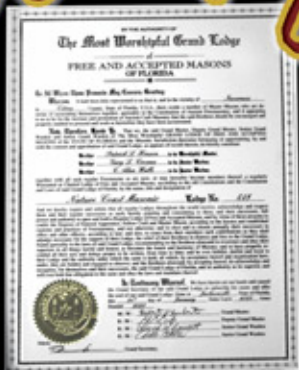


Above & Beyond



2022 Journey With The Grand Master





Grand Master's Message

My Brothers,

As I write this article our Lodges are going into elections and nearly ready for Installations. For some this is an exciting time. A chance to try new things and improve on others. For others, it is bitter sweet a feeling that they have not finished what they have set out to do. For them, the opportunity to still make a difference in their Lodge is not over. As I have learned, some things cannot be finished in a year or two. So, for the outgoing Masters don't disappear; don't go into hiding; don't be the invisible Brother. You have knowledge from your experience that no one else has and it is valuable to the incoming Master. You have tried things that may have not worked perfectly but know what could be changed to make them better. Offer your assistance to the new Master; support his efforts to make the Lodge prosper and grow. This will make what you have done even more successful. Don't be overbearing; remember, he is now the Master and governs the Lodge. As a Past Master one of my favorite things in a meeting, whether it was Opening or Closing was when the Master made a mistake, and I would just sit there and smile thinking, "Glad I am not the only who messed that up."

The future of our Beloved Fraternity is in your hands my Brothers. I have seen several Lodges invite Masonic Educators to come in and do a special presentation on the Esoteric Work, even having a symposium. Brothers are getting together in small groups of two or more and exploring the meanings. This is what the newest Masons among us are looking for.

Our Grand Secretary and others have put together the Secretary Treasurer Seminar and it is essential that our Lodge Secretaries take the time to attend these classes. The information is vital to the success of your Lodges. It can be done in person or online. I recommend any new Masters to join in, so he fully understands what the duties of his Secretary are.

This last year we have had the pleasure and honor to spend time with our Florida Prince Hall Brothers. It was truly exciting and exhilarating. Their love for the Fraternity and hospitality is something to witness. In time, I know more will come and we can each learn from one other.

I hope that the new year is a good one for you. My God bless you, your families, the USA, all first responders, and military wherever they may be. ✖

Fraternally,

M.: W.: Robert J. Lambert, Grand Master

Journey to The Future



Grand Lodge of Florida

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Jacksonville, Florida 32202
P.O. Box 1020 • 32201
Tel: 904.354.2339
www.GrandLodgeFL.com

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS 2022-23

GRAND MASTER

M.: W.: Robert J. Lambert
(Tampa)

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

R.: W.: Glen B. Bishop
(Clearwater)

SENIOR GRAND WARDEN

R.: W.: Donald W. Cowart
(Valrico)

JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN

R.: W.: Taleb "Tali" Atala
(Miami)

GRAND TREASURER

R.: W.: Rudin "Rudy" J. Boatright
(Fleming Island)

GRAND SECRETARY

M.: W.: Richard E. Lynn, P.G.M.
(Jacksonville)

All submissions
for future issues of
*The Florida Mason
Above & Beyond*
and Facebook submissions
should be sent to:

R.: W.: Will Dishman
publications@grandlodgefl.com
407-446-2214

(Please use email address
provided here,
Do Not send text messages)



Deputy Grand Master's Message

My Brothers,

Welcome to 2023, a new year with new Officers in our Lodges. I hope everyone's Holidays were enjoyable, I and wish everyone a very Happy New Year. Let me take this opportunity to remind everyone of their Masonic Education Requirements, if you are missing something, I encourage you to get it before Grand Lodge. Master Mason Exams I, II, and III are online and MLT is available on Zoom as well as in person.

Our Masonic Home is open for business, and visitations. Our Residents are looking forward to having the District monthly events again, and seeing all your smiling faces. On April 15th, we will have Pilgrimage Day again, and this year we will be reveling four First Lady Projects. It will be a great day for our Residents, and our Fraternity. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

We will hold Legislation Meetings online again this year. It will be recorded, and available to play back in your Lodges. The date will be forth coming in a monthly mailing, keep an eye out for it.

I look forward to seeing everyone around the State, may God bless you and your Family, may God keep a watchful eye over our Military and First Responders and protect them regardless of where they may be deployed, and may God bless the United States of America. ✖

Semper Fi,

R.: W.: **Glen B. Bishop**, Deputy Grand Master



Senior Grand Warden's Message

My Brothers,

Iwould like to start off by thanking each and every one of you for electing me as your Senior Grand Warden. What a humbling experience. It has been my honor not only to represent you, but to work for you, and this great Fraternity. Dell, and I want to thank you for the friendship and hospitality you

extended to us in our travels around the State. We have enjoyed visiting with the friends we have made over the years as well as making new ones.

The Leadership Development Program that I spoke to you about the previous year is almost ready. The survey which was made available to the Craft last year received 281 responses. The results of the survey gave our committee the information needed to further develop this course.

The objective of the program is to develop the leaders needed for the future of our Fraternity. This is not just about developing leadership

skills, but providing the proper foundation of knowledge, critical thinking, understanding, and practical application of all aspects of Freemasonry. Our goal is to build a multi-year program that will be delivered over an eight-month period and divided into the following unique tracks: Understanding, Freemasonry, Fraternal, Personal Development, and Fraternal Operations.

These modules will include required readings, live and/or prerecorded lectures, written assignments, as well as practical application projects as an individual or in a group setting. This program is geared toward providing a holistic approach to developing not just leaders of the future, but the leaders our Fraternity Needs.

May God bless you, your family, this great Fraternity, and the United States of America. ✖

Semper Fi,

R.: W.: **Don Cowart**, Senior Grand Warden



Junior Grand Warden's Message

My Brothers,

Iwould like to express my thanks and sincere gratitude to you, the Craft, for the support and confidence you have instilled in me by electing me your Junior Grand Warden.

The future of Masonry in Florida and throughout the world is in our collective hands. United we can make a difference by following the Principal Tenets of our Beloved Institution.

All the tools to make us grow and prosper are at our reach. By doing so we can expand and succeed.

As your Elected Grand Lodge Officers, all we can do is help and guide. At the end of the day what we do together will determine the future of our Great Fraternity.

Thank you once again for your support and confidence. ✖

Fraternally,

R.: W.: **Tali Atala**, Junior Grand Warden



Grand Secretary's Message

To all Masons of the Sunshine State:

As we recover from the pandemic and prepare for better things to come, I wish to thank you for allowing me to serve as Grand Secretary of this great Fraternity.

The Commitment of the Office of the Grand Secretary and the staff is one striving to be of service. I wish to thank the staff for their devotion and service.

The Secretaries and Treasurers Seminar this year was attended virtually by a record number of Brothers. Many Secretaries and Treasurers were present, however, I am pleased that there were as many Progressive Lodge Officers in attendance as well.

What about the future of Florida Lodges?

In the early years of The Grand Lodge of Florida, the Proceedings reflect that the goals were Foreign Relations as it was necessary to establish relationships to be truly universal. In my opinion, this has not changed in 2022, nor should it. At Our Grand Lodge Session last year, we had representatives from all over the globe including Grand Lodge Officers from the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida, Prince Hall Affiliate.

Let us review the Stated Purpose of a Lodge.

The Lodge Charter states in part: granting and committing to them, and their successors, full power and authority to open and hold a Regular Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, and by virtue of these presents to Confer the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, according to the known and established customs and practices of Freemasonry, and not otherwise; and to elect and to choose annually their successors in office and other Officers, according to law; and also, to exact from their Members such contributions as they shall adjudge necessary for the support of their Lodge, the relief of their Brethren in distress, and fees to The Grand Lodge, found agreeably to the Laws of said Grand Lodge.

Basically, the Charter is a franchise agreement and only requires

the Lodge to Confer Degrees and collect funds necessary to operate the Lodge and The Grand Lodge respectively.

We claim to make *Good Men Better!*

Perhaps education fulfills that statement; or does the raising of funds for Community charities Make Men Better?

I submit most of our Members, if not all, were good men when they knocked on our door. They participated in Community projects prior to becoming Masons. So, did we make them better? Now, as for education. We have adopted an array of programs to educate them both in Masonic Administration and personal life or avocation. These education programs are far outnumbered by our insistence to participate in charitable endeavors. Please do not misunderstand me, I support our charities and many outside charities as well.

However, does this Make Good Men Better?

Masons in North America Donate approximately 4.1 million dollars to charity each day. After all, the Shrine Hospital system budget is over a billion dollars alone.

So, where are we going?

I wish my crystal ball did not have a crack in it so I could see into the future.

There are programs that truly could Make Good Men Better if properly applied.

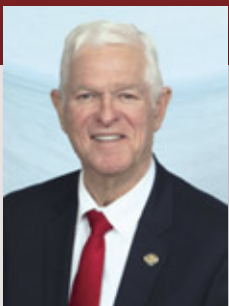
We must honor our commitment to truly Making Good Men Better, through dedication and education. Adopting programs that attract new Members. Showing society, we are indeed *good men with good principles* devoted to deity.

Our Fraternity has had its up and downs and survived; and I am sure we will survive in the future if we really take *Good Men and Make Them Better*.

In closing, I sincerely wish for you and your family good health and a sense of accomplishment. ✖

Sincerely and fraternally,

M.: W.: Richard Lynn, P.G.M., Grand Secretary



Grand Treasurer's Message

My Brothers,

It continues to be my honor to serve the Craft again this year as your Grand Treasurer.

My updating of The Grand Lodge of Florida History Books (published 30 years ago) continues. I have already forwarded Volume I (*The History Of Our Lodges*) and Volume II (*History Of The Grand Lodge Officers*) to proofing and I am well into the updating of Volume III (*Grand Masters' Biographies*). I sincerely want to thank those Brothers who sent me the updated photos of our current Lodges and the Past Grand Masters who sent me updated biographies of themselves.

We will once again soon be balloting on new Worshipful Masters, Wardens, and all the other Lodge Officers for the upcoming year. We have great educational material here at The Grand Lodge to prepare your new Officers so they can get a great

start for their new positions. With the Purple Card (Master Mason Exams and Lodge Officers Training Courses) under their belts, they will have the foundation they need to make their year a success. In addition, the Masonic Leadership Training Courses provides very valuable information on the day-to-day operation of a Lodge and has many templates for the Lodge Officers to refer to.

Please keep our service members and our first responders in your thoughts and prayers. Being deployed can be especially rough when small children are home without their father or mother.

We have many Masonic Items that can only be found in our Grand Lodge Museum. Please contact the Grand Secretary or myself to set-up a special tour for you or your group. I look forward to seeing you. ✖

Fraternally,

R.: W.: Rudy Boatright, Grand Treasurer

A Letter From A Recipient Of The Grand Lodge Of Florida's Scholarship In 2022

Dear Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Florida,

Happy Holidays! I hope you've all been well. I just completed my first semester at Florida State University (FSU) as a Political Science major on the Pre-Law track and absolutely loved it! I cannot wait to return in the spring.

I am very pleased to announce that I have received a 3.942 GPA for this semester! I'm glad my hard work paid off.

In the meantime, I wanted to update you all on the activities and academic opportunities I've been involved in so far. This past semester, I joined three student organizations and even played one sport! I played my violin in the FSU University Sinfonia, joined Phi Alpha Delta (the Pre-Law Fraternity here on campus), the Women in Pre-Law Society, and played co-recreational intramural flag football for fun! I plan on continuing my involvement in these organizations and hopefully, joining some of their executive boards sometime in the near future.

All of this, however, couldn't have been done without people like you supporting me along the way. Being a recipient of a Grand Lodge Scholarship has allowed me to focus solely on my academics and extracurricular involvement and do the best that I can in order to achieve my career goal of becoming a practicing attorney.

Although I've only been back home for a few weeks, I have been volunteering at the State Attorney's Office in downtown West Palm Beach. So far, I've really enjoyed it! I'll be sure to provide you all with another update sometime during the spring semester.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year! Thank you, again, for your unyielding support. Words can't express how grateful I am. ✠

Sincerely,

Kate Deviney

11th Masonic District Presents Scholarship Awards For

At-Risk Youth Submitted by R.:W.: Kent Warman

The 11th Masonic District recently presented two \$500 scholarships to graduates of the Florida Youth Challenge Academy (FLYCA) based at Camp Blanding. FLYCA's mission is to empower at-risk youth to become successful, productive citizens by leading, training, and mentoring them through a highly disciplined and motivational environment, free from outside distractions. These scholarships are to enable these cadets to continue their education either in college or trade school.

Later in the ceremony, the 11th Masonic District Association was presented with a Partnership Award for continued involvement and support with FLYCA. For the past several years, the 11th Masonic District Association and Lodges of the 11th District have provided scholarship funds to graduates selected by FLYCA Staff. The Award was accepted by R.: W.: Kent Warman, District Deputy Grand Master, in the 11th Masonic District, and W.: Erin Riva, Association President. ✠

Also, pictured (right) are several Brothers who attended the graduation ceremony



Above: (L to R) W.:M.: Chase Barnes (Pineland), W.:M.: Jeffrey Smith (Bunnell), W.:M.: Bill Autro (Cabul), W.: Ted Barker (Bunnell), Kent Warman D.D.G.M., W.: Erin Riva, Assoc. President (Bunnell), Josh Hall (Cabul), W.: Ron George (Middleburg), R.:W.: Marvin Thiele (Cabul).
Not pictured W.: Michael Filz (Middleburg)

Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252 Awards Inaugural Richard Whalen Sr. Scholarship

Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252 awarded Tyler Allen, a graduating senior from Clearwater Countryside High School, with the Inaugural Richard Whalen Sr. Memorial Scholarship, at the Countryside High School Senior Awards Ceremony, on May 4, 2022.

