

By now it has become clear that what we are experiencing with our daily activities is something that nobody alive has ever experienced before. When we were first told to stay at home, it was for only two weeks, then it was extended for many more weeks. It was then made a suggestion for those with weakened immune systems to continue to stay at home. Face coverings were discouraged, now they are required every time we go outside of our home.

Covid-19 has also affected the way that Masonic Lodges operate, or don't operate. Our Grand Master has decreed that no Lodge, or affiliated body, in California can hold actual meetings of any kind. In a Masonic Lodge, business meetings can only be held in "open Lodge". This means that the required number of officers must assemble in Lodge and with the prescribed ritual, open Lodge, hold the business meeting and then close Lodge with the proper ritual.

One of the purposes of our Stated Meeting is to approve and pay our bills. Our Grand Master has set forth a procedure whereby the Master conducts a virtual mini Stated Meeting. On the day and time for our Stated Meeting, the Master and five members, over the phone, approve the bills and vote that they be paid. What we can't do is read petitions for membership, vote on petitions for degrees or affiliation, have candidates give their proficiencies or conduct any other Lodge business. These latter items will have to wait until California allows Fresno County, and perhaps all counties, to open up as Phase 4. This may or may not be until a Covid-19 vaccine is available for everybody. Then we may be allowed to have Stated Meetings while following safe meeting rules.

As for the conducting of degrees, Our Grand Lodge is looking into ways that our existing ritual can be modified to conform to safe meeting protocol. As for the serving of food at a Lodge, I am sure that many changes in our prior procedures will have to be made to keep us all safe. In short, our life at Las Palmas Lodge will definitely have major changes once we open back up. During the interim, our brother the Secretary, Bryan Kincade, is at the Lodge every weekday morning at 9:00 to open the mail, respond to e-mails and send out dues cards when dues are received. He is normally there for only a few minutes so if you need to contact him, it is best to send him an e-mail or call him at 9:00 a.m. sharp.

Until we can meet again, stay safe, stay well and make the best of your life.