



The Messenger

Published for the Residents
Masonic Homes of California at Union City



Valentine—Submitted by Jeanne Benedict

February 14th, Valentine's Day, is the day set aside to celebrate, honor, or remember love or a loved one.

Is it not ironic that the symbol used to depict love is the heart? The heart is one of the most important organs in all living things. For when it stops working, life as we know it ends. How many times have we used or heard these words?

“I love you with all my heart.”
“Take my heart . . . it is yours.”
“I give my heart to you.”
Are we then saying,
“I love you with all life,” or
“I give my life to you?”

If the beating of our heart sustains life, maybe love in its many forms and ways is a strong helping hand. With this thought I implore you to ---

*Love one another with all your heart.
Think of each other, with the goodness of your brain.
And last but not least,
Have faith with all your being!*



2024

Thank You, Secret Santa—Written by Luz Garcia, RCFE Recreation



In the heartwarming spirit of the season, a resident has once again donned the hat and played the role of a secret Santa, spreading joy and goodwill for the second consecutive year. This anonymous benefactor, who embodies

the true essence of the holiday season, generously purchased Christmas presents for the residents.

What makes this festive gesture even more enchanting was the involvement of a "little elf helper" who, with their meticulous wrapping skills and thoughtful arrangement, transformed a common area into a magical haven. The anticipation and excitement among the residents reached its peak as they gathered around a festively adorned table, each choosing a carefully wrapped gift.

The joy that radiated from the room created a memorable and heartening celebration, proving that the spirit of giving knows no age and can light up the lives of those in the golden years of their lives.



The Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Joel Ingram

Christmas Miracle!

This year I discovered a new "Christmas Miracle". In December, I ordered one of those collapsible Christmas Trees. It arrived in a sturdy 1x1x5 foot box. Take it out, put it up; easy peasy. Repacking the same tree: impossible! Who originally packs these things—NASA? I discovered one needs a hydraulic press and a six-man crew (or strong women crew) to put this "Genie" back in her "bottle". Long story short: It's safely packed away but if you hear a loud explosion around Christmas time NEXT year, it means I have just unpacked it and there's no need to call 911!

The Chaplain's... *Continued from page 2*

Why all this? Well, because sometimes things may appear simple and obvious, but on closer inspection are more involved or have more “layers” than first realized. And with this bit of introduction let me segue to talking about problems and people.

In some ways, it seems like our collective levels of patience and adaptability took a nosedive about the time Covid took hold. Maybe it was that, maybe something else, but many people have noticed that a good many of us have come to have shorter fuses these days. Some have become increasingly skeptical of institutions and authority figures. Others seem to just be fed up generally. The bottom line is, it often takes less folks to get “up in arms”, angry, or ready to write someone or something “off”.

“
Compassion is not a
relationship between the
healer and the wounded.
It's a relationship
between equals. Only
when we know our own
darkness well can we be
present with the
darkness of others.
Compassion becomes
real when we recognize
our shared humanity.

PEMA CHÖDRÖN

Now, the next point is NOT to suggest we should just call everything “good” – or even assume that everyone is doing a good job or their best job. Sometimes things are not right, and change or improvements are needed. But these days, I have become increasingly aware that often (if not always) there is more going on in someone’s life than I know. Like that tree going back into its box, others’ lives, work, behaviors, or experience may SEEM simple and obvious – but often, there’s more going on than I can possibly know or see.

I am seeing, and slowly – (sadly slowly) learning, that I really need to put my angst, judgment, and critical views (and expressed opinions) on hold because many times my struggle with this or that is not an isolated thing.

The problem with person “A” or “B” is often connected to their current burden or struggle with something altogether different, and their “something” may be much more significant and challenging than my petty (or not so petty) concern. I guess the shortest version of this is “cut others some slack”, but it really goes deeper than this. Others don’t just need slack.

Nowadays, what many need is compassionate understanding. And sadly, this is often in short supply. It’s about reminding myself that, in truth, I know so little about other people’s lives and life experiences and that I need to be humbler and accommodating. I know it’s easy to say this, but hard to do. I hope I can “pull it off”. And, if you are prone to oversimplifying or making assumptions about other people’s lives (whatever their behaviors and troubling practices are), I hope you can too. I think our lives and relationships will be improved if we do. Wishing you well in this still young year. – *Chaplain Joel*

happy february!