Cited by faculty, and the Scholarship Award Board at Countryside High School as a highly deserving, civic-minded student-athlete, Allen will pursue a degree in Business Administration. He will use the \$500 scholarship to help offset some of his costs.

The Richard Whalen Sr. Memorial Scholarship is an annual scholarship awarded to a deserving local high school student who is pursuing higher education.

The scholarship honors Right Worshipful Richard Whalen Sr.,

Past Master of Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252. Among his many accomplishments in Masonry, Right Worshipful Whalen was Past District Deputy Grand Master of District 18, Treasurer of Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252, for many years, and Treasurer of Tampa Scottish Rite for several years.

As a 33-Degree Mason, Right Worshipful Whalen is fondly remembered as "Chairman of the Board" at Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252. ✠

W.: Rusty Valley of Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252, presents the scholarship award to Tyler Allen at the Countryside High School Senior Awards Ceremony



The Grand Master's Travels

Grand Master's Visit to San Salvador *Written by Brother Paul Ritchie*

The Grand Master and his entourage received an invite to the Comaca Conference last September. This conference is a rendezvous of all the Grand Lodges of Central America. This very distinguished group met for three days.

The first day was filled with Fellowship, registration, and Masonic Education. The Grand Master's entourage received a lecture by the noted Masonic Author, Brother Arturo de Hoyos. After the lecture, we had a lively question and answer session. We departed for dinner and much needed sleep.

The second day did not disappoint. We started with The Grand Lodge Delegation being presented to the Comaca Convention. We were escorted in by armed sword barriers with our Nation's Anthem in the background. Oh yes, we all sang with pride as we entered. We then listened to the State Of Affairs of all Grand Lodges. Later we deliberated with sandwiches and coffee. We then departed to institute a new Grotto and its Members hailing from Mexico. Children with special needs from Mexico can now receive funded dental care. This is truly a gift for disadvantaged children. After the installation, food and Fellowship abounded. It seemed as if our world got a little smaller by meeting new and dynamic people from outside our backyard.

The third day was awesome. It started with a historical tour of Plaza Gerardo Barrios, a place of Masonic Significance. This guy on Horseback is Captain General Gerardo Barrios who ran afoul of a local group. He was assassinated on the way to the government house. Here he is leaning back in his saddle saying, "I'm still here" Defiant till the end a pure Mason. We also toured the Government House, the National Cathedral, and the National Theater. We then departed for seaside views and lunch. Once lunch and pictures were complete, we departed for home. On the way to the hotel, the buses were stopped, and we were escorted to a traffic circle. The grassy knoll in the center was a Masonic Memorial. We sat in chairs and watched the Grand Master and his entourage receive Certificates Of Appreciation and the Key to the City from the Mayor. After the speeches and pictures were complete, we departed for the hotel. The gala that night was filled with food, Fellowship, and dancing. Rest assured a great time was had by all. I want to say thank you to all Past and Present Most Worshipful for planning and executing this historic event. I won't forget! ✖

August 2022

Southeastern Conference of Grand Masters in Hot Springs Arizona



*"Say 'Masonic' and Smile!"
Everyone gathers for a photo at the Southeastern Masonic Conference in Hot Springs, AR*

M.:W.: Lambert, R.:W.: Bishop, R.:W.: Cowart, R.:W.: Atala, M.:W.: Foster, M.:W.: Aladro, R.:W.: De Angelo, M.:W.: Foster, M.:W.: Aladro, R.:W.: Stellrecht

August 2022

10th Masonic District, Ben Hill Griffin Stadium

R.:W.: Patrick Jacob, the District Deputy Grand Master in the 10th Masonic District, had his Grand Master's Official Visit at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. He was able to put M.:W.: Lambert and Lady up in lights.



The Grand Master and Lady Carol on the Jumbotron at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium

September 2022

El Salvador

LV Asamblea COMACA – Confederación Masónica Centroamericana y del Caribe

translation: (LV COMACA Assembly - Central America and Caribbean Masonic Confederation)

While touring the Country with other Grand Masters, Ladies, and others, we stopped at the Monumento a la Masonería Salvadoreña. Each Grand Master was presented with the Key to the City as well as recognition for the work of Freemasonry in each Jurisdiction.



M.: W.: Lambert received a key to the City of Antigua Cuscatlan, San Salvador from the Mayor



M.: W.: Lambert received a proclamation from the City of Antigua Cuscatlan, San Salvador from the Mayor

Continued →

The Grand Master's Travels

El Salvador *(continued)*

Later that evening at the Grand Masters Banquet each Grand Master was recognized again by M.:W.: Oswald Hernandez Huerta of The Grand Lodge Cuscatlan of El Salvador. ❖

(No Group Photograph)

M.:W.: Lambert, R.:W.: Cowart,

R.:W.: De Angelo, M.:W.: Aladro,

R.:W.: Filgueria, Brother Paul Ritchie, W.: Otto Thiergart



*Monumento a la Masonería Salvadoreña
(Monument of Savadorian Freemason)*



Monumento a la Masonería Salvadoreña

November 2022

Florida Highway Patrol Troop Station E, Marathon

M.:W.: Lambert, R.:W.: Bishop, R.:W.: Cowart, R.:W.: Atala, M.:W.: Foster and R.:W.: De Angelo rededicated the Florida Highway Patrol Troop E Station at Marathon, Florida. The station was originally dedicated in 1984.



*Marathon, FL Sheriff Ramsey
Chief Brandenburg*



*Major Reyes commander
Marathon FHP Troop E
addressing those present*



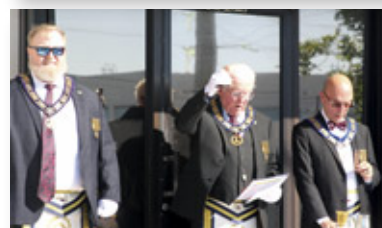
*Law Enforcement Officers present Florida
Highway Patrol; Florida Highway Patrol
Honor Guard, FWC, Monroe Sheriff,
KWPD Chief of Police*

Brother Major John E. Hicks was stationed in Marathon and Troop E most of his career. He was a USMC surviving the bombing of Pearl Harbor and participated in major battles in the South Pacific during WWII.



Brother Major Gene Gracey worked with Brother Hicks and gave a few minute long speech about him.

Brother Hicks was a Member of Poinciana Lodge No. 227, and Mahi Shrine.



Marathon, Florida, Major Gene Gracey

His son, Worshipful William Hicks, is a Member of Palatka Lodge No. 34, but was not present.

W.: Sheriff Rick Ramsey, and Brother Chief Sean Brandenburg were both present for the ceremony. ❖



*FHP Cornerstone re-dedication, November 4, 2022
The Grand Lodge Elected Officers Marathon, FL*

Membership Awards

Harold Holtsberg Received 70-Year Masonic Service Award

Submitted by Doug Ankeny, Past District Deputy Grand Master, 2012 Secretary, Fort Pierce Lodge No. 87

Brother Harold Holtsberg receiving his 70-Year Masonic Certificate, and Lapel Pin Service Award! Presented by R.:W.: Douglas Ankeny, W.: Rollin Ankeny P.M., and Brother Ramon Figueroa, in his home. Brother Holtsberg, and his wife, Mae were present. Brother Holtsberg, was Initiated on 12-30-1949, Passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft on 2-24-1950, Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on 4-14-1950, and has been a Member of Fort Pierce Masonic Lodge No. 87, for 72 Years, 6 Month, and 22 days. Congratulations Brother! ✖



Worshipful Jacob V. Knight Receives 50-Year Award

Submitted by R.:W.: Harry Boyette

At a Stated Meeting, Worshipful A. J. LaRose Presented a 50-Year Membership Award to Worshipful Jacob V. Knight. This was special because Brother Jake brought me into Masonry. Our families had so many ties that his kids thought we were family. Thus, one of my nicknames is “Harry Boy-Knight” or Uncle Harry.



My wife, Debbie, and Jake’s wife, also worked together for thirty-two plus years at the telephone company.

Forty-one years ago, I approached Jake about joining the Lodge and he said, “This is a day I long had sought” and I didn’t have a clue what he was talking about. But, whatever it meant, it has led me on a journey of enlightenment, and Brotherly Love.

I truly had to work on Brother Jake to go to the East, and I understood why he was avoiding the step to become a Worshipful Master. He had worked his way through the chairs and then wanted to be passed over.

I want to regress for a moment. Several years back, he and his wife were hit head on in a terrible car accident. The driver of the other car was drunk and swerved over into their lane hitting them head on. The other driver died instantly but miraculously, both Jake and Debbie survived with multiple injuries. Jake went through the windshield which resulted in short term memory loss. While he says he still struggles at times, he has overcome many adversities. He had a successful year as Worshipful Master and seldom misses a Meeting. Did I tell you Jake can tell some stories? Ask him about Vietnam, tigers, or anything, and then take a seat. It will be a while. ✖

W.: Alfred T. Shiller Received 65-Year Masonic Service Award

Submitted by R.: W.: Kent Warman

At a recent Meeting of Cabul Lodge No. 116, W.: Alfred T. Shiller was recognized for his 65-Years as a Freemason. R.:W.: Kent Warman, the District Deputy Grand Master, of the 11th Masonic District, made the Presentation of a 65-Year Lapel Pin, and Certificate with assistance from Mrs. Shiller. The Brothers of Cabul were there to share in the occasion along with Brothers from several other Lodges in the area. ✖



Brother Julian W. Fant Receives 55-Year Service Award

Photo by Howard Knapp

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge recently presented Brother Julian W. Fant his 55-Year Service Award in Freemasonry. Julian was born on June 27, 1931. He grew up and attended school in St. Augustine, Florida. During his years at Ketterlinus High School he met Mildred ‘Millie’ Williams who became his high school sweetheart, and upon graduation in 1951, the couple were married. Julian and Millie celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary this past September.

After having served in the US Navy during the Korean War, Julian took a position in St. Augustine with the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce as Assistant Manager. Julian was recruited in 1961 to take over as Manager of the Treasure Island Chamber of Commerce.

In 1965, Julian was the youngest Mayor ever elected in Treasure Island, at the age of 33. He went on to serve five two-year terms. In the 1980s, he ran for the District 2 seat and won, serving eight terms in office. As Mayor, Julian headed-up an effort to buy 4 ½ acres in the center of the City that is now the site of the Community Center and park.

During his political service, Julian worked full-time while drawing a \$150-a-month salary as Mayor. He worked for an advertising agency in St. Petersburg, then as Senior Vice President of First Bank in Treasure Island for 10 years. When the bank was sold, he earned his

stockbroker license and went to work for E.F. Hutton & Co. until it was sold. Then he earned his real estate license and worked as a Realtor for Marie Powell’s agency.

Julian was a member of the Treasure Island Volunteer Fire Department for 30 years, serving alongside his late son Charlie, who had become Chief of the fire department.

Julian became a Freemason at Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge on June 22, 1967, and has been an active Member for 55 years. Among the Members of the Lodge pictured making the Presentation is Julian’s close friend, and Masonic Lodge Brother, Larry Lund, who is also a former Mayor of Treasure Island, and Member of Gulf Beach Lodge. ✖



L-R: standing:
Chris Fant Peacock, Millie Fant,
Mark Niceley,
Larry Lund, Joe Sosa
and Steve Johnson
Seated: Julian Fant

Membership Awards

R.:W.: Richard S. Agster Presented His 50-Year Service Award

Submitted by Jeremy A. Tabak Worshipful Master PTF United Lodge No. 153 F&AM

On Tuesday, November 1st, 2022, the Brothers of PTF United Lodge No. 153, in Tampa, Florida, had the honor and pleasure of Presenting Right Worshipful Richard S. Agster with his 50-Year Service Award. R.:W.: Agster was Initiated an Entered Apprentice on May 2nd, 1972, Passed to Fellow Craft on June 13th, 1972, and Raised a Master Mason on July 18th, 1972.

Since such time, he has served on a variety of Grand Lodge Committees while remaining an active member of PTF United Lodge, the York Rite, and Scottish Rite Bodies. He has always been a true friend and mentor to many of his Fellow Brothers. He served as Worshipful Master of Fellowship Lodge No. 265 in 1979, was appointed a District

Deputy Grand Master in 1987, and continued to serve Fellowship Lodge as Treasurer from 1985 to 2000.

