

Trestle Board

Volume 137

290

February 2025

Issue #2

South Pasadena Masonic Lodge of F&AM



2025 Lodge Master

Worshipful Nate S. Brown



WWW.SOUTHPASADENA290.ORG

FEBRUARY



5

WEDNESDAY

Stated Dinner & Meeting

6:30pm

11

TUESDAY

Possible Officer Practice

6:30pm

12

WEDNESDAY

Officer School of Instruction at

Wisdom Lodge

7:30pm

14

FRIDAY

Valentine's Day

Lodge Dark

15

SATURDAY

Sweethearts Dinner

5pm

19

WEDNESDAY

Possible Officer Practice

6:30pm

20

THURSDAY

Lecture Set-up

7pm

21

FRIDAY

Illumination Lecture

7pm

22

SATURDAY

Masonic Meditation

10am

26

WEDNESDAY

Gentleman's Night

7pm

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

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



HALL ASSOCIATION MEETINGS
TUESDAY February 25, 2025
Meeting @ 6:30pm



ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR
MONDAY, February 10, 2025
Quarterly Meeting @ 7pm



Worshipful Nate Brown

A seed grows with no sound, but a tree falls with a huge noise. Destruction has noise, but creation is quiet. This is the power of silence. *Grow Silently*"

—Confucius (551–479 BC)

Greetings Brethren,

In the wake of one of the worst disasters California has ever experienced, I hope that our 137th Installation of Officers was able to provide to those in attendance a brief interlude from the anxiety and uncertainty the wild fires have been spreading. The installation was very well received, and I know that for myself and my new "first lady", we will never forget it!

The skeleton key logo for this year is my representation of the Masonic "Key of Knowledge," which in turn alludes to an archaic Masonic allegory referred to as the "Bone Box" that dates at least as far back as the early 1700s. Bone Box refers to the mouth, symbolizing the virtues of secrecy and silence. It reminds us of the time-honored method of learning the Craft, from Master to Apprentice. The emphasis on secrecy

was due largely to a historical precedence of the profane often deriding and condemning that which they do not understand, rather than venerating it. The related virtue of silence, on the other hand, was embraced as far back as the 6th Century BC by Pythagoras, who promoted silence as one of the core virtues of his school. Over time his students would come to realize that the discipline of silence increased their opportunities to listen and learn, as well as their opportunity for introspection and contemplation, or, to "know thyself." Knowing oneself is the beginning of all wisdom, and thus he who knows ... is silent.

In closing, I've got quite a few designs drawn upon my Trestle Board this year, so please keep an eye on the calendar section and take advantage of them. I am humbled to have been seated in the Oriental Chair, and am very much looking forward to working together with all of you this year.

Fraternally Yours in L.V.X.,
Bro. Nathaniel Brown



David VanderSmith

“Human effort is not futile, but man fights against the giant forces of nature in a spirit of humility. One has a sense of dependence on the higher power.” —Brother Ernest Shackleton

Greetings Brethren,

First, let me express my gratitude and excitement to be addressing you as your newly installed Senior Warden. It is an incredible honor to get to serve our lodge in this capacity and I am incredibly excited to be working with such an amazing line of officers this year.

Our newly installed Worshipful Master, Nathan Brown, had a spectacular installation, facilitated by an exemplary installation team, with a fantastic flag presentation by the team from Los Angeles Commandery No. 9. Worshipful Brown and our Senior Deacon Sebastian Schmidt also treated us to an exciting display of their martial arts prowess, accompanied by live traditional Japanese music during dinner. This was truly an installation for our history book.

I would like to share the story of a brother Mason who made a different kind of history which inspired a generation over a century ago. In 1914, in an attempt to be the first to cross the Antarctic continent, Brother Ernest Shackleton set out on the Imperial Trans-Antarctic expedition. Unfortunately, that expedition was a complete failure; but through that failure came one of the greatest stories of human will and survival. After being stuck in the Antarctic ice for 9 months, Shackleton’s ship, Endurance, was crushed by the ice and all hands had to abandon ship. Shackleton and his crew sat on the ice, 90 miles from shore, for a month, watching their ship being crushed beyond repair, until it finally sank beneath the ice. Shackleton wrote the opening quote of this article in his journal the night the Endurance succumbed to the Antarctic ice and his crew of 28 men had to face seemingly impossible odds.

The ensuing courage and determination of Shackleton and his crew, surviving more
(Continue on Page 12.)



