



The Messenger

Published for the Residents
Masonic Homes of California at Union City

Holiday Traditions—Compiled by the Lorber Recreation Team

Lorber residents and staff share their Holiday Family Traditions—



“My family comes to see me and bring food so we all can eat.” -Margaret Cunningham



“Lentil soup the night before Christmas and then we would open packages under the tree.

If we had enough people around, we had a turkey for dinner on Christmas Day along with sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, and turkey dressing-not in that order.” - Bill Young



“We go to church on Christmas Day depending on the weather. I like to worship on Holidays.” – June Graham



“When my kids were little, we would give some toys and play with them. We also would eat both American and Chinese food.” - Lillian Jung



December 2020

Continues on page 2

Holiday...



“We go get a Christmas tree together. I chop it down and my kids put it in the car. Our neighborhood has a particular section with spectacular decorations that makes the snow look real.” - Ari Eddleman

Continued from page 1



“I think it is nice to get together and have dinner. We would go to my mother’s home. She would prepare and we would bring gifts for everyone.” -Betty Simms



“We go home during Christmas to get together. We have Lechon and celebrate with family. It is like a reunion during the holidays. Giving gifts to the children and god-children. The kids are happy!” – Beth



“My birthday is near Christmas, so we usually celebrate both at the same time.” - Patricia Beltranena

“Christmas is one of my favorite holidays. I used to spend time with family, eat a lot of food and go shopping for gifts.” - Harold Earley



Holiday...



“We celebrate with family and try to enjoy as much as we can. The special part is watching the kids open the gifts.”
— Jose

Continued from page 2



“Exchanging gifts, doing parlor games, and having a family reunion.” — Fouziya

PHOTO
NOT
AVAILABLE

“My family and I take turns hosting and cooking. We all catch up and be thankful. We are having a simple celebration this year with family.” — Mary Ann Tang



“Now I See” — Submitted by Resident, Zelma Campbell

A snake slithered to the optometrist office and said, “My eyesight is getting so bad that I can’t see well enough to find my way around anymore. Can you fit me with a pair of glasses?” “Sure,” replied the Optometrist, and the snake returned to his home with a pair of glasses that gave him 20/20 vision. It was then he realized that the unfriendly neighbor who wouldn’t even say “hi” was a garden hose.



Things to Do Today

- Smile easily
- Laugh frequently
- Think kindly
- Speak gently
- Act thoughtfully
- Love always.



The Chaplain's Corner

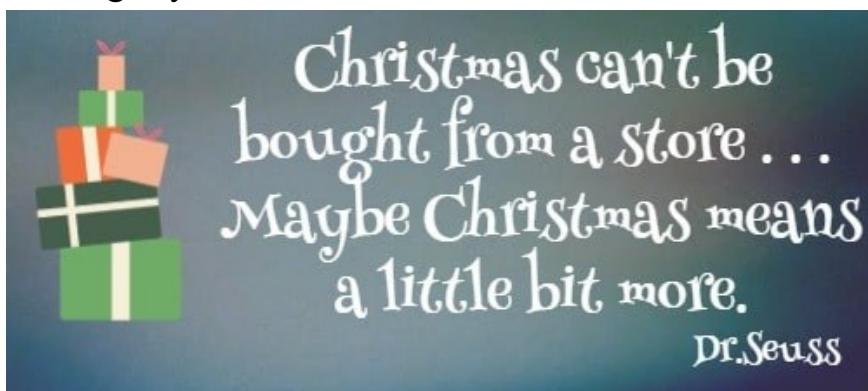
by Chaplain Joel Ingram

Well, here we are in the month of November. Wait, what? It's December? You've got to be kidding me? All this Covid stuff has got most of us feeling one or two ways or for those of us with split personalities perhaps feeling both ways.

Being all cooped up has made this year fly by in a blur. With all days feeling the same, they all just run together and hmmpf, it's time for Christmas cards. Covid has brought week after week of monotonous days that can't finish fast enough for us.