R.:W.: Agster was also very involved with the Grand Lodge of Florida from 1990 to 2003, serving as a Member of the Penal Affairs Panel, and attorney for the Board of Trustees of the Masonic Home during that time. Brothers from across the Districts gathered at PTF United Lodge to help celebrate this special occasion, and we wish R.:W.: Agster many more years of good times with the Fraternity. ✖



High Springs Lodge No. 137 Honors 25 - 40 - 50 - 60 - Year Members

The Officers and Members of High Springs Lodge No. 137, had the pleasure of honoring and recognizing several of its Members this year for achieving at least 25-Years of good standing. W.: Bill Stoll, Senior Stewart, received his 50-Year Membership Award in March 2022. Brother George Baumann received his 40-Year Membership Award in April 2022. W.: Joe Elder, received his 60-Year Membership Award in May 2022. W.: James Hunter received his 25-Year Membership Award in July 2022. Brother Thomas Collar received his 40-Year Membership Award in August 2022. The Officers and Members of High Springs Lodge No. 137, are very proud of these Brothers and looks forward to honoring and recognizing other Brothers in the future. ✖

W.: Albert Killmeyer Received 60-Year Masonic Service Award

Submitted by R.: W.: Kent Warman

Brother Albert Killmeyer was Presented his 60-Year Membership Award, at Melrose Lodge No. 89. R.:W.: Kent Warman, the District Deputy Grand Master in the 11th Masonic District, Presented Brother Killmeyer with his 60-year Lapel Pin, and Certificate.

The Brothers of Melrose in attendance offered their heartfelt congratulations. ✖



Brother Max Jordan Receives His 70-Year Award

Gulf Breeze Masonic Lodge No. 347 was honored and pleased to present Brother Max Jordan with his 70 -Year Service Award, and Pin at his residence on January 19, 2023. Brother Jordan is a World War II, and Korean War Veteran. He also holds the honor of being the oldest Member of Gulf Breeze Lodge No. 347. His daughters, and spouse were also in attendance for this momentous occasion.

Brother Jordan was Initiated and Entered Apprentice on May 3, 1952, Passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft on September 2, 1952, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on November 2, 1952.

Brother Jordan received his 25-Year Service Award on May 10, 1985; his 4-Year Service Award on November 2, 1992; his 50-Year Service Award, and Dues Exemption on November 2, 2002; his 55-Year Service Award on November 2, 2007; his 6-Year Service Award on October 19, 2012; and his 65-Year Service Award on November 2, 2017. ✖



L TO R: R.:W.: Haskell Vest, Jr., W.: Dave Bolton, Daughter, Amy Floyd, Bro. Max, Daughters, Sharon Sims and Kay Johnson, W.: B. K. Stoesser

Silver Tower Award



During a Fellow Craft Degree, while waiting on the Candidates to return, Members of Wauchula Lodge No. 17, took the opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions a fellow Brother has made to our Lodge for the last three years. In the picture, Bro. Thomas Boardman (center) of LaBelle Lodge, and flanked by W.: Dan Lackey (left) and Senior Warden Paul Allen Crothers (right, and the evening's Degree Master) of Wauchula Lodge No. 17, was honored with a first-ever "Silver Tower" Award. Whenever we asked him, this Brother hops in his car, drives to us for two hours, and has delivered almost all of our Degree Lectures for the last three years in superb fashion. That is dedication to the Craft at its finest! I'd also like to acknowledge another Brother who had a hand in this award. Bro. Patrick Tessier of Orange Park Lodge, made the sculpted water tower and shipped it to me on his own dime. This is another Brother who selflessly serves the Craft by helping others, even a whole Lodge, to help honor another deserving Brother. Well done to them both, and now, Bro. Boardman has a trophy for his Silver Tower Circuit Racing. ✖

The Internal and External Qualifications Debate

For decades, I have been hearing the debate about the Internal and External Qualifications in making the case against wearing proper attire to the Lodge, Grand Lodge or Masonic Event. This argument for, or against proper attire has no place within this context, if anything, you may say it makes a case for proper attire in an indirect way, when you carefully read the Internal Qualifications.

Brother Albert G. Mackey, a Masonic Scholar, very influential Mason, and prolific Masonic Author clearly defines the Internal and External Qualifications as follows:

Every candidate for Initiation into the Mysteries of Freemasonry must be qualified by certain essential conditions. These qualifications are of two kinds, Internal and External. The internal qualifications are those which lie within his own bosom, the external are those which refer to his outward and apparent fitness. The external qualifications are again divided into Moral, Religious, Physical, Mental, and Political.

FIRST - The Internal Qualifications are:

1. The applicant must come of his own free will and accord. His application must be purely voluntary, to which he has not been induced by persuasion of friends.

2. He must not be influenced by mercenary motives.

3. He must be prompted to make the application in consequence of a favorable opinion that he entertains of the Institutions.

4. He must be resolved to conform with cheerfulness to the established usages and customs of the Fraternity.

SECOND - The External Qualifications are, as has already been said, divided into five kinds:

1. **Moral.** That candidate only is qualified for Initiation who faithfully observes the precepts of the moral law, and leads a virtuous life, so conducting himself as to receive the reward of his own conscience as well as the respect and approbation of the world.

2. **Religious.** Freemasonry is exceedingly tolerant in respect to creeds, but it does require that every candidate for Initiation shall believe in the existence of God as a superintending and protecting power, and in a future life. No inquiry will be made into modifications of religious belief, provided it includes these two tenets.

3. **Physicals.** These refer to sex, age, and bodily conformation. The candidate must be a man, not a woman; of mature age, that is, having arrived at his majority, and not so old as to have sunk into dotage; and he must be in possession of all his limbs, not maimed or dismembered, but, to use the language of one of the old Charges, "have his right limbs as a man ought to have."

4. **Mental.** This division excludes all men who are not intellectually qualified to comprehend the character of the Institution, and to partake of its responsibilities. Hence fools or idiots and madmen are excluded. Although the landmarks do not make illiteracy a disqualification, and although it is undeniable that a large portion of the Craft in olden times was uneducated, yet there seems to be a general opinion that an incapacity to read and write will, in this day, disqualify a candidate.

5. **Political.** These relate to the condition of the candidate in society. The old rule required that none but those who were free born could be Initiated, which, of course, excluded slaves and those born in servitude; and although the Grand Lodge of England substituted free

man for free born, it is undeniable that action was the change of a landmark- and the old rule still exists at least in the United States.

Now that it has been made very clear that the External Qualifications do not have anything to do with the way a Candidate dresses and for that matter a Mason dresses and that it has all to do with the Candidate's Qualifications to join Masonry.

So, where does the dress part come into Masonry, well it comes from many places in my humble opinion. It comes from usages and customs of the Craft, as Masonry turn more towards the Speculative Masons it attracted more of the nobility, professional and influential people of the time who would naturally be dressed in the highest fashions of the time. One can see the illustrations, paintings and pictures of Masonic Events, and the type of attire they wore.

Another place where proper attire would come from is, that a man goes through a transformation from a good man, to a better man by the struggle which will ensue the rest of his life of being better tomorrow than he was today. That there is an internal, as well as an external improvement, in the way you conduct yourself, in the way you speak to others, in the way you treat others, as well as your appearance in being well groomed, remember you are someone's impression of what a Mason is. Noted; that there is no second chance to make a first impression. Remember we seek to improve the whole man, and that all improvements benefit the man, and Masonry in general.

We find number four of the Internal Qualifications very enlightened as it requires the individual from his Initiation to adhere to the usages and customs which deal with the proper attire to attend a Lodge as a practice since 1721.

He must be resolved to conform with cheerfulness to the established usages and customs of the Fraternity.

And most important we find that in the General Regulations from Anderson's Constitution Number VII. In the first sentence it says "Every new Brother at his making is decently to clothe the Lodge, that is, all the Brethren present..."* in other words "Every new Brother at his making is properly attired in the Lodge, that is all the Brethren present."

My Brothers, whether it is part of the usages and customs, or part of Anderson's Constitution, if you travel anywhere, you should be properly attired to represent your Lodge, and Grand Lodge well, then why not dress properly to your Lodge.

If you can acquire a black suit, white shirt, black tie, black shoes, and socks you would be set to visit most of the Lodges around the world, including Grand Lodges, and funerals, this one single piece of clothing can become a multiple purpose suit. You cannot go wrong looking at our ancestors, black has been the universal dress code.

Thank you, my Brother, for reading this little article, now let's work together to make the changes necessary. ✖

*Anderson's Constitution, Pg 82, The Digest of the Masonic Law of Florida 2022. See Also Reg. 1.11 Anderson's Constitution, 1722, the General Regulations of Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Charges of a Freemason, are in force in this Grand Jurisdiction, so far as they are not in conflict with the Constitution and Laws of this Grand Lodge. Pg 81, The Digest of the Masonic Law of Florida 2022.

Fort Pierce Masonic Lodge No. 87 Holds Annual First Responder Recognition Ceremony

Submitted by Doug Ankeny, Past District Deputy, Grand Master 2012, Secretary Fort Pierce Lodge No. 87

Fort Pierce Masonic Lodge No. 87 held its annual First Responder Recognition Ceremony on Wednesday, August 24, 2022. We wish to congratulate the following individuals: Officer Samantha Mincey of the Fort Pierce Police Department, Officer Martin Ghobrial of the Port St. Lucie Police Department, Detective Brian Saliba of the St Lucie County Sheriff's Office, and Fireman Matt Coney of the St. Lucie County Fire Department. Each was recognized for the courage, skill,



and service they demonstrated every day in the protection of the lives and property of the citizens of St Lucie County. Presenting each with the award were Congressman Brian Mast, Worshipful James Barnes, Worshipful Michael Hafling, Worshipful Brian Moss, and Brother Ramon Figueroa. ❖

Sea No Limits Special Needs Citizens Fishing Clinic • October 8, 2022



Gulf Breeze Masonic Lodge No. 347, along with the Brothers from Lodges in Districts 1 & 2, came together for the Annual Sea No Limits (SNL) Fishing Clinic to celebrate our special needs citizens. This event allows them to learn about our natural resources, knot tying, good angling, where fish live, and casting. The group is then turned over to the Pier Patrol to let them enjoy catching a variety of local fish.

The SNL Clinic is not possible without the continued support of local businesses, Fish Florida, and our many volunteers. It continues to be one of the major Community efforts in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

The next SNL Clinic is scheduled for October 14, 2023!! Looking forward to everyone coming out to enjoy this great event. ❖



Traveling Gavel for the 9th Masonic District

Ionic Lodge No. 101 breaks the stronghold of Albert J. Russell Lodge No. 126, and Orange Park Lodge No. 267.

For the first time, in many years, Ionic Lodge No. 101, located in the 9th District, caught the perpetual winners of our "District's Traveling Gavel" off guard. Albert J. Russell Lodge No. 126 and Orange Park Lodge No. 267, have been taking home the

gavel for more years than we like to count. However, in October 2022, at the monthly Northeast Florida Masonic Association Meeting, Ionic Lodge No.101 had them all outnumbered. Additionally, we had all of the Line Officers through the Junior Deacon. Ionic Lodge No. 101 knows this will be short-lived, but it sure made us happy for a month. ❖



November 2022 Was A Good Month For Ionic Lodge No. 101 In Jacksonville, Florida

Ionic Lodge No. 101, Raised six new Brothers to our Lodge on November 5, 2022. During the Ceremony, two fathers were able to Raise their sons. To make it unique, one of the fathers, who having been Raised earlier in the Degree, was able to Raise his son later in the Ceremony. The newly Raised Brothers are William King, Joel Phillips, Joshua RuBright, Marshall Banks, Dirk and Derek Ploeg. Dirk Ploeg was Raised first, and was able to watch Brother King get Raised. During a short break Dirk was given instructions on Raising his son. Derek, the son, was waiting until next to last. Brother Dirk Ploeg was then able to Raise his son, Derek Ploeg, starting their Masonic Journey together. It doesn't end there. The Senior Warden, Scott RuBright, who was sitting in the East for the Degree, was able to Raise his son, Joshua RuBright. A very special occasion! ❖



Eastern Star Holds Their Annual Average Masonic Lodge Meeting

Submitted by Doug Ankeny, Past District Deputy, Grand Master 2012, Secretary Fort Pierce Lodge No.87

The Officers and Members of Ft. Pierce Masonic Lodge No. 87 were pleased to host the Old Oaks Pink Lodge No. 007, sponsored by Ruth Chapter No. 7, Order of the Eastern Star. Sisters from all four Chapters in District 21, came together to present their version of "an average Masonic Lodge Meeting."* It was an evening of triple "F" activities (Food, Fun and Fellowship), complete with dinner, balloting, and the Initiation of Candidates.

The event is held annually on the first Saturday in November, this event promotes camaraderie among the Lodges and Chapters in our District. Every year there is a new script and you never know what they've got up their sleeves. ❖



*All characters appearing in the play are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.



Winter Park Lodge No. 239 Celebrates 67th St. John's Day



On 18 June 2022, Winter Park No. 239, welcomed M.: W.: Robert J. Lambert, Elected and Appointed Grand Line Officers, several Past Grand Masters, and most especially, the new Junior Grand Warden, R.: W.: Tali Atala, to our annual St. John's Day celebration.

Starting in 1956, as a local recognition of that Patron Saint of Freemasonry, St. John the Baptist, it quickly grew in popularity. The day begins with breakfast, followed by a Tyled Meeting. For the last fifty years, we included a "welcoming" ceremony for the new Junior Grand Warden, offered with humor and Fraternal Fellowship.

In 2019, W.: Chris Chag (b. 1975, d. 2020) began a program to have the Lodge donate to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida as part of the celebration. Brothers donate throughout the year, with the final push being on St. John's Day.

W.: Chag passed away early in his ninth year as Secretary of Winter Park No. 239 and since then we have continued our support of the food bank in his honor. For several years, Worshipful Chris had been the primary developer, writer, and director of the entertainment performed at St. John's Day.

