milan in 1801, and in 1805 Milan hosted a Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. The Grand Orient of Naples amalgamated with the new body, and a new Grand Orient was born, recognized by Paris. Freemasonry briefly flourished, until the new state was broken up and Freemasonry suppressed in 1814.

During the period when Freemasonry was first being established in Italy, Savoy and Piedmont were part of the Kingdom of Sardinia. In 1749, a lodge was founded on the basis of a charter from the provincial grand master for Savoy and Piedmont, coming originally from the Grand Lodge of London in 1739. In 1752, the same lodge took the name of the Mother Grand Lodge, with the power to create other lodges in all the territories of the Kingdom of Sardinia. In 1765 three of them were created. However, after the regions were handed back to Sardinia in 1814, Freemasonry was repressed.

As you can see, the regions of Italy were divided and constantly undergoing changing ownership and leadership changes. Freemasonry would arrive and flourish, be banned, later return, only to banned again. Freemasonry's success in Italy largely depended on the degree

of enthusiasm with which Papal bans were enforced in the various states. However, Freemasonry was eventually suppressed in most of Italy until the Risorgimento (Re-establishment or Re-organization) which created modern united Italy.

The Risorgimento, or unification of Italy, began in earnest with the 1861 acquisition of most of Northern Italy by King Victor Emmanuel II of Sardinia. This followed by several years of diplomacy and military campaigns, often lead by Giuseppe Garibaldi. Garibaldi was quite a character, he was at different times and places an Italian general, patriot and supporter of a republic, and other times a foreign revolutionary, internationalist, a mercenary and perhaps a self-aggrandizing opportunist. He was also a Freemason of sorts, although his devotion to it has been occasionally called into question. At the age of 37, in 1844, Garibaldi was initiated in Lodge of Montevideo, (now Uruguay in South America). It was an irregular lodge under a Brazilian Freemasonry not recognized by the main international masonic bodies. By the end of 1861, 22 masonic lodges joined to become the Grand Orient of Italy. Garibaldi was named as honorary Past Grand Master. However, while Italy was united in name, it was divided by politics, perspectives, history, opinions and values. As a result, there was much splintering of Masonic organizations, resulting in multiple Grand Lodges, of different rites, both regular, irregular, and somewhere in-between.

Between 1864 and 1867 there were four Grand Bodies in Italy, the Grand Orient based in Florence, a Scottish Rite Council in Palermo and another one in Milan. Garibaldi personally intervened. His masonic congress in Naples in 1867 started a process of unification of the grand bodies, which was completed in 1873, and to split over disagreements about public schools and political activities of some lodges. Thus, there formed the Grand Lodge of Italy in opposition to the Grand Orient, with some Scottish Rite bodies operating independently.

During the 1700s and 1800s, Freemasonry was an international movement developing along different lines in different areas. A variety of Masonic Rites were being created, many of which still exist, in some places. The Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraïm is a Masonic Rite founded in Naples, Italy in 1881 by the merger of two older rites; the Rite of Misraïm and the Rite of Memphis. This Rite is sometimes known as "Egyptian Freemasonry" due to the invocation of hermetic esoteric symbolism referencing Ancient Egypt in its system of degrees. The rite is noted for its high number of degrees in its system; it has 99 degrees, though some modern French variations practice only 33 degrees. The Rite of Memphis-Misraïm was governed by a *Grand Hierophant* from 1881 until 1923, the first being Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had also been



Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy. By 1923 the Rite had broken into various factions. Today the Rite of Memphis-Misraim is not recognized by any regular Anglophone Masonic organization. However, it is practiced in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador by lodges under regular Grand Lodges. It also has significant following in France and Brazil. In the US, it is under control of the College of Rites.

Benito Mussolini was a Fascist who rose to power in Italy in the early 20th century. He banned Freemasonry in 1925. The Grand Master of the Grand Orient and 44 other masons were sent, without trial, into exile in the remote Lipari Islands. There Italian Freemasonry continued in exile. Freemasonry did not return to Italy until the fall of Fascism, near the end of the Second World War.

In December 1943, the Grand Lodge of Italy reconstituted the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite. There followed years of schism and confusion, as different groups attempted to revive their own brand of Freemasonry. It seems that Italy was very divided.

The Grand Orient of Italy was recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1972 (the recognition was transferred to the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy in 1993, although many other regular Grand Lodges continue to recognize the Grand Orient). In 1973, attempts to unite the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge failed due to the Grand Lodge's acceptance of female initiation. 200 lodges of the Grand Lodge transferred their allegiance to the Grand Orient. The Grand Lodge, continued in its own tradition and prospered.



