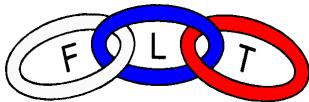


Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 6  
Cupertino, CA 95015-0006  
(408) 736-6563

# The Triple Links Silicon Valley Odd Fellowship

September 2024  
Editors, Don Lang  
& Mason Wolf  
donlang@sbcglobal.net  
mason@true52.org

Established 1987



## The Jane Austen Dance (Reprise!)

We had our first Jane Austen Ball in February, and a second in August, so now it's a tradition!

True Fellowship Lodge #52 (San Jose) and the Bay Area English Regency Society (BAERS) held a second Jane Austen Ball on August 10, and it was even more successful. We'd sold out 60 tickets in February but had some extra space and set the cap to 70 for August - and sold out again, with most of the tickets sold to people who had enjoyed the February ball, but some newcomers. The English country dance style is well-suited to bringing newcomers and people who come as singletons along, as unlike couple dancing there's no "lead" and "follow", so



any two people can easily dance together as partners, and the prompter teaches the figures of each dance as needed, using positional terminology so gender is irrelevant.

The scene was splendid. Costume was not required, but many attendees chose to wear period clothes - men in period tailcoats (in more colors than modern black) and women in Empire-waist dresses it looked like a scene from a movie. Even if you weren't dancing it was fun to watch.

The lodge building is beautifully suited to this event - the wooden floor is excellent for dancing, the room is a good shape for dancing in columns or a circle, with good acoustics letting the five-piece band (piano, two fiddles, clarinet, recorder, tin whistle) be heard easily without amplification. The hall makes a lovely setting even without any additional decoration. Breaks with food were in the dining room, and long tables meant that attendees mixed together while

eating for a pleasantly social scene. Caller and organizer **Alan Winston** is both a co-founder of BAERS and a TF#52 member, and arranged for BAERS to provide the band and the lodge to provide the hall, refreshments, and registration. Lodge volunteers - including a last-minute recruit - managed all that beautifully, with good cheer and without anyone visibly breaking a sweat. A financial success as well as a fun party, the event raised hundreds of dollars for the lodge and for BAERS.

We're actively looking for dates to schedule more of these community dance events in 2025, and make the hall ring once more with festive music.

By *Alan Winston*

## Initiation on September 30

Cupertino Lodge 70, with the help from members of the district, will again hold the degree of Initiation on the 5th Monday of the month, September 30. The time will be at 7:00 PM. It will be the formal version of the degree with everyone at their best. Many of the Degree Lodge members from Yreka will also take part. We welcome as many candidates to come from the local Odd Fellow lodges and we also strongly urge as many members to come and take part and support the new initiates, especially if you are bringing a candidate. There are many non speaking parts for the shy members

By *Don Lang*

## Report from the August Cave Degree

In Northern California, just south of the Oregon border, there is a cave that has featured in our degree work for several decades. What we usually call “the cave degree” is a tradition which extends back to 1940, at least with the Odd Fellows.

The cave is named the Pythian cave because it was first used for fraternal ceremonies by the Knights of Pythias, and actually served as their lodge before they acquired a building in Yreka. In addition, it’s also been used by the Free Masons, making it one of the best examples of inter-fraternal cooperation anywhere in America.

There have been periods when the cave degree had to go on hiatus. It went unused in 1943-1945, because of World War 2, and then again from 1991-1993 for necessary repairs. And then in 2020 it was shut down for the pandemic, and even once restrictions were lifted, it had to remain shut down due to the condition of the stairs and platform. Happily, it was once again able to serve as a venue for the second degree on the night of August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, after a 4-year break and much repair work.

But it was a close call.

Riding back on the rental bus Friday night, following the dedication ceremony to celebrate the cave’s reopening and the institution of our new degree lodge, the bus made a number of “expensive-sounding noises”. The brakes might have been perfectly fine, but they did not sound like it. And the driver asked for complete silence as he carefully navigated sharp curves and steep embankments that most people would not have expected the bus to be capable of handling. Every divot or rock in the road shook us like rag dolls, and tree branches scraped along the side of the bus, as if chiding us whenever we were a little too far from the center line.

And to truly add to the sense of wild adventure, the headlights stopped working consistently part-way down. This resulted first in passengers literally shining flashlights out the windshield, and then eventually having a “seeing-eye truck” lead the way just a short distance ahead of the bus. It was, all-in-all, a memorable experience that I would not like to repeat, but we emerged unscathed, and presented our driver with a generous tip once it was over.

The following day showed rain in our forecast, which would be great for clearing smoke from the air and helping the firefighters extinguish the still-smoldering Park fire, but based on the weather, the transit company decided to cancel our reservation. Was it truly because of the rain, or because the experience of the previous night had so unnerved the driver that he didn’t want to repeat it either? We’ll never know for sure, but we suddenly found ourselves in a situation where we had over 60 people to take to the cave, and no bus to get them there.

