

Established 1987



The Power of Friendship

On November 14, Mountain View lodge #244 welcomed nine candidates from around the district to receive the degree of friendship: **Jesse Donaldson and Tatiana Kuvaldina (Mountain View #244); Kat Powell, Lynn Wilson, Natalie Usova and Liana Hidalgo (True Fellowship #52); Paul Colin (Volcana #25); Steve Franke (Cupertino #70); Steve Koehler (Bay View #109)**. We congratulate them on advancing in Odd Fellowship after exploring the power of friendship through ritual with us. Learning more about how we may stand together to do good in this world felt especially apropos.

We also wish to give a special thanks to the Barnes encampment (#77) for their visiting and volunteering for this first degree after their meeting earlier in the evening. It was fantastic to have you there and share a lively Chinese dinner before the ritual together. We also wish to give a special thanks to **Mason and Debbie Wolf** for leading in the organisation of this edition of the 1st degree. Our degree team included two first time additions to performing live degrees; **Haunani Neil** of Cupertino #70 and **Katy Dickinson** of Mountain View #244 with a leading role. They joined; **Aer van de Water, Jane Beckman, Rodney Metoyer, Tom Blackburn, Debra LaVergne, Carole Wahrer, Randee Chen, Ron Myres, Annie Cronin, Ria Toolis, Debbie Wolf and Mason Wolf**.

I wish I could go into more detail on what a joy the evening was, but that would be telling secrets. If you would like to enjoy a live edition of the first degree of the Odd Fellows yourself, we happily welcome you to experience it live next time, tentatively scheduled for the next 5th Thursday on January 30, 2025. We at Mountain View #244 also look forward to sending out

the quickly advancing members of our own lodge to deepen their knowledge of love and truth in the 2nd and 3rd degree at other lodges in our district.

By Aer van de Water



Candidates From left to right: **Steven Koehler, Paul Colin, Tatiana Kuvaldina, Liana Hidalgo, Kat Powell, Steven Franke, Jesse Donaldson, Natalie Usova, and Lynn Wilson**



Cupertino 70 New Years Eve Music Jam

Come ring in the new year with Cupertino 70 in New York time, and enjoy playing, singing, hula, food (Pot Luck) and fellowship as we welcome 2025 from 6pm to 9pm. Suggested donation of \$5, for non-Odd Fellows members. Registration available at:

www.cupertinooddfellows.org/newyears

All are Welcome!

By Jim Kabage

An Odd Dickens Fair

On Saturday, November 30th, Odd Fellows from around the bay area converged on the world famous Dickens Fair in San Francisco for a day of revelry and merriment in a lovingly recreated Victorian London at Christmas Eve. Those who attended were treated to carolers, exciting performances, mesmerizing dances, and a wide variety of Dickens's own favorite characters.

The members who attended were able to find their own entertainment and souvenirs, but many of them met together for lunch, where members **Andrew Crockett**, **Bex Clark**, and **Angela Commean** met them with traditional collars to wear. For the rest of the fair, all Odd Fellows could be readily identified.

Among the lodges represented, the biggest contingent came from **Golden West 322**, with 16 members. Other lodges were **True Fellowship 52**, **Cupertino 70**, **Mountain View 244**, **Saratoga 428**, **Livermore 219**, **Sycamore 129**, **Davis 169**, **Apollo 123**, **Gilroy 154**, and possibly some others, but at some point it's hard to keep track. In all, at least 42 Odd Fellows (plus some friends) attended.

A highlight of the day came near the end, when we all gathered together for a procession of welcome and friendship at the Athenaeum Club. Brother Andrew Crockett arranged to present a token of friendship and many photos were taken from the light-hearted, yet semi-sincere occasion.

The Athenaeum club, in particular, has already invited us to return next year. And we were definitely noticed throughout the venue. It was an event which played to our strengths - many of our collars are nearly as old as the time period we were pretending to visit, and they made fetching accessories for the many lovely outfits members chose to wear.

We weren't there to pass out applications and gain members, but just by being there, having fun, and being visible, we left a lot of people with a positive impression about Odd Fellowship. And since they were mostly the sort of people who like dressing up in 150 year-old period wear, a lot of them are the sort of people who'd probably make good members someday, should they desire!

