



Friendship Lodge No. 210 Trestleboard

2500 Masonic Drive – San Jose, CA 95125
Stated Meeting – First Thursday of Every Month

DECEMBER - 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 <i>Installations</i> <i>South Valley 187,</i> <i>11:00 AM</i> <i>Palo Alto 346,</i> <i>5:00 PM</i>
3	4 <i>Stated meetings</i> <i>Golden Rule 479</i> <i>San Jose 10</i> <i>Los Altos 712</i> <i>Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	5 <i>Stated meetings</i> <i>Mt View De Anza 194</i> <i>Palo Alto 346</i> <i>Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	6 <i>Stated meeting</i> <i>Willow Glen</i> <i>Fraternity 399</i> <i>Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	7 <i>FRIENDSHIP</i> <i>Stated Meeting Dinner</i> <i>6:30 PM</i>	8 <i>Bethel 129</i> <i>7:00 PM</i>	9 <i>Installations</i> <i>San Jose 10</i> <i>3:00 PM</i> <i>Friendship 210</i> <i>4:00 PM</i>
10 <i>Los Altos 712</i> <i>Installation</i> <i>2:00 PM</i>	11	12 <i>Santa Clara</i> <i>DeMolay</i> <i>7:00 PM</i>	13	14 <i>FRIENDSHIP</i> <i>2nd Degree</i> <i>Henry Peña</i> <i>7:00 PM</i>	15	16 <i>Bethel 129</i> <i>Stated Meeting</i> <i>10:00 AM</i>
17	18	19	20	21 <i>FRIENDSHIP</i> <i>No Meeting</i>	22	23
24	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26 <i>Santa Clara</i> <i>DeMolay</i> <i>7:00 PM</i>	27	28 <i>FRIENDSHIP</i> <i>Stated Meeting Practice</i> <i>7:00 PM</i> <i>Officers</i>	29	30 <i>South Valley 187</i> <i>Installation</i> <i>11:00 AM</i>
31	1 <i>New Year's Day</i>					

From the East



I'm looking forward to our Installation of Officers on December 9. On the one hand, I'm happy to step down from my third tour of duty (second tour in Friendship Lodge) as Worshipful Master. On the other hand, a big job awaits me and the incoming Lodge Secretary.

So just what qualifies me to be the Lodge's Secretary? Basically, the Lodge elected me and I agreed to serve.

Besides that, I have experience. I was the Secretary of Fraternity Lodge No. 399 (now Willow Glen-Fraternity Lodge No. 399) from 1996 through 2002. We had no iMember system in those days. Everything was on paper records or in your homemade database. The Grand Lodge did not have Secretary & Treasurer retreats. If you needed guidance, you reached out to a more experienced Secretary in another Lodge, like Jim Greer at Friendship.

Ceremony of Constitution

November 3 was the Constitution ceremony for the new Mission Peak Lodge No. 884. The event was held at the magnificent Oakland Scottish Rite Center.

Friendship Lodge was well represented this year by WM Daniel Doornbos, PM; SW Gilbert Cruz, JW Andrew Litfin, Secretary Helmuth Litfin, PM; and next year's Junior Warden, Ronald Rebong.

Mission Peak Lodge was formed in the hope of starting a Masonic Lodge that would meet in the city of Milpitas. There are lots of Masons living in Milpitas, and they have a substantial drive to attend their respective Lodges in the South Bay area.

For the time being, Mission Peak meets in the Siminoff Center at the Masonic Home.

Grand Master's Reception

Our biggest and grandest event of the year took place on Saturday November 4th, when Friendship Lodge hosts the Grand Master's Reception on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Masonic Officers Association.

My hat is off to Angela Athans, the Events Manager at the San Jose Scottish Rite Center, who sat down with me to plan the table arrangements, decorations, food service, set-up and clean-up, and music for the event.

Among the team from Friendship Lodge were Gilbert Cruz, Andrew Litfin, Helmuth Litfin, PM; Ron Rebong, Sean O'Hara, Mike Smith, Jim North, Dan Chaid, and Al Dorji. Oh, and I was there, too. As Master of the Host Lodge, I assumed the duties of Master of Ceremonies.

