

President's Message

December 2019 / January 2020

It's a familiar scene in TV and movie westerns; the one-time outlaw is released from prison and wants to go home to start over, but the townspeople won't let him. They forever re-mind him that they remember that he is a criminal. They treat him with suspicion and disdain. In the movies the ex-con usually proves a hero in the end and his accusers have to "eat crow." Not so, in real life.

Brother Fran Carothers of Rio Hondo Parlor #294 has been working hard for over a year to arrange a dedication during the Discovery of Gold celebration in Newhall this January. I asked her first to look at the William S. Hart mansion in Newhall because of personal connections that I have to the site. We were turned down by L.A County Parks because, to paraphrase them; Mr. Hart left an endowment to place a marker, so we don't need yours.

Brother Fran shifted gears and worked with local representatives to place a plaque on the Walker Cabin in Placerita Canyon which would have included the first NSGW plaque in Braille. Again, after months of work by Brother Fran, the Worthy Grand Historian and others, we found ourselves stonewalled by Los Angeles County bureaucrats under the pretense of needing an environmental report. This was a red herring, and when Grand Historian PGP Erik Christeson, an engineer with over twenty years of experience preparing these sorts of reports, and intimately familiar with the law, called their bluff, we came to the root of the issue. A single, solitary, petty bureaucrat within L.A. County Parks discovered that the Native Sons have a history that she doesn't like, and she made it her personal mission to prevent the Native Sons from having a place in Los Angeles County.

Well, of course we have a history. It reflects the social mores and prevailing public opinion in California in those days. It is not something that any of us are proud of, but we are not trying to hide, buy, nor pander away history as is the wont these days. Most, if not all, of those people are gone and we are not that organization any longer and haven't been for a very long time. Neither is Los Angeles County who in 1942 passed a resolution warning that Japanese-Americans might be a, "potentially dangerous fifth column enemy" and supporting internment. Is this crusading pencil pusher similarly seeking to punish the County as she has punished us?

Unlikely, for as with most social justice warriors, she is content to punish others all while ignoring her own history and transgressions. Our good works be damned; the perpetually-offended have come to power and they have begun the new iconoclasm. They will dig and sift through everyone's background (while deftly ignoring their own pasts and those they favor) to find any little thing by which they can be offended. Every hero of our past, real and mythical, is at risk. Every deed will be scrutinized through the lens of "wokeness" and found to be offensive and worthy of disdain or out-right hatred. Our very nation and all of its institutions are under assault. History will be rewritten, and America will be made the enemy. We are to be punished for the sins, real and

perceived, of our fathers to the seventh generation, and beyond. Even Saint Junipero Serra has been castigated as a villain.

I don't like to end my rants without a solution, but I don't really have one this time. Our educational institutions have been subverted and the indoctrination of entire generations is manifest. We are being ground down under constant assault. All I can do is encourage you to stay strong and true to our purpose and always be ready to answer the critic and defend our beloved order.

On a more positive note, I have two short stories to tell: One day in early October I was talking with a coworker and he asked me about; "this group that you're with." I told him about who we are. I described, at length, our historical preservation work and then I told him about our cleft palate charity. Hank listened to me and then said; "I was born with a cleft palate and my son is currently being treated for a cleft." I related this story at the check presentation at St. John's in Santa Monica and as I said then; I am very proud of the Native Sons' historical preservation work and our dedication to patriotism. But the work we do through the Charitable Foundation is personal. It has a real impact on real people. It improves their lives. That is something that we should all be proud of.

When I got home from Southern California Weekend, I told Hank that I had "used him" in my address. I showed him a picture that I took of the young boy that spoke to us, flanked by Dr. Reza Jarrahy and Speech Pathologist Julia Hobbs. Hank pointed to Dr. Jarrahy and said; "That's my son's surgeon." It seems that the doctors and specialists work at UCLA, too. Last week, Hank took his boy down for a visit and progress assessment and met with both Dr. Jarrahy and Julia Hobbs. Hank mentioned me and the Native Sons and received glowing praise from them for our order. On Tuesday, November 12th, Hank submitted his application and became a Brother in San Luis Obispo Parlor #290.

One evening in October, I was on my way north and I stopped in to visit an artist in Morgan Hill and buy a print that I had been eyeing. We talked for a while and she asked what had me traveling so much, so I told her all about us. She replied; "Our grand-son is being treated for cleft palate. May I give you a donation?" And she did.

The moral of the stories is a common homily of mine; We all need to talk about the Native Sons. We engage people in friendly chit-chat every day, let the Native Sons of the Golden West find its way into your conversation. When people find out who and what we are, and what we do, they will often seek out ways to support us or they may even join us. They cannot if they have never heard of us.

**In friendship, loyalty and charity,
James King
Grand President 143rd Grand Parlor
Native Sons of the Golden West**