Whichever way it is for you, I get it. For the past eight months it's been odd, inconvenient and just plain strange to work from home half of the time. My dog loves it, but he's the only one. Okay, my wife loves it but that's just because I make lunch. So, heading into the holidays which will most certainly not feel like the "holidays of yore," what is one to do? Well, here are my thoughts.

First, do what you usually do. No, I don't mean feed the dog your portion of fruitcake! I mean, decorate your home just as if you had lots of family visiting from out of town. Sure, we want other people to see and enjoy our decorations. But we also decorate for our own enjoyment and celebration, don't we? Doesn't your 2020 need some celebration, some tinsel, some shine? Mine does. And, I'm not just preaching to the choir here. I've already hung a few strings of lights at my house (Yes, Soledad it was off company time! ☺) and will put more outside in the coming days.



Also, by all means, reach out to friends and family or family and friends either way! If you usually have writer's cramps from sending out oodles of Christmas cards, knock yourself out and get writer's cramps

this year too! In times of uncertainty and with the loss of routine, everyone you know will welcome the familiarity of "that card" with your name at the bottom. And, for goodness sake, make it about the holidays. A Christmas card that drones on about how bad the year has been would be right up there with socks for Christmas! You can do better. Not a writer, that's fine. Just follow your routine. Call folks. Send smoke signals (well, here in California maybe don't do that). We've had enough smoke this year!). But you get the idea. Reach out and touch someone (with a mask and gloves of course!).

Finally, give thanks. Wasn't it Erma Bombeck that said, "If life is a bowl of

The Chaplain's Corner

Continued from page 4

Cheerios, why am I feeling the pits?" Wait, no, that's not what she said. Anyhow, no matter how dreary your year has been, I'm sure there have been blessings tucked away here and there. My mom used to buy little chocolate bars and hide them all over our home. My dad used to say she was hiding them from me, but I could smell chocolate on his breath when he'd say that, so I knew the truth.

Anyhow, I digress, but the point is, she'd hide these chocolate bars and forget all about them. Then, one day, when she'd least expect it (as Alan Funt would say), it would be "Hey! A chocolate bar. I forgot that one!" My guess is, your 2020 is a lot like a house full of mama; "chocolate bars" all over the place. So, give your sweet spot a look. You know, those places, times and people who have made your 2020 worth trudging through and – give thanks. Until 2021 and a C-19 vaccine, be well – *Chaplain Joel*

Keeping the Faith—Submitted by Resident, Jeanne Benedict

How many times have you heard the phrase?

"Keep the Faith"

Keep it where? Keep what faith? You may ask.

I have two great places to store it.

1- in our hearts

2- in our thoughts

Keep what faith? Faith in ourselves that our actions will bring happiness.

Faith in each other

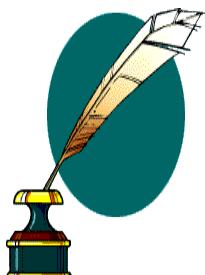
Faith that the Lord loves and keeps us.

With these faiths stored and kept by you and I,
Our lives will be happy and have more meaning.

So, remember –

"KEEP THE FAITH"

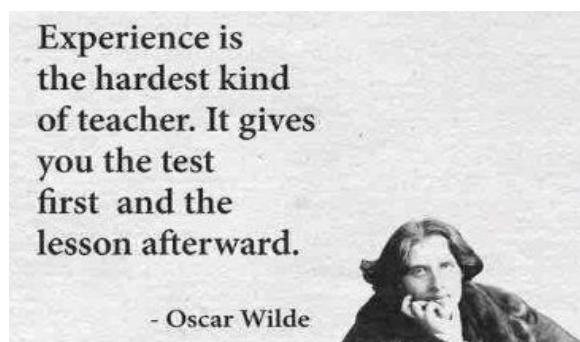
Note: From the files of my departed husband, who wrote this many years ago before we could even conceive the current state of the world. COVID has changed almost everything, but it cannot prevent us from "Keeping the Faith." I have faith that God will see us through this - so far so good - and that the changes ahead might give us new and maybe better opportunities.