The event was to recognize and honor our Grand Master, MW Sean Metroka and his wife, Margaret. MW Metroka came down from the head table and stood on the floor, where he gave an inspiring talk and received a standing ovation.

MW Metroka was pleased to accept a \$1,000.00 gift to the California Masonic Foundation from the SCVMOA, and a \$500.00 donation to CMF from Friendship Lodge. My wife Gillian and I gave the Grand Master and his wife a jar of our home-grown and homemade spiced nectarine jam. Hint: Anything homemade scores points with Grand Masters.

Bro. Hristo Kolev prepared two desserts, cannoli and bread pudding. He made enough for twice as the number of people we had but there were no leftovers by the time we departed for home.

Sean O'Hara ran out and bought sodas, which I forgot to bring. And Andrew did a great job as bartender. Gillian served her now-famous cactus juice margaritas, which were a big hit.

Like the nectarines, we grow prickly pear cactus. If you've even handled prickly pears, you know they have tiny hair-like barbed thorns, called "glochids", that easily detach and lodge in your skin. The thorns go right through gardening gloves, so I bought a pair of welder's gloves, trying to handle them safely. The gloves worked, but we still got thorns in our arms and had to dig them out with a magnifying glass and tweezers. Somewhat of a nuisance but all part of the experience.

In closing, I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all the Lodge officers, committeemen, members, and their wives whose time, effort, wisdom, and contributions enabled us to have a successful year in 2023, and to leave the Lodge in good shape to face the future.

Daniel Doornbos, PM
Master

From the West



Greetings Brethren,

I hope everyone had a thankful get together with family. I love the Thanksgiving Holiday because it also means that Christmas is just few weeks away.

From our iMember 2.0, from the Grand Lodge of California from the month of October there were 4 inquiries that were sent to our Lodge. There are three applicants which we need to follow up. And we have 8 Entered Apprentices and 3 Fellowcrafts, hopefully we can raise them to the sublime degree of Master Mason.

Bro. Henry Peña will be doing his proficiency during our December Stated Meeting. Let's us support him by being present during his proficiency.

Lastly, I like to congratulate to our elected and appointed Officers for the service they will give in the ensuing year.

It was a pleasure serving our Lodge as Senior Warden, and I hope we continue to grow in membership as well as to the newly raised to step up in serving our Lodge.

Happy Holiday, Merry Christmas and let's look forward to a more fruitful year ahead.

Let us continue to Connect, Communicate, and Commit.

Fraternally,
Gilbert Cruz, Senior Warden

From the South



Fraternal Greetings from the South,

What a year this has been! For my first time in the South, I feel truly blessed to have had such an amazing team behind me to ensure the food this year has been amazing.

My eternal thanks go to Bro. Jeff Hiatt, Bro. Tony Gonzales, every brother who served as a member of the Hoodwinked Horde, the wonderful people of the Bethel, and everyone else who helped in every way possible from set up to clean up and everything in between. My most heartfelt thanks goes to each and every one of you who stood by me in good times and bad.

As you might have heard, the Hoodwinked Horde has unfortunately decided to disband after 9 years of service. Their longstanding hard work gave Friendship its reputation as having some of the best dinners in the Valley, and their absence will be sorely missed. Their final hurrah will be the December dinner, where we will do our traditional Prime Rib dinner!

As a reminder, the Prime Rib dinner is more expensive than other dinners, at \$15 per person instead of \$10. If you have a Pre-Paid Dinner Card, the additional cost is already factored in when you paid.

Lastly, please give a warm welcome to Bro Ron Rebong, who will be your Junior Warden in the coming Masonic year. I wish him the best of good fortunes in the upcoming year as we navigate what to do without our Horde.

I thank you all again and have a Happy Christmas / Hanukkah / Yule / Kwanzaa / Festivus / all the others I'm missing.

Fraternally,
Andrew Litfin, Junior Warden

Training Camp



All degree practices happen on Thursdays from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. If you cannot attend the practice, kindly let me know so we don't wait around for you to show up. If you miss a practice, you are still expected to learn the material we discussed that evening.

