



Friendship Lodge No. 210 Trestleboard

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

JULY – 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 <i>Stated Meeting Willow Glen Fraternity 399 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	2 <i>FRIENDSHIP Stated Meeting Dinner 6:30 PM Casual dress</i>	3	4 <i>Independence Day</i> 
5	6 <i>Stated Meetings Golden Rule 479 San Jose 10 Los Altos 712 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	7 <i>Stated Meetings Mt View DeAnza 194 Palo Alto 346 Dinner 6:30 PM</i>	8	9 <i>FRIENDSHIP Ritual Practice 7:00 to 9:00 PM</i>	10	11 <i>Sciots Cornerstone Awards & Dinner San Jose Scottish Rite Center, 6:00 PM</i> <i>Due date for Lodge Scholarship applications.</i>
12	13	14	15	16 <i>FRIENDSHIP Ritual Practice 7:00 to 9:00 PM</i>	17 <i>Santa Clara DeMolay Hot Dog Dinner 6:00 to 8:00 PM SJMC</i>	18
19	20	21	22	23 <i>FRIENDSHIP Ritual Practice 7:00 to 9:00 PM</i>	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 <i>FRIENDSHIP Ritual Practice 7:00 to 9:00 PM</i>	31 <i>Nor Cal DeMolay Golf Tournament 8:00 AM Hiddenbrooke Golf Club, Vallejo</i>	

From the East



Fraternal Greetings from the East!

Andrew Litfin, Master

From the West



Fraternal Greetings from the West!

Sean Michael O'Hara, Senior Warden

From the South



Dear Brethren,

I hope you are all having a wonderful summer so far.

As July represents the heart of the season—bright, bold, and full of life—it serves as the perfect backdrop for our upcoming stated meeting and dinner. We look forward to celebrating the beauty and glory of the day together.

In the spirit of the season, we invite you to gather around the table for a classic barbecue dinner. Our menu will feature authentic Texas-style smoked baby back pork ribs, accompanied by creamy potato salad, refreshing coleslaw, and freshly baked cornbread. This will be a wonderful opportunity to share a meal and enjoy the company of family and friends.

Please join us for this special evening of fellowship. We look forward to seeing you there.

For reservations, please contact Past Master Helmuth Litfin at 408-421-9381.

Best regards,

Jake Todino, Junior Warden

Training Camp



We are making progress toward training our Lodge Officers in their ritual duties for next year.

Bro. Sean O'Hara continues his progress in the Master's part of the Third Degree.

Bro. Jake Todino has begun studying the Master's part of the Second Degree.

Bro. Dan Chaid, is doing an impressive job with the Master's part of the First Degree.

Bro. Al Dorji is studying the Senior Deacon's work for opening and closing all three degrees and the Middle Chamber lecture.

Meanwhile, Wor. Andrew Litfin is preparing for married life beginning with the wedding to his fiancée Lauren on November 8.

Officers Association Meeting

The Santa Clara Valley Officers Association does not meet in July. But come August, Friendship Lodge No. 210 is hosting the Officers Association Meeting (OAM) and presenting at the School of Instruction (SOI).

Dinner is served at 6:30 PM. Friendship Lodge covers the cost of our officers' meals.

The SOI begins at 7:30 PM. We will study the procedures for balloting on member applications.

All Lodge Officers are expected to attend all SOIs. If you cannot make it for any reason, please our Inspector Worshipful Dinesh Chhabra. And let WM Andrew Litfin know, so we don't send somebody out to find you.

Helmuth Litfin, PM and Daniel Doornbos, PM;
Officers Coaches

The Chaplain's Corner



Does Freemasonry coincide with Biblical Standards?

The argument or concept as to whether the world's oldest fraternity, called Freemasonry—rich with teachings that relate to, or coincide with, standards in the Holy Bible—is a prominent subject of discussion that people need to understand.

The Freemasonic organization asserts the value of morality, the acceptance of all religious affiliations, and the connectivity of every masonic member in the society as a law-abiding citizen.

However, many Bible scholars and other religious writers have the tendency to criticize the standards Freemasonry lives by. Perhaps, they simply do not comprehend, or choose not to accept, the reality that we, as Freemasons, are not in competition with any other person or entity, but rather within ourselves “to be better today than we were yesterday”.