In 2022 approximately 133 Brothers participated in the Tyled Meeting which concluded with a Renewal of our Master Mason Obligation. By the end of the day, our total annual donations reached \$7,700 for Second Harvest, which yields about 30,000 meals for local families.

Join us on June 24, 2023 for our next St. John's Day celebration.. ✂

Boynton Lodge No. 236 Hosts Three Presentations

Submitted by Scott A. Schwartzberg

On Saturday, March 19, The Florida Lodge of Research held a meeting at Boynton Lodge No. 236. There were three Presentations given. One by W.: Sam Cintron of New Jersey, on the Enlightenment and Freemasonry, another by Brother David Felker (Boynton Lodge No. 236) on the significance of the number one, and the third by W.: Daniel Molina (Hibiscus Lodge No. 275) on Rhetoric.

The presentations were well received by the Brethren present. Several Brothers present took Petitions to join The Florida Lodge of Research. The dues are only \$20 a year, and any Master Mason in good standing can join.

The Florida Lodge of Research meets around the State as well as our Annual Memorial Day Meeting at The Grand Lodge, with Elections and Installations taking place at Northside Lodge No. 283 on the grounds of The Masonic Home. ✂



Most Worshipful Tommy Turlington

"Our Faith Is The Fertilizer To Our Souls"

Submitted by Ted Barber (Past D.D.G.M. 1997) based on information from R.: W.: Johnson and R.: W.: Clark

M.: W.: Tommy Turlington's leadership and love for Freemasonry serves as a beacon of light to many today, and forever. M.: W.: Turlington's life began on January 21, 1951, in Newport News, Virginia. He attended public schools in Hampton, Virginia, and graduated from Pembroke High School, in 1970. His 25-years working with Virginia's Electric and Power Company, provided valuable management experience that he brought to Florida, after retiring in 1997.




In 2001, Halifax Health Hospice in Florida placed M.: W.: Turlington in charge of their resale Shop Division which he significantly expanded before retiring again in April 2015. Brother Turlington's thoughts, words, and actions honored the Grand Architect of the Universe. His statement, "Our faith is the fertilizer to our souls" was made when he was fighting the terminal effects of covid 19/pneumonia that took him from this earthly life to his eternal life with the Lord. His influence upon R.: W.: Spencer Clark and R.: W.: Paul Johnson led them to frequently gather with him and his wife Sandy, at Corky Bell's Seafood at Gator Landing in East Palatka, FL. They even traveled to Virginia's 11th Masonic District, where M.: W.: Turlington had served as the Worshipful Master of Botetourt Lodge No. 7, in Gloucester, Virginia. Brothers Clark and Johnson distributed to Virginia Masons in District 11, M.: W.: Turlington's Memorabilia they collected, including his Masonic Ties that M.: W.: Richard Lynn rounded up, and his Florida Grand Lodge Pins.

The Members of Botetourt Lodge Presented R.: W.: Clark, and R.: W.: Johnson with M.: W.: Turlington's last Botetourt Lodge Dues Card, which they had mounted in a plaque and Presented to Brother Tommy's widow Sandy Turlington. Brotherly Love and Fellowship were experienced in Virginia's 11th Masonic District, thanks go out to R.: W.: Warren Jones, M.: W.: Charlie Powell, with a special appreciation to W.: Robert Tamplet, of Gloucester Lodge.

In November 2021, M.: W.: Tommy, was hospitalized, fighting Covid-19/pneumonia, he thanked everyone for their prayers for his recovery, and he wondered what God had in store for him. He fought the good fight, and honored the Grand Architect of the Universe with his thoughts, words, and actions, and is now eternally blessed with Him.

To M.: W.: Tommy Turlington we say, "Alas, my Brother"! ✂





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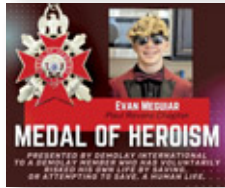
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2022 DeMolay International Session

At the 2022 DeMolay International Session held in Orlando Florida, Evan Meguiar (Paul Revere Chapter), son of Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, Worshipful Master Jody Meguiar, Received the DeMolay International Medal of Heroism, for swimming into a rip current and pulling a Fellow DeMolay Member to safety, during their Conclave 2021, in Daytona Beach. Likewise, Zackary Windsor, (Edward K, Walker Chapter), successfully attempted to perform the Heimlich maneuver and CPR on his Advisor, R.:W.: Luther “Chop” Bodiford, earning himself the DeMolay International Medal of Valor. Of course, R.:W.: Bodiford did pass away some months after this particular incident, but Brother Windsor stepped up to help when needed.

Both young men are pillars of their Chapters, and are to be commended for demonstrating their commitment to excellence, even in the face of tragedy! ✖



Pineland Lodge Present American Flag to Q.I. Roberts Jr.-Sr. High School

Submitted by R.:W.: Kent Warman

Pineland Lodge No. 86, recently presented an American Flag to Q.I. Roberts Jr.-Sr. High School.

The flag comes with a certificate showing it was flown over the U.S. Capital. This is part of the Lodge’s Public Education & Citizen Program. It is their honor to do this for our local schools. ✖



L to R: R.:W.: Kent Warman, Brother Zach Landis, R.:W.: David Rich, Brother John Dugish, R.:W.: Randy Bolen, Asst Principal Tammie Thornton.

Harry Jackson Lodge No. 314 Holds Award Ceremony

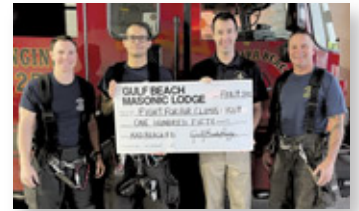
Harry Jackson Lodge No. 314 award winners for 2022 Teacher of The Year, Police Officer of The Year and Firefighter/EMT of The Year. ✖

L to R: Melissa Privette, Assistant Principal, Merritt Brown Middle School; Andrew Halford, Teacher of the Year; Michael Dean, Firefighter / EMT of the Year; CPL Joshua Newsom, Police Officer of the Year; Lt. Roger Gates, Police Superintendent, and R.: W.: Gary Gatewood Master, Harry Jackson Lodge No. 314.



Gulf Beach Lodge Supports Madeira Beach Fire Department’s “Fight For Air Climb”

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, located at 14020 Marguerite Dr. in Madeira Beach, recently supported the Madeira Beach Fire Department in their participation in the American Lung Association’s ‘Fight for Air Climb’. The climb this year was held at historic Raymond James Stadium in Tampa. The firefighters of MBFD created a team that took part in this worthy event, and represented Madeira Beach in the highest manner. Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge is proud to have supported our local firefighters, and the American Lung Association with a monetary donation of \$150.00.



Worshipful Master of Gulf Beach Lodge, Stephen Johnson, presents members of Madeira Beach Fire Dept. a check for the Fight For Air Climb (Photo by Howard Knapp)

Congratulations to the MBFD team, and their dedicated service to our Community. ✖

Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 Has Created A Video Introducing The Lodge

Submitted by R.:W.: Howard Knapp

Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291, has created a video introducing the Lodge. This video is available on the front page of their website, www.gulfbeachlodge.org, as well as on their Facebook, Youtube and Instagram pages. This video came about by action of the Lodge Public Relations Team which got together over the summer of 2022 to discuss the idea. They wanted to create a video to introduce Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291, to those who were interested in joining, or new Brothers who were interested in visiting from another area. The video is intended to assist individuals in learning about the Lodge, so that they hopefully feel more at home.

The Public Relations Team consists of R.:W.: Howard Knapp, who spearheaded the script and history, W.: Steve Johnson, who provided the narration, and Brother Brian Ellis, who performed the filming (both drone and ground) along with the editing. ✖





Mark Your Calendar April 15, 2023

Masonic Home of Florida

We are happy to announce Pilgrimage Day 2023!!!!

Our date has been set and the planning begins. We are so happy to re-introduce this event to the Home and our community.

3201 1ST STREET NE, ST.PETERSBURG

Above & Beyond Awards & Donations

Gulf Beach Lodge Adopts-A-Teacher

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge, located at 14020 Marguerite Dr., in Madeira Beach, recently took part in the Pinellas County Adopt a Teacher / Class Program, by adopting Ms. Heather McShane at Starkey Elementary School. For a donation of \$150.00, an individual or business can adopt a classroom, or teacher which will assist them in procuring educational items for their students. Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge encourages individuals, organizations, and businesses to consider taking part in this worthy program to help our public school teachers accomplish their goals. Nestled in a quiet Seminole Neighborhood, Starkey Elementary has been a fixture of the Community since 1960.



Over the past several decades, they have created many special traditions while embracing innovative learning opportunities. They have a reputation for strong partnerships with families, and Community members. They are focused on academic achievement, and character development in a safe environment. Proud home of the Starkey Bears, their mascot represents strength, determination, and confidence. They serve about 700 students from PreK, through Grade 5.

Their students, and staff are dedicated to the S.T.A.R. expectations of Safety, Teamwork, Attitude, and Responsibility.

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, was Chartered in 1950, and has been an active force on the Gulf Beaches for over 72 years. ✖

High Springs Lodge Adopts-A-Teacher

The Officers and Members of High Springs Lodge No. 137 supported the elementary teachers at High Springs Community School, located in High Springs, FL, through the Annual Adopt-A-Teacher Program. This year, four elementary teachers received \$150.00 each, in addition to school supplies for their students, which was donated by Lodge Members and their families.

W.: David McCullors, Worshipful Master, and Bro. "Butch" Love, Senior Deacon, presented the checks and school supplies to each of the teachers on behalf of the Craft. This has been an annual event for High Springs Lodge No. 137 since 2014. ✖

Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 Donated \$200 Worth Of Items To "Corky's Cupboard"

Submitted by Howard W. Knapp PM, PDI, P.D.D.G.M., Chaplain, Public Relations Team Chairman

In 1990, Coreen "Corky" Brownell, a Member of the Masonic Home Service Guild, came up with the idea to hand out sundry items, health, and beauty aids to Residents for no charge. She issued a request to Masonic Lodges and Chapters. Then donations started coming in from across the State.

Today, Residents enjoy stopping by Corky's Cupboard twice a week to pick up health and beauty aids they might be out of and spend a few minutes socializing. The shop is stocked with in-kind donations and run by volunteers, so there's no charge for these items that Residents might need between their shopping trips. ✖

Cabul Lodge No. 116 Donates A Grill



L to R: Justin Faulkner, Principal; Bro. Vinny Ficarrotta, Treasurer; Bro. Earl Higginbotham, Junior Deacon; Monica Green, Assistant Principal

Brothers of Cabul Lodge No. 116 adopted Green Cove Springs Junior High School, Home of the Cougars, in 2022. The Brothers of the Lodge approved the purchase and donation of a new grill for the school. The grill will come in handy when Members volunteer to cook at the school for the Faculty, and Administration during Teacher Appreciation Week in May of this year. ✖

L to R: Justin Faulkner, Principal; Bro. Earl Higginbotham, Junior Deacon; Jim De Marie, Asst. Principal; Monica Green, Asst. Principal



Your Florida Masonic Museum



When touring our Grand Lodge Museum in Jacksonville, Florida, you will first encounter this Holy Bible. This Bible was printed in 1715, two years before the United Grand Lodge of England, and before the publication of Anderson's Constitution of Masonry. This was one of the Bibles printed by the Special Command of the King of England (King George, II) and was the Official Bible of the Church of England.

R.: W.: Henry Roberson, Grand Treasurer, from 1877 to 1922, Presented this Bible to the Grand Lodge of Florida in 1901, and it was used on Our Altar at Grand Communications, from 1901 to 1949. The Grand Secretary was directed to deliver the Bible to the Museum Committee. Since then, due to a lack of proper quarters for the museum, it was still left in the custody of the Grand Secretary and stored in the Grand Lodge Vault. When the Grand Lodge Museum was dedicated in 1964, it was one of the original displays.

This Holy Bible is a beloved treasure of our Grand Lodge and a Symbol of the Foundation on which this Grand Lodge stands. ✖

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No 291's "Trash Pirates" Celebrate 3rd Year Of Beach Clean Up

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, located in Madeira Beach, participates each month in the local 'Trash Pirates' beach clean-up program. The 'Trash Pirates' schedule monthly clean-ups for citizens and organizations to get out on our local beaches and remove any trash or debris that is littering our pristine beaches. This is the third year that Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 has taken part in this worthy program. The 'Trash Pirates' of Madeira Beach have a Facebook presence if anyone is interested in seeing the good things that are accomplished by this group. ✖



L-R: Brothers Jason Conner, Howard Knapp, Mark Niceley, and Steve Johnson

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291 In The Adopt-A-Mile Program

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, has partnered with Keep Pinellas Beautiful (KPB), through their Adopt-A-Mile Program. Volunteers enter into an agreement with KPB, during which time they agree to conduct litter removal at regularly scheduled intervals. Many miles of roadway are adopted by various organizations, and individuals allowing civic-minded people to make a difference in their Communities. These periodic clean-ups ease the load on City and County work crews, enabling them to devote more time to other road maintenance and special highway projects. Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 has adopted Duhme Road from Tom Stewart Causeway, to 54th Avenue North. The Lodge encourages other businesses and organizations to take part in this worthy cause. ✖



Laurel Hill Elementary Receives \$3,500 For Greenhouse Project

Submitted by: W.: Lynn Brandin Sr.