The back-up plan was to simply hold the second degree at Yreka 19, and we made preparations to do this. But some of the experienced locals thought that, if anything, the splash of rain, which was forecast to clear completely by 6pm, would actually make the road to the cave safer. And a number of people said they were prepared to drive their own vehicles up to it. So, still wishing to have our degree work in



the cave, we made the trip in private vehicles. No one got lost. One vehicle had to be left partway up the road, when it was unable to handle the incline, but in a triumph of mutual assistance, the passengers from that vehicle all found rides with other drivers and continued their journey to the cave.

To our delight, the sky was indeed clear. The smoky air from the night before was now clean and crisp. Clouds still traced across the heavens, and Mount Shasta was hidden from view, but they parted frequently enough to let the moon add her own light to the artificial ones we’d brought with us.

We conferred the second degree on 22 candidates that night, and when we were done, the trip down was far less memorable than the bus trip the night before. By any measure, the 74<sup>th</sup> cave degree, the first for Richard Brouse Degree Lodge #190, was a resounding success, and I look forward to doing it again.



The second degree team included several members of District 107, including **Jane Beckman** and **Andrew Crockett** (Gilroy 154), **Tom Blackburn** (Cupertino 70), **Sara Bruce** and **Mason Wolf** (True Fellowship 52). We were joined by **Jaime Herrera** (San Fernando 365), **Stacy Thomason** (Gold Hill 129), **Carol Wahrer** (Livermore 219), **Jack Cain** (Upper Lake 241—not pictured), **Robert Seibel** (Progressive 134), **Larry Guenther** and Grand Master **Dave Reed** (Davis 169).

Our next degree weekend will be on September 14-15<sup>th</sup> (and this will probably be the last time we do two weekends in a single year). If there are still slots available, you can sign up at [oddfellowscavedegree.com/september-registration](http://oddfellowscavedegree.com/september-registration). It’s a long drive from district 107, but the experience is one you can’t get anywhere else. And just to be clear, we’re not doing the bus next time!

By **Mason Wolf**



## Degree Lodge Dedication in Yreka

With Mount Shasta visible through haze, the refurbished Pythian Cave in Yreka was dedicated to the purposes of Odd Fellowship as the temple of **Richard Brouse Degree Lodge #190**, on Friday, August 16, 2024. 60 people rode up to the Cave in a 60-passenger school bus, and private cars carried more people, so about 70 were present for the ceremony.

The Knights of Pythias originally developed the facility in 1920 for their ceremonies by adding a wooden platform, railings, stairs, and bleachers. Since 1940, Yreka Odd Fellows #19 has annually conferred the Second Degree there, ideally by the light of a full moon rising over Mount Shasta, with a few interruptions. The Yreka Odd Fellows Lodge bought the 40-acre site that includes the Cave in 1962. The Masonic Order also uses the Cave, and contributed a second set of bleachers in 1995. The Knights of Pythias continue to use the Cave.

The last time the Odd Fellows used the Cave was in 2019. The pandemic in 2020 and 2021 prevented degree weekends those years. Inspection of the Cave in 2022 indicated that the stairs and the edge of the platform were unsafe.

The major fundraising effort since then has paid off with new staircases, and replacement of the damaged section of the platform.

The Dedication Ceremony from the Odd Fellow Book of Forms was used. The Heralds (those who assembled the altar), were all descendants of Brother **Richard Brouse**, who had helped Yreka Lodge keep the degree weekends going since 1990. Herald of the North **Debra LaVergne** is currently President of the Rebekah Assembly, and received the Second Degree in the Cave in 2016. Herald of the East **Denise Cater** is currently Color Bearer of the Rebekah Assembly. Herald of the West **Danita Schwemer** and Herald of the South **Megan Schwemer** are members of Capitol City Rebekah Lodge #160.

Brother **Mason Wolf**, also a descendant, set up the ceremony, and provided programs that included the lyrics for all of the songs included in the ceremony. The ceremony was joyful and memorable.

By **Debra LaVergne**

## Birthday Fellowship in San José



The monthly potluck at True Fellowship Lodge no. 52 on August 14th 2024 was a memorable event the lodge dedicated as a birthday celebration for Vice Grand **Andrew Crockett**, and it has spawned a new tradition for the Lodge! Held on the second Wednesday of every month, the San Jose Odd Fellows Potluck was already a beloved tradition among the members, but this particular gathering brought an extra sense of

joy and camaraderie. Members brought an impressive array of homemade and store-bought dishes contributing to a festive atmosphere.