Quotable

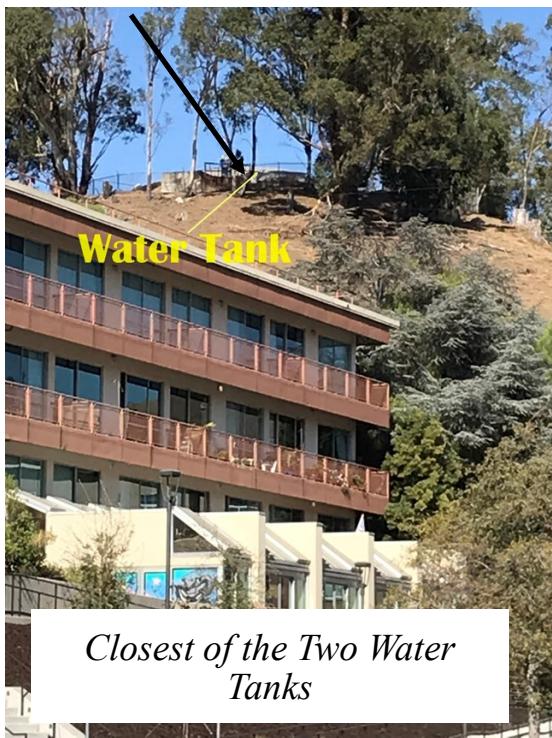
Experience is
the hardest kind
of teacher. It gives
you the test
first and the
lesson afterward.

- Oscar Wilde



Hiking Trip to the Dark Side of the Water Tanks

Written by Residents, Bruce & Evelyn Rick



After hearing of the plan to again have astronauts visit and see the “dark side” of the Moon, it was time to visit and see the “dark side” (back side) of the two Water Tanks on the Campus of the Masonic Homes at Union City.

From the Campus buildings only a little piece of one of the Water Tanks can be seen, like the first quarter of the Moon. Only a little bit of the front tank’s dome and some fencing can be made out. Dennis Lopiccolo, our Director of Environmental & Facility Services, Safety & Security says the water tanks together hold about 400,000 gallons of fresh water.

Checking with the Walking Group about walks to the Water Tanks, it was confirmed that, just like going to the Moon, few people have taken the journey. Thus, it was immediately decided that this was another “must see” adventure trip to share what is

unique around our Campus. Having regularly visited the Event Center and previously hiked to the Outdoor Degree Site, we know that good walking shoes are needed for the dusty trail to the Water Tanks.

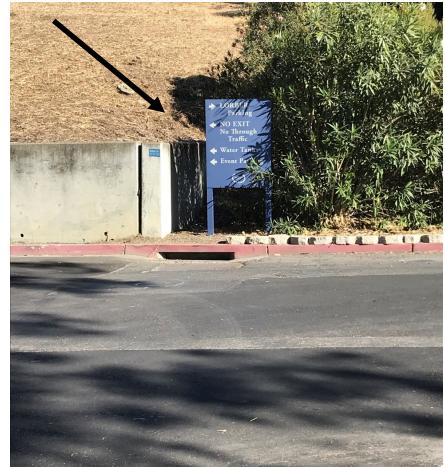
Starting out on a cool, clear morning, the walk up to and past the Lorber Parking Lot to the Event Center is a comparatively easy stroll. Taking the Promenade to the Siminoff Center, a new ramp on the right leads to the new sidewalk that winds up and around to the Lorber parking area. Taking a left turn at the sign with the arrow



New ramp next to Siminoff Center



New sidewalk to Lorber Parking from Siminoff Center



Sign to direct us to the Water Tanks

to the Event Center we note that the road has a marked pedestrian/wheelchair lane. This paved road leads to the Outdoor Degree Site/Water Tanks turnoff. One 1980's era

Hiking Trip...