New Normal—Submitted by Ralph McNitt

I don't think we talk enough about how quiet the road gets.
How long the waiting feels.
How lonely healing can be.

I don't think we talk enough about how undone we become
in the valley of grief or how enormously we must stretch
just to fit ourselves into some kind of a new normal
and dare to call it life again and I don't think we talk enough about how we have
no other thing left but to gather up our heavy limbs
and carry on because the earth keeps on spinning,
the sun keeps on rising, and the days keep on bleeding,
one into the next regardless of the moment
that made all the minutes
inside of our heart stand still. – Ullie-Kaye

Social Services News—RCFE Team



ARRIVING FROM...
✈ GALVESTON, TEXAS



The Masonic Homes extends a warm welcome to our new
resident and family member, Jim Erickson! Originally from Galveston, Texas, Jim spent a
significant part of his life in Escondido, California. Jim brings a wealth of experience,
having owned his own Grocery store, and served as the VP of Meats
at Lucky's grocers. With a legacy that includes 5 children, 23
grandchildren and 8 great-grands, Jim embodies a rich tapestry of
family values. Jim is thrilled to become part
of our community. Impressed by the facility
and the professionalism of our dedicated staff,
he has found a new home where he can thrive.
Jim can be reached at A321, ext. 5653.



Hello Neighbor—Written by the Lorber Recreation Team



Nevin Chamberlain was born in Philadelphia. His family moved across the country from Pennsylvania to Iowa, Idaho before settling in Santa Barbara, CA. He moved away from home when he attended College of the Pacific in Stockton. Then he became a Beaver at Oregon State University, where he studied Business Administration. While at Oregon State, he rowed in Men's 8 Oar Crew Shell for a year and competed.

Nevin met his wife, the late Nina Chamberlain, at an insurance company in downtown Santa Barbara. While away at college, even through the distance, Nevin and Nina grew closer together. Once he graduated he came back to Santa Barbara, where he and Nina got married. Nevin served in the Air Force for four years and nine months and worked in The Security Service. Nina joined him in Texas when he went to Tech School and later when stationed in Germany.

Nina worked as a CPA office manager and, when she retired, she was awarded a cruise to Alaska which started their cruising adventures to various parts of the world. They have two children; Hallie and Bernie. As a family, they enjoyed camping and several long trips with the kids. They once drove to Canada. His children were involved with Job's Daughters and DeMolay. The Bethel Guardian who observed how Nevin supported his children asked him if he would be interested in becoming a Mason. Nevin has been part of Santa Barbara Lodge #192 for 45 years, served as Master of the Lodge twice, and was Secretary for 21 years. He shared that he loved doing that; he enjoyed the people who displayed good character and, as a history buff, appreciated the history of Masonry.

January 13, 2022, Nevin was in an auto accident. After being admitted to the hospital and after working with rehab, he and Nina moved to Masonic Homes. It was hard to leave Santa Barbara after living there for more than 50 years, where the climate is great and a pretty place to live. Nevin shares he is "Glad to be here" at the Masonic Homes. In 2023 Nina and Nevin celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary.

Andrea Shield was born in Prague and was a teenager during World War II in occupied Czechoslovakia, now Czech Republic. She describes living in Germany during Hitler times. Her family immigrated to Canada because it was easier to immigrate there than it was the United States.

They lived in Calgary, where Andrea shares liking the mountain views

Hello...

Continued from page 6



very much. Her family enjoyed skiing and being outdoors. She shares that her mother rode horses until she was in her 90s and lived to be a centenarian.

It was in Montreal that, through some Czech friends, Andrea met her husband Charles. He had also immigrated to Canada due to the war; he was Jewish and lost many family members.

Andrea attended a prestigious design school in Prague where she received her degree in Fashion. In Brussels, Belgium, she was a pattern maker designing dresses. She states that in the fashion world everything comes back into fashion years later. Andrea also knitted and enjoyed using colors and various patterns in her designs.

She shares a story of going to a

fabric store when she lived in Los Angeles and purchased the last few yards of beautiful fabric, a bright red with black roses. The salesperson had shared with her that someone famous had come in to buy the majority of that fabric but would not tell her who. Some time passed, and Andrea found out it was Nancy Reagan who bought the same fabric.

Andrea has two children; John and Tom. She is proud of all her children and grandchildren, that they are good citizens and know what is right and wrong.