This is why we do not discriminate the desire of a non-Mason to become one provided he believes in the existence of God and an afterlife. Whether he is a Catholic, a Baptist, a Pentecostal, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Taoist, a Jew, a Mormon, etcetera, the overall dominating principle for him to espouse is simply not to deviate from his faith and maintain that love and respect for the law so that his usefulness as a

Freemason would never be shattered by intrigues or controversies affecting the fraternity.

The tenets of Freemasonry are always inculcated in our hearts and minds are those of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

The Holy Bible clearly states that, “the true religion that God embraces is to care and look after the widows and orphans in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world”. James 1:27 (KJV). This is the very same Holy Bible upon which every Freemason takes his obligation at the altar.

Of course, a Brother of a faith other than Christianity may, at his request, take his obligation on the holy book of his religious affiliation.

Pastor Eduardo S. Advincula, Chaplain

The Secretary's Table



Here is the latest news on the San Jose Masonic Center's (SJMC) rooftop solar energy project.

Once they decide to go ahead with a project, the SJMC Association Board of Directors issues a “cash call” to raise the money to pay for it. Each SJMC shareholder pays according to the number of shares it owns. The shareholders are composed of the Lodges and other Masonic bodies that meet at the SJMC. No individual person or outside organization can be a shareholder.

The SJMC's biggest expense is paying PG&E for electrical service. A common alternative to PG&E is to install solar panels. They capture the sun's light and convert it into electricity. You must buy or lease the panels. But once they are installed, your electrical service is essentially free. Add batteries (at additional expense) and you have power 24 hours a day.

Anybody who has installed solar panels on their home knows that designing the appropriate system and having it installed is a major undertaking. Sometimes, the roof needs repair or replacement (at additional expense) before the panels can be installed on it.

In the case of the SJMC solar project, members of the Board were eager to sign the contract by July 4 to qualify for a 40% tax credit.

Unlike a tax deduction, which factors in calculating how much tax you owe, a tax credit is subtracted from the amount you owe. In this case, by reducing our tax bill, the federal government is contributing 40% of the cost of the solar project.

Sadly, the project had problems from the beginning. That's what happens when you're in a hurry. Several preliminary tasks required by the Grand Lodge of California were skipped. And the shareholders never got to vote on whether they agreed with the project itself.

The Board sent a message to each shareholder an estimated cash-call amount. Based on the guesstimated solar project cost of \$230,000.00; divided by the number of SJMC shares outstanding (9,520), the cost per share would be \$24.16. Multiply that by the number of shares your organization owns, and you get the amount the Board expects it to pay.

Friendship Lodge would have had no problem paying its cash call. But two SJMC shareholders did not have sufficient funds, sparking a financial crisis.

Friendship Lodge Treasurer Kendall Mills, PM and Secretary Daniel Doornbos, PM are members of Howard Chapter No. 14 RAM, one of the shareholders in financial crisis. They worked with the Friendship Lodge Trustees, Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and our Inspector to find a solution. They presented a motion at our June Stated Meeting that we will vote on at our July Stated Meeting. The motion authorizes Friendship Lodge offer:

- To pay Howard Chapter's cash call, up to \$75,000.00
- To give Howard Chapter an additional \$100,000.00 in exchange for 2,000+ shares in the SJMC.

Meanwhile, the SJMC Association Board of Directors realized its mistake and dropped the solar project. That eliminated the need for a cash call and ended the financial crisis.

As a result, there will be no cash call unless and until there is a new rooftop solar energy proposal and all required preliminary actions are taken.

It also allows time for Howard Chapter to consider other fundraising solutions. The Chapter may ultimately decide not to transfer its shares.

What did we learn from this experience? Take the time and make the effort to do things properly. Because when you don't, you may cause unanticipated problems for yourself and others.

The tax credit for solar projects expires in December 2027, leaving the SJMC Board time to develop a new rooftop solar energy proposal. If it is cost effective, it will likely happen.

This time around, the shareholders will be better informed and have time to arrange for payment of their respective cash calls.



A separate question arose regarding the market value of the SJMC and the land beneath it, and by extension, the value of an SJMC share.

The city of San Jose desperately needs more high-density housing. Currently, our land is not zoned for it because it lacks the infrastructure (such as water and sewer service) to support it. If the city chooses to upgrade the infrastructure, the zoning will likely change and we will have a decision to make: Do we sell? And if we do, where do we go?

Let us cross that bridge when we come to it.

Please Pay your Dues

No Secretary's monthly article would be complete without mentioning member dues.

Currently 14 Friendship Lodge members have not yet paid their 2026 dues. And two members who have not paid for 2025 nor 2026. If paying dues is a challenge for you right now, we invite you to have a confidential chat with the Master or one of the Wardens, and possibly arrange a dues remission.