Continued from page 6

sign, probably erected before the Outdoor Degree Site was constructed, says ‘Entrance to Water Tanks,’ which sounds like there is a water slide park. This sign and the more modern one tell us where to start the dirt “Water Tanks Road” to our destination. The road starts its uphill angle and the dust starts to kick up.



Continues on page 8

Messenger—December 2020—Page 7

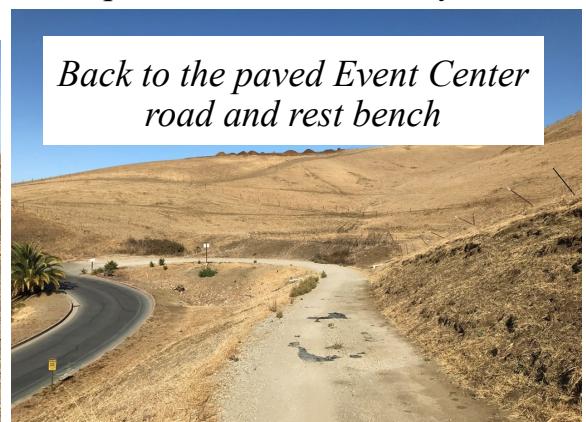
Hiking Trip...

Continued from page 7

Shortly, we are at the fork in the road sign to select either the “Outdoor Degree Site Road” (my new name) or continue on (up?) “Everest Way” (another new name) to the water tanks. At the sign the two hilly roads both rise up, but “Everest Way” looks a lot steeper, like Mount Everest. As each step gets us closer to our goal, rest stops are needed, ah, to see the view. “Where is a branch for a walking stick?” The road’s loose gravel makes for a slick and dusty trail. At last, to the top of the hill, and finally to the back side of the rear Water Tank!



Back down “Water Tanks Road”



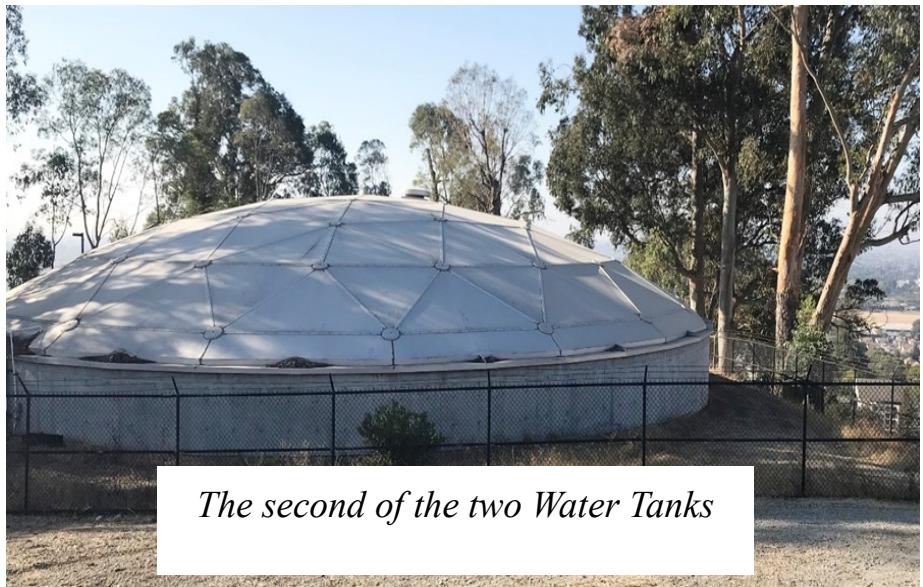
Back to the paved Event Center road and rest bench



The rest benches and road home



Ho-hum. A fenced-in round water tank with a geodesic dome. It is huge though. Should hold enough water for dining room cooking and enough water pressure for our showers. The rear hillsides are just more grass – no cows to be seen. No water slides. And the view of campus? Well, there really isn’t any.



