

Palm Springs Lodge #693

1-Year Plan

VISION

To restore Palm Springs Lodge #693 as a beacon of light in Masonry for all worthy and well qualified men.

MISSION

The purpose of Palm Springs Lodge #693 is to provide a sanctuary away from the world at large where brothers are free to teach, learn and explore the symbols, values, morals and principles of Speculative Freemasonry that will help us live a righteous noble manhood.

1-YEAR PLAN

1. Make the Stated Meeting the meeting you don't want to miss
2. Improve the Prospecting process and Experience.
3. Install the Trivium Discussion Group for both Prospects and Members.
4. Exemplify the Third Degree without outside help.
5. Improve Membership Experience.

WHERE IS OUR LODGE TODAY?

Palm Springs Lodge #693 in 2018 is on a more solid foundation than three years ago. Our Lodge business practices have been solidified thanks to the efforts of Brothers Jeff Gibson, Ruben Leija and Jeff Bayer. Our finances are transparent and our overall record keeping is consistent with better business practices.

RITUAL – the lodge at this time still cannot exemplify the third degree on its own but can Initiate and Pass members if the need arises.

EDUCATION – Our Lodge gives Masonic Education at every stated meeting and before any practices that we have had. This has also been expanded to the prospects.

SOCIAL EXPERIENCE – The lodge does provide for a social hour before every stated meeting dinner, degree practice and after every discussion group session so as to allow members and prospects to get to know each other on a more personal and relaxed level.

LODGE LEADERSHIP – The lodge leadership is as strong as it has been in the last five years. Due to this strength the lodge has created continuity and consistency and due to this the lodge has a definite direction and it has given the active members something to look forward to every Tuesday.

MEMBER PROSPECTING – The lodge has adopted the philosophy of waiting longer before giving out applications. This comes from the ritual itself where in the first degree charge it specifically states “by refusing to recommend anyone to a participation in our privileges, unless you have strong reasons to believe that, by a similar fidelity, he will ultimately reflect honor on our ancient institution.” We will observe this passage and make all prospects wait at least 6 to 12 months before they can receive an application.

RELIEF – The lodge was just awarded the Joe Jackson Outreach Award for outstanding service to members in need and also staying in communication with Grand Lodge to inform them of certain cases. Thanks to the efforts of

Arman Ordian, Jeff Gibson and Jeff Bayer we gained this recognition in 2017 at the Grand Lodge Communications.

WHERE DOES OUR LODGE WANT TO BE?

Palm Springs Lodge #693 wants to help restore Masonry to its sense of greatness. We will have a lodge that is vibrant and innovative but respectful of age old traditions. We will create a powerful and compelling reason for members to want to come to lodge by providing the necessary environment where the Craft is once again the hub of free thought, discussion and personal development. We will actively engage prospects and let them know our expectations and spend time with them so that we can get to know each other and allow them to build a network of friends throughout the lodge. We will create knowledgeable, engaged Masons who will ultimately build up the Fraternity. We will make every degree meaningful and celebrate it afterwards. Everyone that hears about Palm Springs Lodge will know that we are actively engaged in intellectual and ritual labor. We will infuse everything we do with the Eight Steps to Excellence. The active members will have a voice, they will see the vision, they will have a role and it will be understood that the Leadership will let the workers work. We will create a very ennobling, hard hitting, but deeply loving culture where members can hold each other accountable and expect only the truest efforts from one another to become a better man.

HOW DO WE GET FROM WHERE WE ARE AS A LODGE NOW TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE?

The first thing that we must do is take accountability of what the true state of the lodge is by accessing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by using the SWOT Analysis.

By reflecting on what we are supposed to be doing in a Masonic Lodge by studying and paying attention to what the rituals have to say it becomes very clear that we are supposed to teach, learn and explore what it means to be a Speculative Mason? To provide the opportunity to build trusting, supportive relationships that reflects the principles of Speculative Freemasonry and the power it can have to impart a positive impact in the way each of us lives on a daily basis.

We are reminded of this when we are asked “what came you here to do?” The answer is “to learn to subdue our passions...” The primary purpose of a lodge is to teach the philosophy of Speculative Masonry through the rituals, symbols, and an exploration of their meanings, it is only logical that the bulk of the time spent in a lodge meeting should focus on those very issues including the presentation of ritual in a quality, meaningful manner, explorations of symbolism contained within the ritual, and discussion about the application of the principles of Freemasonry and their impact on our daily lives. It is thru this process that we truly ‘make good men better.’”

Everything should revolve around the training of the mind in all things Masonic.

The lodge must continue its sound business practices by being transparent, up front and practical.

Also by improving the social events before and after lodge meetings and by providing fellowship/meet and greet nights where men that are interested in Masonry can come and meet us will help in attracting more men who can and will contribute to the realization of our vision.

Having regular officers meetings to discuss not only the day to day operations of the Blue Lodge but the lodge goals, vision, mission, prospect and candidate progress and leadership qualities that are necessary to continue to build up the lodge will be essential to make the plan run smoothly and get stronger as time passes and most importantly create consistency and continuity.

By observing the Eight Steps to Excellence and applying them at every step of the way as a quality control mechanism we can be assured of consistent effort and results.

And finally by always keeping in mind that:

1. Everyone has a voice
2. Everyone sees the vision
3. Everyone has a role
4. Leadership lets the workers work

This will be the cement that holds it all together by keeping us on the level with everyone.