Laurel Hill Elementary thanks Laurel Hill Masonic Lodge No. 44, and The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Florida for their donation. They have donated \$3,500 to the Laurel Hill Elementary's Greenhouse Project for our Career and Technical Education Program. This will help our students put their practical skills to use as well as support their fundraising efforts. The plan is to restart the school's agricultural class. ✖



L to R: W.: Ben Smith, Treasurer; Mr. Kenneth Jackson, Instructor; W.: Lynn Brandin, Sr., Secretary

Masonic Lodge Brings Holiday Cheer To Local Families

Photo by Howard Knapp

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No.291 took part in the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program for the fourteenth consecutive year at Tyrone Mall. The Angel Tree Program is designed to provide holiday gifts for needy children in the Community. Over twenty-five Members of Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, took turns manning the Angel Tree Booth at the mall. It was a very moving experience for the Masons to see how the Community comes together to bring joy to the hearts of children at this time of year, even during a pandemic.

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, is appreciative of the Salvation Army for

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge Give Six A Fabulous Angel Tree Christmas

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, recently purchased \$500 worth of Christmas gifts for six local children ages 3 -12, at the recent Salvation Army Angel Tree. This was done in connection with the Lodge manning the Angel Tree Booth at Tyrone Mall in St. Petersburg, for the fourteenth consecutive year. What a blessing it is to be able to bring joy into a child's life. ✖

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge Brings And Thanksgiving Dinner To Local Families

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, helped bring holiday cheer to ten local families in need. Fifteen Masons, friends, and family members prepared, and delivered, the Thanksgiving food baskets to less fortunate families in the area. The baskets included a large turkey, pies, and all the sides necessary for the most sumptuous Thanksgiving dinner.



All articles from Gulf Beach Lodge are Submitted by R.: W.: Howard Knapp

Our Communities



Pictured here are Members, and their families helping at the Angel Tree.

Gulf Beach Lodge Helps Keep Pinellas Roadway Beautiful

Submitted by R.:W.: Howard Knapp

Members of Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291, meets quarterly in support of the Keep Pinellas Beautiful Roadway Clean-up Program. Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 has adopted a mile stretch of roadway on Duhme Road, from Tom Stewart Causeway (Madeira Beach), to 54th Ave N. It is a simple way to help give back to our Community, while keeping our neighborhood clean and neat. The Keep Pinellas Beautiful Mission is to conserve and beautify our natural environment by means of Community engagement, and education. Through education, engagement, and empowerment efforts, their vision is to create a culture of environmentally responsible citizens within the Communities throughout Pinellas County, Florida. ✖



Lodges Of District 2, Assist Local FFA In Packaging 60,000 Meals

Submitted by R.:W.: Jason M Gaylard, P.D.D.G.M, Treasurer, Pensacola No. 42, Zone 1 Chairman of Public Relations, and Publicity Grand Lodge of Florida Representative of Colombia - Bogota

After a long COVID related delay, the annual Tate High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) Meals of Hope Program was held early in 2022. This program has become a Lodge Tradition. Pensacola Lodge No. 42, was there to provide assistance, and this year they brought along plenty of help. Ten Brothers, including R.:W.: Edwin Eblamo, the District Deputy Grand Master, who, and at the time, was representing four Lodges in District 2, also helped with some of the heavy lifting for this event. When all was said and done, around 60,000 meals were boxed up, and trucked to a local food bank to be distributed to needy families right in our Communities. ✖



allowing them to take part in this worthy program. The Lodge also encourages other organizations and individuals to take part in this event in the future. ✖



Children



Holiday Cheer Families

Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291, is pleased to be able to assist in making this a great holiday season for those in need. Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291, has provided holiday baskets for over 45 years and looks forward to continuing the tradition well into the future. ✖



Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No.291, is located at 14020 Marguerite Dr. in Madeira Beach

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge Donates Christmas Food Baskets To Families

Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291, helped bring Holiday Cheer to ten local families in need. Fifteen Masons delivered Christmas food baskets to less fortunate families in the area. The baskets included a large ham, pies, and all the sides necessary for the most sumptuous Christmas dinner. Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 is pleased to be able to assist in making this a great holiday season for those most in need. Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 has provided Holiday baskets for over 45 years and looks forward to continuing the tradition well into the future. Gulf Beach Masonic Lodge No. 291 was chartered in 1950 and has been an active force on the Gulf Beaches for 72 years. ✖





Providing Safety and Security to Our Membership

OUR FOCUS

The main purpose of the FMDRA in Apopka, FL is to provide affordable disaster relief services of the highest possible quality through a special Group Membership Association for fraternal organizations, and/or other charitable activities, that provides the necessary funds to repair or replace buildings and/or the capital assets of the same in the event of a loss in such geographic areas as may be chosen by the Officers and Board of Directors.

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The Traveling Man

As the song goes “I’m a traveling man, made a lot of stops, all over the world” and although the hearts we own are the hearts of the Brothers we have met, and received into our Lodges with open hearts, and arms as customary in every Masonic Lodge around the world.

Traveling is more prevalent today than ever before with traveling being more affordable, and easier. We encourage our Brethren to travel not only within our Districts, and our State, but within our Country, and abroad to get the real taste of Brotherly Love, and Affection that Masonry has to offer.

According to The Grand Lodge Constitutional Provisions “It is a Landmark of Freemasonry that every visitor seeking admission to the Lodge must be examined and prove himself, unless duly and properly avouched for.” (Excerpt Art. XIII, Sec. 2(e))

Our Regulations say Regulation 40.01 “A Worthy Master Mason possesses no absolute right of visiting a Lodge, but he has an inherent right to apply, and the Lodge has the discretion to admit or refuse him admission.”

In applying for the right to visit a Lodge, this may not always be granted as there may be extenuating circumstances which can preclude the Brother from visiting a particular Lodge. However, visiting Lodges is certainly encouraged and embraced in all regular Grand Lodges across the Masonic Universe. Experience firsthand the courtesies and hospitality you hear so much of from Brothers that travel abroad.

Regulation 40.04, “In all cases of doubt, Lodges should require of visitors, before examination, some documentary evidence of good Masonic Standing, under the Seal of some regular Masonic Body.”

The reason for documentation of proof of good standing, and regularity is supreme among all the Grand Lodges in the world, for several reasons:

a. Regularity. A Brother visiting must be from a Lodge that its Grand Lodge is recognized by our Grand Lodge and vice versa. (See the Acacia Book or the Amity Application)

b. That he has a current dues card (optional a letter of introduction from his Grand Jurisdiction, as some Grand Lodges do not issue dues cards).

c. We must be very cautious to examine the credentials very carefully as we have experienced counterfeit documents.

The Grand Lodge of Florida is very clear in its policy of visitations to clandestine Lodges. As written in Regulation 40.06 “A man who knowingly visits a clandestine Lodge cannot be permitted to also visit a Regular Lodge in Florida.”

Make sure that before you travel, your dues are current and you have a dues card, download the Amity Application, and be approved by Grand Lodge for the use of the application. Check the Acacia Book or with Grand Lodge to make sure the Lodge(s) you are visiting are recognized by our Grand Lodge and finally request a letter of introduction to the visiting Grand Lodge and Lodge.

If you can meet all the requirements above and you have passed the examination, it is still up to the Master of the Lodge to make the



decision of allowing you to visit the Lodge. “(Reg. 40.10 Any Brother present may vouch for any visitor, but the Master may inquire and judge of the information upon which the vouching rests, and decide as to its validity.)”

Make sure before you travel, especially if you are a little rusty on your modes of recognition that you attend your Lodge and brush up on them, as you may be tried before being allowed to visit the Lodge. Regardless of how the visiting Lodge does their Ritual Work, you do what is traditional or mandated in your Grand Lodge, which is what you are representing. In many Grand Lodges in the States, they may require you to repeat the Tyler’s Oath a custom we use in our Grand Lodge.

According to our Digest Reg. 40.03, any of the following causes are valid against the admission of a visitor, to-wit:

(a) The Lodge may be engaged in the examination of some private matter which they do not wish to publish to the Masonic World.

(b) The applicant may be an element of discord to the Lodge he wishes to visit.

(c) A Member objects, but insists that his objections are such as cannot be properly stated.

Be aware the Worshipful Master is also vested with additional duties as to make sure that any objection to the visitation of an otherwise duly qualified visiting Mason may not be objected to by a Member of a Particular Lodge if the objection is based upon the grounds of race, creed, or color. (See 1993 Proc. 123 Declaration of Principles)

When visiting a Lodge, make sure that you arrive with plenty of time for several reasons:

a. To be able to give the Lodge Officers ample time for them to properly examine your credentials.

b. Secondly, it may be necessary that you be tried to make sure you are a Mason in the Degree that the Lodge is opened for that Communication.

c. And, thirdly that you have time to get to know some of the Brethren before entering the Lodge.

And finally make sure you are properly attired. Universally a black suit, white shirt, black tie with black shoes, and socks will get you in most Lodges around the world and would properly represent your Lodge and Grand Lodge. Also, if you have an apron and other regalia, please take with you as many Lodges do not have spare aprons as the Brothers in many jurisdictions are responsible for their own regalia.

My Brothers, I hope you make it a point to visit a Lodge out of your District, or even your Grand Lodge, and experience the beauty of this Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God. Speaking for myself, the worst visit I have made outside of our jurisdiction, has been a wonderful experience.

The Brothers I have met from around the world have been phenomenal, their friendship cherished, their hospitality without parallel, and the Brotherly Love, and Affection, without a doubt as if I had never left home. Masonry at its best. ✖

Through the Eyes of Our Grand Orator

Submitted by R.:W.: Ernest William Catsulis Jr., W.: Grand Orator 2021-2022

Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Florida 193rd Grand Communication • Grand Oration

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Elected, and Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, Distinguished East, family and friends, guests assembled, and my Esteemed Brethren All:

It is no secret within my circle of family, my friends, acquaintances, and more than likely any person I meet in my travels, that I am a proud Freemason.

I became a Mason on February 16, 2009, in Ornan Lodge No. 117, Free and Accepted Masons in the small town of Williston, Florida. It's a small Country Lodge that was Chartered on January 21, 1890.

My personal Masonic Journey began in Hammond, Louisiana, while reading a Masonic Bible on a friend's coffee table which piqued my curiosity. Around that same time, another "friend" of mine, who would often stay at my home, had just become a Master Mason himself in Canada. Both suggested that I should look into the Fraternity, as they thought I was well suited for the Work and that I would enjoy it. Both men, who became my Brothers were there at Ornan Lodge when I was Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on August 22, 2009, by my Canadian Brother who traveled 1,200 miles each way across an international border for all three of my Degrees. While we don't get together as much as we used to, a simple phone call or the rare visit with either one elicits great Masonic Fellowship between us, as it should. To this day, I remember how they both told me that this Fraternity would change my life. That I would... "eat it up!" And while it took longer than it should have to get through the process of finding a Lodge and completing the Petitioning process that started me on my path, (we all know anything worth having, is not always easy) they were both right. It did indeed change my life. At that time, I was both overwhelmed and amazed that they took the time and made the physical effort to be there as I began my Masonic Journey. As I progressed in my Masonic Education, I began to understand what being there for me meant to them, why they were there, and why someday soon I would also travel three times to Alabama for a good friend's Three Degrees and later the same way for others. Because of the wonderful example these Brothers set for me, we will be forever linked together by that Brotherly Bond.

In my daily walk through life, the question I most often get is, "What is Freemasonry?" My typical answer is probably similar to yours. "Freemasonry is a system of Morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols," with a brief (well not really brief who am I kidding) explanation of what we do. How we as Masons help our Community, how we take good men and make them better, help the needy, support our widows and orphans, support local schools and our valued first responders, whether they be Masons or not. Typically, these objectives are met through work in our Blue Lodge and the Appendant Bodies we may be involved with. Through countless ways, we endeavor to improve our human family and their respective walks through life. These honorable deeds which became part of our Fraternity's Story long after Freemasonry was modernized over the past three hundred

years, it seems, are the most prevalent subjects in the explanation of what we Freemasons are. Each of us have been charged to continually exemplify the goodness of our Craft, as well as to help form how this ancient and honorable Fraternity is perceived by the general public. Even though we all should know as Masons, our Lodges are Chartered to do one thing...make new Masons. All of these other noble deeds, however fulfilling, are ancillary to that one duty to create new Masons.

Yet, as Freemasons, most of us should know that it is more than just that, much more. I have found that we sometimes forget and lay aside many other important benefits of this magnificent undertaking. It is also a vehicle by which we can better enjoy our own lives, our individual walk through this life through our Masonic Relationships.

The actual BROTHERHOOD of men, and all the benefits of the intimate relationships we create, help to make our society, our band of Brothers, such a great organization to belong to. Our Work says that "Masonry unites men of every Country, Sect and Opinion and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance." You see, my dear Brothers, we are all here at this place, at this time, because of one singular circumstance. Because we chose to believe in the obligations we have taken upon ourselves. These obligations are something that we all take most seriously. With each one, we opened our hearts and minds to new ideas,

to our newly formed Masonic Relationships, regardless of age, race, nationality, wealth, or political ideology. None of us knew, at that particular moment of our Initiation, what being a Mason was really all about. It was therefore in my not so humble opinion, a "leap of faith", that the journey we were embarking on, was going to make us all better men. The reality is most of us had barely any way of knowing anything about what we were signing up for. Each of our experiences were different due to our own perception. While not exactly the same, all were close enough, that we were all staring at the same exact point and certainly in the same condition. I promise you here today that I certainly did not know the places my leap of faith into Freemasonry would take me. The relationships I have formed in Lodge Meetings, in nine different States and two Countries in the last 13 years became a path I could never have imagined.

