

Las Palmas Lodge, like other Lodges in the Fresno area and many other fraternal organizations, has a dark history that we are certainly not proud of. After WWI, and for many years thereafter, quality men who had names or ties to Germany were routinely denied membership at the ballot box. In Fresno, men of Armenian descent were treated in a similar way.

At our Stated Meeting in August of 1959 a man named Archie Nahagian was the first man of Armenian descent to be elected to receive the degrees of Masonry in Las Palmas Lodge. One month later, Leon Peters was the second man of Armenian descent elected to receive the degrees of Masonry in Las Palmas Lodge. Brother Peters was raised a Master Mason in Las Palmas Lodge in January of 1960 and in March of 1960 Brother Nahagian was raised a Master Mason.

While these two Brothers opened the door for many future Brothers of Armenian descent to become members of Las Palmas Lodge, the story does not end there.

Brother Peters set up a philanthropic foundation known the Leon Peters Foundation and after his death in 1983 this foundation has given many millions of dollars to worthy causes in the Fresno area. Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge is a recipient of Brother Peters good will in that we receive support for our Bike giveaway program for two, and soon to be three, local elementary schools. Students in these schools with perfect attendance for the quarter are eligible to receive a new bike, back packs and other school related items. Sixth grade students with perfect attendance for the whole year receive a tablet computer. This last June we gave away 11 table computers.

For over 20 years, we have been giving these perfect attendance incentives to Powers-Ginsburg and Wilson Elementary Schools. Recently, our Lodge decided to add Birney Elementary to the list. Birney is located about 3 blocks north of our Lodge. This means that instead of having to purchase, store, and assemble 24 bikes a year, we will now have to do this for 36 bikes. Storage in our Lodge building is at a premium and our Brother Secretary, Bryan Kincade, came up with the plan to build a wall on our stage so that there would still be room for use as a stage and also be a secure place to store all of these bikes, back packs and other prizes. While we receive money from the Leon Peters Foundation, we still need tax deductible donations from our Las Palmas-Ponderosa family to maintain this good program.

On Saturday, July 27 the following Brothers got together and built this wall: Brandon Camarena, Brandon Munsey, Christopher Guillen, Daniel Valdez (EA), Mark Stroup (JW), Richard Ehorn, Richard Frey and Bryan Kincade. Brother Ehorn didn't do any building of the wall, but he did barbeque us a great steak for lunch along with potatoes prepared by Donetta Kincade.