Last year Andrea assisted with leading a baking group to make a Czech Fruit Sponge cake called Bublania. While waiting for the cake to bake, Andrea shared stories of her life and history of Prague through photos. She speaks Czech, German fluently, and some French. In 2005 Andrea and her husband Charles went to Prague for a vacation; she describes it being a “beautiful city, old but it is home”.



Since the last update there have been five Blue Box Cards submitted as of January 15, 2024. There were no compliments in the most recent submissions, but the Lorber clinical team did get a huge shout out from a resident's family member who sent a letter to Cynthia. He had some concerns about the short-term rehabilitation availability and staffing, but he made sure to emphasize how wonderful the nursing staff was.

In addition, I just want to add that I have heard much well-deserved praise for the facilities staff from both residents and staff regarding getting and maintaining heat throughout the campus. Everyone knows that it is an ongoing struggle, but it seems like with their hard work we are mostly winning the war!

In the blue box there were five concerns and/or suggestions/requests submitted:

1. **Concern:** "I have a concern about communications. So many people miss special activities because they "didn't know anything about it." No notice, no announcement(s). Some of us get flyers, some don't. People are insulted."

Suggestion: "I suggest you use resident volunteers to place flyers/announcements outside apartment doors – so everyone (not just some) is/are informed. (Mailboxes won't work – not everybody checks their mail every day). This could help when activities are offered on short notice."

Resolution: This concern and suggestion have been forwarded to Administration and Volunteer Services for review and evaluation for possible implementation.

2. **Concern:** It is hard for some residents to get up to give CNAs entry into their studio apartments. "Most of the people just leave the door unlocked or lock their door and easily open the door. Those of us that are permanently in a wheelchair or those of us who transfer to a lift chair must get out of the lift chair get into their wheelchair and then go and unlock the door."

Suggestion: "I suggest that the CNAs knock on a person's door and then they enter and carry a master key."

Resolution: Some people choose to keep their doors locked and others do not. Some are okay with people entering after they are told to "Come in" through the closed door, others are not. Each resident is encouraged to work with the staff on their floor to find the best solution for when a CNA or other staff member needs to enter.

3. **Concern:** "If I complain about something the least you can do is to send a note that since the complaint, the problem seems to have been corrected. Thank you."

Resolution: We do instruct our managers to follow up on Blue Box items and to let the residents who submitted them know what the resolution is. It sometimes doesn't happen as timely as we would like, and we resolve to work on that. Thanks for the feedback!

4. **Concern:** "The lunch service is horrible!" on January 1, 2024.

Suggestion: "Call in people including management!"

Resolution: This concern was sent to the Dining Services Director and Dining Room Manager and MHC Administration for review and discussion.

5. **Concern:** “What has happened to our once beautiful campus? Leaks everywhere with garbage cans collecting water, sitting stagnant for days. NO HEAT for weeks? Dirty carpets, cobwebs. Why do we only deep clean when we have special events?”

Resolution: Thank you for voicing your concern. This concern was sent to the Director of Facilities and MHC Administration for review and discussion.

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

People Mover—Submitted by Bruce Rick



A campus-wide transportation service is available for staff, residents, and visitors, that is driven by resident volunteers. You probably have seen the “People Mover” SUV around campus or waiting for passengers at the lower parking lot kiosk.

This service was established to allow the staff who regularly shuttle staff and visitors from and to the lower parking lot, time away to do other tasks. In addition, the SUV may be reserved for off-hours

use for residents to attend Masonic-related meetings and events. This 2023 Honda Odyssey holds 7 passengers comfortably. Each resident driver must have a valid driver’s license and proof of insurance. A resident driver who is a member of the Resident Electric Car Share team may also drive the SUV. Both of us “Happy Wanderers” are part of this team and enjoy helping the staff in this small way.

The People Mover team can always use more volunteer drivers. Contact Ola Afolabi through the Front Desk or call ext. 6416 with any questions and to register as the newest member!

Call the Hotline—Written by Mike McComas



One of the goals of the Maintenance department is to make sure that all of our repair requests get taken care of in a timely manner. In order for us to achieve this goal, our team needs to make sure that all requests are documented and assigned a work ticket. The BEST way to get your repair request for a documented work ticket is to call the **Maintenance Hotline at extension #6430**. We man the hotline Monday to Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. If you call after hours,

please leave a message with your name, room number, and nature of your repair. With your cooperation in using the Hotline, we are guaranteed to make sure that everyone’s request is taken care of.