I have had the opportunity to travel with several Grand Masters and other Distinguished Brethren in my personal Masonic Career. With Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts, and Master Masons alike. It is a journey that I encourage each of you to endeavor towards, if you have not had the honor to do so already. I have observed, and participated in great events in foreign Countries, as well as attending Meetings in small rural areas, in tiny old Lodge Rooms and the Grandest Masonic Edifices. This path has allowed me to serve the Craft in many different roles, to preside over Meetings in my Mother Lodge with just three or four Brothers; barely enough to be able to open Lodge. Conversely, to open a Lodge in a National Monument with over 50 distinguished

Oration



Continued →

Brethren from several different Grand Jurisdictions, as well as to stand here before you today in this auspicious role that will forever be engraved in my memory. Heady stuff when you hear it. I sincerely do not consider myself special for these particular honors. I do, however, consider myself extremely blessed to have formed relationships with those men, my dear Brothers, on those trips and in those Lodges comprised of 3, 53, or 1,053. Teaching Catechisms and watching my Brothers enjoy the Masonic Work they get to do; watching them make Masons as I was honored to make them, simply because they made a choice to take that leap of faith, learn their work and put it to good use, which changed their lives, as well as mine and yours. All it took was a little courage to seek out the opportunity to improve ourselves.

Anais Nin said "Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage" So maybe the topic of this Oration could be courage. Maya Angelou once said... and I quote "One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest." end quote. So, maybe the title should be potential. Both are apropos of course, but for my journey, it seems "potential" led me to courage and that allowed me to take it, that leap of faith.

Regardless of how we got here, what we claim it was that brought us together as Brothers, to this time, to this place, we too must recognize that we are all here because we, each and every one of us had the same potential, the same courage to take that leap of faith. Swearing to obey our obligations to each other. To be good Men, and Masons, swearing not to the Fraternity, and not even to our God, but to



each individual Worthy Brother whomever and wherever they may be.

My Brothers, each one of us has the power to make those walks better for our fellow man, starting with ourselves. I encourage you to look around and remember those who also took that leap of faith. To cultivate new Masonic Relationships across all previously mentioned lines and borders. To FOSTER (pun Most intended) those relationships that already exist, and most importantly set the example by reaching out to reinvigorate that Brotherly Relationship which may seem lost, in keeping with the spirit of unity within the Craft.

Travel when you can, and where you can. Even if it's just a few feet away to shake hands with the Brother behind you that you have never met; across the table at dinner tonight, in your District, State, or across international borders. Have the courage with the singular goal that the relationships you form from your interaction with your Brothers, will improve not only your walk through life, but theirs as well.

I will leave you with a quote that has served me well in this Fraternity, Edward Everett Hale, an American Author wrote "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

By following the fine example of Edward Everett Hale, our Fraternity will benefit and we will all be better because of it. We are all linked together by that indissoluble chain of sincere affection because we have all taken the same giant leap of faith.

May the Supreme Architect of the Universe grant his blessing upon each and every one of you here today.

Thank You ✕

Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 Oktoberfest 2022

Submitted by R.: W.: Howard Knapp

Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 held a well attended 2022 Oktoberfest fundraiser which raised \$1,226.55 after expenses for the Bikes for Books program. This program, spearheaded by W.: Bob Meeks, provides a new bicycle to a boy and girl from each local elementary school grade who reads the most books during the school year. This is the fifth year that Gulf Beach Lodge has held this event at the local elementary schools, and it has always been well received by the students, teachers, and administrators. ✕



Garden Lodge No. 366 And Boynton Lodge No. 236 Pass Four Entered Apprentices To The Fellow Craft Degree With 40 Brothers Present

Submitted by Brother Scott Schwartzberg

On Friday, April 29th, four Entered Apprentices were Passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft. There were over 40 Brethren present to watch Brothers Bruce Payne of Garden Lodge No. 366, along with Steve Bernat, Michael Chapnick, and Christopher Ellis of Boynton Lodge No. 236, as they continued their Masonic Journey. The Degree was held on a Friday night instead of the usual Thursday in order to accommodate a visiting contingent of Brethren from the Bahamas, including several from Arawak Lodge No. 8877 (UGLE), Boynton's Sister Lodge in the Island Nation. Most of the Degree Team were in their positions for the first time, and Conferred an excellent Degree, with the Lecture flawlessly Delivered by W.: Robert Mandell, P.M. ✕



Why The Holy Saint John?

By R.:W.: Jerry J. Miller
Omega Lodge No. 380, F. & M.A. of Florida

Blue Lodge Masonry is a Fraternity of religious men. But it is not a religion, nor does it profess to be. Accordingly, it is not a Christian organization. All religions are welcomed at its altars, and all its directions point us to the divine and for each individual, his search for God and attaining salvation.

The Holy Bible (*Book of the Law*) is displayed with prominence on the Altar in our Lodges. In Florida, we use the Holy Bible in Blue Lodge Degree Work. Were the Candidate not a Christian, another book would be substituted at the appropriate time. Most Masonic Themes are Biblical and founded upon its characters, history, reports, and moral principles. Most subjects used are Old Testament references.

There are New Testament exceptions. You can observe over the inner door of my Home Lodge, the New Testament Scripture *“Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* (Matthew 7:7) And our American Masonic Lodges are dedicated to the Holy Saints John. That reference is to the two New Testament characters, John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist.

Saints are those that by special preeminence, or piety have been specially recognized, or canonized by a church. A “Patron Saint”; is a saint to whose protection, and intercession a person, a society, a church, or a place is dedicated; or it can also mean an original leader or prime exemplar. The two are then our Masonic Patron Saints. This is perplexing to other Masons throughout the world as their Lodges are not similarly dedicated.

How these two became our Patron Saints is the subject of great speculation. History does not report that the two Saints John participated in the operative Masonry Crafts of their day.

I must wonder where at least two other Christian Saints, both Disciples of Christ, fit in the conversation. Saint Stephen is the Patron Saint of stone masons. Is his connection to the Craft only that he, the first Christian Martyr, was stoned to death. Or Saint Thomas, of doubting fame, the Patron Saint of Architects. He is certainly the one of Christ’s disciples exhibiting the model for bravery. He expressed his willingness to die with Christ and was most bold in searching for the Truth. When Christ was preparing to go to the dangerous city of Jerusalem, he espoused “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Remember that he was the active Disciple with Christ in searching for

explanation when he asked: “How can we know the way.” And he is certainly the most like us, when he needed proof that Christ was alive after his crucifixion, and burial. He died while on mission to India, and to this day is the Patron Saint of India.

The Saints John were related to each other, and to Jesus through their mothers. John the Baptist became what in today’s parlance we would call a preacher, and has prominence as the forecaster of Jesus’ ministry. He spoke sternly against evil character and immoral conduct. He was unwavering in his commitment. His dedication and courage soon brought about his death at the hands of King Herod, who had him beheaded at his request and for the entertainment of Herod’s daughter.

It is known that John the Evangelist was first a disciple of John the Baptist, prior to the baptism of Jesus, at which event he was also present. John the Evangelist, with his brother James, became two of the twelve disciples. The brothers were given the name, “Sons of Thunder,” by Jesus for their zeal and intensity. They once proposed to destroy a village that did not receive Jesus.

John the Evangelist was the most courageous and faithful, and thus beloved Disciple by Jesus. He was at Jesus’ Baptism, at the trials before High Priest Caiaphas, and before Pilate. This is simultaneous with Peter’s open denial of Jesus with the other disciples having fled. He was also present at the crucifixion of Jesus where Jesus placed the care of his mother Mary in John’s hands. He was the only Apostle who was not martyred. After a long life of evangelism, imprisonment, and persecution he died of natural causes. He is credited as the author of the Gospel of John, John 1, 2 and 3 and Revelation. These writings, especially Revelation, are replete with symbols and allegories, as are our present-day Masonic Practices.

With the development of Speculative Masonry in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, we find both Johns gaining a place in Masonic Practices. To this time, special ceremonies on the shortest and longest days of the year, the solstices, are practiced. There is a long history of man recognizing these days as special in each year. The Christian church has included some of these dates and practices into its calendar and connected them to religious practices. We are all familiar with certain religious feast days. The shortest and longest days of the year, the solstices, have evolved

to relate to John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist.

The feast of John the Baptist is celebrated on June 21, to coincide with the Summer Solstice. The feast of John the Evangelist is celebrated on December 21, to coincide with the Winter Solstice. In modern American Masonic Practices these days are special with ceremonies or celebrations often held in Lodges on those days.

Masonic Practices have, in the past, held up and continue to hold up to our Members certain biblical figures by which examples we are challenged to conduct ourselves. Examples are Noah, his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, King Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre, Hiram Abiff, and Adoniram. I find it no accident that John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist should be elevated to similar status in our practices.

The four prime beliefs of Freemasonry are:

1. the Fatherhood of God;
2. the Brotherhood of Man;
3. Relief to Others; and
4. the Search for Truth

All these role models exhibited allegiance to God, strong personal associations, charity, and the pursuit of salvation. St. John the Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist, undoubtedly exhibit those traits and their prime exemplar status is justified.

As a Mason, I am associated with men dedicated to the four prime beliefs. By their example, I am inspired to strive to be the absolute best that I can be. Each Freemason shares this high goal. It is said that “where we go may not be the most important thing, but instead with whom we travel.” We Freemasons are especially blessed in that regard.

In our travels in life, we are exposed to knowledge. It is important that we apply that knowledge meaningfully in our lives, for that is the beginning of wisdom. And it is wisdom that we next seek, and thereafter understanding. That is the ultimate challenge made to us in the first great light in Masonry, the Holy Bible. ✖

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GROW WITH US

She ran up to me, with her short locks springing up and down, crawled into my lap, put her arms around my neck, looked into my eyes with her baby browns, kissed me softly and sweetly on the cheek and I kissed her on hers, and she said directly into my ear, in halting English, “I love you.” She was beautifully dressed in her Sunday finest. This was Daniela. I had never seen her before and that was to be the last time ever again.

Yes, there is a lot more to tell about this relationship. Let’s backtrack to the day it began for me. I was in the Army, assigned to Italy as the Chief of the Storage Division, Leghorn Army Depot. This was the summer of 1970. The ICEs (pronounced eye-sea-eee), as we called the Local National Workforce, were in a state of unrest because the rumors were strong that the mission of the depot was changing from a working depot to one of storage of material to support various war plans, especially plans for the Mediterranean area and the Middle East. The workload would require a much smaller workforce to accomplish.

The primary concern of the ICEs was their ability to find other employment. Many of them were in their forties and fifties and had worked for the Americans since World War II ended. They petitioned the Italian Government to grant them status as Government Employees and receive credit for the years they worked in Leghorn. While this issue was being debated, some of them drew attention to their cause by stopping trains, rioting, and stoning US-operated vehicles. This created work stoppages, the use of excessive sick time, and work slow-downs. The truth was the rumors were correct and many would be laid off permanently, and this was to be done a few hundred at a time. What we did not know was the extent of the layoffs. It was a very tense time for all.

My deputy was Fernando Porciani, the highest-ranking ICE under my supervision. He spoke flawless English and had traveled to the States several times to take courses at Fort Lee, Virginia, home of the Quartermaster Corps. He came into my office with a request from one of the forklift operators for three weeks-advanced vacation. This request was highly unusual and highly suspect that it may be time to seek employment elsewhere. This employee began the year with the maximum accrued va-

cation time he could carry over from one year to the next, but he used it up and had already been granted one week of advanced leave.

I told Mr. Porciani I need to know why this man wants three weeks more. He guessed I’d say “no” to the request and was surprised I asked for details. He went to his phone and a few minutes later, returned with the information that this employee had a sick child. I told him to bring this man to my office.

A few minutes later entered a short, forty-something, balding forklift operator named Roberto Lami. Using Mr. Porciani as a translator, I asked about the sick child. He seemed reluctant to reveal the details and I said, “Look, I will have to explain to my boss why I approved this request, and I need to have an answer that will hold up, or I will have to deny the request.” With that, Mr. Lami, standing in front of my desk, began to cry. I quickly seated him and pulled up chairs for Mr. Porciani and myself.

His daughter was two and a half and she developed perfectly normally the first two years of her life. She could do all the things expected of her age, but after her second birthday, progress not only abated, but functions she previously mastered were no longer within her ability. At one time she could feed herself; now she had to be fed. She could no longer talk. She walked unbalanced and frequently fell. She lost control of her bodily functions, often soiling herself.

Italy has socialized medicine. For medical problems, other than those requiring emergency room care, one starts the healing process with the neighborhood clinic, usually staffed by a nurse. The nurse will do everything within his or her power to resolve the problem before referring the case to the next higher level. Thus, a patient goes through a long process of diagnosis, ruling out the simple explanations, cures, and various tries at fixing. When all else fails, the nurse concludes it cannot be handled and refers upward. During this time, Mr. Lami was using his vacation time to be with his wife and daughter, spending much of it in the waiting room.