There is no Officers Association Meeting (OAM) in December. We start again on January 25 at Liberty Lodge No. 299.

Praise from our Inspector

At the SCVMOA meeting on November 13, Wor. Dinesh Chhabra proudly announced that unlike some of the other Lodges in the Association, Friendship Lodge had fully qualified its Officer Corps for Installation. That's not me making the claim, it came from the Brother authorized to judge our proficiency. What is coming from me is thanks and appreciation for the time and effort each Officer put into learning and performing his part.

Installation of Officers

The Installation of Officers for 2024 will be held on Saturday, December 9, 4:00 PM, at the San Jose Masonic Center. Dress for Officers is tuxedo. Other members may wear a business suit or sports coat, dress shirt, tie, and slacks.

Stated Meeting Practice

In 2024, there will be a new Master in the East. Our goal is to have a smooth, productive, and time-efficient Stated Meeting on January 4.

Therefore, we will hold a Lodge Stated Meeting practice at 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 28. All 2024 Officers are urged to attend. Dress is casual.

Daniel Doornbos, PM
Officers Coach

Reverend's Corner



Reverend Gene is in a rehabilitation facility recovering from a fall. He hopes to be home by the end of November. Unfortunately, he cannot contribute an article for this issue of the Trestleboard. He very much appreciates the Lodge members who have visited him.

Member Dues for 2024

Annual dues for Friendship Lodge in 2024 are **\$113.50**. The change is due to an increase of \$5.00 in the per capita tax that we pay to the Grand Lodge of California for each individual member. Your 2024 dues are payable on the first of January 2024.

Two ways to pay

If you have an iMember account, you can pay your dues online with a credit card. And you can always pay with a check made out to Friendship Lodge No. 210, in the amount of \$113.50, and mail it to our Secretary:

Helmuth Litfin, Secretary
Friendship Lodge No. 210
2500 Masonic Drive
San Jose CA 95125-2019

When it's a problem...

For some members, paying annual dues is a challenge. Maybe you live on a fixed income, are between jobs, or have major family obligations.

If paying your dues requires an unreasonable sacrifice, place a confidential call to the Master of the Lodge and request a remission of your dues for this year.

Secretary's Table



2023 Membership Dues

As of this writing, there are 13 members of Friendship Lodge who have not yet paid their 2023 dues. Note that member dues are payable on the *first* day of the year, not the last day.

2023 member dues are \$108.50. Check your dues card to see if you paid for 2023.

If you have not yet paid your dues for 2023, write a check made out to Friendship Lodge No. 210, in the amount of \$108.50, and mail it to our Secretary:

Helmut Litfin, Secretary
Friendship Lodge No. 210
2500 Masonic Drive
San Jose CA 95125-2019

You can also pay your 2023 and 2024 dues at the same time with one check.

You can also pay your dues online through your iMember account.

December Events:

December 7th – Stated Meeting December dinner, cost is \$15.00.

Dress: Business suit or sports coat and tie.

During the dinner we will hand out anniversary pins to Lodge Brothers who are completing a five-year interval of service this year.

During the meeting, we finalize our plans for the Installation of Officers on December 9th.

December 9th – Friendship Lodge's Annual Installation of Officers. Social at 4:00 PM, Installation at 5:00 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM. We are switching to a Saturday ceremony for greater convenience. Dress for Officers is tuxedo. Other members may wear a business suit or sports coat, dress shirt, tie, and slacks.

December 14th – Bro. Henry Peña receives his Fellowcraft Degree. 7:00 PM. Officers wear tuxedos. Sideliners wear a business suit or sports coat, tie, and slacks. Refreshments to follow the degree.

December 21st – This date is too close to Christmas, so everybody will be focused on the upcoming holiday. We will NOT hold a practice that night.

December 28th – The Friendship Lodge officers will hold a practice for the January Stated Meeting. Dress is casual.

December Birthdays

2 – Michael Brill 9 – Kendall Mills, PM
4 – Adam Sickles 12 – Maurice Taber
4 – Paul Lyew, PM 15 – Gary Cook
5 – David Girton



The History of Christmas

From the History Channel

How Did Christmas Start?