Spotlight on the Masonic Homes Way-By Joel Ingram



Eight years and counting! That’s how long Imelda Rivera has been making Lorber a better place to work. If you have visited or lived in Lorber you may know the many ways Imelda makes things better firsthand. But in case you have not, let me share a few details.

As with every place of employment, from time to time there can be staffing challenges; one staff member may fall ill or need family time off, or perhaps someone moves away and a vacancy is created. At such times someone needs to step up and do a bit more. Time and time again, Imelda has come forward to assist. What’s more, she has done so with a great attitude and dedication. Imelda’s manager notes that she is particularly concerned with making sure the safety of staff and residents comes first. (Good for her, as this is the **Leading Pillar** that needs to guide all actions within the Home). Another key quality Imelda brings to her work is an approach to staff and residents filled with kindness and respect. This makes all the difference in how people feel about themselves and creates a positive “ripple effect” within the Home.

Thank you, Imelda, for your years of service and the exemplary way you make our Home a better place. For this, you are our Masonic Homes Way Honoree of the month!

Food Forum—Written by Jeremy Garrett, Dining Services Director

On January 23, Morrison Living hosted another of their monthly Food Forums in the Auditorium, with a handful of residents in attendance. The event featured Chef Carlos Badra doing a cooking demonstration and Jenalyn Sacramento (Dietitian) speaking about the health benefits of citrus fruit.

Chef Carlos prepared Brazilian Lemonade and Orange Hummus as Dawn Hicks, the Resident Council President, watched in rapt attention. The event concluded with a question-and-answer session about the Dietary Department.



Employee Milestone Recognition

Written by Kim Hegg, Sr. Director of Events, Recreation & Volunteer Services



The Masonic Homes of California values the dedicated staff members who care for the residents, and each year looks forward to celebrating those who have reached a milestone anniversary.

This year, we will celebrate these milestone anniversaries at “The After Party,” the after-the-holidays staff party on Saturday, February 24, 2024. In the meantime, please congratulate the following team members on their milestone accomplishment:

5 Years:

- ◆ Aziz Akramy, EVS
- ◆ Sydnie Black, SNF
- ◆ Rio Castillo, EVS
- ◆ Christopher Cross, Facilities
- ◆ Nicholas Cunningham, Facilities
- ◆ Dianna Espanol, Finance
- ◆ Norma Flores, EVS
- ◆ Maria “Pinky” Lorenzana, SNF
- ◆ Maria Manga, EVS
- ◆ Edna Salamida, Memory Care
- ◆ Juvelyn Salvador, SNF
- ◆ Zin Zaw, SNF

10 Years:

- ◆ Sonia Dy-Liacco, Assisted Living
- ◆ Melita Cuasay, Assisted Living
- ◆ Maricela Perry, Human Resources
- ◆ Jaimarie Moh Hasim, SNF
- ◆ Irene Bones, HIM
- ◆ Wesley Gamboa, Health Clinic
- ◆ Gemma Ramos, Assisted Living

To the awardees, congratulations on reaching your special milestone anniversary in 2023! Your hard work and dedication are truly appreciated, and Masonic Homes looks forward to celebrating many more milestone anniversaries with you. Congratulations!

20 Years:

- ◆ Ola Afolabi, Resident Services
- ◆ Joann Nisperos, Memory Care
- ◆ Kusmir Singh, Assisted Living
- ◆ Remelie Velasquez, Assisted Living
- ◆ Lourdes Zablan, Assisted Living

25 Years:

- ◆ Bhan Parsad, EVS
- ◆ Evelyn Subida, SNF

30 Years:

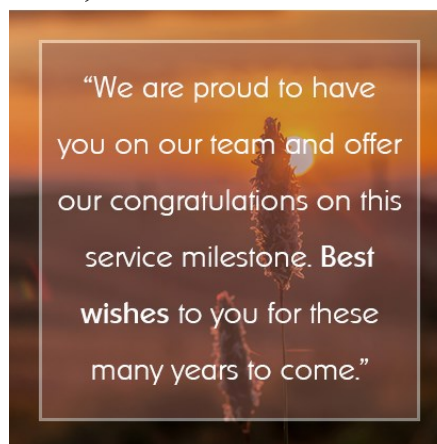
- ◆ Gloria Bautista, Assisted Living

35 Years:

- ◆ Ana Lacayo, SNF
- ◆ Jagindar Lal, SNF

40 Years:

- ◆ Todd Leines, Facilities



Information Technology Frequently Asked Questions

by Alan Davies, Director of IT



Question: Which browser is recommended by IT?

