



# Over the Back Fence

Masonic Homes of California at Covina

Volume 30, Issue 10

## Masonic Homes Named Top Workplace Second Year in a Row!

*Top-Notch Work Environment Helps Provide the Best Care and Support to Our Residents*

Submitted By John Feagans

For the second consecutive year, the Masonic Homes of California has been honored as a Top Workplace by the Bay Area News Group. The award is based on survey data collected by the technology firm Energate LLC that measures factors like company values, managers' impact on employee growth, and employees' connection to the larger mission. For the Masonic Homes of California, the designation is especially relevant this year, as it has emerged as a leader in its field in confronting



the COVID-19 health crisis. At a time when many continuing-care retirement communities have struggled to adapt to the pandemic, MHC has demonstrated its commitment to safety, transparency, and mutual support.

Through licensed retirement homes in Union City and Covina, the Masonic Center for Youth and Families, and Masonic Outreach Services, MHC provides care and services for some of California's most vulnerable people. The organization, which employs more than 400 staff members across its campuses, was founded in 1898 and today provides outreach and services for hundreds of families across the state centered on four principles: safety, personal connection, experience, and efficiency. "Despite the changes we've made this year, those concepts remain our guides," President and CEO Gary Charland says. "That said, it's the way that our team members across all levels of the organization have embraced them that has made us so successful."

Source: <https://masonichome.org/community-news/for-the-second-straight-year-masonic-homes-of-california-is-named-a-top-workplace/>

## Preparing For Cold and Flu Season During Pandemic

*Steps You Can Take to Protect Yourself and Others in Our Community*

Submitted By John Feagans

COVID-19 didn't wind up disappearing over the summer like we'd hoped—far from it. But even though the coronavirus doesn't seem to be seasonal, plenty of other communicable diseases are. Colds and influenza make the rounds every winter, and this winter they're going to be circulating alongside COVID. So how can we prepare?



### Recognize that colds, flu, and COVID may look similar

Colds and the flu are already very similar ailments. Often the flu will feel more severe than a cold, but that's not a hard and fast rule. In a typical winter, at least one strain of flu virus is going around, plus many cold viruses. Viruses that cause colds include rhinovirus, adenovirus and four other types of human coronavirus.

Any of these can cause fevers and respiratory symptoms like coughing and

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## The Last Chance HALLOWEEN!

By Bro. Steven L. Harrison, PM, FMLR

I figured I'd better get upstairs. I didn't want to go to the séance...yes, the séance...and after that the top three floors would be closed — forever. I'd worked in the building three years and never been up there. This was my last chance. With no working elevators, I hoofed it up the stairs and emerged in a dark fourth-floor hallway of the doomed building. My eyes adjusted and I slowly made my way to the rooms in the north-west corner. I opened the door and entered the fabled room. There were no drapes covering the windows and the bright light nearly blinded me. The room was stark and dirty. To my left was a broken wheelchair. A sink jutted out from the far wall. Its basin was stained and dusty. Beneath it was a wastebasket — full. A bed frame with an old mattress was

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# Over The Back Fence

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Over The Back Fence is published monthly as a vehicle of communication and entertainment for the Residents and Staff of the Masonic Homes at Covina with a focus on sharing information about Residents, Homes activities, and items of interest to the "Masonic Family." ALL RESIDENTS are welcome to contribute to *your* newsletter. Articles are subject to editing by the Editor. If you have an article you wish to have published, please give it to Jennifer before the 15th of the month. Space is limited so please restrict your article to a half page.

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**Masonic Homes of California at Covina**



# OTBF Readers' Perspectives



## A Letter From Judy Figueroa

Dear Residents,

Two years in a row the Masonic Homes of California has been one of the top places to work. Last year the staff celebrated with a carnival theme in Solomon Square. Unfortunately, this year will be different due to COVID-19. The Directors are working on several fun events for our staff to enjoy. Each year we work on the lower scores of the staff survey. This year has become difficult. What staff perceived to be low scores prior to COVID-19 has changed their opinions today. Our staff have worked hard and as one big team since COVID-19. The staff's number one priority is the residents. We are so fortunate to have such a caring staff for both the residents and their co-workers. I will share the celebration with you along with pictures so stay tuned.