The second of the two Water Tanks

Since the last update there have been fifteen Blue Box Cards submitted as of November 16. There were four compliments in this batch. Two were for Dining Services for providing a wonderful Anniversary Dinner to a couple celebrating 64 years together, and one in acknowledgement of a very good prime rib lunch. These cards were sent to John Marshall for the acknowledgement of his staff. One was for excellent cell phone email help by Carlo Flores. This card was sent to Alan Davies so he could acknowledge Carlo's good work. And one was for Facilities Services providing excellent and efficient service when doing an annual carpet cleaning for a resident apartment. This card was sent to Dennis Lopiccolo so that he could acknowledge his team's great work.

There were six resident concerns:

- ◆ Two resident concerns were about the toilet paper provided for residents' apartments. They find them too rough and scratchy. There were suggestions that "softer and friendlier" toilet paper be purchased. These concerns were sent to facilities for review.
- ◆ Two resident concerns were about the look of the library now that visits are being done in there. They feel that it is not up to the usual Masonic Homes standard. They suggested that the books be filed away, that the boxes be removed, and that the plant which has died, be removed or replaced. These concerns were sent to Recreation and Facilities. Recreation department schedules the visits and Facilities is responsible for housekeeping, so together they can review and work toward a solution.
- ◆ One resident submitted a card reporting that the Clam Chowder that was served had grit in it. This card was sent to John Marshall in Dining Services so that the kitchen staff can remedy the situation the next time.
- ◆ One resident stated that they don't find the new larger cement area very inviting and thought that it might be too hot to use in the summer. They suggested that perhaps half of it be covered with "phony grass." This was sent to Administration for review.

There were five anonymous cards from staff members with questions regarding the new Dining Services Company coming in. These were sent to Administration so that the questions and answers can be shared with all of the affected staff members.

Thank you very much for continuing to use this communication tool, especially for any safety related issues. Please keep the cards coming!

Inspiration Piece—Submitted by Irene Bones, HIM Manager



If you feel STRESSED, give yourself a break;
Enjoy some ice cream, chocolate, candy, cake...
Why? Because STRESSED spelled backwards is
DESSERTS... enjoy

December Fun Facts—Written by RCFE Recreation Team

December was originally the tenth month of the year in the Roman calendar. It gets its name from the Latin word "decem" which means tenth. However, when the Romans added January and February to the calendar, it became the twelfth month. They still kept the name, though.



We made it! The end of this crazy year is finally upon us. That doesn't mean we are out of the water just yet – but it does mean new beginnings, and new chances to make the New Year something memorable.

Before we say goodbye to 2020, though, let's not forget what this month is best known for – Christmas!

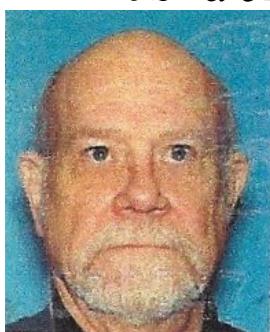
The Recreation department team is putting our heads together to create a safe fun-filled Holiday experience for you all! We know how hard the last few months have been on everyone, so we want to make sure we do our best to bring some Christmas magic on to campus to flip those frowns upside down. So please be on the lookout for the fun and exciting things we have in store.

As always, if you have any comments, suggestions, or feedback on current activities or new activities you would like us to try, please do not hesitate to let us know. Call Eddie Silva at ext. 2119, Susana Vuong at ext. 6484 or David Bible at ext. 6440. Have a wonderful month of December and Happy Holidays!

