

If you have taken a Covid 19 home test, you know that you are positive when the second line shows up. If you were positive on the first test and several days later when you were feeling better, you took a second Covid 19 home test you may have still found the second line. This is because even though you may no longer be contagious, Covid 19 stays in the body for some time after the most obvious symptoms go away.

By April of 2020, all Masonic Lodges in California were suffering the effects of Covid 19 and we definitely had two lines on our Lodge at home test kit. Las Palmas and all other Lodges in California were not only in the hospital, but were definitely on a respirator. We could not receive any applications for either the degrees or affiliation, hold stated meetings, or confer degrees. Candidates who had learned their proficiencies could not give their proficiencies in open Lodge as there were no Lodge meetings of any kind. Most of the coaches stopped coaching to avoid the spread of Covid 19. To pay our essential bills, the Master, Wardens, Secretary and one or two members would hold a conference call on the phone to approve the bills that had to be paid.

In October of 2020, our Grand Lodge held its annual communication via skype. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, Las Palmas held its first Zoom meeting. Of course, Lodge could not be opened as there was no way to tile the meeting, but it did give us a chance to see and chat with a few of our Brothers. Our Stated Meeting for November was the first to be held via Zoom. Since Lodge could not be formally opened, we could still not receive petitions, vote on candidates or hold proficiencies. Our 2021 Installation of officers was also held via Zoom.

On July 29, 2021 we had our first degree night after fifteen months of Covid darkness. Bro Daniel Valdez was passed to the degree of Fellowcraft. There were 18 Masons present for this degree. Since then we have been holding our regular Stated Meetings and have conferred seven 1<sup>st</sup> degrees, three 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees and three 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees. We currently have scheduled two 1<sup>st</sup> degrees and 1 second degree.

**If you think that Las Palmas is over its Covid 19, THINK AGAIN!** For one of the 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees we barely had sufficient Masons present to confer the degree and several of those Masons had never partaken in a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree before. At our August, 2023 Stated Meeting, we only had the minimum number of Masons present to open Lodge in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree. In fact, all of the Entered Apprentice Masons present had to take an officer's chair so we could open Lodge and pay our bills. Our Lodge Covid 19 home test kit still shows two lines because we are still suffering the long effects of Covid. While we may not still be on the respirator or contagious, we have not been discharged from the hospital. What does our Doctor say we need to do to get out of the hospital; we need Masons to show up for our degrees and Stated Meetings.

If I did not attend all meetings of Las Palmas when I am in town, I would not be asking Masons to come to Lodge. But I practice what I preach. We need you there to show support for our Lodge and to show support for our candidates. Except for July and August, there was a dinner for Masons and their significant other starting at 6:30 on our Stated Meeting nights. Our Stated Meetings last less than 30 minutes so you should be able to leave for home around 8:00 pm. If you come for a degree,

there is an optional free light dinner at 6:30 followed by the degree at 7:30. Lodge will normally close around 9:00.

What is your excuse for not attending? As many of you know, I have been doing Masonic funerals for our fallen brothers for over 40 years. I even risked my health by doing them during the pandemic. At your funeral, if I am asked by a family member or friend how well I knew you; do you want me to say that "I didn't know you as you never showed up in Lodge once you got your degrees". I hope not. If you want to be a Mason, then act like a Mason and support your Lodge with your attendance. **Bring Las Palmas-Ponderosa Lodge home from the hospital by attending your Lodge.**