From The South



Nathan Bexton

Brothers,

As I take in the view from the South, I am truly honored by the trust I've been given to carry out its associated duties with diligence and care. I am left with a sense of awe for the giants who came before me. The ones who set a bar of distinction so high that now that I find myself in this pillared place of elevated merit, the climb henceforth is a daunting one. And as it should be. One could say they also stood on the shoulders of giants; however, in my case, as I settle into the Junior Warden's station, I am quite literally sitting on them.

The plumb is a symbol of rectitude, so with my own shoulders pinned back and head held high, I embark on this time-honored path in hopes that my service not only does justice for those giants who came before me, but most importantly, for those Brethren who currently sit with me in the chairs of our lodge. We fellows are collectively part of a living history called Freemasonry, but we humans are paradoxically bound to the present in the construct called time. So, let's embrace this time that we presently have together to create the next historic chapter of our living institution, unified by an unparalleled Masonic experience. It's an experience you will be hard pressed to find anywhere outside of our humble Lodge; and the only thing I ask of you, my fellow Brethren... is to simply, show up.

Fraternally, With Gratitude,
Bro. Nathan Bexton,
Junior Warden

Lodge News & Notes



Stated Meeting
January 15, 2025

Newly installed Southern California Research Lodge Master, Wor. Michael Laidlaw, presented Wor. Geno Nadirov and SPML 290 with *Point Within the Circle* wood display, that was handmade by Wor. Laidlaw himself out of Acacia wood. It was gift to honor the mutual interests in Masonic education shared by our respective lodges.



Past Master Portrait
January 18, 2025

Following the 137th Installation of Officers, our newly minted Junior Past Master had a rare opportunity to hang his own black and white Past Master's portrait to join those of other PMs in the lodge entry way. After successfully ending the 2024 year, Wor. Nadirov has now earned the title of *Past Master*.



Quarterly Officer Meeting
January 21, 2025
Braving the cold weather, the new line of 2025 officers met to discuss the future, schedule of events and degree conferrals for our lodge.





The 137th Installation of Officers

137TH INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

BY DAGO RODRIGUEZ, PM
IMAGES BY LETICIA BURGOS

2025 Line of Officers

(L - R): Chaplain Charlie Fisher, PM; Asst. Secretary Dago Rodriguez, PM; Senior Steward Max Mironenko; Secretary Mimo Akkari, PM; Senior Deacon Sebastian Schmidt; Senior Warden David VanderSmith; Worshipful Master Nate Brown; Junior Warden Nathan Bexton; Junior Deacon Angel Perez; Treasurer Sergio Gomez, PM; Junior Steward Allen Bergstrom and Tiler Adrian Howard.



On Saturday, January 18, 2025, South Pasadena Masonic Lodge held its 137th Installation of Officers. Amidst the tragic wild fires surrounding our communities from the Pacific Palisades to Altadena, questions swirled whether we would even be able to have an Installation. With brothers being evacuated from their homes, some volunteering at help centers and one tragically losing his home, the most historic fire storm Los Angeles County has ever witness would have the final word on how we might get our lives back on track. But, as the Santa Ana winds calmed and as our heroic firefighters took more control of the wild fires—it was deemed safe enough for us to move forward and pick up where we left off—and so our Installation of Officers continued as planned.

Once again, SPML 290 pulled out all the stops to celebrate the incoming year and our new line of officers like it has never been experienced before. The event included an hour-long reception, SPML 290 toasts in the library, an impressive ceremony, dinner with a live ninja sword-wielding martial arts performance by our newly installed Lodge Master Nate Brown and our newly installed Senior Deacon, Sebastian Schmidt, and live traditional Japanese music featuring lovely strings and dramatic drums.

Through the somber and tragic ashes of what had happened the weeks before, a return to the traditional fanfare that our lodge installations are known for brought back that celebration and grandeur of the annual transfer of lodge

SPML's Installation RECEPTION



leadership, from one Master to the next; the closing of one leader's legacy and the opening of another's.

Brothers, friends and family enjoyed a multitude of beverages and passed hors d'oeuvres while roaming the lodge rooms and catching up with old acquaintances. Prior to the ceremony, brethren from our lodge gathered in the Library, for our traditional pre-ceremony toasts, led by incoming Master Nathan Brown, and closed off by Wor.



Geno Nadirov, who gave thanks to the SPML brothers and encouraging words of support to the new line of officers and brothers. The entire room then broke into singing, “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.”