- Judy Figueroa

## I Wish You Would Write!

No, that's not a pathetic behest by a grief-addled mother to her child. It's a plea to you to write something for YOUR publication, Over The Back Fence. There is no other way I can put it: WRITE!

It's easier to do than you think. I don't have a lock on writing talent. I write when I need to say something, when I feel strongly about something. I don't know (and, frankly, don't

care) if anybody agrees with me or not. I write because it's an outlet, both emotional and intellectual, and it feels good whether I see myself in print or not.

You may feel that you're not up to the task. Nobody is. I never know whether something I submit will be approved or not. Jennifer is the ultimate arbiter of what goes in and what stays out, and I have had some stories scrapped by her. But I keep writing anyway, first because I must keep writing for my own sanity, and second because OTBF needs stories and I'm the one who has to write them.

Here are some ideas, in case you haven't already thought of them.

- The time you and your significant other had a big fight over what turned out to be much ado about nothing.
- You took your car (boat, motorcycle, RV) in for service and it ran better and more smoothly before you took it to the dealer or repair shop than afterward.
- You were at a neighbor's pool as an invited guest and the embarrassing thing that happened to you.
- You started a new job and you came overdressed or underdressed for it.
- You started a new job, only to find that the knowledge required for it far exceeds what you've got.
- The time you and your significant other fought over who has to clean up the mess made by (child, dog, cat, bird, etc.)
- The perfect description of the ideal mate for you.
- The time you met someone who would have been perfect for you, only he or she was married or otherwise spoken for.

If you haven't tried writing in a while (like since you were in high school), write a paragraph. Then write a second paragraph. And so on. You will find that if you write the

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## THE REBELLION HAS BEGUN!



## HAIKU

Woodpeckers pecking  
Rapping, tapping, louder now  
Welcoming morning.

by Sharanne Wick

# Last Chance Halloween

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over by the window. All told, the room was disappointing. It just didn't seem... well...as auspicious as it should have, given what had happened there many, many years ago on Halloween.

**Halloween and Freemasonry:** There are probably many tie-ins what with all the costumes worn in degree work, skulls and other symbols; and that's before the conspiracy theorists weigh in. Occasionally, though, the pairing of the mysterious holiday and Freemasonry brings to mind images of Harry Houdini, a life member of St. Cecile Lodge 568, New York City.

A man of mystery, you could almost say Brother Harry lived Halloween 24/7. Aside from being, arguably, the world's greatest magician and escape artist, Houdini maintained an abiding interest in the paranormal. He did not, however, deceitfully promote it as he felt many did. He despised fraudulent seers and mediums and worked tirelessly to expose their chicanery. He felt everything he couldn't expose as being fake must be real.



Harry Houdini with his mother and wife 1907.

He made many attempts to communicate with his mother after she died, but found no evidence of contact. Still, feeling communication with "the other side" was possible, he made a pact with his wife Bessie that the first to die would attempt to contact the other through a coded message. No one knows what the full message was, but part of the pact was that Houdini would open a pair of silver handcuffs they owned. Bessie never received any communication from Houdini after his death, but hundreds of psychics claimed they did.



Harry Houdini, the most famous magician to ever live, died of peritonitis in Room 401 of Grace Hospital on Oct. 31, 1926 -- Halloween. He was staying at the Statler Hotel for his performance at the Garrick Theatre. All three of these Detroit buildings with ties to Houdini's final moments have been demolished.

On Halloween 1936, the 10th anniversary of his death, she held a final séance in which he failed to appear. After that, Bess declared the search over and said she believed he could not come back, "It is finished." Two years later she created a firestorm in the world of spiritualists when, playing herself in the film *Religious Racketeer*, she said she did not believe communication with the dead was possible.

During his life the great Houdini did everything he could to separate the fake aspects of spiritualism from what he thought might be real. Shortly before his death he testified before congress against spiritualists and fortune tellers licensed to practice in Washington, DC. So adamant was he that they were charlatans, the hearing broke out in a shouting match and some of the spectators tried to attack Houdini.