The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the presentation of a homemade loaf of banana bread (in lieu of birthday cake) from **Bex Clark** - ablaze with strips of irregularly burning paper standing in for the birthday candles no one remembered to bring. The heartfelt rendition of "Happy Birthday" made the unorthodox situation feel completely wholesome.

Hosting this birthday celebration to honor of Andrew, who has been a pillar of the San Jose Odd Fellows community, made sense, as the event was not just a celebration of his birthday but also a testament to the strong bonds of friendship and mutual support that characterize the group. The evening concluded with Andrew expressing his gratitude to everyone present, acknowledging the warmth and affection he felt from his fellow Odd Fellows.

Inspired by the success of this August potluck, True Fellowship Lodge no.52 made the decision at their following meeting to dedicate all future potlucks to celebrate the birthdays of members born in the respective months. They also authorized the purchase a designated Lodge stockpile of birthday candles. This new tradition ensures that every gathering will include a special tribute to those whose birthdays fall within the month, fostering an even greater sense of

community. The members look forward to these monthly celebrations, where food, fellowship, and the joy of honoring one another's life milestones will continue to bring them closer together.

By **Andrew Crockett**



## SGL Report: District 107 Represents!

In August, I had the honor and privilege of representing the Jurisdiction of California at the annual session of The Sovereign Grand Lodge in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Our regular elected Grand Representative is Bro. **Rod Metoyer**, but he was not able to attend this year and I had been elected as his Alternate. Our two other Grand Representatives are Bro. **Peter Sellars** and Bro. **Fred Dolling**. For those who are newer to the Order, The Sovereign Grand Lodge is the highest body for Wildey Odd Fellowship and includes representatives from the Grand Lodges and Grand Encampments of North America. It meets once a year to elect its officers and to consider changes to the Ritual, changes to the Code of General Laws, and resolutions. There are also various banquets, ceremonies, activities, and an opportunity to get to know Odd Fellows and Rebekahs from all over.

In addition to voting on all items of business to come before the body on behalf of the interests of our Jurisdiction, I also served on the Committee on Ritualistic Work, which reviews changes to the Ritual and related legislation. Unlike our lodges and our Grand Lodge, at the Sovereign Grand Lodge most of the debate and work on amendments happens in committee rather than on the floor, so this was a great opportunity to get involved and help shape outcomes.

Although this is my first time serving as Grand Representative, I have actually attended sessions several times, beginning in 2017. This year I noticed that there were a lot of younger faces, both among the Grand Representatives and among the visitors. It was great to see new people learning how our Order works at the highest levels and getting their voices heard. We even arranged a meetup for the Heart in Hand Online Discord server which began as one of my Grand Master projects, but now has active participation from Odd Fellows all over North America (visit [heartinhandonline.org](http://heartinhandonline.org) to learn more).

Next year, the annual sessions of The Sovereign Grand Lodge will be in Charleston, West Virginia from August 17th to August 21st, 2025.

By **Michael Greenzeiger**



## Mountain View Artists Pop-Up Gallery

We're excited to announce a special Pop-Up Art Gallery featuring a diverse collection of artwork by talented local artists! From captivating paintings and intricate sculptures, to unique stickers and handcrafted jewelry, there's something for everyone to enjoy and take home.

**When:** September 7th & 8th (during the Mountain View Art & Wine Festival)

**Where:** Mountain View IOOF Lodge

This event isn't just about celebrating art—it's also for a great cause! All proceeds will go towards creating an inspiring mural on the side of the Mountain View IOOF Lodge, adding a splash of color and creativity to our community.

Come by, support local artists, and be part of something beautiful. See you there!

By **Mark Flider**



Heart in Hand Online meeting at SGL. Front:

**Raford Percival** (HI), **Charlie Stephenson** (TX), **Laura Huchel** (PA), **Meredith Moore** (TX), **Michael Tucker** (VA). Back: **Erik Fearing** (MA), **John Reitzer-Smith** (TX), **Ainslie Heillich** (IL), **Michael Greenzeiger** (CA), **Nick Curry** (VA), **Toby Hanson** (WA)



**J.R. Prosk** and **Roberta Prosk** addressing SGL about the Rose Parade Float.



## Portrait of a New Member—Paul Colin

**Paul Colin** is a new member of the Historic Volcano Lodge No. 25 on the campus of the fellowship's Saratoga Retirement Community. In November of 2023 Paul moved into the SRC. He was initiated into the Odd Fellows on July 29, 2024 and plans to earn his degrees over the next several months.



Paul was born in Brooklyn, New York. After college, he lived and worked in retail and technology businesses for many years in Boston, Massachusetts, where he met and married his wife, **Jill Barnes**. They have been married for 42 years. In his mid-to-late-30's, Paul changed careers and earned a J.D. degree from Northeastern University Law School and, in 1991, he and Jill moved from Boston to San Jose. Paul's motivation for his career change was public service. For the next 21 years, Paul served as a Deputy District Attorney in Santa Clara County. Then from 2013 to 2022, he served as a Superior Court Judge also in our county.

In retirement, his interest in the Odd Fellows is due to a desire for fellowship, an appreciation for our values, and contributing to the welfare of others. The Historic Volcano Lodge 25 is focused on making it as easy as possible for elderly members living at SRC in various levels of care to maintain their fellowship participation. Paul has visited Saratoga Lodge 428 and hopes to become more involved. In July, Paul was sworn in as the newest member of the Board of Directors of the Odd Fellows Homes of California, the body that owns and oversees the fellowship's retirement communities in Saratoga and Napa.

By **Paul Colin**

## California History Tour : September 19 - 22, 2024

**Home base:** We have a block of rooms and a negotiated discount for September 19, 20, and 21 at Best Western Amador Inn, 200 S. State Highway 49, Jackson, CA 95642, (209)223-0211. Room Rate: \$95.99 + taxes. Discount Code: Odd Fellow Group

**Thursday, September 19** - Dinner at Progressive Lodge #134 in Lockeford. \$25. Reservation required.

**Friday, September 20** - North to Coloma. There may be tours with entry fees.

- Lunch on your own.
- Dinner by Emerald Bay #50 at Placerville, \$25. Reservation required.
- Evening fun, possibly square dancing on the spring floor.

**Saturday, September 21** - East to Volcano. The annual Odd Fellows meeting in the Volcano Lodge Hall will be an open meeting, so that Rebekahs and non-members can attend.

- Drive east on 88 to the Odd Fellows Monument at Kit Carson Pass. Pick up a picnic lunch along the way.

- Dinner at Diamond Springs #9 in Diamond Springs \$25. Reservation required.

**Sunday, September 22** - South to Sonora Odd Fellows Cemetery and on to La Grange Odd Fellows Hall. Possible stops at Angels Camp and the Columbia State Historic Park.

We require reservations for each dinner, but no payment in advance. Lodges need to know if they are cooking for 10 or for 40 people, after all! Reservations should be sent to:

President **Debra LaVergne**

Mail: 2369 Saint Francis Drive, Palo Alto CA 94303-3136

Email: Debra.ella@gmail.com

Phone: 650-575-4565.

(Email reservations preferred.)

Detailed plans and maps for each day will be distributed at the hotel. If you are staying somewhere else, you can meet us at the hotel each morning.

By **Debra LaVergne**



*One of the longest-serving members of District 107, Brother **Gerald Williams** of Bay View 109 (seen here with Brother **Mason Wolf** during the cave degree weekend), has been in the order an impressive 68 years! When members were asked to stand based on number of years in the order during the final Good of the Order session, Gerald stood longest of anyone, and then shared some of what Odd Fellows has meant to him. Way to go, Gerald!*





## Craft Sale Fundraiser

Hermenia Rebekah Lodge in Mountain View will have a Fundraiser Craft Sale September 12 - 15 with setting it up the 9th, 10 & 11. Hours will be 10 am to 5 pm on Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday. We have a wide variety of items including things for baby, afghans, hats, scarves, fingerless gloves, hanging towels, aprons, soap bags, scrubbers, blankets, etc. Hope to see you all there.

Thanks,

By *Jackie Brown*



The inside of the Pythian cave for the second degree. 8/17/2024

## Have You Taken Control of Your Health?

Life Line Screening will be here at the Odd Fellows Cupertino Lodge 70 on Friday, September 6, 2024 offering safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings that are typically not a part of a routine physical.

### 4 Preventive Health Screenings for these Diseases:



#### Carotid Artery Disease:

an ultrasound is performed to screen the carotid arteries (a pair of blood vessels in the neck that deliver blood to your brain) for buildup of fatty plaque. This buildup, called atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of stroke.



#### Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD):

an Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) test is performed using blood pressure cuffs on the arms and legs. It is important to screen for PAD because it increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, or stroke.<sup>2</sup>



#### Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA):

an ultrasound is performed to screen the abdominal aorta for the presence of an enlargement or aneurysm. AAA can lead to a ruptured aortic artery, which is a serious medical emergency.



#### Atrial Fibrillation (AFib):

an electrocardiogram (ECG) is performed by placing sensors on the arms and legs to screen for irregular heartbeat. AFib can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure, and other heart-related complications.<sup>3</sup>

To be more proactive about your health for yourself, your family and your community, please register for these health screenings today. There is no time like the present to take action!

### Three ways to register:

- Call toll-free: 1-888-814-0466 promo code HSCA001
- Online: <https://www.llsa.social/hzca>
- Text: the word circle to 216-279-1607

By *Don Lang*