

As I read through our old minutes, I would occasionally see where members were suspended for non-payment of dues "NPD". The number varied each year with the highest numbers being during the great depression and the fewest during and shortly after WW II. Some of these suspended members would petition for reinstatement and were required to pay some, or all, of their previously unpaid dues.

For several years, Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge has tried to keep its dues as low as possible so that the number of NPD members was kept at a minimum. About 10 years ago, we changed our dues formula so that what we got to keep was kept constant and the yearly amount was only raised when the Grand Lodge assessment went up. About every 3 years, the GL assessment increases would accumulate to at least \$10. At that time, we would raise our dues by \$10 to cover what we had to pay to Grand Lodge. For the past few years, we have skipped some of these \$10 dues increases to keep our dues affordable. This caused our net dues to shrink over time.

About 7 or 8 years ago, our Grand Lodge started a program whereby a suspended member could get reinstated without vote of the Lodge or having to pay his unpaid dues. For \$100 he would be reinstated and we got to keep the \$100. We voted to opt into this program with the hopes that we could easily reinstate some previously suspended members.

While Grand Lodge did get some of our members to pay the \$100 and get reinstated, we found that over half of these men quickly got behind on their dues so each year that they did not pay their dues, we still had to pay the Grand Lodge assessment of over \$60. To suspend again, we had to send them a registered letter with return receipt which cost us over \$20 per person to be suspended. In addition, we had to have a minimum of two years without any dues and we still had to pay the GL assessment. In sum, it turned out to be a financial loss for our Lodge. Several months ago, we voted to withdraw LPP from our GL \$100 reinstatement program.

Several months ago, I was sitting in the east for our Stated Meeting and I read the names of about 20 members who we were suspending for NPD. About half of these had taken advantage of the \$100 GL reinstatement program. Grand Lodge, seeing a potential decrease in their yearly assessment, performed an audit on these suspensions for NPD. We just got word that we passed their audit that made sure we dotted every "i" and crossed every "t".

For at least the last 100 years, a candidate had to complete his three degrees within 3 years of being initiated. Several years ago, I was told that this was no longer the case

so we allowed over 20 Entered Apprentice Masons and a couple of Fellow Crafts to exceed this 3-year time limit. It turns out that this 3-year time limit is still in the California Masonic Code and we are currently in the progress of suspending about 20 EA and FC's for failure to advance. Let us hope that we do not get another GL audit on these suspensions.