New Residents



Gloria Kirkpatrick
Sponsoring Lodge: Capital City #499
City: Sacramento
Moved in on: November 2, 2020



Michael "Mike" & Sally Sanders
Sponsoring Lodges: Trinity #27 & Siminoff #850
City: Alameda
Moved in on: December 4, 2020



Remembering George Wilkerson

Written by Christine Anicete, Communications Clerk



For many, jingling bells would be a reminder of Christmas time and reindeer led sleighs. For many here at Masonic Homes in Union City, rustling bells would also announce the arrival of a most unique and passionate resident. A man on a mission every day, George Wilkerson would zoom throughout the Home to check up on projects and activities and check in on his many friends.

Be they resident or staff, George's friends could rely on a chiming power chair to come by with their no-nonsense friend ready to tell you like it is and remind you that most anything always has room for improvement.

Some remember him for his carpentry and

photography skills, others, his devotion to his late wife, Margaret, and still others, his steadfast patriotism.

An Army veteran and longtime philanthropist, George channeled his love of country and love for people by supporting various charities and local children's programs. Leaving behind a legacy of truth seeking and community service, George endows his mission to us: to champion worthy causes and strive for lives that are beyond reproach. Special thanks to Penny Adams and Maria Torres for their contribution to this article.



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Editor's note

Indeed, time waits for no one. If only I could turn back the hands of the clock... There have been a couple of times when George wanted to share the story of his army life through the "Open Forum" then it would fall through. We planned again for March, then Covid happened. Another instance was when I wrote a piece on Gus Anastole & Betty Newman, he approached me for the story he never got the chance to share at the "Open Forum." But alas we never got to it yet again.

Looking back, it seemed to me it was never meant to be... but I'm glad and honored to have met him and shared in his passion for photography like so many others. I'm also relieved I told him to go ahead and give out the countless pics he took, just days before he answered the clarion call. Adieu, George.

Happy Holidays from the Innovations Department!

Written by Jasmine Myers

Happy Holidays Masonic Family! I, for one, I'm looking forward to bringing some holiday cheer to 2020. It has been a hard year for all of us. Let's try our best to spread some kindness throughout our halls this season.

Where would we be without our helpful smart speaker, Alexa! Amazon has added some fun features to her with the holidays in mind. Try asking Alexa about her belief in Santa Claus or to sing you Christmas carols! Or any one of these fun conversation starters...

- ◆ Alexa, how ugly is your Christmas sweater?
- ◆ Alexa, sing Jingle Bells.
- ◆ Alexa, how many sleeps until Christmas?
- ◆ Alexa, tell me a Christmas story.
- ◆ Alexa, can you name Santa's reindeer?
- ◆ Alexa, play some classic Christmas music.



If you haven't already, take this time to get connected with Viibrant. Our staff and our Viibrant Resident Committee are working hard to make the Resident Portal and Digital Signage have the most updated information accessible to you from the comfort of your apartment. We have recently added a Covid tab on the main green bar that we will be adding memos and notices related to this pandemic. Check out the front page

announcements on the portal for quick tips about the portal, overhead transcripts, and general need-to-know information. If you need assistance getting started, please call ext. 6354.

Emergency Power Outlets—Written by Mike McComas

The Facility Services department has always strived to ensure that the safety and comfort of our residents and staff is our number one priority. Not only is SAFETY the first pillar of the Masonic Home Way, it just makes good sense.

Last month, the power outlets in the hallways of the North, Head and South building were wired to run off, of our emergency power generators. What this means is that if the power goes out for long periods of time, we would still be able to run equipment like CPAP machines during the night. Sometimes the smallest of jobs can make the biggest impacts in our lives. If you have questions, please call ext. 6430. Have a safe Holidays!



Spotlight on the Masonic Homes Way—By MHW Team

This month, our Masonic Home Spotlight highlights two staff members that have accepted tasks for our Home that are both time consuming and require skill and care. As you know, for the past few weeks and even now, our Home has to perform weekly COVID-related screenings on all staff and residents.



