

Visits to the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of California and Grand Building of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

By Past Grand Master Dennis Liao

Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of California

This year, I was honored to represent our Grand Master, MWBro. Arthur Chen, to attend the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of California and the installation ceremony of its new Grand Master in San Francisco from October 24 to 26. The Grand Lodge of California was founded in 1850 and currently has approximately 340 lodges and 60,000 members. Our Grand Lodge was assisted in its founding by the Grand Lodge of the Philippines which was consecrated with the assistance of the Grand Lodge of California; therefore, the Grand Lodge of California may be considered the “grandmother Grand Lodge” of GLOC. The last time I attended its Annual Communication was in 2018 during my term as Grand Master. At that time, I participated in all sessions and was deeply impressed by how the Grand Lodge of California conducted its business. There were many practices worth learning from, and they came in handy when I returned to Taiwan the following week to preside over our own Annual Communication. This time, I again attended the full sessions. I understood more and gained many new insights and am happy to share with all the brethren.

The Annual Communication began at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, October 24. All visiting delegations were seated for the opening ceremony and the flag presentation. Afterward, the visiting representatives exited through the side door and gathered outside the auditorium. They were then arranged into two files—Grand Masters and Grand Master Representatives—lined up by the seniority of their Grand Lodges, with the more senior ones at the end. The Marshal announced each delegation, first escorting the Grand Masters and then the Grand Master Representatives to the East. The Grand Master descended from the East to personally greet each visitor, showing the highest respect to all guests. The visitors were then escorted off stage to be seated.

The Grand Master delivered the opening remarks, thanking all brethren for their support during the past year. Each committee then presented its report with accompanying slides. After every report, one officer on the stage would immediately rise to move for adoption, and another officer would promptly second. After hearing no objections, the Grand Master declared the report adopted. The entire process was harmonious and orderly.

The agenda then moved into legislative discussions, divided into four categories:

1. Grand Master’s Decisions – similar to our Grand Edicts, these are orders issued by the Grand Master during his term.
2. Grand Master’s Recommendations – proposals initiated by the Grand Master.

3. Carryover Legislation from 2024.

4. Resolutions for 2025 – which must be presented at least 180 days prior to the Communication and seconded by two Master Masons from different lodges.

During the discussion of items 1 and 2, the Grand Master stepped down from the East and the Deputy Grand Master presided. The Grand Master explained each decision or recommendation and its rationale, followed by a report from the examining committee (such as committee on jurisprudence or ritual). Then, up to three brethren each from the opposing and supporting sides alternately approached the podium to speak, with a three-minute time limit. Those wishing merely to ask questions were also allowed to speak without counting toward the three-person limit. After both sides had spoken, voting delegates marked their ballots, and the process continued item by item. For categories 3 and 4, the Grand Master returned to the East to preside. The procedure was the same—presentation, committee review, alternating pro and con statements, and voting. Despite more than a thousand attendees, the entire legislative process proceeded smoothly without arguments, repetitive speeches, or disruption.

The Saturday session started with awards presentation, followed by a keynote address from the Grand Orator and annual reports. The legislation session continued in the afternoon and then it was moved into elections.

For the offices from Grand Master down to Grand Treasurer, the Grand Master first announced the sole nominee (as officers advance according to the lineup). He then rapidly asked three times: “Is there any other nomination?”. Upon confirming there were none, one officer moved for a unanimous ballot, another seconded, and with no objections, the Grand Secretary was ordered to inspect the (virtual) ballot box and then reported: “Grand Master, I found one unanimous ballot for Brother XXX.” The Grand Master then declared the candidate elected, confirmed his acceptance, and the brethren applauded.

For the election of the Junior Grand Warden, the Grand Master explained that the candidate was selected by a committee composed of all Past Grand Masters and one representative from each lodge in California. The candidate, wearing a white apron, was presented before the brethren. An elaborated biography featuring his business and Masonic careers was read, after which the candidate was excused during the voting. The election procedure was the same as before. The Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary were likewise elected. The only difference was that for the election of the Grand Secretary, it was the Grand Treasurer who inspected the ballot box.

The election process went peaceful and as planned. The process ensures transparency and fairness in selecting the Junior Grand Warden and provides stability of the leadership since officers advance in order. This system allows future leaders to prepare early, improving administrative consistency and policy continuity—an aspect

worth considering for our Grand Lodge.

The officers-elect were installed on Sunday morning. Therefore, the Welcome Dinner on Friday and the Grand Master's Banquet on Saturday were both hosted by the outgoing Grand Master. The program of the Grand Master's Banquet was especially impressive, and the outgoing Grand Master's farewell remarks were moving. After the banquet, the incoming Grand Master hosted an informal reception in a suite with refreshments for visiting guests.