On the other hand, still believing there was something to communication with the spiritual world, he worked with Thomas Edison in an attempt to develop a "delicate psychic detecting instrument." The object of the "ghost machine," as it was called, was to be so sensitive it could detect the presence or touch of an ethereal being from another world. There is no evidence the machine was ever built.

On October 26, 1926, Houdini received a painful blow to the stomach in a demonstration at McGill University in Montreal. Contrary to popular opinion, most medical experts believe the blow was unrelated to the appendicitis attack that followed; however, Houdini failed to get treatment thinking the pain in his stomach was due to the punch to his abdomen. After his appearance in

Montreal, he traveled to Detroit where he collapsed at the end of a performance. Five days later, on Halloween, Harry Houdini died.

I was standing in a nondescript empty room on the fourth floor of old Grace Hospital in Detroit. The building, once considered progressive and modern, had deteriorated to the point that it would be torn down in a few months. I ran the Information Technology department downstairs and once my group moved out, the wrecking ball would move in. I soaked it all in. Somehow it just didn't seem that special, but shortly several people and the news media — this year including *Time Magazine* — would gather there as they had done for years on Halloween.

This wasn't just any room. This was the very place where, on October 31, 1926, Brother Harry Houdini died. I took a final look and turned to leave. As I walked away, people filed past me to enter the room for Houdini's last séance.

Houdini, as had been the case on every Halloween in Grace Hospital since he died, did not show up.

Steve Harrison, 32° KCCH, is a Past Master of Liberty Lodge #31, Liberty, Missouri. He is the editor of the Missouri Freemason magazine, author of the book *Freemasonry Crosses the Mississippi*, a Fellow of the Missouri Lodge of Research and also its Senior Warden. He is a dual member of Kearney Lodge #311, St. Joseph Missouri Valley of the Scottish Rite, Liberty York Rite, Moila Shrine and is a member of the DeMolay Legion of Honor.

Source: <http://www.midnightfreemasons.org/2013/10/the-last-chance-halloween.html>

# Flu Season

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sniffing. Telling the difference between colds and the flu is tough enough in typical years; now we add the possibility of COVID-19 into the mix.

Don't expect any chart or rule of thumb to be able to authoritatively tell the difference between a cold and COVID. If you think you have a garden-variety cold, it's definitely possible it's actually COVID. On the flip side, if you think you might have symptoms of COVID, it may bring you peace of mind to remember that it could just be a cold.

In any case, don't assume. Testing will be important to tell the difference between COVID and other respiratory infections. (Let's hope that prompt tests are available to everyone who needs them, and that leaders are planning now

for the increased demand.) If you think you have a cold, flu or COVID (or fall allergies, for that matter), get in touch with a local doctor for advice.

## Support your immune system, but not with supplements

There are a lot of supplements out there that claim to "boost" your immune system, but those claims are mostly garbage.

As we've discussed before, they don't work—and even if they did, boosting isn't what your immune system needs.

I'm thinking of supplements like Vitamin C, which isn't bad for you or anything, but realistically it's not going to make the difference between staying healthy and getting sick.

That said, I understand that taking a daily packet of Emergen-C (or



whatever) is a helpful little ritual for many folks. Normally I'd argue that you should get over yourself, but we're in a pandemic. If something like this helps you to feel calm and in control, maybe it's good for your mental health. Maybe it takes up some brain space that would otherwise become filled with worry. Just be aware of the limitations, and don't let these little rituals give you a false sense of security.

## Masks and distancing protect us from colds and flu, too

We've come to think of masks and social distancing as specifically anti-COVID measures, but since they protect us from each other's respiratory droplets, they may reduce our risk of catching and spreading other diseases as well.



This means that even if you don't think you're at risk of COVID—let's say you're visiting a friend who recently tested negative—safety measures like masks, distancing and ventilation are still a good idea.

Remember, even though colds are less deadly than COVID, getting a cold can mean spending time worried about your health, getting tested and seeking care.

## Definitely get that flu shot

The last thing you need, in the middle of a pandemic, is to catch the flu. Even though flu shots aren't perfect, they:

- Reduce your overall chances of catching the flu.
- Make it more likely that if you do get the flu, it will be mild.
- Reduce the chances that you'll pass the flu on to someone more vulnerable.