If you want to check out the fair for yourself, it runs each weekend through December 22, and you can find more information at dickensfair.com. But if you want to experience it with some Odd Fellows, stay tuned because we're planning to go back next year!

By Mason Wolf



A Night at Seven Stars: True Fellowship In a Galaxy Far Far Away

On the evening of November 6th, members of True Fellowship #52, gathered the day after our nation's general elections for their regular business meeting. During this meeting, they kept assiduously to "no political, sectarian, or other improper debate." Directly after, skipping even the usual desserts, they carpoled to a "Star Wars" themed bar to unwind and strengthen their fraternal bonds. The chosen venue for this much-anticipated outing was the newly reopened, Seven Stars Bar and Grill of Willow Glen.

As the fraternity brothers and sisters arrived, the vibrant atmosphere of Seven Stars welcomed them. The bar, known for its nerdy drink menu, galactic decor and lively ambiance, quickly became a hub of laughter and camaraderie as it was completely overtaken by Odd Fellows. After a very productive but lengthy meeting, the members were ready to shift gears and enjoy each other's company in a more casual setting without the Order's non-partisan rules.

They settled at a long communal table, where the aroma of grilled dishes wafted through the air. As they indulged in fried foods and cocktails, conversations shifted from national politics to light-hearted banter and back to the mission of Odd Fellows and what that calling would mean in the next year. Side topics included many reminiscences about old sci-fi favorites, convention experiences, favorite TV shows and recent Odd Fellows events such as degrees and visiting Yreka. Those moments of laughter and connection reinforced the bonds built during their time together in the fraternity.

As the night came to a close, the members of True Fellowship #52 left Seven Stars Bar and Grill not just as fraternity members, but as friends and confidants, rejuvenated and ready to tackle the challenges that lay ahead together.

By Debbie Wolf



The Veteran's Day Parade

The Veterans Day Parade was very different this year, because we had rain. As I drove off to meet our group at the True Fellowship Lodge as usual to be there at 10:30 AM, it was raining out pretty hard. As I got to the True Fellowship lodge the rain lightened up a little, but I was met with a locked gate with only one car there before me. It was **Rod Metoyer** from Boulder Creek. You see, **Ben & Debbie Shuler** were on a cruise in Australia, and they are the ones who always take care of the things at True Fellowship. As we were calling around for someone to open the gate, **Andrew Crockett**, **Jeff Rively**, and Jeff's friend **Steven** (who's not a member, but was willing to help) showed up. Luckily one of them had a key for the gate and the lodge. In the meantime, **Annie Cronin** calls and says she will not be there until 11:30, because she had to go to work and couldn't leave on time. Since it was about 11:00 already, I said that we would wait until then. The parade was only starting at 12:00 and we were number 57 out of 90 entries. It looked like there wasn't going to be any decorating on the cars this year because of the rain. So, into the lodge we went and tried to reorganize for who was doing what with our small group.

In the meantime, **Ron Myres** called and said he had a terrific tooth ache and had a special emergency appointment with a dentist in Morgan Hill and could not come. **Jim Kabage** also called and said he had an emergency which he had to attend to and could not come either. So we needed to work with who we had. **Debra LaVergne**, President of Rebekah Assembly, came with Subway sandwiches for all of us which was very welcomed. **Mason Wolf** was supposed to meet us at the staging area of the Parade, as well as **Tom Blackburn**. Annie Cronin showed up and we loaded everyone into my Odyssey and Andrew's antique car and we headed off to the staging area with the antique car following the Odyssey. Oh, yes, there still was a fine rain coming down as we drove.

As we got at the staging area we needed to find where our group was, number 57, since it was pretty crowded as we were one of the last groups getting there. Finding where it was and making our way in, we were finally got in place. As we got there, the rain stopped. Mason Wolf showed up, but Tom had a Veteran neighbor come unexpected to his house, and Tom felt it was important to stay with him. The parade started moving and we needed a driver for my Odyssey. Jeff was the only one with a non-critical position, so he was chosen to drive the Odyssey. So we were on our way again.