Even if our Grand Lodge cannot immediately change its election system, we may consider adopting this banquet arrangement—having the outgoing Grand Master host the Saturday banquet and holding the installation the following day. This would allow the outgoing Grand Master to enjoy a nice farewell and save the awkwardness that might arise from unexpected election results.

The public session began at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday. Various Masonic youth organizations (DeMolay, Rainbow for Girls, Job's Daughters) were introduced and presented awards. Masons who supported those youth development were recognized. When each awardee went on stage, the Grand Master or another officer described in detail their contributions, followed by youth leaders presenting medals and ribbons to them. The audience with over a thousand attendees applauded enthusiastically, and many awardees were visibly moved to tears.

At 11:00 a.m., the installation ceremony for the new Grand Master and officers began. The ritual was similar to ours, but with one special feature: After the installation, the new Grand Master came down from the East to join the new Deputy Grand Master, Grand Warden, and Junior Grand Warden. They stood in a line on the stage, and the outgoing Grand Master was invited to stand beside the new Grand Master. The outgoing Grand Master then personally put the Grand Master's pin on the lapel of his successor. The new Grand Master in turn invested his Deputy Grand Master, and so on. The moment was heartwarming and it symbolized continuity and unity.

After the new Grand Master presented the Past Grand Master's apron to his predecessor, he delivered his address and received congratulatory gifts from visiting delegations. I presented the "Beacon of the Craft" plaque on behalf of our Grand Master MWBro. Arthur Chen, explaining to MW Garret Chan that "Garret" means attic, and his Chinese name "Yong-Chang" (永昌) means eternal light, and wishing him to be the guiding light for all Californian brethren and may the Grand Lodge continue to thrive under his leadership.

The ceremony concluded with a lively lion dance and drum performance—more festive than a Lunar New Year celebration in Chinatown. I considered that I have duly fulfilled my mission as the representative of the Grand Lodge of China,

Visit to the Grand Building of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

After the Annual Communication on October 26, I flew to Boston to continue my personal itinerary. Having met MWBro. George Hamilton, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, during the California Communication who invited me to visit their Grand Lodge, I visited the Grand Building in Boston on October 28 and was received by the Grand Librarian WBro. Matt Ahern for a detailed and informative tour.

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, founded in 1733, is the fourth oldest in the world and the first Masonic Grand Lodge established in the United States. It currently has about 250 lodges and 25,000 members. The Grand Lodge once had a District Grand Lodge in China and thus strongly opposed the establishment of Grand Lodge of China. After the founding of GLOC in 1949, lodges under the District Grand Lodge of China were ordered to go on darkness from 1950 onward. Only Sinim Lodge was permitted to relocate from Shanghai to Tokyo, where it continues to meet today. WBro. Matt showed me the many volumes of archives of District Grand Lodge of China—historical treasures indeed.

The Grand Building of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, originally constructed in 1859, was burned down in 1864 and rebuilt, then partly damaged by fire again in 1895 before being reconstructed once more. The current structure was completed in December 1899, comprising two basement levels and nine above-ground floors. The library on the 2nd floor features the largest Masonic library collection in the U.S., with many early American Masonic artifacts. The Ionic Hall on the 5th floor is the largest meeting hall. It is richly decorated with 400+ seats and is used for Grand Lodge Communications. Next to it is Doric Hall which has simple décor and is used for lodge meetings or for overflow during the Annual Communication. On the same floor there is a Chamber of Reflection used by York Rite. The Corinthian Hall on the 3rd floor is the most elaborated, which is used by York Rite or special lodge events. The 7th floor features Scottish Rite offices and Gothic Hall. The Tuscan Hall (4th floor) and Egyptian Hall (2nd floor) are spare rooms used only when other rooms are all booked. Both Ionic and Corinthian Halls house pipe organs. Portraits of past Grand Masters adorn the walls. WBro. Matt recounted the history of the Grand Lodge and highlighted several important Past Grand Masters—including John Hancock, the first popularly elected Governor of Massachusetts. Before leaving, I visited MW George Hamilton in his office for greetings and photos, concluding a deeply enriching Masonic journey. Freemasons are meant to travel, for travel enriches our Masonic experiences. I hope brethren of the Grand Lodge of China will step beyond their own lodges, explore others lodges and other jurisdictions, and discover a broader Masonic world!