Less flu in the community is a good thing. Besides the uncertainty of wondering if you have the flu or COVID, there are other reasons. Flu patients are sometimes sick enough to need hospital care, so less flu means less strain on the healthcare system. And less flu means less of a chance that someone might get the flu and COVID at the

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# OTBF Readers' Perspectives



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way you talk, it will be easier to do.

Tell the world who you are. Do what I do very often: talk about yourself. Give us a report on why you're the best at (you name it). How did you become a Republican or a Democrat or an independent voter? How do you make a delicious blueberry pie? Why do you do that thing you do? What is your main concern in your life right now? You can talk up a storm if you want to.

I can't do this alone. Your writing something about yourself is special and sacred. For the sake of OTBF, write something soon.

- Karla Johnson

## Don't Buy From Locostylish.com!

That's right. Not .com, but .con. Don't be dumb like me – I fell for their con.

I was looking for face masks at a reasonable price. As I was browsing the web, I saw an ad for these beautiful, clever face masks offered by this company. There were an endless variety of face mask groups, in groups of seven

or thereabouts. There were other face masks offered individually, too. Wow, I thought, this is terrific!

I saw the groups of face masks with only one price for each group: \$3.99, \$4.99, \$5.99, and up. I thought these were the prices for the groups of masks. That was what they wanted you to think. So I placed an order for what I thought was a group of masks for \$4.99. The charges for shipping were outrageous (\$16), but I wanted the masks, so I paid it.

I should have known better. Six – yes, six – weeks later when the package arrived, there was no return address. And when I opened the package, there was one measly face mask and nothing else inside. The mask was a simple print of various indescribable things (see photo). Nothing else.

**Caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware. Don't get caught in the same trap as me. Stay away from Locostylish.**

- Karla Johnson



# Masonic Homes of California at Covina

# RESIDENT COUNCIL

## September 9, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 AM by Chairperson Lenore Upson. 5 members were present plus Jennifer Shapiro. There were no Residents at the meeting. Assembly took place in Upper R4 with one member per table wearing masks. The Beauty Salon is open. We have Norma Garcia as our weekend receptionist, and Pam during the week. We can reopen the campus when we are COVID-19 free for two weeks with negative results. We go by the guidelines as well as: CDC, DSS, LA COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES.

### **REPORTS – BILLIE KARZ**

The balance as of 9-8-2020 is \$8,353.23.

### **ACTIVITIES - LYN EFFREN**

Due to the COVID-19 virus all off campus outings have been suspended until further notice. This includes shopping, lunches, and dinners. This month was more active, we have hallway Bingo once a week, and library is now open with a limit of 2 people. General store weekly, coffee social for Pink Hats, root beer floats or ice cream on Saturdays. A very successful meeting was held about where and what to get for take-out. Busy Bee talk show Monday and Wednesday 11:00 am and 2:30 pm in Upper R4. Happy Hour every Friday.

### **BUILDING & GROUNDS/HOUSEKEEPING - ERNEST MARUMOTO/ KARLA JOHNSON**

Janae is the new housekeeping supervisor and she can be reached on Ray's old ext. which is 32313. Bobbie has hired a new housekeeper to fill Janae's old position. The outdoor patio is almost complete, the lights have been hung and the flowers are in the planters. With the excessive heat the flowers are dead but will grow back in a couple of weeks.

### **FOOD SERVICES - MILT FREER**

Still not much to report during the COVID-19 times. The kitchen has been trying for variations in the menus but I have not been able to hear what residents' impressions have been. All I know is that Yolanda is very responsive to the needs of the residents. The a la carte menu is well received by the residents.

### **HEALTH SERVICES - RITA DOW**

Let us all welcome the new members of our nursing staff. Genesis a LVN, Vanessa a CNA, Giselle a Caregiver, and Michael a Caregiver. Paola on nights with Elizabeth. Caregivers must be certified to go to the new building. All nurses have the option to go to the new building.

### **DESTINY LODGE - JERRY CHANDLER**

Lodge is suspended until further notice.

### **RESIDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE - HERSH MAZER**

No report given.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 A.M.