GOALS FOR 2018

1. Make Stated Meeting the Meeting you don't want to miss.
2. Exemplify the Third Degree with no outside help.
3. Improve the Prospecting Process and experience.
4. Install the Trivium Discussion Group for both prospects and members.
5. Improve the Quality of our Member Experience.

Goal #1 – Make the Stated Meeting the Meeting you don't want to miss. In order to make the Stated Meeting the meeting you don't want to miss we need to provide a social hour before dinner. This will be done by having appetizers, wine and other libations accompanied by classical music or jazz in the lobby and library. When the dinner is ready we will all march in together into the dining hall and stand by our chairs. The tables will have been set up in a u-shape where everyone can face each other. This is to promote unity. Once everyone is by their chairs we will say a prayer and begin dinner which will be accompanied by toasts and more music. This will be followed by our stated meeting at 7:30pm. The meeting will be run in an efficient manner where all business will be conducted in 30 minutes or less in order to get into the exploration of Masonic topics. Once we are done with the meeting we will close the lodge and stay for more fellowship and Masonic discussion in the library or dining hall where more appetizers and libations will be had. This is to be an all year project and a new tradition at Palm Springs Lodge #693.

Goal #2 – Exemplify the Third Degree with no outside help. This goal will have a 90 day deadline. The current line of officers and any member of Palm Springs Lodge #693 who wishes to participate will have to dedicate at least six straight practices and commit to be present in order for everyone to understand the timing and rhythm of the

degree. This will be preceded by cold readings of the cipher as a group then in individual teams so that we know that everyone can read the cipher. Once we are all comfortable with reading the cipher then it will be up to everyone to work on their memory work throughout the week reading it at least 10 to 15 minutes a day. The first three practices will be for everyone to understand where they are supposed to be and when. The last three practices will be done all the way through from beginning to end both sections. Then the lodge will set up a practice with the District Inspector so he can critique our work and inform us if we passed or need more precision.

Goal #3 – Improve the Prospecting experience and Process. The Prospecting process will be improved by observing what the first degree charge instructs every single California Mason to do and that is “To be faithful to the trust committed to your care, and manifest your fidelity to your principles by a strict observance of the Constitutions of the Fraternity; by adhering to the Ancient Landmarks thereof, and by refusing to recommend anyone to a participation in our privileges, unless you have strong reasons to believe that by a similar fidelity, he will ultimately reflect honor on our ancient institution.”

We call this Guarding the West Gate or step 1 of the 8 steps to excellence. The prospect will be made to wait at least 6 to 12 months in order to allow time to build a network of friends within the lodge. In order to keep better track of prospects so they don't fall through the cracks we will:

- ❖ Create a Reception Committee made up of three Master Masons who will follow the guidelines of the Prospect Committee Handout.
- ❖ Hand out a copy of our expectations to the prospects.
- ❖ Use all Grand Lodge material applicable to prospects.
- ❖ Have a monthly meet and greet.
- ❖ Create a discussion group to help explore Masonry with prospects.
- ❖ Have a special ceremony to hand the prospect his application.

Goal #4 – Install Trivium Discussion Group for both Prospects and Members.

We believe that the greatest Charity we can give to the community is in the “promoting of wisdom, strength and beauty, in the form of patronage for the very arts and humanities about which we have always taught, is the best philanthropic hand that Masonry can extend to the world. We who are seeking to do good works have chosen this course over all other options because it speaks directly to the principles laid down in our lectures as well as to who we are and what we should become as Masons.” This will be our service to the community.

History shows that Freemasonry was a child of the Enlightenment where the pursuit of ideas and philosophy were at the core of that era.

In honor of that spirit we will initiate a discussion group using the Socratic Method of inquiry where the prospects and members can explore important issues of the past present and future. This is also done in accordance with the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences and more importantly on the Trivium where Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric will be practiced in order to improve our critical thinking skills in the search for meaning, philosophy and truth.

Goal #5 – Improve the Quality of our Member Experience.

In order to improve the quality of our member experience we will focus on:

1. Adhering to the Eight Steps of Excellence as a quality control.
2. Creating more time for socializing and fellowship.
3. Leaders spending more time interacting one-on-one with members
4. Setting expectations that members are required to attend most stated meeting, degrees, practices, etc... starting with our prospects and active members.
5. Asking members to send their regrets to the Master or Secretary if they cannot attend and then read them during stated meeting.
6. Find out what members skills and interests are by using Member Skills and Interest Survey and match skills and interest to lodge needs.
7. Not trying to be all things to all members. We will focus and Education, dressing better for lodge and being precise in ritual.

HALL ASSOCIATION

The Hall Association has had sound business practices for two years running and will continue. The Hall finances are in order and transparent. The Board has done a professional job of keeping expenses down and bringing any major decision to the stated meeting where the brethren can discuss the issues at hand. The minutes are clear and concise and this practice will also continue.

Rentals are a priority as income is needed for building repairs and general maintenance. The lodge website will be utilized to increase rentals as this is our only other means of income besides the lodge investments and the lodge's annual dues.

BLUE LODGE FINANCES

Palm Springs Lodge #693 has transferred its funds with the Grand Lodge of California in order to take advantage of the expertise the Grand Lodge Investment Committee has provided for every lodge in the state. The lodge has adopted very sound financial practices since 2016 and came \$1000 under budget for 2017. The lodge will continue to explore other venues to increase income but as of December 2017 our only source of income is our membership dues and any interest accrued from our investments with Grand Lodge. We will continue these practices.