Debbie Wolf from True Fellowship, and **Katy Dickinson** from Mountain View, were carrying the Odd Fellows Banner, followed by the color guard flag detail who was Rod Metoyer escort with his sword, Annie Cronin carrying the Odd Fellow flag, Debra LaVergne carrying the American flag, then **Don Lang** as escort carrying his sword. All of the color guard detail was in their Patriarchal Military uniforms. The two cars followed them. First, the Antique car driven by Steven and second followed by the Odyssey which was driven by Jeff Rively from True Fellowship with Mason Wolf, District Deputy Grand Master, in the passenger seat waving his small American flag out the window, with his DDGM Collar regalia on, acting as Grand Master as the magnetic sign on the car stated. Tom did reach the parade, but sadly not in time to march with us.

So off we were. The parade seemed to be moving pretty fast this year; almost like the marchers were running at times. Since the rain stopped for the moment, it seemed like they wanted to finish the parade before the rain started in again.

There were very few spectators there this year, but the ones that did show up were very energetic. All the good feelings you would have, seeing those smiling faces, all waving hands or small flags at us. There were a couple of Veterans who were handing out small American flags right before us, as we were marching. As we turned the corner at Santa Clara St. to Market St, there was no announcer with a loud microphone, saying who the marchers were as we were passing by. However, they did have the announcer further down Market Street when we came to the grand stand. As we came to the end of our one mile march, we took down our banner; we rolled up our flags, and took off our swords and made a fast dash to the Odyssey, threw the things in the back of the car and piled into the Odyssey. Off we went back to true Fellowship lodge with the Antique car following.

We got back to True Fellowship with everyone ready to go home and dry out and get a little relaxation, very satisfied that we had kept up the tradition of being able to be in the Veterans Day Parade. Not only this year, but now we will be able to continue next year. Because since we had to miss the parade last year, that if we would have cancelled again this year, we felt that they would not let us back in the parade next year.

See you next year, when we all promised to do a better job in advertising our group in the parade. We all felt it is well worth honoring the Veterans in this way each year.

By **Don Lang**

Bayview Lodge #109: Supporting Worthy Causes in 2024

Redwood City, CA – Redwood City Odd Fellows Bayview Lodge #109 continues its proud tradition of giving back to the community through generous donations and impactful initiatives in 2024. This year, the lodge has supported a diverse range of organizations that make a meaningful difference locally and beyond.

2024 Donation Recipients

The lodge's contributions have supported a variety of causes, spanning education, veterans' services, community development, and more. Recipients include:

- **Aragon High School Music Department**
- **Redwood City Education Foundation**
- **Wreaths Across America**
- **Trees for Troops**
- **Rebuilding Together Peninsula**
- **Warrior Foundation Freedom Station**
- **St. Anthony's Dining Room**
- **Redwood City Downtown Business Group**
- **Redwood City School District**
- **Our Lady of Lebanon Church Young Adult Group**
- **Barnes Encampment Youth Pilgrimage Scholarship**
- **IOOF Grand Lodge of California**

These contributions reflect Bayview Lodge's dedication to fostering growth, providing resources, and uplifting those in need within the Redwood City community and beyond.

Acoustic Series Launched to Support Multiple Causes

2024 also marks the debut of the **Bayview Acoustic Series**, an innovative initiative combining music, community, and charity. Hosted at the lodge, the series features live performances by local musicians, with proceeds supporting various causes, including those listed above.

The Acoustic Series offers a chance for community members to enjoy great music while making a tangible difference. Each event highlights a specific recipient or cause, ensuring that funds are directed to impactful initiatives.

Bayview Lodge #109 invites all Odd Fellows, Rebekahs, and community members to join in these efforts. Whether it's through attending events, volunteering, or supporting donation drives, there's a role for everyone in making Redwood City a stronger, more compassionate community.

Together, we continue to live out the Odd Fellows' mission of fellowship, love, and truth—one donation and one cause at a time.

By **Hannah Koury**



Bay View #109 member **Carol Fung** poses at the Redwood City Car Show, where Bay View Lodge was a Silver-level sponsor.



In Other Giving: Cupertino Lodge 70 member **Richard Sanico** delivers a donation check for \$720 to the West Valley Community Services Food Bank from their recent Halloween/Oktoberfest Fundraising Event!

Meeting of Acoustic Women

REDWOOD CITY – On November 9, 2024 at 7 pm, the Bay View Lodge #109 had the pleasure of presenting another great concert for the community: Meeting of Acoustic Women!