After a couple of months at the local clinic, doctors who conducted many tests and tried various remedies, without any success, saw her. It appeared she had a brain tumor, and she was sent to Milano. She was examined by a prominent neurosurgeon. The diagnosis was

that she had an inoperable brain tumor and she had three weeks to live. She was home and this is why the ICE asked for three weeks off.

Sometimes you realize a story is true and you do not ask for a letter from a doctor. I told Mr. Lami I would approve his request and expressed my sadness and concern for his daughter. Daniela Lami was dying, and she was but two and a half years old.

I asked Mr. Lami if he felt that everything that could be done had been done, and he replied that he felt it had. He and his wife accepted what was happening and he wanted to be with Daniela until her end.

I recalled reading about cases whereby sick children were flown to the States for operations they could not get in their native land, so I asked Mr. Lami’s permission to investigate the possibility of obtaining medical help. He seemed resigned to Daniela’s fate but agreed that he would welcome any possible solution. With his request signed, he went back to his warehouse to finish the day’s work.

I telephoned the Commander of the U.S. Army Hospital, Leghorn, and told him what I knew about the girl and asked if there was anything he could do. I was taken aback by his non-interest in the case and his unwillingness to get the U.S. involved. With that being the only idea, I had to get help for Daniela, my heart sank. My only possible solution just went down the drain.

Then I reminded myself that I am a Mason and Masons are famous for their children’s hospitals. I was actually in the process of becoming a Member of the Craft, as I was awaiting the Second Degree. Thinking this will get nowhere but willing to try anything, I telephoned the Worshipful Master of Benjamin Franklin Lodge No. 591, Free and Accepted Masons. He asked for details I did not have, such as the names of the places the child had been examined and the doctor’s names and phone numbers. Since Mr. Lami was still at work, I sent for him. I asked him if he would be receptive to receiving help from the Masons, and he was. He then gave me the information needed. I relayed this to the Master.

The Master called me about an hour later and asked if I could bring Mr. Lami to his office the next day. I said it would be the first day of his advanced time off (vacation seems

Continued →

to be the wrong word), but I'd check. Yes, he would come in and we would go to Camp Darby together.

The next morning, Mr. Lami and I went to see the Master, who was at his regular job in Personnel. He greeted us warmly but with sadness, which I sensed immediately. He had contacted three neurosurgical clinics, one in Switzerland, one in Sweden, and one in Canada, all headed by Masons. All three agreed to take the child, at no cost, provided one doctor who had examined the child would say there is some hope an operation would be successful. A lot of phone calls had been made between doctors, but the answer from the Italian doctors was that Daniela's condition was indeed hopeless.

The ride back to the Depot was quiet. I had allowed my hopes to get ahead of the reality of the situation, and now a few precious hours were taken away from the father to be with his daughter. These were the best hours she had left because it was downhill all the way. I felt I had heard the final appeal of a death sentence get turned down, and I even thought, there will be no reprieve, no last-minute telephone call from a governor.

We went into my office and were saying our goodbyes and trying to express our feelings when I was notified I had a call that I had better take. A little annoyed as I answered, it was the last Italian doctor in Milano who examined Daniela and who sent her home for the final three weeks. He was shocked at all the calls he received from very famous doctors, all asking about, in his words: "This insignificant Italian child." The doctors asked him why he is not operating. Was it because he did not know the procedure, did he not have the facilities, did he not have the staff to assist, or any other reason?

These Masonic doctors expressed such a concern for Daniela, that he literally could not believe there was such interest in this case. He said he studied textbooks written by these doctors and never thought he would ever speak to any of them, and ended up talking to all of them late into the night about Daniela. He never learned of the Masonic involvement.

The Italian doctor replied that yes, he knew how to perform the operation, yes, he had the facilities, and yes, he had the staff. What he did not have was time. He sees many such cases, and he has the duty to decide which ones are operable and which ones are hopeless. Still convinced this case was hopeless, but because of the international interest in Daniela, he said that he would

perform the surgery. However, he wanted the parents to fully and clearly understand that he did not expect the child to survive on the operating table.

All this was translated to Mr. Lami, who then said he had to go home and speak with his wife. Having no phone at his home, he said he would come back the next day with the answer. The question really was: Operate now and lose her now, or watch her die over three horrible weeks? He came back the next day and said one word: "Operate!"

The Italian doctor said to bring her immediately, but now she needed an ambulance. No problem, I thought; I'll call the Army Hospital. Again, the Commander refused to get involved, citing all sorts of concerns, not the least of which was liability issues should she die en route. The other option was the use of an Italian ambulance, and for this, I turned to my workforce. In short order, they located an ambulance that belonged to a funeral home we could use if we provided drivers and gas.

The second problem was money. The operation was free, but the parents had to stay in a hotel, had to be fed, and gasoline had to be bought. I quickly decided to raise some funds from all the workers, both in the Depot and at Camp Darby. Hand-crafted posters, telephone calls, and support from the Commander's Office occurred with a high level of interest and priority. This fund-raising effort took place at a time the ICEs were more concerned about their future than anything else. But with a lot of help from the U.S. soldiers, U.S. civilians, and ICEs, we managed to raise enough funds to cover the expenses. I had two drivers in my ICE workforce licensed to drive ambulances.

Off to Milano Daniela and her family went. This all-in-one incredibly hectic day!

Daniela went into surgery upon arrival. Her little heart stopped many times but was restarted every time. The tumor was larger than expected, and cancerous growth extended down her spinal column. The tumor was removed and the unexpected spinal tissue was "cleaned out." She was alive when taken to the ICU, but not expected to make it through the night.

In fact, she coded that night but was revived. The doctors began immediate radiation treatment with doses that would be considered lethal for an adult, seemingly because "there was nothing to lose." So it went for several days: Hopeful news followed bad news; crisis after crisis, but she hung in there. My office was a beehive of activity as so many

people were calling to learn the news and progress of this child. There were a lot of prayers too.

We had to collect more money for the parents, and when the doctors said there was nothing further that could be done for her, and there was no hope she could ever survive, Daniela was sent home. We needed the ambulance again, and with the same arrangements, returned her to her house in Livorno.

While our attention was drawn to Daniela, the reduction of staff issue was still on the front burner for the workforce. Many, many were fired and there was anger. The ICEs wanted us to delay the firings to give the Italian Government time to address their wants, but we did not delay. Workers were fired in the reverse order they were hired, meaning the youngest workers left first (and took whatever jobs were available), while the older workers hoped the firings would cease before their names were called.

Workers rioted. An airborne U.S. Infantry battalion was placed on alert in Germany to come to our rescue and the Italian police positioned a riot battalion at Camp Darby to maintain order. With a heavy heart, I gave Mr. Lami his termination notification. I pleaded his case to my superiors but my words fell on deaf ears. He was let go.

My ICE workforce was reduced from 206 to 18. I was left with a reduced workload, to be sure, but with the oldest ICEs, some of which were physically incapable of doing the jobs that had to be done, such as operating the materials handling equipment, and lifting heavy boxes.

With Mr. Lami no longer present and with no phone, sporadic reports of Daniela's condition were incomplete and never verified, but it did seem she was still alive. Also, what few workers I had told they had not noticed any obituaries in the Livorno newspaper reporting her passing.

With Christmas nearing and no real word about Daniela except that she was believed to be alive, I went to the Worshipful Master and got Roberto Lami's home address. I then went to the Post Exchange and bought a doll and had it wrapped. The Sunday before Christmas, I went with a road map and an Italian translator to see for myself how she was.

I drove a Plymouth Fury III, a very large car by European standards. When we located the right street, it curved uphill and was too narrow for my car. So, I parked at the base of

Continued To Page 26 →

the hill and we walked up. There were two-and-three story apartments lining the road on both sides, with balconies and clotheslines strung between the second floors across the street and the same for the third floors. There were many Italian women on the balconies talking with each other and most of the railing sported a familiar sight: red flags with the Communist's logo, the hammer and sickle. This was one of many hotbeds of red supporters. When I was noticed by the women, their attention was directed to me because my military style haircut and American-style clothing, leaving no doubt I was American.

Finding the right house number, I knocked on the door. A middle-aged woman answered, and the translator told her who I was and that I would like to pay a short visit with Daniela. She was Daniela's mother. She graciously ushered us into the living room, where several people were sitting. I was told they had just finished Sunday dinner. These people were aunts, uncles, and cousins. We were offered food and drink, all of which was declined. Mrs. Lami said she would prepare Daniela and for us to wait a few minutes.

Those few minutes seemed to take forever, and with the conversation in Italian, I got lost in my private thoughts. I became scared at what I would see: a hollowed-out child bedridden in a room that would look like a hospital setting. Had the right thing been done? Have these people endured more agony

than was already there? What is right and wrong here? Everything was done with the best intentions, but the odds were so great against success that it might have been better to have done nothing.

Then I heard little feet running down a hallway. Now, please reread the first paragraph before reading on. One reason for the wait before she ran in was to teach her to say "I love you" in English.

Daniela had fully recovered and was again leading a normal life. Seemingly impossible prayers were answered. There were many tears that afternoon, tears of joy and gratitude. Sorry, but I have no words to describe the moment, the elation, and the thankfulness. Frankly, I knew I gave her the doll, but I don't remember doing it!

We left after less than an hour, and as we walked back to my car, the translator pointed out to me that the red flags were gone, the women were not on the balconies, and on some, the Stars and Stripes were draped over the railings. She said word spread that I was the U.S. Army officer who saved Daniela. I could only guess that their communist leaning prevented them from expressing themselves from the balconies so they went inside. It was quiet and eerie, but I was so proud to have been involved. No Masonic doctor even touched her, no Masonic funds were spent and this was never discussed in a Lodge Meeting, but there is no doubt the involvement of Masons saved Daniela.

Epilogue

I am often asked, years later, how Daniela is now. I have sent that question at various times through the years to people I still knew in Italy. While there is no reliable report, it seems that Daniela experienced a relapse in her late teen years and died. If true, at least she had many good years before the end came. I even heard one report, sad as it is, when she was in severe pain, her mother saying, "Where is your Captain now?" While I pray the reports are inaccurate, they probably are true.

Captain Bryan completed his tour in Italy with orders for Vietnam. Before leaving, he became a Master Mason in Benjamin Franklin Lodge No. 591, F.&A.M. He joined Scottish Rite during a later assignment in Germany, and upon retirement to his hometown of St. Petersburg, Florida, he joined the Egypt Shrine, and Selama Grotto. In 2003, he became the Worshipful Master of Northside Lodge No. 283, F.&A.M., and was Monarch of the Grotto in 2006. He is a life member of all three Masonic Organizations. He retired at the rank of Lt. Colonel, with twenty years of service, two of which were in Vietnam, and eight in Europe. Midway through his second tour in Vietnam, during a rest, and recuperation break from combat in Honolulu, Hawaii, he married Beatrice Partilora, the Italian translator who was with him when he visited Daniela. Together, they raised four daughters before divorcing after 25 years of marriage. ✖

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Henry Mowry Honored for 75 Years of Service

Written by Worshipful Master Lynnwood A. Thomas Sr., Oceanview Lodge No. 408 F.& A.M.

Members, friends, and family came together to honor Henry Nelson Mowry for more than 75-Years of Masonic Service on July 19, 2022, during Family Night at Oceanview Lodge No. 408 F.& A.M. in Jacksonville, Florida.

Right Worshipful District Deputy Grand Master Bob Eubanks, representing Most Worshipful Robert J. Lambert, Grand Master of Masons of Florida, Presented the Award on behalf of Mowry's Home Lodge, Nitram Lodge No. 188 of St. Petersburg, Florida.

Mowry, 97, was Presented with a Certificate of Appreciation and a 75-Year Pin, to celebrate his many years of faithful service and loyalty to Masonry. As Nitram Lodge's longest good-time Member, he has helped the organization uphold the values of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Among the event attendees were Most Worshipful Jeffrey S. Foster, Past Grand Master of Florida, 2021, and Right Honorable Terry Kuch, District Instructor for the 8th Masonic District. ✖

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Masonic Education And Its Components

A few years ago, the The Grand Lodge passed a Resolution making Masonic Education, and its Subcommittee on Mentoring, as one of the seven Standing Committees, which are mandatory for all Lodges under the Uniform Code of By-laws.

This Committee was required by Regulation 37.12 & 37.18, and had been established since 1954, but we have not been diligent in its implementation as our Forefathers intended it, thereby, causing a lack or disconnect if you will, with all aspects of Freemasonry by a great number of our Brothers. We need to understand Masonic Education, and all its components, to be able to appreciate its importance, and reap its benefits to the fullest.

Masonic Education is the greatest legacy we can leave our Brothers; for if it is properly conducted, we will leave, our posterity a strong foundation in which they can continue to build a fortified building of personal and spiritual knowledge, which can endure a lifetime of trials and tribulations.

Is Masonic Education for only New Masons, or is it for everyone?

This is a fair question, and I tell you Freemasonry is in, and of itself, a way of life, and life is ever changing, evolving, and so is Freemasonry. Think of Freemasonry as a University from which there are no graduates. Therefore, the answer to the question is that Masonic Education is for EVERYONE. From the Candidate, to the Grand Master.