The middle of winter has long been a time of celebration around the world. Centuries before the arrival of the man called Jesus, early Europeans celebrated light and birth in the darkest days of winter. Many peoples rejoiced during the winter solstice, when the worst of the winter was behind them, and they could look forward to longer days and extended hours of sunlight.

In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. In recognition of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would bring home large logs, which they would set on fire. The people would feast until the log burned out, which could take as many as 12 days. The Norse believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year.

The end of December was a perfect time for celebration in most areas of Europe. At that time of year, most cattle were slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter. For many, it was the only time of year when they had a supply of fresh meat. In addition, most wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.

In Germany, people honored the pagan god Oden during the mid-winter holiday. Germans were terrified of Oden, as they believed he made nocturnal flights through the sky to observe his people, and then decide who would prosper or perish. Because of his presence, many people chose to stay inside.

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2023 Officers

Officers

(Wives/Ladies)

Master

Daniel Doornbos, PM (Gillian) 408-802-7480

Senior Warden

Gilbert Cruz (Monette) 408-483-1964

Junior Warden

Andrew Litfin 408-832-5846

Treasurer

Kendall Mills, PM (Janet) 408-281-4084

Secretary

Helmuth Litfin (Evonne) 408-421-9381

Chaplain

Chase Traficanti (Melissa) 775-750-9921

Senior Deacon

Robert Asuncion (Cindy) 408-717-2448

Junior Deacon

Sean O'Hara (Savannah) 559-862-9372

Marshal

Al Dorji (Hakimeh) 408-313-4781

Senior Steward

Mike Smith (Bonnie) 408-483-8985

Junior Steward

Dan Chaid (Theresa) 408-393-8905

Tiler

Jim North (Tami) 408-202-4813

Inspector 345th Masonic District

Dinesh Chhabra, PM (Meenu) 908-247-9288

Officers Coach

Daniel Doornbos, PM (Gillian) 408-802-7480

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FriendshipLodge210

Website: <https://friendship210.org/>

Saturnalia and Christmas

In Rome, where winters were not as harsh as those in the far north, Saturnalia—a holiday in honor of Saturn, the god of agriculture—was celebrated. Beginning in the week leading up to the winter solstice and continuing for a full month, Saturnalia was a hedonistic time, when food and drink were plentiful, and the normal Roman social order was turned upside down. For a month, enslaved people were given temporary freedom and treated as equals. Business and schools were closed so that everyone could participate in the holiday's festivities.

Also, around the time of the winter solstice, Romans observed Juvenalia, a feast honoring the children of Rome. In addition, members of the upper classes often celebrated the birthday of Mithra, the god of the unconquerable sun, on December 25. It was believed that Mithra, an infant god, was born of a rock. For some Romans, Mithra's birthday was the most sacred day of the year.

Is Christmas Really the Day Jesus Was Born?

In the early years of Christianity, Easter was the main holiday; the birth of Jesus was not celebrated. In the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. Unfortunately, the Bible does not mention date for his birth (a fact Puritans later pointed out in order to deny the legitimacy of the celebration). Although some evidence suggests that his birth may have occurred in the spring (why would shepherds be herding in the middle of winter?), Pope Julius I chose December 25. It is commonly believed that the church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the custom spread to Egypt by the year 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century.

By holding Christmas at the same time as traditional winter solstice festivals, church leaders increased the chances that Christmas would be popularly embraced but gave up the ability to dictate how it was celebrated. By the Middle Ages, Christianity had, for the most part, replaced pagan religion.

On Christmas, believers attended church, then celebrated raucously in a drunken, carnival-like atmosphere similar to today's Mardi Gras. Each year, a beggar or student would be crowned the "lord of misrule" and eager celebrants played the part of his subjects. The poor would go to the houses of the rich

and demand their best food and drink. If owners failed to comply, their visitors would most likely terrorize them with mischief. Christmas became the time of year when the upper classes could repay their real or imagined "debt" to society by entertaining less fortunate citizens.

When Christmas Was Cancelled

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. By popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday.

The pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston. Anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. By contrast, in the Jamestown settlement, Captain John Smith reported that Christmas was enjoyed by all and passed without incident.