Ann Comm Program 年會議程

SCHEDULE	
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025	
8 A.M.–5 P.M.	Registration/Exhibit Hall Opens (elevator level EH)
8–10 A.M.	Past Grand Masters Meeting (California Room)
11:30 A.M.	Lunch Break
1 P.M.	Grand Lodge Opening and Business Session Entrance of Grand Lodge Officers Presentation of Past Grand Masters Roll Call and Credentials Report
1:30 P.M.	Formal Opening of Grand Lodge and Flag Presentation
2 P.M.	Escort and Introduction of Visiting Grand Masters or their Representatives
2:30 P.M.	Welcome by Visiting Grand Master Grand Master's Message Reports of the Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary, and Grand Lecturer Report of the Committee on Jurisprudence Report of the Committee on Finance Proposed Legislation Video Presentation: Masons of California Entities Impact Report
5 P.M.	Recess Until Saturday Morning
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025	
7 A.M.–1 P.M.	Registration/Exhibit Hall Opens (elevator level EH)
8 A.M.	Grand Lodge Business Session
8:30 A.M.	Entrance of Grand Lodge Officers Recognition of Inspectors Memorial Service Grand Oration The Keystone Initiative Legislation
NOON	Lunch Break "Elevate": A Masonic Charities Luncheon (California Room)
1115 P.M.	Grand Lodge Business Session Entrance of Grand Lodge Officers Final Credentials Report Presentations: National Masonic Foundation for Children George Washington Masonic National Memorial Report on Charters Trial Review Committee Report Continuation of Legislation Adoption of 2025–2026 Budget and 2026–2027 Per Capita Election of 2025–2026 Grand Lodge Officers
5 P.M.	Recess
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SCHEDULE <i>continued</i>	
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2025	
9 A.M.	Public Ceremonies: Auditorium (open to all Masons, families, and friends) Entrance of Grand Lodge Officers Flag Presentation Escort and Introduction of Masonic Youth Leaders Grand Chaplain's Inspirational Message Remarks from Youth Leaders Grand Master's Youth Support Awards Grand Lodge Officers Retire Recessional by Grand Organist
11 A.M.	Installation of 2025–2026 Grand Lodge Officers (open to all Masons, families, and friends)
12:30 P.M.	Reception for 2025–2026 Grand Master and Grand Lodge Officers: Great Hall, California Masonic Memorial Temple
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SOCIAL PROGRAMS	
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025	
6:30 P.M.	Visiting Dignitaries Dinner Fairmont Hotel, Pavilion Room, 950 Mason Street, San Francisco (open to elected Grand Lodge officers, past grand masters and significant others, invitation list)
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025	
10:30 A.M.	San Francisco Spirit Bay Cruise Significant others program Transportation: Departure from in front of California Masonic Memorial Temple at 10:30 a.m. and return at 3 p.m.
6 P.M.	Grand Master's Banquet Hilton San Francisco Union Square, 333 O'Farrell St., San Francisco Grand Master's Circle Donor Reception, Invitation Only, Salon A (buses depart CMMT at 5:45 p.m.)
6:30 P.M.	No-host Bar Social Hour, Yosemite Room (buses depart CMMT in rounds, beginning at 6 p.m.)
7:30 P.M.	Program and Seated Banquet, Grand Ballroom Welcome and Invocation Dinner Introductions Awards Video 100% Officer Giving Grand Master's Mason of the Year Awards Ritual Competition Awards Joe Jackson Award Entertainment by MasFX Dance Troupe Closing Remarks and Benediction
9:30 P.M.	Grand Master's DJ Afterparty, Salon A Transportation: Buses will depart in rounds between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. (buses will return in rounds between 9:30 p.m. and 11 p.m.)
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Public Ceremonies	
Procession of 2024–2025 Grand Lodge Officers	
Grand Lodge raised by Ischel, Sofia, and Amira Salazar; and Max and Elijah Encinas.	
Welcome	M.: W.: Arthur L. Salazar Jr. <i>Grand Master</i>
Entrance of the American Flag Pledge of Allegiance Introduction of Youth Leaders	
Hazel Fleck	Grand Bethel Honored Queen <i>Job's Daughters International, California</i>
JoAnna Lyle	Miss California Job's Daughter <i>Job's Daughters International, California</i>
Aubrey Mendonca	Grand Worthy Advisor <i>International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, California</i>
Sebastian Marano	Jurisdictional Master Councilor <i>DeMolay International, Southern California</i>
Peter Thompson	Jurisdictional Master Councilor <i>DeMolay International, Northern California and Hawaii</i>
Inspirational Message	V.: R.: David M. Ferreria <i>Grand Chaplain</i>
Remarks from Youth Leaders Presentation of Grand Master's Youth Support Awards	
Closing Remarks	M.: W.: Arthur L. Salazar Jr. <i>Grand Master</i>
Recession of 2024–2025 Grand Lodge Officers	

