

2025 Western Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges

Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

February 14th, 2025

The 2025 Western Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges convened at 9 am on Friday February 14th, 2025 at the Palisades C Hall at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort. According to definition B of our bylaws, M.:W.: Alberto Angulo Verdugo presided over the conference, as the immediate P.:G.:M.: Armando López Acosta was not present due to his flight being delayed.

R.:W.: Oscar Zepeda offered an invocation.

The National Anthems of the United States, Canada and Mexico were presented.

R.:W.: Arturo Nikolai Sevilla Covarrubias, Grand Secretary of Baja California and for this year's conference, called the roll for those in attendance:

From the Grand Lodge of British Columbia & Yukon:

- M.:W.: Mark Forster, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Ken Christofferson, Deputy Grand Master

From the Grand Lodge of Washington:

- M.:W.: James Norton, Jr., Grand Master
- R.:W.: Roger Nelson, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: Chris Haynes, Senior Grand Warden
- R.:W.: William Hubbard, Junior Grand Warden
- R.:W.: Clinton Brown, Jr., Grand Secretary
- M.:W.: Steve C. Martin, Past Grand Master

From the York Grand Lodge of Mexico:

- M.:W.: Marco Tilio Reyes, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Fermin Rodríguez Martínez, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: Ricardo Preciado Ploneda, Grand Secretary

From the Grand Lodge of Arizona:

- M.:W.: Michael Dale, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Leigh Creighton, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: Roger Biede III, Senior Grand Warden
- R.:W.: Eric Dupree Junior Grand Warden

From the Grand Lodge of Hawaii:

- M.:W.: Gloriani Lontoc, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Mike Lopez, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: Chris Kaminaka, Senior Grand Warden
- M.:W.: "Maui" Marty Alexander, PGM, Grand Secretary

From the Grand Lodge of California:

- M.:W.: Art Salazar, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Garrett Chan, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: Ara Maloyan, Senior Grand Warden
- V.:W.: Allan Casalou, Grand Secretary
- M.:W.: Art Weiss, Past Grand Master
- M.:W.: Stu Wright, Past Grand Master
- M.:W.: David Doan Past Grand Master
- M.:W.: Sean Matroka, Past Grand Master

From the Grand Lodge of Alaska:

- M.:W.: Michael Hoskin, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Jack Clouse, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: John Barnett, Senior Grand Warden
- R.:W.: Vincent Baehr, Junior Grand Warden
- M.:W.: Johnnie Wallace, PGM, Grand Secretary
- M.:W.: Joe Darnell, Past Grand Master

From the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California:

- M.:W.: Hon Robert J. Eagle Spirit, Sr., Grand Master
- R.:W.: Aaron Washington, Deputy Grand Master

From the Grand Lodge of Oregon:

- M.:W.: Timothy J. Best, Grand Master
- R.:W.: Marc L. Strong, Deputy Grand Master
- R.:W.: Richard D. Varner, Senior Grand Warden
- R.:W.: Gregory A. Hinkelmann, Junior Grand Warden
- M.:W.: Craig A. Sipp, Immediate Past Grand Master
- M.:W.: James L. Morgan, PGM, Grand Secretary
- M.:W.: Michael McGuyer, Past Grand Master

From the Grand Lodge of State Baja California:

- M.:W.: Alberto Angulo Verdugo, Grand Master

- R.:W.: Arturo Nikolai Sevilla Covarrubias, Grand Secretary
- R.:W.: Oscar Mario Zepeda Peralta, Grand Chancellor

From the Grand Lodge of Alberta (guest of Baja California):

- M.:W.: Christopher John Uchman, Past Grand Master

M.:W.: Alberto Angulo Verdugo asked if there is an amendment to the proposed agenda, for which the Grand Secretary for Baja California put forward a correction of the name of the presentation from the Grand Lodge of Arizona, and adding the presentation from the Grand Lodge of Oregon. With the amendment the agenda was seconded and unanimously approved.

The minutes from the 2024 annual meeting were unanimously approved as distributed and amended by the Grand Lodge of Arizona (name of the Grand Master).

There was no report from the Committee on Education.

