

By now all of our members should have received their dues notice for 2018 and many of you have already sent your check in or paid by PayPal. As a Treasurer of Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge I wanted to let all who read this Trestleboard article know what happens to the \$120 that each member pays in dues.

Our Grand Lodge has expenses and out of this \$120, the sum of \$48 is sent to Grand Lodge. This leaves our Lodge with only \$72 per dues paying member. Currently we have about 350 dues paying members (there are additional members who are life members and others who have their dues remitted). Our life membership funds are invested very aggressively, as recommended by Grand Lodge, and on average this fund earns about \$5,000 per year. When we multiply \$72 times 350 we get the sum of \$25,200 which with the life membership earnings gives our Lodge an income of only \$30,000 per year to operate on.

The Secretary's salary is \$12,000 per year and rent is \$9,000 per year so we now have only \$9,000 to keep our Lodge running all year long. There are additional expense for office supplies, printing and mailing of the Las Palmian and numerous other expenses that are necessary to keep our Lodge running. Over the last eight years, on average, the Trustees have invaded their investments in excess of \$24,000 per year to keep our Lodge running. This does not include the \$170,000 which the Trustees gave to the Temple Board to pay for the solar panels in 2016.

Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge is a great Lodge and one of the things that make it so great is our Temple which has been beautifully maintained for the last 57 years. At its age, however, our Temple now needs constant repairs, some minor and some major. While a few of our members have the knowledge and skills to make repairs, some repairs require outside contractors. The cost to keep our Temple Building open is about \$80,000 per year. Thankfully, we are able to rent our parking space to the Veterans Hospital which helps defer some of these expenses.

As I was cleaning out an old file cabinet at lodge, I discovered a paper that said that up until the early 1960's about 2% of the population in Fresno were Masons. Today that figure would be only a fraction of a percent. Due to deaths, demits, and suspension for non-payment of dues, the number of dues paying members decreases each year. For our dues to net our Lodge the needed \$50,000 per year, we would have to have 650 dues paying members. I do not see this as any kind of a possibility to achieve and maintain.

I am writing this column so that you know how much it costs to keep Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge afloat. I also want you to realize that the life of Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge will not be measured by maintaining a corps of officers and active members; it is how long our money will last. I have been a Trustee since 2001 and during this 16 years I have not seen anyone bequeath any money to our Lodge. When I read a hundred years of the minutes of Las Palmas Lodge starting in 1906 I saw many instances where members bequeathed money to Las Palmas Lodge. If you as a member, or a widow of a member, enjoy and get pleasure from attending functions at our Lodge, perhaps now is the time for you to think of the future of our Lodge.