**Respectfully Submitted, Howard Steinore, Secretary**



# Living on the Edge...

## Down Home



Karla Johnson

Just as I emerged from one quarantine, I encountered another. I went to get my car smogged so I could register it before the

expiration date. This took about half an hour, maybe 45 minutes tops. I went where I have gone since I came here nine years ago, to Will's Automotive on San Bernardino Road, maybe a mile and a half from the Home. When I came back, I was immediately told that I was under quarantine – again.

So here I am, stuck again in that den of iniquity known as My Apartment. I read a lot to keep myself busy. I'm reading a couple of books that a friend loaned me. And I am on the computer most of the rest of the time, trying to enroll at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) so I can pursue Fine Arts as a major, with or without academic credit. (I have all the degrees I need or want; I don't need any more.) Every class is via Zoom, so I don't have to go anywhere. I have a class selected – Beginning Painting – and I've even "attended" part of the first class via Zoom so I wouldn't entirely miss the start of the Fall semester.

My class is every Friday from 9 am to 3:30 pm. It's not as hard as one may think; I still get to take my lunch break. (So if you're looking for me on Friday, it's best to wait for lunch or after class.)

That's Friday. I have spare time when I'm not painting for homework the other 6 days. I went yesterday for a COVID-19 test (the only way to get out of this silly quarantine business early) and won't get the results for 2 to 5 days.

I went to CVS pharmacy to get the test, which was free to me with my insurance card. The test was a drive-thru. I waited behind two other cars. And waited. And waited. Finally my turn came. The woman behind the counter asked to see my insurance card. She asked me to hold it up while she took a picture of it. I didn't know how that was going to work, since she was four or five feet away from me in an ensconced cubicle. She focused the cell phone on the card, took a picture, and said, "Thanks. You can put your card away."

She told me to unroll the test kit in the plastic bags I had received, then told me to wipe the back of my nose with the swab, first on the left side, then on the right side. I pushed the swab as far back as it would go and did as she asked. Then, following her instructions, I broke off half of the stick, wrapped everything up and placed the test kit in the receptacle a few feet ahead of my car. Like the other drivers ahead of me, I had to get out of the car to reach the receptacle. I was done. The woman had told me to expect the results in 2 to 5 days. So now I wait.

You have to fill out some confusing instructions prior to going for the test at CVS. It seems the results come back to you in a proprietary application called MyChart. I don't recommend CVS for testing because they don't know how to design software. For example, they assume everyone has a cell phone. I don't have one. So now they will be sending texts to my Home phone number, which is not a cell phone.

Anyway, that's how I've been spending my days confined like a prisoner to home.

# Flu Season

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same time. That would be no fun.

## Sleep well and eat well

The best ways to support your immune system are the simple, boring ones. Science is pretty sure that people are least likely to get sick when they're well-rested, well-fed and not terribly stressed.



Life is hard out there, and you shouldn't feel guilty if you do get stressed. But make a little time in your schedule, when you can, to get to bed early. Plan out meals that include both protein and vegetables. Manage your stress the best you can, whether that means delegating tasks, taking more time for self care or recognizing that maybe you've been ignoring these signs of anxiety for too long and it's time to look into therapy.

Source: <https://vitals.lifehacker.com/how-to-prepare-for-cold-and-flu-season-during-a-pandemi-1844749240>

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Betty Cannon - Oct. 7  
Ernest Marumoto - Oct. 14  
Donald Covey - Oct. 20  
Patricia Long - Oct. 20  
Steven Hawkins - Oct. 21  
David Studer - Oct. 25



## Masonic Homes Covina RESIDENT CENSUS

**TOTAL POPULATION** = 59

Women = 28 Men = 31

**COUPLES** = 8 (Includes 5 Outplacements)

### OUTPLACEMENTS

**Bente, Clare** Claremont Care Center  
**Riedel, Robert** Alta Loma Gardens  
**Ripley, Daisy** Pilgrim Place - SNF  
**Scovill, Robert** Silverado Sierra Vista  
**Stoddart, Yvonne** St. Simon Home  
For the Elderly

### TEMPORARY STAYS

**Long, Pat** Garden View Post-Acute