Response: This is a great question and often is of personal choice. Depending on how you ask this question, the answer can change. For example, if you asked, “What is currently the most security-focus browser?”, that answer would differ from, “What is the most highly used browser today?” Since most tasks performed on computers today are through a browser, we should first talk about browsing use and habits. Regardless of which browser you use, if you tend to be careless of your browsing habits, then you are better off becoming focused on changing those habits than on which browser you use. Watch for an upcoming article on browser habits. One of those habits is keeping your browser updated to the latest version.

If the question is which browser protects your privacy and provides good security? I would recommend Firefox. Mozilla, the company which created and maintains Firefox, has a strong belief that your data is your data, and it should remain as such. Their software is open source, which means anyone has access to review the code that runs their browser and other products.

There are other browsers that I would recommend. Yes, Brave, Pale Moon and DuckDuckGo often rank well in the security forums. All three of these browsers use the Google open-source browser called Chromium, not to be confused with Chrome. Chromium is the underpinning of many browsers such as Chrome, Brave, Edge, Pale Moon, Opera, and more.

Why am I not recommending Chrome? Chrome is the most universally used browser today with a reported adoption of 66.76% (2023) globally across all devices (phones, computers, tablets, etc.). Its use continues to grow. However, Chrome is not fully open source, and that has proven to be an issue in the past. Google, the creator of Chromium, has leveraged Chrome in different ways

Information... *Continued from page 11*

to drive Google’s advertising revenue. This creates a direct conflict between revenue generation and privacy and, potentially, security. Someone may not care that Google is tracking their browser use, and others take steps to stop Google from collecting as much information as they otherwise might.

Regardless of the browser you select, computer habits are much more important in the long term. Clicking links from an email or randomly visiting unknown sites could undermine your efforts to stay safe. Some people have taken to using one specific computer that is kept up to date to do sensitive banking and financials, having a tablet for email and higher risk online activities.

Question: Will IT install and configure IT’s preferred Browser on Windows, Apple, and Android?

Response: We will install any mainstream browser that a resident requests. We suggest Firefox as it can be run on any operating system and respects privacy.

Old Jokes for Old Folks—Submitted by Diana Swing

Joanne, a rather stylish lady in her day, is standing at the rail of the cruise ship holding her hat so that it won’t blow away in the wind. Howard, an older gentleman, approaches her rather awkwardly and says:

“Pardon me, madam, I do not know how to say this; however, are you aware that your dress is being dreadfully blown about in this wind?”

“Yes, thank you, I know,” replies Joanne, “However as much as that may embarrass me, I must attend to my hat.” “But madam,” insists Howard, “Surely you realize your entire rear end is exposed at times!” Joanne looks squarely at Howard, and retorts: “Kind sir, anything you may see down there is 85 years old, but I just bought this hat yesterday!”

Old Age Isn't for Sissies—Submitted by Zelma Campbell



- ◆ Marriage is like singing in an opera. It looks easy until you try it!
- ◆ The soprano in our neighborhood has extraordinary range. You can hear her four blocks away.
- ◆ Have you heard about the baritone who couldn’t find a singing partner? He ended up buying a “Do It Yourself” kit.
- ◆ The tenor’s recital received mixed reviews. He liked it, but his audience didn’t.
- ◆ His voice filled the hall with music! In fact, most of the audience left to make room for it.

Committees & You—Written by Joseph Pritchard, Chief Operations Officer

The Home has always been honored to have Masons and Masonic family members as residents. The residents have always been and will always be among the greatest resources of Masonic Homes. They add to the culture, environment, and overall experience of our beautiful campus. Every staff member, visitor, or guest is surrounded by a group of intelligent, caring, and truly Masonic residents who lend support, kindness, as well as relief.

