

The Trestleboard

Acalanes Fellowship Lodge #480 ☉ September 2023

Upcoming Events at Acalanes Fellowship Lodge #480

Sept 5, 5:30 pm

Stated Meeting & Dinner

5:30 pm social hour

6:30 pm dinner

7:30 pm meeting

[RSVP NOW](#)

Sept 9, 5:30 pm

Luau

Come support Hawaiian fire relief and enjoy a little Aloha spirit with your ohana and all the brethren.

[RSVP NOW](#)

Sept 12, 6:30 pm

First Degree

Save the date! Pending a ballot at our stated meeting, we anticipate initiating a new brother on September 12.

From the East

A message from Worshipful Robert S. Strohmeyer, PM

Aloha from the East, my Brethren. The summer may be coming to a close, but we're preparing to get into the island spirit. In solidarity with our brethren and loved ones who suffered the horrific fires on Maui, we are holding a LUAU on Saturday, September 9. All net proceeds from the event will go to relieve families affected by the devastating fires.

We'll be serving up Hawaiian food, Polynesian music, and tiki drinks all around. [CLICK HERE TO RSVP FOR THE LUAU.](#)



I was tremendously pleased with the performance of your officer corps at the initiation of Bro. Patrick Labit on August 22. We had several brothers performing roles in advance stations, including Bro. Mark Williams as Master, Bro. Pete Peterson as Senior Warden, Bro. Christopher Benz as Jr. Deacon, and Bro. Rob Seitelman as Sr. Steward. Bro. Mick McNulty not only served in an advance station as Jr. Steward for the evening, but also delivered an excellent Charge to our newly initiated brother. It's so gratifying to see these brothers stepping up to take part in our degrees, and seeing the way they've been pitching in and helping to lead, I'm more confident than ever in the future of our lodge. I know without a doubt that when I step down as Master at the end of this year the lodge will be in tremendously capable hands.

As you probably understand, Freemasonry is not about "powers that be" or "lodge management" making things happen. Freemasonry is the quintessential democratic society. Our ancient brethren spread democracy to the world, and taught humanity to embrace the freedom and responsibility of self-governance. That's true not only historically, but today it is the essence of how our lodges operate. That means we need you, whether you're a seasoned past master of 40 years or a newly initiated brother. The lodge needs your participation, either as an officer or as a volunteer on a committee. We need brothers with a variety of talents, from putting on social and charity events to running our Hall Association to serving in our leadership line. There is a role for you here. Just speak with any officer and we'll welcome your contribution.

Speaking of Masonic democracy, Annual Communication is coming up October 27-29. This Grand Lodge meeting is where Masons gather from lodges around the state to vote on proposed changes to the California Masonic Code, the code of Masonic law in our jurisdiction. It governs everything from how meetings are run to how officers are elected, how our ritual works, and more, and the process works like a representative democracy with lodge officers and past masters voting on behalf of their lodges. We'll share the legislative proposals in the October stated meeting, and we hope you will take the opportunity to give us your input on how the lodge should cast its votes.

We also have our stated meeting coming up on September 5. Please remember to [RSVP for the stated meeting](#), and invite your friends to join us for dinner. We're always welcoming visitors at The Friendly Lodge, so just let the Master know if you've got someone to bring along. If the visitor is a prospective member, we'll comp their meal and ensure they get a warm welcome when they come.

Fraternally yours,

Bob Strohmeyer, PM

Master

From the South

Peter A. Peterson, Senior Warden

A few observations after participating in the most recent Entered Apprentice degree ceremony for our newest Brother - Patrick Labit. It was a pleasure for this relative old-timer to watch some of our newer Masons who have stepped up to the plate both as participants and future leaders in our friendly Lodge. Our two Stewards ("Mick" McNulty and Rob Seitleman) performed with military-like precision. Chris Benz shined performing his duties while sitting in an advanced chair as Junior Deacon. Kaveh Astaneh (next year's Senior Deacon) filled in as Tiler (a position near and dear to my heart) and kept various unsavory folks away during the initiation.



Not-so-new, but always active, Mark Williams—our incoming Junior Warden—sat in the East and performed exceptionally well. We had a great turnout and so many sideliners attended that at one critical point we were concerned we might not have enough room to get everyone shoulder-to-shoulder. We were considering using sledgehammers to push out the wall in the East until our beloved and grumpy Marshall, Brother Lezak, snarled a few cuss words and made judicious use of his baton to make sure we all fit in line. Our District Inspector was in attendance and had high praise for the entire performance!

If you haven't personally attended recent Stated Meetings, you may be unaware that Worshipful Strohmeyer (working with Grand Lodge Secretary Alan Casalou, Past Master of AFL#480), has begun the process of developing a scholarship program in partnership with Acalanes High School. Worshipful Strohmeyer appointed a Scholarship Committee consisting of Mark Williams, Cody Wilbur (an Acalanes HS grad) and yours Truly.

Our Lodge has a significant connection with Acalanes High School. As detailed on our website, our roots began in 1952 when members of Thousand Oaks Lodge #363 in Berkeley, but living in the Orinda, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek area, decided to form a new lodge on this side of the hills. They received a dispensation from Grand Lodge that year and received a charter as Acalanes Lodge #723 during a ceremony held at the Acalanes High School gymnasium. Some of those original charter members were teachers at the high school.

What we have found is there are several students who may not be able to participate in extra-curricular events - sports activities, volunteer opportunities, advanced placement courses, etc. - that would enable them to compete with other students for scholarships. For example, some of these students may have to work after school to help support their family or stay home to take care of younger siblings while their parents work. Some students simply have different goals in life that traditional “higher education” may not provide. They may be more interested in gaining skills in a trade through a tech school, community and junior college, or the California State system. These students are the ones we are most interested in helping to reach their goals.

The Scholarship Committee has been working with Grand Lodge and Acalanes HS staff to get this program started for this upcoming school year. Many of us have already donated to this scholarship program and several others have made pledges to contribute. Grand Lodge Secretary, Worshipful Casalou, has pledge to match a portion of our donations. Our goal is to make this a permanent Lodge program and encourage any and all contributions. A separate account has been set up to accept donations and any proceeds from fundraisers. Checks can be made out to Acalanes Fellowship Lodge #480, with a “Scholarship Fund” notation in the memo line.

Finally, on the Hall front. We are still evaluating the scope-of-work and getting bids to repair and replace at least four upper windows that have sustained weather damage over the years. The goal is to get this work completed before the next rainy season.

Pete Peterson

Junior Warden

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