M.:W.: Joe Darnell presented the report on the Committee on Fraternal Relations, in which he summarized the work done by the Commission by compiling the grand lodges that we recognize. A paper on Female Freemasons was given, and discussion followed on how the member jurisdictions handle when a woman requests membership to their grand lodge. R.:W.:B.: Ricardo Preciado, York Grand Lodge of Mexico, specified how they redirect their requests to a female grand lodge. M.:W.:B.: Sean Metroka, Grand Lodge of California, detailed that there are many Masonic traditions in California, including co-masonic lodges, like the Women's Grand Lodge of California, and the George Washington Union grand lodge, which the latter practices French-Scottish Rite ritual; they engage with these other bodies in charitable events, and that they are trying to understand if their form of Freemasonry is "compatible" with California's Masonic values, and that while they do not sit in tyled meetings or have Masonic communication with those traditions, they acknowledge they are practicing a good form of Freemasonry; he also stated they are considering an association like the United Grand Lodge of England formed with the two Female Grand Lodges in England, coming together for education and philanthropy. R.:W.: Clinton Brown shared that for some of these Masonic groups it is very hard to establish contact; thanks to their media outreach they've had women that request membership and they redirect their request to female lodges but as they are very secretive, they sometimes don't know if it's a good organization. A question was put forward if the Committee is studying this for fear of litigation, for which M.:W.:B.: Sean Metroka stated that thanks to the Freedom of Association we are not in risk, but that the motivation is to associate to like-minded individuals within their jurisdiction. Another question was put forward as to what do we gain from recognizing women as Freemasons, M.:W.:B.: Sean Metroka responded that there is no good coming from denying their existence, but it can come from coming together in a friendly, non-formal way, and issuing referrals to these organizations.

M.:W.: Art Weiss touched on the concern that was raised about not referring to Eastern Star and membership: he relates how they removed their requirement to have a Masonic connection to become Eastern Star and now they can follow a similar process as when men request the degrees of Freemasonry; they are already seeing an uptick in regards to women who might bring their partners to lodge.

M.:W.: Alberto Angulo Verdugo states that whether we like it or not we involve women in Masonic activity, like with our wives and daughters, or other family members, and if they ask what do we do in our lodges, or they themselves want to become part of it, it is really difficult to point them to a good female-lodge if we don't know them. While the Grand Lodge of Baja California will not initiate women into Freemasonry, we need to know which organizations exist within our jurisdiction to at least we know to whom we should refer when required, and what do these organizations stand for.

Presentations followed in the following order with a general discussion and a session of questions and answers after them:

1. **Officer Qualification Process** by V.:W.:B.: Allan Casalou, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of California.
2. **The Cornerstone Project** by R.:W.:B.: Ken Christofferson, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.

Lunch break is taken, and meeting resumed at 1:00pm.

3. **Grand Lodge Financial Management Outlook** by R.:W.:B.: William Hubbard, Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Washington.
4. **Grand Lodge of Baja California Improvements** by R.:W.:B.: Arturo Nikolai Sevilla Covarrubias, Grand Secretary of Grand Lodge of State Baja California.
5. **Benefiting from Masonic Charities** by R.:W.:B.: Gregory A. Hinkelmann, Junior Grand Warden of Grand Lodge of Oregon.

After the presentation M.:W.:B.: Chris Uchman introduced his M.:W.: Grand Master Will Leano from the Grand Lodge of Alberta who arrived after his flight got delayed.

6. **Multimedia & Social Media Exposure** by R.:W.:B.: Roger Biede III, Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Arizona.

M.:W.:B.: Marty Alexander of the Grand Lodge of Hawaii specified that his proposal is not about a bylaw amendment but a standing resolution to have a website that is password protected. The proposal presented is as follows:

1. A main page which would be open to all visitors that would outline the purpose of the conference with current year's host contact information.

2. A password protected area for all conference members to access information such as a history of by-laws, agendas, meeting minutes, current member contact info to include name of Grand Master, Grand Secretary, preferred contact phone number, preferred contact email address
3. Next year's conference site information, including host.

The proposal being moved and seconded, it was unanimously approved.

Being the need to replace M.:W.:B.: Cameron M. Bailey who served his term in the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters in North America, we proceeded to the election of the representative of this Conference at such Commission. The candidates were M.:W.:B.: Jim Mendoza, P.:G.:M.: from the Grand Lodge of Washington, and M.:W.:B.: Sean Metroka, P.:G.:M.: from the Grand Lodge of California:

1. M.:W.:B.: Jim Mendoza, P.:G.:M.: received 6 votes.
2. M.:W.:B.: Sean Metroka, P.:G.:M.: received 20 votes.

Thus, the Conference elected M.:W.:B.: Sean Metroka to be the representative and member before the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters in North America.

The Grand Lodge of State Baja California, presented a motion for the Grand Lodge of Alberta to become members of this conference. The Grand Lodge of California and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California seconded the motion, being no discussion, it was unanimously approved by the voting members of the Conference. The Conference By-Laws will be modified to reflect the new membership, as well as stating that the Grand Lodge of Alberta will become the host jurisdiction in 2035 (at the end of the queue).

M.:W.:B.: Will Leano, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, thanked for the approval of the membership. M.:W.:B.: Chris Uchman, P.:G.:M.: of the Grand Lodge of Alberta thanked the Grand Lodge of State Baja California for promoting this closeness.

Being no further discussion, M.:W.: Marc Forster gave the benediction and the conference session was closed at 3:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



R.:W.: Arturo Nikolai Sevilla Covarrubias

Grand Secretary

Muy Respetable Gran Logia de Estado Baja California