Committees... Continued from page 12

The best communities create a partnership between staff and residents. We see it on our campus all the time. Residents run different programs like the New-2-You Shop, Gift Shop, Special Friends, and the Welcoming Committee. We see residents every day working in the garden or helping another resident in times of distress. These examples are evidence that Masonic Homes' residents are active and engaged in community living. These committees are tasked with establishing better communication on specific topics and giving a platform for resident voices to be heard. Residents will be partnering with staff to share their insight and the insight of other residents. The residents will run the committees and will be able to direct conversation to specific areas that are a priority to the residents.

These committees are standing committees that last more than one year. They were not created to solve one problem or area, but to grow and adjust with the times and be ready to offer sound recommendations and advice to leadership. Harnessing the power that is created within a staff/resident partnership will help our Home evolve and continue to be excellent. We will all get to be a part of creating happiness for today and for the future!

Presidents' Day

R	H	A	R	D	I	N	G	H	A	Y	E	S	H
N	C	O	O	L	I	D	G	E	E	T	C	O	S
O	H	W	N	O	S	I	D	A	M	H	A	O	K
S	M	H	R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T	O	L
R	O	N	S	A	O	N	O	S	K	C	A	J	O
E	R	R	E	W	O	H	N	E	S	I	E	G	P
F	H	O	M	C	K	I	N	L	E	Y	E	R	N
F	S	O	N	O	E	A	R	E	L	Y	T	E	Y
E	D	L	B	T	S	R	U	H	T	R	A	T	R
J	T	A	T	J	O	H	N	S	O	N	G	A	O
A	M	C	L	I	N	T	O	N	H	O	N	F	L
A	S	W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	T	Y
C	L	E	V	E	L	A	N	D	K	U	S	S	A
O	H	N	O	S	L	I	W	L	A	R	I	H	T

- JEFFERSON
- ROOSEVELT
- ARTHUR
- CLEVELAND
- MCKINLEY
- TAFT
- OBAMA
- POLK
- MADISON
- HARDING
- WILSON
- CLINTON
- COOLIDGE
- WASHINGTON
- TYLER
- EISENHOWER
- JACKSON
- JOHNSON
- TAYLOR
- HAYES

LAST MONTHS ANNIVERSARIES & NEW RESIDENTS



*Orrin & Jeanne
Benedict
4th Wedding
Anniversary*



*Bob & Ginger Huber's
4th Wedding Anniversary*



**Happy Anniversary
to a beautiful couple!**
Wishing you a wonderful day
filled with much love.



*Dick & Barb Sullivan
32nd Wedding
Anniversary*



Robert McBain
Sponsoring Lodge: Liberty
No. 299
City: Santa Clara
Moved in: December 12,
2023



James Erickson
Sponsoring Lodge: Acacia
No. 243
City: Hayward
Moved in: December 27,
2023



Asuncion Bamberger
Sponsoring Lodge: Crow
Canyon No. 551
City: Castro Valley
Moved in: January 16,
2024



Birthdays, Weddings, Anniversaries & In Memoriam

Resident Birthdays	
BARBARA SULLIVAN	2/3
ED AUGUADRO JIM NIKAS	2/6
JODY TAYLOR ANDREA SHIELD	2/8
GENE MOORE	2/9
BOB HUBER JAMES LEONARD JACKIE PURDY	2/10
ED BURGLE CHARLOTTE HOFFMAN	2/13
JANET AUGUADRO	2/14
NEVIN CHAMBERLAIN	2/16
RON PARKER	2/17
NORMAN RUSHING	2/22
JESSY RUSHING	2/25
DON WALDEN	2/27
WILDA ERICKSON	2/28



Residents	Ann. Date	Years
Robert & Linda- Biancalana Church	2/3	2
Norm & Sheila Gorsuch	2/23	44

In Memoriam



Larry Merino
June 28, 1932—January 1,
2024
Mason of Mt. Moriah No.
292

“ There are no goodbyes for us. Wherever you are, you will always be in my heart. ”

- Mahatma Gandhi



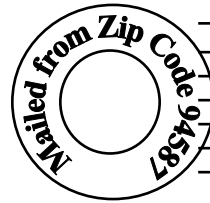
Basil Brooks
August 12, 1946—January
11, 2024
Mason of Santa Barbara
No. 192



The Messenger

Masonic Homes of California

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**February is
American Heart Month**



The Messenger is published monthly as a vehicle of communication and entertainment for the residents and staff of the Masonic Homes at Union City with a focus on sharing information about residents, Home activities, and items of interest to the Masonic Family.

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

The Pillars: Safety, Personal Connection, Experience & Efficiency