

We have all experienced many unpleasanties due to the Covid pandemic. Hopefully, only a few of you actually experienced the actual disease. Certainly, all of our lives have been changed for the last almost two years. While most of you may no longer be wearing a mask in public, I still due as our daughter is back on chemo and I do not want to increase the possibility of her exposure when we are with her and our two granddaughters in Oregon.

I am fearful that Covid will be with all us for several more years to come, if not for the rest of our lives. This does not mean that we can't try to get our lives back to as pre-pandemic "normal" as possible.

Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge has been having live meetings for some time, but the number of degrees that we have had has been severely limited. One reason is that most of our candidates that were being coached quit being coached and without candidates to receive their degrees, we were limited to Stated Meetings only and an occasional First Degree.

Prior to the pandemic, I started to coach two Entered Apprentice Brothers in the candidate's proficiency in the first degree. All coaching stopped in 2020 and throughout 2021 and the early parts of 2022. A couple of months ago, I started to coach Rian Bowman in the long form of his EA proficiency. Recently, we have been working together four or five times a week and as I write this on August 29<sup>th</sup>, I am pleased to say that Bro Rian will be giving his proficiency on the evening of September 1<sup>st</sup> after two candidates receive their first degrees. CONGRATULATIONS BRO. BOWMAN!

What makes me especially happy about this event is that it brings back Masonry at Las Palmas when I got my degrees in 1968. Back then there was never a single first degree, always multiple degrees. Back then, there was no "short form" proficiency, just the standard proficiency given after a new set of Entered Apprentice Masons were initiated and before Lodge closed. I am sure that all of us old timers think of the old days and wish they were back. We can bring them back if we work hard.