After the American Revolution, English customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. In fact, Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870.

Washington Irving Reinvents Christmas in America

It wasn't until the 19th century that Americans began to embrace Christmas. Americans re-invented Christmas and changed it from a raucous carnival holiday into a family-centered day of peace and nostalgia. But what about the 1800s piqued American interest in the holiday?

The early 19th century was a period of class conflict and turmoil. During this time, unemployment was high and gang rioting by the disenfranchised classes often occurred during the Christmas season. In 1828, the New York city council instituted the city's first police force in response to a Christmas riot. These events catalyzed certain members of the upper classes to begin to change the way Christmas was celebrated in America.

In 1819, best-selling author Washington Irving wrote *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, gent.*, a series of stories about the celebration of Christmas in an English manor house. The sketches feature a squire who invited the peasants into his home for the holiday. In contrast to

the problems faced in American society the two groups mingled effortlessly. In Irving's mind, Christmas should be a peaceful, warm-hearted holiday bringing groups together across lines of wealth or social status. Irving's fictitious celebrants enjoyed "ancient customs," including the crowning of a Lord of Misrule. Irving's book, however, was not based on any holiday celebration he had attended—in fact, many historians say that Irving's account actually "invented" tradition by implying that it described the true customs of the season.

A Christmas Carol

Around this time, English author Charles Dickens created the classic holiday tale, *A Christmas Carol*. The story's message—the importance of charity and good will towards all humankind—struck a powerful chord in the United States and England and showed members of Victorian society the benefits of celebrating the holiday.

The family was also becoming less disciplined and more sensitive to the emotional needs of children during the early 1800s. Christmas provided families with a day when they could lavish attention and gifts on their children without appearing to "spoil" them.

As Americans began to embrace Christmas as a perfect family holiday, old customs were unearthed. People looked toward recent immigrants and Catholic and Episcopalian churches to see how the day should be celebrated. In the next 100 years, Americans built a Christmas tradition all their own that included pieces of many other customs, including decorating trees, sending holiday cards and gift-giving.

Although most families quickly bought into the idea that they were celebrating Christmas how it had been done for centuries, Americans had really re-invented a holiday to fill the cultural needs of a growing nation.

Who Invented Santa Claus?

The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back to a monk named St. Nicholas who was born in Turkey around A. D. 280. St. Nicholas gave away all of his inherited wealth and traveled the countryside helping the poor and sick, becoming known as the protector of children and sailors.

St. Nicholas first entered American popular culture in the late 18th century in New York, when Dutch families gathered to honor the anniversary of the death of "Sint Nikolaas" (Dutch for Saint Nicholas), or "Sinter Klaas" for short. "Santa Claus" draws his name from this abbreviation.

In 1822, Episcopal minister Clement Clarke Moore wrote a Christmas poem called "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas," more popularly known today by its first line: "Twas The Night Before Christmas." The poem depicted Santa Claus as a jolly man who flies from home to home on a sled driven by reindeer to deliver toys.

The iconic version of Santa Claus as a jolly man in red with a white beard and a sack of toys was immortalized in 1881, when political cartoonist Thomas Nast drew on Moore's poem to create the image of Old Saint Nick we know today.

Christmas Facts

- Each year, 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States alone. There are about 15,000 Christmas tree farms in the United States, and trees usually grow for between four and 15 years before they are sold.
- In the Middle Ages, Christmas celebrations were rowdy and raucous—a lot like today's Mardi Gras parties.
- When Christmas was cancelled: From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and lawbreakers were fined five shillings.
- Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States on June 26, 1870.
- The first eggnog made in the United States was consumed in Captain John Smith's 1607 Jamestown settlement.
- Poinsettia plants are named after Joel R. Poinsett, an American minister to Mexico, who brought the red-and-green plant from Mexico to America in 1828.
- The Salvation Army has been sending Santa Claus-clad donation collectors into the streets since the 1890s.
- Rudolph, "the most famous reindeer of all," was the product of Robert L. May's imagination in 1939. The copywriter wrote a poem about the reindeer to help lure customers into the Montgomery Ward department store.
- Construction workers started the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree tradition in 1931.

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas>