

DECEMBER 2023

TRESTLE BOARD

Ionic Composite Lodge No. 520

2244 Westwood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90064

(424) 273-1054 / ioniccomposite.com

Dear Brethren,

Over the course of this past month and more, I have often found myself wondering how we – all of us – arrived at this point in history, where terrible events seem to swirl around us in a never-ending maelstrom. I thought about my own journey, which, for those who know me and my story, has been anything but straightforward, and how it has brought me to a place where I have once again been elected to help guide the Lodge for another year. In the broadest of terms, my life nearly ended by my own hand back in the early days of my collegiate career, and after getting therapy, I drifted. I was lost, without purpose, without direction; without a charted course or a star to steer by.

It was my father who suggested that I needed a community of caring, like-minded individuals to help anchor me, and he suggested that I look into joining the Masons. He explained that while he himself had discovered them too late in his life for him to be able to make the requisite time commitment to really dedicate himself to the Craft, he thought it would be a perfect fit for me.

And he was right. Soon after joining the Masons, I was back in school, off on a new, slightly altered course. I served as a junior officer of the Lodge for several years, until I felt that I was both steady enough in my course and that I needed to dedicate extra time to my studies. Secure in my knowledge that I was a Life Member of the Lodge and that it would survive my absence, my existing momentum carried me through my graduation with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biochemistry, but again, due to a concatenation of factors too complex to go into at the moment, my course was once again stymied. Once more, I found myself set adrift. I resisted the urge to return to Lodge out of shame; shame that I had somehow let my brethren down by not getting into the graduate

program I wanted and had expected, shame at once again having failed in my plans and aims. I didn't want my Brethren to see me as a failure. In short, my Brethren, I was a fool.

I forgot one of the oldest sayings of my people, which states quite simply, "Man plans and God laughs." Once more, I seemed to wander aimlessly, going in circles. But Brethren, the Great Artificer of the Universe is wiser than mortal man, and his ways, as it is truly said, are mysterious. Or perhaps, it would be better to say that the ways of the Divine simply have a level of perspective unavailable to the rest of us. For it was during these "aimless wanderings" that I would meet a friend who I now consider to be as close as any brother by blood or oath, and ultimately, it was through his influence that I found myself not only once more considering a new path for myself, but realizing that I had no reason to stay away from my Brethren at Lodge after my father's death in early 2019. And it was a good thing, too, because in my absence, the Lodge had suffered.

No, it was not my absence that caused the suffering, nor would my presence have prevented it; I am neither so arrogant nor so conceited as to think that. No, it was a series of petty disagreements between some members that grew out of proportion that had begun tearing at the fabric of the Lodge's Harmony, followed by a series of mundane floods and physical problems on our old property that had hurt our beloved Lodge. I saw that the Lodge needed help, and when asked, I stepped in to assist, first as Senior Deacon, and then as Warden and ultimately Master of the Lodge.

Brethren, I am telling you my story today because it is illustrative of something that I have been coming to realize, and which, ironically, I found perfectly expressed just last night in a novel. I never would have had reason to seek out the Masons had I not been brought so

low as to consider suicide and subsequently needed an anchoring community. I would not have likely set my feet on their current path had I not met my friend in my time adrift, for when I helped him with his problems, helping relieve his troubled mind in the wake of his own trauma, it was he who proved to me that I could and should be so helping others. This, in turn, has opened the doors to new ways of thinking for me whereby I have realized more and more where I really want – where I really need – to be in this world. As Ramy Vance, the author of the aforementioned novel I have been reading so aptly put it, “Sometimes we need to wander aimlessly and find ourselves back where we began to truly understand where we must go.”

Brethren, the world has wandered aimlessly for the past several decades, and it has once more come back to where it found itself some three quarters of a century ago. Old hatreds and radical ideologies are rising to the surface at unprecedented levels and at rates not seen since our darkest days. Once more, the world seems like it is being plunged into darkness. But I tell you Brethren, the darkness cannot stand before the coming of the Light.

I am a Jew, and proud of it. Long ago, we were Chosen by God. Much is made of that statement, in ways both terrible and benign, but what most people forget is that to be chosen is to be chosen for something. We were not chosen to be arbitrarily exalted, lifted up, or celebrated. We were not chosen to be rulers of the world, nor have we ever desired such. No, instead we were chosen for a specific task; we were to be an “Or La’Goyim” – a light unto the nations of the world. A nation of priests and teachers, of doctors and healers, of scholars and scribes. A nation whose collective purpose is to bear witness and stand as a reminder to the world that there is a better way to live – not based in religious superiority, but in basic morality and human decency, where the primary rule is “V’ahavta L’re’echa K’Mocha” – where you should love thy neighbor as thyself. Where one should never do unto another that which is abhorrent to oneself, where one lives and acts without judgement of differences in belief. But brethren, if I have learned anything in my years as a Mason, it is that we Jews are not alone in this task.

My ancestors were chosen for this task, but we – each and every one of us – chooses to take up this same task as Masons. Of our own free will and accord, each and every Mason vows to help bring Light to the world, to spread Brotherly Love, to bring Relief to those in distress, and to hold up the banner of Truth in all things. Perhaps that explains why the same people who so often spread hateful speech about Jews concoct terrible conspiracies about the Masons as well, for they sense that we share a singular purpose: to make this world a better, brighter place for everyone.

Brethren, in these dark times, I urge you to stay strong. Let the light of Truth be your guide in the darkness. Let Masonry guide you on your path, and lead you to where you can best help end the suffering of others. For those who have been distant or absent from the Lodge, I urge you to return in the near future, for together, we can do so much more than we can apart. We have wandered in the darkness, my brethren, but now I, for one, have begun to understand where we must go. I invite you to join me – to join us – on that journey, whereby we fulfill the promises we have made, when the choices both ancient and personal that have brought us to this place and time will finally begin to make sense. Brethren, we are here, at the perfect moment in time, when the World stands at a Crossroads, to light for the people of the world a better path than it has taken in the past. To show them that those Chosen of old and those who choose even now can truly make the world a better place, because Brethren, it truly is a great thing when we can dwell together in Unity. I invite you to join us.

Jacob Gershbock, PM
Master

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 4, 2023

DECEMBER STATED MEETING & PRESENTATION OF THE HIRAM AWARD TO BROTHER STAN SAX

LODGE OPEN: 6:30PM

DINNER: 7:15PM

HIRAM AWARD CEREMONY: 8:00PM

CLOSED PORTION TO FOLLOW

MENU

GRILLED CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD

PASTA BOLOGNESE & MEATBALLS

GARLIC BREAD

PANETTONE

DINNER IS \$15, PLEASE EMAIL BROKYLEWARE@GMAIL.COM TO RSVP

DECEMBER 11, 2023

INSTALLATION PRACTICE

7:15PM

ALL 2024 OFFICERS REQUIRED TO ATTEND.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 16, 2023

102ND ANNUAL INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

SOCIAL BEGINS: 5:30PM

INSTALLATION: 6:00PM

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS

PLEASE EMAIL BROKYLEWARE@GMAIL.COM TO RSVP

DECEMBER 18, 2023

DARK

DECEMBER 25, 2023

DARK FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

JANUARY 1, 2024

DARK FOR NEW YEARS DAY

January 8, 2024

Stated Meeting

HOW TO GET YOUR DUES CARD

With the installation of the iMember 2.0 online system a few years ago that all brothers can access upon registration lodge secretaries no longer receive all the dues cards to mail out after payment.

The dues card is now online in an 8 ½ x 11 format which can be printed and also downloaded to a phone.

There are 2 ways to get you dues care:

1. Login to www.member.freemason.org, select Ionic Composite Lodge bar, then select Virtual Card.
2. Send an email to our lodge Secretary Kyle Ware (brokyleware@gmail.com) requesting that it be mailed to you.

If you need help registering contact the Secretary.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO

Ionic Composite Lodge No. 520's

102nd Installation of Officers

MOST WORSHIPFUL LARRY ADAMSON, PGM

PRESIDING AS INSTALLING OFFICER

LOCATION: 2244 WESTWOOD BLVD, LOS ANGELES, CA 90064

DATE: SATURDAY DECEMBER 16TH, 2023

SOCIAL BEGINS: 5:30PM

INSTALLATION: 6:00PM

DINNER TO FOLLOW

MENU WILL BE ISRAELI FOOD (PITA, HUMMUS, TEHINA, FALAFEL, SCHWARMA, SALADS, ETC.)

ALL ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO COME.

RSVPs REQUESTED BUT NOT REQUIRED.

PLEASE BRING YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND ANY OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED AS PROSPECTIVE MASONS.

Please RSVP for the Installation so we may have an accurate headcount:

brokyleware@gmail.com

IONIC COMPOSITE LODGE NO. 520

We are considering getting a group together for the

Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

6067 Wilshire Blvd

Los Angeles, Ca 90036

Sunday, February 25, 2024

Time TBD

Group Fees:	Adult	\$22
	Senior 62+	\$17
	Students 18+	\$13
	Children to 17	Free

For information and reservations please contact Bernie

Morse PM at (310)704-2262 or email

brnhrd18@yahoo.com.

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CASTING CALL

**Wannabe Actors, Thespians
And Those Who Want Great Ritual**

You can help enhance the Masonic degrees for our candidates by taking part in the ceremonies. We want to put together ritual teams in all three degrees that will create memorable experiences.

Note that Entered Apprentices can take part in the 1st degree, Fellowcrafts in the 1st and 2nd degrees, and Master Masons in all three.

We are also looking for Master Masons who want to be officers. We have openings for 2024.

We want and need your involvement. If interested please contact:

Bernie Morse, PM

Officer's Coach

(310)556-4463

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gary Cremo 1

Morris Lazar 4

Vartan Gukasyan 6

Wesley Challacombe 7

Jason Louv 11

Marshall Krupp 13

Etan Goldman 16

Norman Langer 19

Bruno Samuel 20

Harold Forster 22

Yukihiro Matsumoto 22

Michael Maroko 23

Stanley Ziegler 27

THINK ABOUT IT

RON KORETZ, P.M.

Prior to the COVID epidemic, the state of Oregon had a testing requirement for all high school students. In order to graduate and receive a diploma, it was necessary for them to demonstrate proficiency in nine “essential skills”; these skills included reading, writing, and mathematics. This requirement was accomplished by either passing a state standardized test or by submitting “work samples” (one or two questions, problems, or topics that the student had to answer, solve, or discuss). Apparently most of the school districts relied on the standardized tests, which probably required less administrative time. However, the standardized test scores were sometimes disappointing. In 2019, the reading, writing, and math skills were fulfilled by using the standardized tests in 88%, 77%, and 73% of those taking the tests. As has been seen in other regions of the country, difficulty with these tests were particularly noted in minority groups, disabled students, or those learning English as a second language.

When the pandemic became a problem, the Board of Education suspended the standardized testing for the classes of 2020 and 2021. The requirement to demonstrate proficiencies was also temporarily stopped. While testing was subsequently resumed in 2021, it was “scaled back”. The Oregon Board of Education then determined that the requirement to display some mastery in reading, writing, or mathematics was “harmful”, especially to the groups that had not performed well in the past. Most recently (July 2023), the state legislature passed Senate Bill 744 which suspended the requirement at least through 2028. Thus,

while the standardized tests will still be given, they will not be a factor in deciding if particular students are given diplomas or not.

The proponents of this decision do recognize that their action made graduation easier, but argue that the requirement was a “meaningless hoop”. For them, this was a matter of “equity”. They compare this action to the decisions of many colleges to no longer use SAT scores in admission decisions. The teachers’ union has supported this action.

On the other hand, there has been backlash from the community. An editorial in the Wall Street Journal called this action “Dumbing Oregon Down” and opined that the school officials in the state were embarrassed by the number of minority children who failed to master the essential skills that high school is supposed to teach.

It appears that many school systems (including Oregon) are identifying too many students who are not demonstrably skilled in the 3 R’s. However, I am not convinced that the way to deal with this problem is to de-emphasize it. What Oregon is functionally doing is lowering its expectations of its high school students. I believe that people, including children, will live up, or live down, to the expectations placed upon them.

Think about it.

BRETHREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Sick and Visitation Committee Report

Bill Miller

Feeling well following shoulder fracture.

Wellness Calls And Funeral Notification List Please Contact Bro. Stan Sax
stan_sax53@yahoo.com

Brethren Please, a Telephone call from you could brighten their day. To get the contact information of those listed please contact the lodge Secretary or Master. If you know of a Brother or a member of a Brother's family who is ill, please contact the Lodge Office.

BEWARE...

**of scam / phishing emails asking for money or personal information.
Scammers are pretending to be Masons, even the Worshipful Master!
We'll never ask you to send money or gift cards via email.
Reach out to Lodge Leadership directly or by phone.**

2023 OFFICERS

Master – Jacob Gershbock

Marshal –

Senior Warden – Jeffrey Bear, P.M. (Trisha)

Senior Steward – Varun Dadabhoy

Junior Warden – Steve Resnick, P.M. (Sheelah)

Junior Steward –

Treasurer – Bernie Morse, P.M. (Carolyn)

Assistant Secretary – Michael Bear, P.M. (Debbie)

Secretary – Kyle Ware

Tiler – Roy Steinfeld, P.M.

Chaplain –

Officers' Coach – Bernie Morse, P.M. (Carolyn)

Senior Deacon – Chay Alexander Wright, P.M

Inspector for the 626th Masonic District
Jhairo Echevarria P.M.

Junior Deacon – Luis Tananta (Maria)

Trestleboard Layout – Kyle Ware