Installation of Officers	
Procession of 2025–2026 Grand Lodge Officers	
Grand Lodge raised by Curtis and Nicholas Chan.	
Installing Officer	M.: W.: Stuart A. Wright <i>Past Grand Master</i>
Master of Ceremonies	M.: W.: Larry L. Adamson <i>Past Grand Master</i>
Installing Chaplain	M.: W.: Frank Loui <i>Past Grand Master</i>
INSTALLATION CEREMONY	
Installation of the Grand Master	
Proclamation by the Grand Marshal Introduction of Grand Lodge Officers and Families	
Presentations Officer Pin Exchange M.: W.: Arthur L. Salazar Jr., <i>Past Grand Master</i> and Laura Salazar <i>Other Presentations to the Grand Master</i>	
Address by the Grand Master Benediction by the Grand Chaplain Performance Prelude Leung's White Crane Kun Seng Keng Dragon And Lion Dance Association Recession of 2025–2026 Grand Lodge Officers Reception and Refreshments in the Great Hall	



大會禮堂及舞台 Auditorium and Stage



Outgoing GM Arthur Salazar



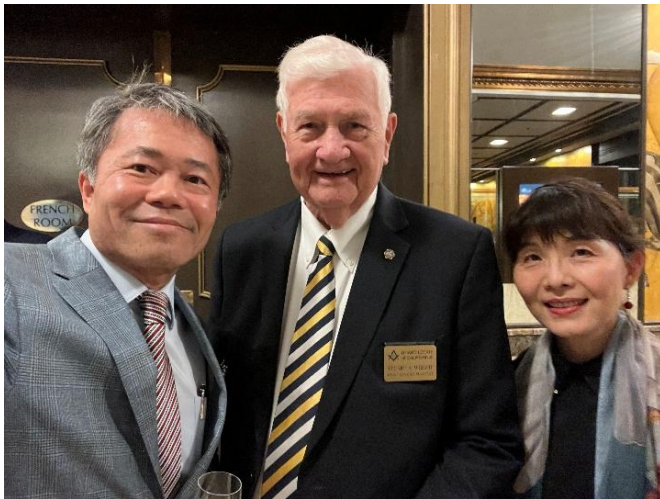
Incoming GM Garret & JoMay Chan



PGM Larry & Lynn Adamson



PGM Frank & Jeanie Loui



PGM Stuart Wright



PGM Sean & Margaret Metroka



Grand Marshal Albert Cua



Senior Grand Deacon Gabriel Mariscal



Junior Grand Warden Eric Young,
GL of Oregon



GM Michael Lopez, GL of Hawaii



MW Grand Master Fermin Rodrigues
PGM Octavio Flores, York GL of Mexico



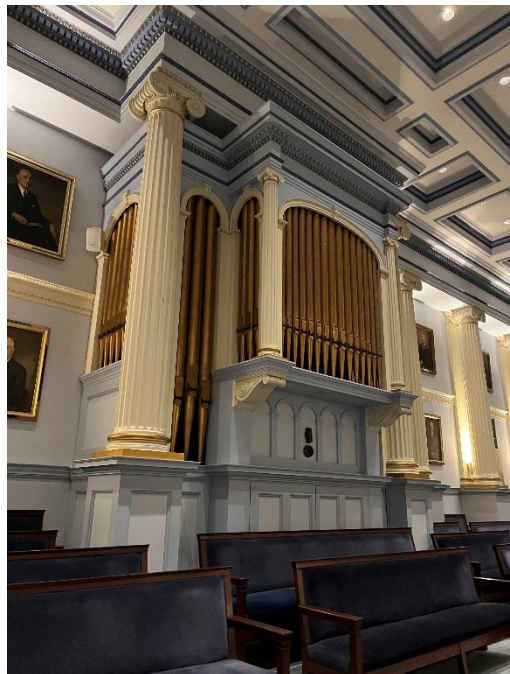
Grand Secretary Ricardo Preciado
York GL of Mexico



(Up) Cocktail reception at the suite
(Right) PGM Tim & Teresa Best, GL of
Oregon



(Below) Ionic Hall

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Corinthian Hall



Grand Librarian Bro. Matt Ahern

Grand Library



總會圖書館



Archives of District GL of China
中國區總會會議報告



GM George Hamilton