A major scandal affecting the Grand Orient arose in the 1980s from the exposure of illegal activity in a lodge called Propaganda Due (P2). The lodge was originally formed in 1877 as Propaganda massonica. Its purpose was to ensure privacy for masons of national

importance, both within and outside the organization. This lodge continued for many years with minimal to no supervision. After an investigation in 1981, a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry concluded that the lodge was subversive, and a "criminal organization". The lodge was legally dissolved on 25 January 1982. The P2 scandal seriously damaged the image of Freemasonry in Italy, damaging all the various Italian Masonic movements, and not just for the Grand Orient of Italy, of which P2 was a part.



Today Freemasonry is flourishing in Italy despite the P2 scandal and the opposition of the Roman Catholic church hierarchy. The following are the current major Masonic obediences (both regular and irregular) in Italy:

- Grand Orient of Italy
- Grand Lodge of Italy; the "Piazza del Gesù" or "Palazzo Vitelleschi".
- Regular Grand Lodge of Italy
- Gran Loggia Italiana
- Ordine Massonico Tradizionale Italiano
- Gran Loggia Massonica Femminile d'Italia
- Gran Loggia Nazionale dei Liberi Muratori d'Italia
- Gran Loggia Italiana dei Riti Egizi

Miscellaneous

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The 150 History of Table Mountain Masonic Lodge # 124

Our 150 year history of Table Mountain Lodge, covering the years 1857 thru 2008, is still available to you. This book contains many rare historical pictures, is enjoyable reading and is well indexed for research purposes. It is professionally produced, spiral bound and available to you at our cost. Unfortunately, the price of paper has dramatically increased, so these copies cost \$30 each. To obtain a copy of this important Masonic historical record, please contact our Secretary - **Brian Grandfield PM, 530-864-6323**, email: bgrandfield@gmail.com

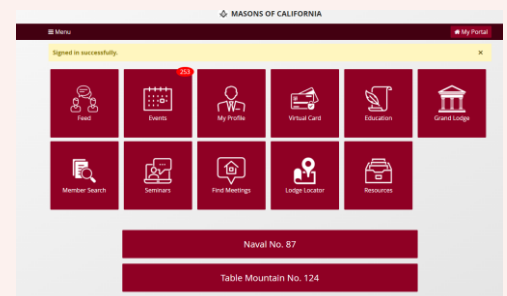
Printing your own Dues Card

To print your dues card. Using your computer, open your browser and go to <https://freemason.org/>. In the right corner, push “member sign in”

This is the “sign up” and the “sign in” page. If you have never been to this website before, then go to “Sign up” in the lower left. It will only take you a minute to create your password. You will need your member number which is on your dues card. After that you sign in using your email and password

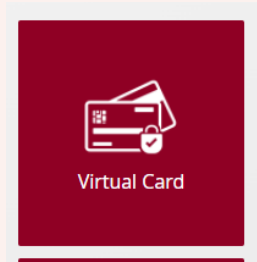
This will be the page you see after signing in

There will be a noticed posted on this page if you have not paid your dues. There will also be a link so that you can immediately pay your dues using a credit card.



To download and print your dues card, go to “Virtual Card”

Follow the very simple instructions to print your Due card. The new dues card does not have to be signed by the lodge secretary.



There is also a I Member 2.0 app for your smart phone. Find out about it at:

<https://masonichome.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Intro.iMemberLOApp.pdf>

Contact Information

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[Table Mountain Building/Rooms Rentals](#)

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Table Mountain Building Association President - Doug Campbell, 530-519-1695,

email: dgcphd@gmail.com

Journal / Tresleboard - Doug Campbell, 530-519-1695 email: dgcphd@gmail.com

Table Mountain Lodge's website - <https://lodge124.freemason.org>

Doug Campbell, 530-519-1695,

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DeMolay - Mike Meyer, 530-514-0252, email: allaboutlocks@gmail.com

Cole Hamilton, 858-342-5031, email: oldkingcreations@att.net

Rainbow Girls (for all of Butte County) – Laura Ray, 530-828-4748.

Shrine / Shriners – Woody Nelson, 916-202-6942, email: woody@wolfranchfarm.com

<https://beashrinernow.com>

York Rite – <http://royalarch.org/locations.html>

Scottish Rite – David Anderson, Sacramento Valley Scottish Rite.

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Paradise and Oroville Eastern Star – Peg McElroy, Secretary Golden Feather Chapter,

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