With the goal of bringing the community together for a night of lively music and to raise funds for a local school, Bay View Lodge #109 brought in musicians **Emily Zisman** (singer songwriter) from San Francisco; **Karen Soo Hoo** (singer songwriter) from San Mateo; and **KatGrüvs** (instrumental guitarist) from Davis. Each performed individually and together genres of folk, rock, jazz and more!

The night was magical with an original and innovative presentation that captivated a large audience of over 100 as the musicians filled the lodge with beautiful acoustic music. The evening was truly a success. All net proceeds of the evening went towards the Aragon High School music department, a local San Mateo County high school with a thriving music program that fosters a strong appreciation for the arts.

Attendees of the evening were a combination of local music lovers, friends and family of the musicians and Bay View Lodge Members. Families of Aragon High School, fellow Odd Fellow members from neighboring lodges, and more, were also in attendance.

This was the second installation of the “Meeting of Acoustic Minds” concert series. The Bay View Lodge #109 held the first concert in June 2023. Members took on various roles including: partnering with local Ghostwood Brewery to provide the beer for sale, planning the food for sale and marketing to local journalists. Lodge member, **Reed Sutton**, learned and ran the sound system; and other members used their talents to set up the lighting for the evening.

The concert resulted in a \$1000 donation to the Aragon High School music department! Bay View Lodge hopes to make this a recurring event and is currently planning their next creative and community building experience for quarter one, 2025. Expect more details in the near future!

By Hannah Koury



True 52 at Christmas in the Park

The Monday afternoon before Thanksgiving, Sisters **Sara Bruce** and **Debbie Wolf**, and brothers **Mason Wolf** and **Scott Spence** braved the chance of rain to decorate our lodge’s tree at San Jose’s Christmas in the Park. Fortunately, the rain stopped and the afternoon was very pleasant. The atmosphere in the park was festive, with various groups decorating their trees, including school and scout groups with happy, excited children.

Mason had the silly idea to dress a Halloween skeleton as Santa and have it climbing the tree to place the star (an all-seeing eye) atop the tree. Mason had to return to work, but luckily Scott was tall enough to attach “Santa” to the tree. The ornaments feature various Odd Fellows symbols and a triple-links chain. Ornaments were made by Sisters Sara, Debbie, and **Bex Clark**.

Our tree is located adjacent to the sidewalk across the street from where The Tech Museum meets Montgomery Theatre. The display is open through January 1. Come to this magical annual event to see our tree and many festive and whimsical displays!

By Sara Bruce



Cupertino 70 Holiday Party

Come join Cupertino 70 on **Saturday, December 14**, in celebrating good will and the holiday season by supporting San Jose Toys for Tots! The evening will include good cheer, a prime rib dinner and live holiday music. Cupertino Members, immediate family members, Philotesian members, and Cupertino 70 widows \$40, suggested donation. General admission \$45, suggested donation. Tickets can be purchased online at:

www.cupertinooddfellows.org/events/holiday-party/

If you cannot make it and still wish to contribute to San Jose Toys for Tots, please leave a donation at <https://www.cupertinooddfellows.org/donate>.

Happy Holidays from Cupertino Odd Fellows Lodge #70!

By Jim Kabage

Braver Angels: Family and Politics Event at True Fellowship

On November 16, the Braver Angels Silicon Valley Alliance held a Family and Politics workshop at the True52 Lodge. Led by **Mia Whitfield** and **Steven Teeter**, both Braver Angels Trained Moderators, the event focused on navigating political differences within families while preserving strong bonds.

Many participants came from the True52 Lodge, contributing to a community-focused atmosphere, which was evident through the camaraderie, shared experiences, and supportive interactions throughout the event. The workshop provided insights into why family political differences are uniquely challenging. Participants explored roles like the Gladiator, who loves debate, the Defender, who protects values, and the Sniper, who interjects sharply. Attendees reflected on their own family dynamics and identified these roles in their lives.

Interactive exercises helped everyone practice effective communication skills, such as active listening, thoughtful sharing, and staying calm during heated discussions. The atmosphere remained lighthearted, reminding participants that families, despite political differences, are still full of love and humor.

The event emphasized empathy and understanding in political conversations, leaving participants with tools to maintain healthy family relationships. Everyone actively participated, demonstrating dedication to bridging divides.