In the ceremony that followed, Geno gracefully passed on the gavel of authority after serving as our Lodge Master. His term was highlighted by three unique events he oversaw: the lodge trip to Washington D.C. and the George Washington Memorial, where SPML 290 was beautifully hosted by the historic Alexandria-Washington Lodge No.22; the Past Masters’ Appreciation Reception,



SPML’s Installation TOAST



SPML's Installation CERMONY



whose success will create an annual event out of this gathering; and our 12th annual Illumination Lecture Series. Also worth noting, were the several community outreach events sponsored by our lodge—from our dramatic Spooktoberfest to the Annual Chili Cook-Off and a few others in-between, our community outreach was on point this past Masonic year. Time will tell how last year will be remembered; but what we know for sure is



SPML's Installation DINNER



that Wor. Geno kept our lodge alive and moving forward throughout the year with education, community outreach and social gatherings, truly embracing his 2024 slogan, *commit*.



The installation ceremony was well attended by 94 brothers and guests. The Installation Team included: Installing Officer, Very Worshipful Brother Jack Rose, PM; Master of Ceremonies, Wor. Freddy Davis, PM; and Installing Chaplain, Wor. John Harney, PM. Piano music for the evening was provided by California's Grand Organist, Wor. Stephen Miller, PM. Eleven 2025 officers were installed, with two others remaining to be installed at a later date.

Our new Worshipful Master, Nate Brown, was installed as our 137th Lodge Master. He is also a member of the Guthrie Valley Scottish Rite, and of the San Fernando Valley York Rite (whose Commandery No. 9 presented the Flag of our Country at the Installation). He joined our Lodge in early 2019 and was raised a Master Mason on January 15, 2020. He resides locally



SPML's Installation AFTER PARTY



with his wife Tae.

Following the ceremony, several brothers retired to the dining room to celebrate the new 2025 officers with congratulations, and a tasty Grass-fed Wagyu Steak dinner. Guests enjoyed having dinner under the dimly lit dining room serenaded by live music from traditional Japanese musicians. Undoubtedly the highlight of the night was when Wor. Nate Brown, accompanied by Bro. Sebastian Schmidt, took the stage wearing traditional *keikogi* martial arts uniforms and carrying wooden swords, where they enacted several ceremonial defense techniques, Kenjutsu (Ono-ha-itto-ryu). They then switched from wooden to a real samurai sword with which he dramatically assailed numerous bamboo sticks, slicing them to pieces, using a practice called Battojutsu (Toyama-ryu). It was a display never to be forgotten! After the dinner, many retired to the

SPML's Installation PORTRAITS



Adrian Howard
Tiler



Sergio Gomez, PM
Treasurer



Mimo Akkari, PM
Secretary



Dago Rodriguez, PM
Asst. Secretary



Charlie Fisher, PM
Chaplain

Library for further reflection, libations and cigars, which inspired further conversation and lively discussion into the wee hours of the night.

Now that the 2025 Installation of Officers is in the history books, the focus for our newly installed Lodge Master is to deliver on his “bone box” theme of *Silent Wisdom*. His plans include continuing our several educational programs: degree classes, the 12th year of The Illumination Lecture Series, a third return of SPML's Masonic Con, many new degree ceremonies and educational classes. The promise for our lodge in 2025 looks bright; and there is no doubt that Wor. Nate Brown—armed with an energetic and ambitious line of officers—will be building on the strength of the previous years to make 2025 a year for our history books.



Sebastian Schmidt
Senior Deacon



Angel Perez
Junior Deacon



Max Mironenko
Senior Steward



Allen Bergstrom
Junior Steward

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than 2 years stranded in the Antarctic, has a renewed relevance to us now, as our communities in Los Angeles are currently enduring one of the greatest natural disasters this country has ever seen. By remaining united in harmony and devoted to purpose, all of the Endurance crew survived and were eventually rescued. Though involving different polarities of fire and ice, their story and ours share a similarity of men having to apply the Masonic virtues to some of the most extreme circumstances imaginable.

Please, if any of you, or those close to you, have been affected by these fires, reach out to any of our officers or the California Grand Lodge for assistance. And above all else, may Brotherly Love prevail!

Fraternally,
Bro. David VanderSmith



2025 Line of Officers

MASTER Nate Brown	SENIOR WARDEN David VanderSmith	JUNIOR WARDEN Nathan Bexton	SECRETARY Mimo Akkari, PM niftymimo@yahoo.com
TREASURER Sergio Gomez, PM	SENIOR DEACON Sebastian Schmidt	JUNIOR DEACON Angel Perez	CHAPLAIN Charlie Fisher, PM
SENIOR STEWARD Max Mironenko	JUNIOR STEWARD Allen Bergstrom	MARSHAL Jeffrey Rewald	ORGANIST
TILER Adrian Howard	ASST. SECRETARY Dago Rodriguez, PM	DISTRICT INSPECTOR Dennis Hadley, PM	OFFICER'S COACH Ed Spalding, PM

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

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

1126 S. Fair Oaks Ave. South Pasadena CA 91030