Maria Torres



Maria Escudero

On the assisted and independent living side of the Home, conducting that extra testing has fallen on the shoulders of Maria Torres, Staff Development Coordinator and Maria Escudero, Interim Healthcare Director. They both already have busy schedules, but anytime we have a staff member test positive it means a whole new round of testing must commence. That's a lot of tests and a lot of time, but they've stepped right up to the plate... or in this case, to the swabs! Their work supports the pillar of Safety and these days we need all the safety we can get.

**No duty is more urgent than
that of returning thanks.**

James Allen

Thanks Maria and you too, Maria! ☺
A shout out also to Beatrice “Bea” Santiago for filling in.



First Outside Games on the Patio and “Our Fountain”

Written by Resident, Bruce Rick



one pound corn-filled bag into the hole of the Cornhole board to score points for landing in the hole or on the board. Two to four players are on a side. The distance for Cornhole is about 20 feet from the front of each Cornhole board.

A Cornhole board is basically a raised platform with a 6-inch hole in it. The bags are of two colors for opposite teams.

The great thing about this outdoor game is that it is simple and doesn't require much effort to set up. All you need are the Cornhole boards and bags, some friends and - oh don't forget the patio - all are sure to have a great time!

Our fountain is gurgling
As if in the woods,
One can sit and look at it
And be any mood.
Sit, stare, close your eyes;
A walk in the woods or
Just blue skies.

The Perfect Ashlar sits at rest
Atop the base of virtues,
Relief, Truth and Brotherly Love
Our Great Masonic jewels.
Sit, stare, close your eyes;
A walk in the woods or
Just blue skies.

The Perfect Ashlar is our goal
From the Rough Ashlar of our present role,
Let the flowing water calm your soul
As you rest, just go with the flow.
Sit, stare, close your eyes;
A walk in the woods or
Just blue skies.

The informal inauguration of the brand new patio at the Masonic Home Union City started out to be a quiet affair until the first bags of the “Cornhole” game were tossed and the players and spectators began yelling “Good toss”, “Oh, so close”, and “A point for our side!”.

Resident Experience Coordinator, David Bible, and the Recreation Team thought the Cornhole game would be an easy and enjoyable game to play outside.

The object of the game is to toss the

one pound corn-filled bag into the hole of the Cornhole board to score points for landing

in the hole or on the board. Two to four players are on a side. The distance for Cornhole is

“Our Fountain”



Birthdays, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam



Resident Birthdays

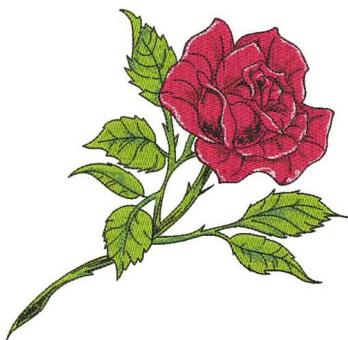
Rodrigo Baldovino Jo Scott	12/5
Sheri Purington Ginny Hornbeck Graciella Strassburger	12/15
Jim Helton	12/16
Richard Cunningham Joyce Fiechtner	12/18
Betty Caria Ray Hoffman	12/19
Betty Newman	12/20
Ruby Rush	12/21
Ed Clarke Ed Garfield	12/22
Pat Beltranena	12/23
Bob Harband	12/24
Willa Rae Gordon	12/28
Beverly Petterson	12/29
Bruce Rick	12/30
Ron Swan	12/31

In Memoriam



George Wilkerson
April 24, 1925—
October 23, 2020
Mason of : Lexington
Lodge #104

Your life was a
blessing, your memory
a treasure, you are
loved beyond words
and missed beyond
measure.