How to pay your dues

Dues for 2026 are \$120.50. You can pay dues online through your iMember account. Note that iMember uses your credit card and charges a processing fee.

If you prefer to pay by check, make your check out to Friendship Lodge No. 210

You can hand your check to me or mail it to:

Daniel Doornbos
2165 Carobwood Lane
San Jose CA 95132-1213

Daniel Doornbos, PM, Secretary



July Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 3 – Jake Todino | 14 – Bong Custodio |
| 4 – Ruben Nazareno | 14 – David Dow |
| 10 – Brian Dao | 23 – Frank Sepulveda |
| 11 – Ken Brady | 25 – Mike Smith |
| 14 – Jim Arnold, PM | 31 – Al Dorji |

July Events

July 2 — Stated Meeting

Dinner, \$10.00 person. Dress: Casual theme. No shorts, jeans, or sandals, please.

July 9 — Degree Practice

7:00 to 9:00 PM. What we practice depends on who shows up. Dress: Casual

July 11 — Sciots Cornerstone Awards

Bro. Don Gunaratne is the 2026 Cornerstone Award recipient from Friendship Lodge.

6:00 to 9:00 PM at the San Jose Scottish Rite. Dinner is \$25.00 per person and reservations are required. Contact Mike Smith at 408-483-8985 or oumikey68@yahoo.com

Dress: Business Casual

July 11 — Scholarship Applications Due

Application instructions were emailed to all members on May 28.

Completed applications go to Wor. Kendall Mills. Scholarships are presented at the August Stated Meeting.

July 16 — Degree Practice

7:00 to 9:00 PM. What we practice depends on who shows up. Dress: Casual

July 23 — Degree Practice

7:00 to 9:00 PM. What we practice depends on who shows up. Dress: Casual

July 30 — Degree Practice

7:00 to 9:00 PM. What we practice depends on who shows up. Dress: Casual



Who are the Sciots? What is the Cornerstone Award? Point your browser to <https://www.sciots.org/> to find out.

2026 Officers

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Wives/Ladies</u>	
Master		
Andrew Litfin	(Lauren)	408-832-5846
Senior Warden		
Sean O'Hara	(Savannah)	559-862-9372
Junior Warden		
Jake Todino	(Lyn)	831-207-1264
Treasurer		
Kendall Mills, PM	(Janet)	408-281-4084
Secretary		
Daniel Doornbos, PM	(Gillian)	408-802-7480
Chaplain		
Ed Advincula		510-921-7136
Senior Deacon		
Dan Chaid	(Theresa)	408-393-8905
Junior Deacon		
Al Dorji	(Hakimeh)	408-313-4781
Marshal		
Gilbert Cruz, PM	(Monette)	408-483-1964
Senior Steward		
Jack Caceres	(Sorena)	669-388-1816
Junior Steward		
Omar Martinez		669-296-7720
Tiler		
Louie Mar	(Ireen)	408-838-3873
Musician		
Chito Atienza	(Shirlita)	408-561-5850
Prospect Manager		
Don Gunaratne		518-335-1146
Inspector 345th Masonic District		
Dinesh Chhabra, PM	(Meenu)	908- 247-9288
Officers Coaches		
Daniel Doornbos, PM	(Gillian)	408-802-7480
Helmuth Litfin, PM	(Evonne)	408-421-9381

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FriendshipLodge210

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

What happened to Henry Peña's Third Degree?

Bro. Henry is one of two Fellowcrafts in Friendship Lodge. For reasons of employment, he had to move several times, and currently lives in Los Angeles.

Henry's Third Degree was scheduled to be conferred as a courtesy by Oasis Lodge No. 854 on Tuesday, June 16. Then the Oasis leaders took a close look at Henry's records.

Before a candidate may receive his Fellowcraft or Master Mason degree, he must complete two things:

- Final Exam in the preceding degree
- Proficiency in the preceding degree

It turns out that Bro. Henry completed his Final Exam but not his Proficiency. Since Henry is a member of Friendship Lodge, it is our duty to coach and examine him. Much to our embarrassment, we forgot all about it! As a result, Oasis Lodge justifiably postponed Henry's degree.

Recognizing our failure, Henry's original coach is back working with him despite the challenge of living 350 miles apart.

What does the Final Exam cover?

The Final Exam is something you study in the Candidate Learning Center online. First the candidate reads a Study Guide that explains all the things he should understand in the degree he has just received.