To stay connected and learn about future Braver Angels events, visit:

<https://braverangels.org/>

By *John Jensen*

Sunday December 15 Special Planning Meeting

Don't forget the special meeting on Sunday, December 15. **Mary Lou Lang** and **DDGM Mason Wolf** will go over all the important event dates of the different Lodges in the area to make sure they are not scheduled on the same day.

The 21st Annual Festival Of Trees

The Rebekah Children's Services Festival of Trees was held on November 23, 2024. It was very successful, fun, and exciting to be at. It was held at the Cinnabar Hill golf Club on McKean Rd in San Jose. It is a beautiful Country Club on top of a hill near Morgan Hill. The drive there out on Bailey Rd, was like we were in another world. On the way we saw about 10 wild turkeys eating on the side of the road.

As we entered the Country Club it was decorated very nicely with all Christmas decorations. You were met by several young ladies who were ready to you check in. You would get your table assignment and your itinerary for the evening. You then were welcomed inside with a glass of champagne. The new room was set up with Las Vegas style gambling tables. You were given each "\$500" (pretend money) in free chips which you got to spend at whichever table you wanted. At the end of the night, you would turn the chips in and get so many raffle tickets for them, which gave you a chance to win a prize.

Now for the main purpose of the evening, to raise money for RCS. RCS serves over 14,000 children and families each year. The Auctioneer for the evening started the bidding on the first of 8 trees, opening it up with \$500. Many joined in the bidding of the tree and gifts under it, which went for \$3,000. This went on until all 8 trees were auctioned off. Many going for \$6,000 and with one for \$10,000 and a special one from their Culinary Academy which went for \$50,000. Next came the raising of the paddle. Each person had a paddle with a number on it. He asked everyone who ever wanted to donation of \$2,000, to raise their paddle. He would then call out all the numbers of the people who had their paddles raised. The Auctioneer then asked for all who wanted to donate \$1,000 to raise their paddle and so on and on. Then they came down to the last donation that was asked for and that was to be the last person to bid on \$100. You see each bid was \$100, but if you were the last person to pay the \$100, you would get the Superman cape and be able to wear the cape for the full year.

All in all everyone had fun and a lot of money was raised. It was very successful.

By *Don Lang*



Thanksgiving Food Drive

The Cupertino DeAnza Lions Club have a food drive every year during Thanksgiving. They stand out front of 3 grocery stores in the area and ask their customers for donation of money or food. They hand out a list of food each family gets. They donate to 175 families plus the Watsonville farm workers, plus the extras left over go to West Valley Community Services.

The Cupertino Odd Fellows Lodge help out by letting the Lions use their lodge to package the boxes of food for free, and also helps on Monday morning. This all takes place the weekend before Thanksgiving, Friday evening to Monday morning.

A refrigerator truck is rented by the Lions and all the refrigerated food gets stored in the truck until Monday morning, when the truck needs to be emptied out. We start at 7:00 AM with as many people that show up to help, We take all of one type of food out and pack them into all the boxes and then go to the next item and so on until the truck is empty. Then we carry the full boxes back out to the truck, 2 boxes per family. Several other cars needed also to be loaded and then they are driven to where the different drop off places are. Several cars follow loaded with people, to help with the unloading of the truck.

After that it is clean up time, and getting rid of all the cardboard boxes which needs to be broken down, and of course if there is rain the extra work that it causes.

We thank the DeAnza Lions for organizing this and making so many needy families enjoy a special Thanksgiving dinner plus meals for several days later.

By *Don Lang*



District 107 Youth Pilgrimage Scholarship Now Open

The scholarship contest is now accepting essays on the topic - **“the importance of citizenship in building a better world.”** The topic is broad and slightly vague on purpose. The students submitting their essays will have freedom to choose the particular perspective that they like best. If you'd like to help get the word out, please share the link to our district website with more information:

siliconvalleyoddfellows.org/youth-pilgrimage/

On that page, you'll also find a flyer that we're asking lodges to send to schools in their area. Physical flyers will also be sent to district lodges to distribute on their own. For questions about the contest, contact:

Mason@true52.org

The contest will run until December 24th, with winners being announced on December 31st.

By *Mason Wolf*