John Alden Jr.
June 9, 1932—November 8,
2020
Mason of : Willow Glen-
Fraternity Lodge #399





The Messenger

Masonic Homes of California

34400 Mission Blvd., Union City, CA 94587



Happy Holidays from our “Home” to yours.
This wish is accompanied with these lights and bowers,
Our front door mat still says “Welcome”
And the lights are on all hours.
We send you “virtual” hugs and kisses,
As we wrap our gifts to send.
May Peace on Earth! And Hallelujah!
Still sing in our hearts no end.
Until we get to see you again in person.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
In this holiday season—*Bruce Rick*

A rectangular postage area containing a ZIP code and permit information. The ZIP code "94587" is printed vertically along the left edge. To its right is a horizontal line divided into five segments for a ZIP+4 code. To the right of the line is a box containing the text "NONPROFIT ORG.", "U.S. POSTAGE", "PAID", and "PERMIT No. 100".

Address Service Requested

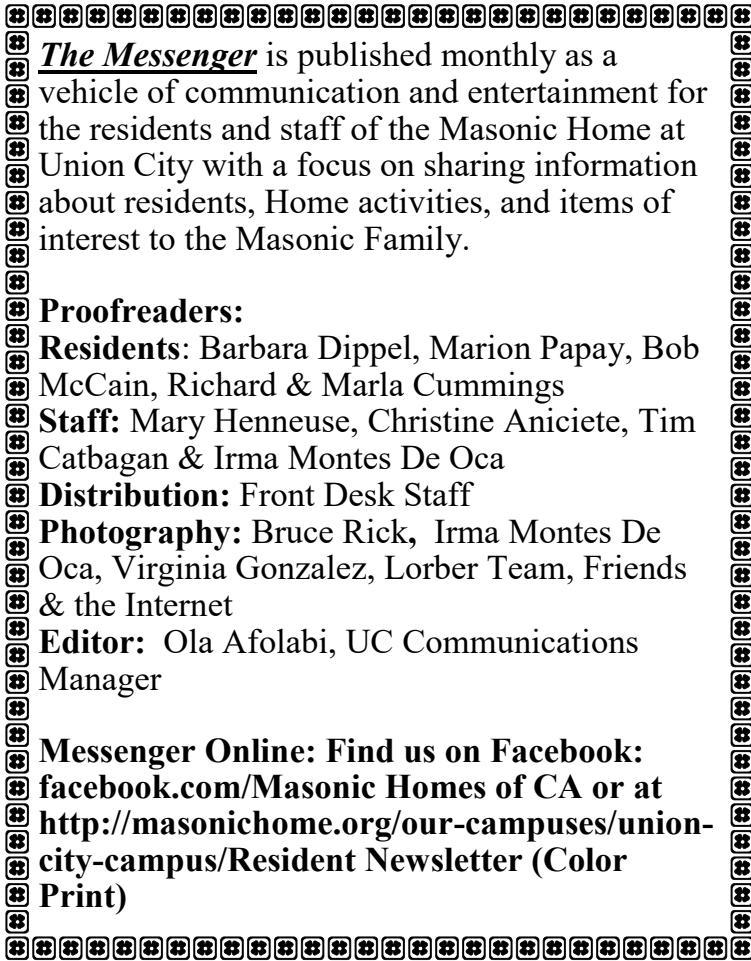


Table of Contents — December 2020

Holiday Traditions.....	1
Holiday Traditions cont.....	2
Holiday Traditions cont/ Laughter.....	3
Chaplain's Corner.....	4
Chaplain's Corner cont/Keeping /Quotable.....	5
Hiking Trip.....	6
Hiking Trip cont.....	7
Hiking Trip cont.....	8
Blue Box/Inspiration Piece.....	9
December Fun Facts/New Residents.....	10
Remembering George Wilkerson.....	11
Happy Holidays/Emergency Power Outlets.....	12
Spotlight on the Masonic Homes Way.....	13
First Outside/Our Fountain.....	14
Birthdays, Anniversaries, In Memoriam.....	15
You're Lookin' At It.....	16

Mission: “Together we create meaningful life experiences that make a profound difference.”

The Pillars: Safety, Personal Connection, Experience & Efficiency

Messenger—December 2020—Page 16