For your study convenience, you can download the Study Guide as a PDF and print it.

When he is ready, the candidate takes an online examination consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions. A score of 70% or 14 questions answered correctly is required to pass. When the candidate passes, the result is automatically posted to his member record.

You can take the exam multiple times. A few particularly zealous candidates might retake until they achieve a 100% score.

What does the Proficiency cover?

The Proficiency is an oral examination of the candidate's knowledge of the degree he recently received. Every Fellowcraft and Master Mason has given a candidate proficiency.

The proficiency is a question-and-answer exercise, reciting or explaining all the key aspects of the degree ritual itself. Every answer must be given perfectly from memory. The examiner, a brother asking the questions, may prompt the candidate if he needs a little help.

Occasionally, we have seen the examiner get stuck and the candidate prompted him. That is a very prestigious moment for a candidate.

As regular, everyday human beings, very few Masons can deliver a perfect proficiency without a needing a few prompts or making a few errors. But your author has witnessed a few candidates who came pretty darn close to perfection.

How long does it take? Your author has witnessed candidates learn their work in as little as one month, while others needed over a year. It's not a competition. Everyone learns at his own pace.

Some brothers have a difficult time memorizing and reciting answers. Decades ago, the Grand Lodge Ritual Committee developed an alternative approach to the candidates' proficiency, commonly known as the "short form".

A short-form proficiency is limited to the obligation and modes of recognition of each degree.

The short-form option has enabled many brothers to receive their Blue Lodge degrees and then go on to join and become active in other Masonic bodies.

Still too difficult?

Sadly, a few Brothers are overwhelmed trying to learn their short-form work. The Candidate Coaching committee might develop a way forward that meets proficiency requirements while accommodating individual learning challenges.

What about Henry?

He and his coach are making up for lost time. When they are ready, we will arrange an examination.

In the meantime, you can reach Bro. Henry at 323-909-0558 or penajhenry@gmail.com

After Henry passes his proficiency, we will update his records and reach out to Oasis Lodge to schedule a new courtesy Third Degree.

We will announce the degree date so any interested Brothers may arrange to attend the event.



California Masons have so far raised over \$2.67 million in contributions to Masons4Mitts. By the September deadline, we could exceed \$3 million.

Last year was our strongest single year showing yet. The combined lodges in California raised \$298,979. That sum purchased nearly 15,000 mitts for kids who might never own one, otherwise.

Every year, each region's teams compete against each other. The winning team's captain presents a check to the region's MLB foundation partner during "Masons Night at the Ballpark" in September.

Last year, Northern California set a regional record by raising \$133,231 for the Giants' Junior Giants program.

Nor Cal region's "Masons Night at the Ballpark" happens at Oracle Park in San Francisco on September 22. Tickets to that event are free to Friendship Lodge members, their families and guests.

Here are the regional fund-raising goals for 2026:

- Northern California, \$135,000
- Greater Los Angeles, \$85,000
- Orange County, \$55,000
- San Diego, \$50,000

More than summertime baseball

When the new school year begins in the fall, children who had access to an enrichment program during the summer perform better than and those who did not. Nine in ten teachers spend at least three weeks re-teaching lessons at the start of every school year. The achievement gap between high- and low-income students has grown by 30% to 40% over the past generation.

For the students from low-income families, the MLB partner programs provide structured, joyful, intentional weeks where kids build study habits and develop teamwork skills. Masons4Mitts helps to fund such programs.

Every participant gets a quality leather baseball mitt with a square and compass burned into the leather. That mitt, combined with additional items provided by other organizations, means that no child shows up empty-handed while the kid next to them has equipment.

Twenty dollars buys a new mitt for a kid whose family can't afford one.

Doug Ismail, President of the California Masonic Foundation, puts it this way: "Masons4Mitts has always been about more than a baseball glove. It's a way to unite us as Masons, bring joy to the children who get to attend a fun summer learning experience. Reaching our goals in 2026 will show our communities that we (Masons) care."

What Works

One approach is to get lodge members in a room, talk about the kids and pass a hat. It works because the cause is real, the impact direct, and every little bit helps us get to our goal.

Passing the hat is great for Masons who carry cash in their wallets. The rising generation prefers to pay electronically and may not have any cash to drop into the hat. No problem. You can also donate online:

[Click here to give a mitt.](#)

If you don't like making contributions online, you can give your Masons4Mitts check to our Team Captain, Kendall Mills, or the lodge Secretary.