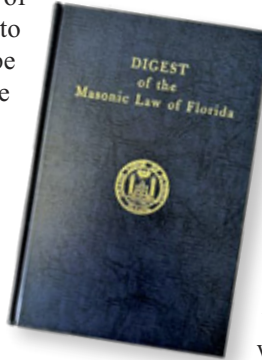
Think of a Lodge where all the Brothers have a high degree of knowledge in Freemasonry; who understand the value of Brotherhood; who have a high degree of dedication and commitment; whose interest is the greater good of the Fraternity; who understand the principles of prioritization; who make the right decisions, not for self, but for the entire group; who accepts assignments because he understands the need, and is willing to take the responsibility. The sky would be the limit to a Lodge that has Brothers with such qualifications.

Knowledge is the single greatest thing any one man can possess. Knowledge is power. Knowledge comes from education, observation, study, application, and even trial and error. Knowledge comes from years of individual dedication. The greatest satisfaction of anyone that has, and understands knowledge is the sharing, the passing, the giving of knowledge to those less informed, more especially when it is someone you have a bond of friendship, or kin.

If every one of us would take Masonic Education seriously, our Fraternity would improve dramatically, the possibilities would be endless, the bonds created would last a lifetime, and together we can achieve heights we would only dare to dream.

So, my Brothers, I ask every single one of you, whether young, or old, officer

or not, past or present, to stand on one side, or the other of Masonic Education, but please stand, and be counted. Be counted on the side that will teach, or be counted on the side that will be learning, but please be counted. If Freemasonry is for you, and your love of Fraternity is true and real, if your obligations, lectures, lessons, and teachings of Freemasonry mean something to you, please be counted as one who is willing, and ready to do your part for the benefit of the Brotherhood.



The Mentoring Education required and mandated to be imparted on the Candidates, Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts, and Master Masons is of paramount importance. It is the foundation on which the individual Brother's Edifice of Masonic Knowledge will be built. This is something that every Lodge, and every Master Mason should pay particular attention to, and remind the Lodge Officers to perform this all-important part of Conferring of the Degrees prior to, and after, each Degree without fail, ask the Candidates, and Brothers receiving the Degrees to make sure there is

compliance with this MOST IMPORTANT part of their Masonic development.

A few years back The Grand Lodge came out with new Master Mason I, II, & III. We encourage the Brothers to participate in taking the new exams, and more especially the Officers, as they are required to hold an Elected Office in our Lodges. However, if all we do is sit as a group, and fill in a circle, or pick a T or F for an answer, we are missing the boat and only fooling ourselves. My Brothers, these tests were designed for everyone to look in the Digest for themselves and find out the answer. This would serve two purposes

- 1) to get acquainted with the Digest and,
- 2) to learn the answer to the question. If after this assignment is completed, the test turned in and we want to have a discussion on the proper answers, it would be fine. But tests cannot be taken in a group setting, very few will benefit from this practice.

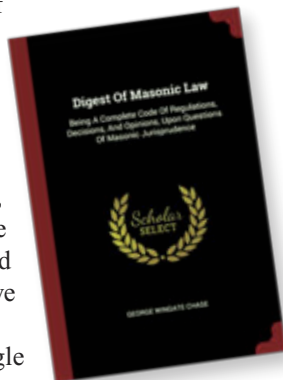
Masonic Leadership Training has also taken a new resurgence, as it is also required to become an Officer in the Lodge. This Program is unique, as it is not tested, and it is presented in a group setting, and it should work in the following manner.

1. Presented in a format that teaches the Brethren what is covered in the Masonic Leadership Training Manual, where to find it, and serve as a reference for later use in planning and operating a Lodge.

2. This presentation should be one that is not rushed. If it is worth investing your time, then it is worth doing it right. This is not a sprint race, it is a marathon, a learning marathon.

3. If there is NO participation from the Brethren, an exchange of ideas, questions from those present, there will be very little learning.

4. If the presenter has experience of real situations, this will be a plus, and will make the discussions livelier when the Brethren are engaged it makes it a better learning experience.



Continued →

Lodge Officers' Training Courses are designed as an open book test training to expose the Brother taking the exam to information necessary to know by any Mason, especially those wanting to serve the Lodge and/or The Grand Lodge, as an Officer, as it gives a better understanding on how the Lodges are to properly function. Again, this is an individual test, and is not to be given in a group setting.

The reason for all this emphasis on the Mentoring System, Masonic Education, Masonic Leadership Training, and Lodge Officers' Training Courses, is to showcase their importance in the Operation of a Lodge, and the Fraternity itself. To make real thinkers with an understanding of Masonry, from its inception, to the present, to help you make Masonry a Way of Life, to improve yourself mentally, and spiritually, making you a better man all the way around.

By the way Worshipful Masters, remember that the Masonic Education Committee requires a Past Master to chair this Committee, and to make reports prior to the Degree being Conferred. Also, remember to use Members that have the experience, and knowledge, to teach these Programs. To the District Deputy Grand Masters: placing a Brother that was Raised a month or two ago to any of the Committees previously mentioned, is a disservice to the Brother named, and also to the Brothers that will be receiving the information, as there is no experience to draw from, nor the time necessary to have learned that material at hand.

So, let's go my Brother, there is no time for rest, let us join hand-in-hand, you are not alone, *"together we can make a difference."* Make a commitment, and join us, stand up, and be counted, *"together we must make it happen."* ✖

Annual Grand Communications

194th Annual Grand Communication of The Grand Lodge



The following information is given to the Craft in preparation for their attendance at the 194th Annual Communication of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Florida to be held at the Rosen Plaza Hotel, Orlando, Florida, on May 29, 30, and 31, 2023.



It is the desire of Most Worshipful Robert J. Lambert Grand Master, that EVERY LODGE IN FLORIDA BE REPRESENTED BY THE ATTENDANCE OF THE MASTER AND WARDENS.

I respectfully refer you to Regulation 29.01 in the Digest of the Masonic Law of Florida wherein it states that it is the DUTY of the Master and Wardens (or at least one of them) to attend EVERY GRAND LODGE ANNUAL COMMUNICATION.

ROLL CALL: Most Worshipful Robert J. Lambert, Grand Master, will expect the Right Worshipful District Deputy Grand Masters to call the roll of Lodge Representatives of their respective Districts at each morning and afternoon Session of The Grand Lodge which will assist the Returns and Credentials Committee in preparing per diem checks.

REGISTRATION: The Committee on Returns and Credentials will begin registration on Sunday, May 28th, at 9:00 a.m., in the Ballroom Foyer of the Hotel.

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL: The Rosen Plaza Hotel, 9700 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32819-8114, Reservations number (407) 996-9700. ✖

There has been much talk about Guarding the West Gate in recent times. Yet, the lessons from our failure to heed the warning is always applied to someone else. It's actually never about us, because after all, the Petitioner came to our Lodge, and after a conversation before the Meeting started he seemed the kind of fellow we wanted in our Lodge, so I gave him a Petition, and not only did I sign it, but I asked another Brother to sign as well, you know! We need new Members.

Does this sound familiar? It may be happening in your Lodge. It may even be you. After all the Petitioner must be investigated. I'm sure they will find out if anything is wrong. We are supposed to do a background check as well, you know, that is the safety net.

Well guess what? You are WRONG, majorly wrong, and I hope this is an awakening for you!

In the past I have been involved in looking into several Lodge's records. I must confess, of the over 30 Lodges I have checked since 2012, the situation is not getting better. It is often said, "the truth is stranger than fiction." My Brothers, it truly is. I have found Petitions not signed by the Petitioner, with no fees written, without recommenders, without references, with criminal records circled and marked "do not read", background checks in files years later, criminal records distorted to allow a Petitioner into Lodge, applications filled out by the Worshipful Master of Lodge who allegedly distorted the information according to the Petitioner, no Petitions Committee Reports, no Supplementary Information forms. Brothers, that sign off on the Petition without ever talking to the Petitioner, or visiting their home, relying on the other Brothers report of the situation without performing his duties. My Brothers, this was just a glance at the situation with the Petition's process, there is much room for improvement with this problem and the solutions are to follow the proper process. It is easy. Let us go over the process.

So let us start with a typical Petition, most likely the Petitioner does not know anyone in the Lodge, and may not even know any Masons in the local area, his grandfather, or great grandfather may or may not have been a Mason, but he has heard about us from television or internet, and he liked what he saw.

Most likely he is thinking we have the key to some secret which will make him an Illuminati, rich, and instantaneously successful. Maybe he would like to know our secrets to uncover some sort of treasure or mystery to rule the world once he reaches the top. NOT.

The first thing we must find out is that he is not coming for curious or mercenary reasons. This will require some time for you to get to know the individual's heart and mind. This time will be considerably more than is available before a meeting, even if he breaks bread with you.

There is no set time 3, 6, 9 months, or even a year. No one knows. Everyone is different. However, the longer you share each other's company the more you will get to know him, and he you. It may be in the end, he doesn't like your company or you his, or it may be that you do have common interest and he will conform with the Lodge and its Members. ONLY TIME will know. Sadly, to say, we are in too much of a hurry to allow this important step of time to take place.

Did you Know? That the United Grand Lodge of England requires the recommenders to know the Petitioner for a minimum of 5 years and give explicit information on how they are acquainted. Commentary: There is a lot to be said for knowing the individual before recommending him, after all it is only your name and reputation that you are laying on the line for one you don't even know, before your Brothers. Do not lose

your Brothers respect for your word by recommending an unworthy Petitioner.

Now, let's move on to the Petition. The Petition should only be given when you are sure the Petitioner is a good fit in the Lodge, that he is of age, lives within the Lodge Jurisdiction and has no criminal record. After which you should explain in detail the things expected of him, such as attending the catechism classes, dress code, Degree Fees, annual dues, Degree dates, Lodge Meeting Attendance, reading of all materials presented, being faithful to his obligations, reading and approving the Lodge By-laws, and most importantly that he must cheerfully accept the mandates of the Institution and his Brethren. That contentious individuals are not welcome nor needed as they destroy the Harmony of the Lodge.

Now, that he has verbally agreed with everything presented to him, more importantly, his willingness to conform to our laws, rules, and regulations, as well as our usages, and customs, and that you feel he is the right Petitioner for your Lodge, you can present him with a Petition.

Such Petition shall be clearly printed except where signatures are required (such as actual signature of the Petitioner) and two recommenders must also sign (if signature is not legible, please print name next to the signature).

Petition must be filled out by the Petitioner in his own handwriting for several reasons. One, that he is responsible for the information he will be signing. Second, to prove he can read and write as it is written in the Digest.

All fees for the Degrees must be filled in by the Secretary, as well as the annual dues, George Washington National Monument Association, which the Lodge must pay Grand Lodge for each Initiate, and the Masonic Home Endowment Fund which is voluntary, along with its purpose explained to the Petitioner. This will give you a window to his charitable qualifications.

Although not listed, we should ask for a phone number to reach out to the three references listed on the Petition, so that we are able to reach them with greater ease and obtain the information necessary. Next, we need to be sure that every blank space is filled, and every question answered even if with an N/A, for when not applicable is used.

Under no circumstances should a Secretary or Worshipful Master receive a Petition (GL-601 Petition for The Degrees of Freemasonry in a legal size paper in order to have the proper space, printed on both sides with all the information on a single sheet of paper, so no information can be separated or lost) that is not filled out completely, with proper signatures and accompanying fees, together with the Applicant Background Waiver Form GL-601A. If the Secretary should accept the Petition, he must obtain approval of the Master before going further.

Once the Secretary or Worshipful Master receives the Petition, he must look at it for the following: is the Petitioner 18 years or older, does he reside within the jurisdiction of the Lodge and has he pleaded guilty or been convicted of any crime? If he is not of age and does not meet the qualifications as laid out in the Digest for exemptions, do not accept the Petition. If he does not live in the jurisdiction of the Lodge the Master can appoint a committee to determine whether the Petitioner lives within the Lodge Jurisdiction. If a waiver of jurisdiction is needed, one can be requested of the Lodge having jurisdiction over the Petitioner by filling a "Waiver of Jurisdiction Form GL-700" and the process is on hold until a reply is received. If the Petitioner has pleaded guilty or has been

Continued →

convicted of a crime, it is his responsibility to prove to the Lodge that all his civil rights have been restored and when he has achieved that, the process may restart again. *“Remember we make good men better, not bad men good.”* Not being in the rehabilitation business, is best to move on, and find good men to start with. Remember that the harmony of the Lodge is paramount. Why we should bring a weak link into the chain of Brotherhood.

Once everything has been checked, and the Secretary or Worshipful Master accepts the application, the Secretary shall order forthwith the Background Check which information, he will share with the Master and Investigation Committee with the Social Security redacted from both the waiver and the Petition.

Once the Petition has been accepted, the Petitioner must be asked to come to Lodge to meet with the Petitions Committee, there he should be presented with the Supplementary Information Form GL-602 to be filled out by him, with his own hand, examined by the Petitions Committee and pertinent questions asked according to his answers as they compared with the copy of the original Petition for the Degrees of Freemasonry, with Social Security number redacted.

The Supplementary Information Form being signed by the Petitioner as to the truth of the information there in contained, and with the approval, or not of the Petitions Committee, (See the Masonic Leadership Manual for more information on the proper procedures of this Committee Pg. 117-118), they will report back to the Master. If approved by the Master, the Secretary can read it in the Lodge for acceptance or rejection of the Craft. All accepted Petitions will automatically follow the usual course before being read a second time for approval, or rejection of the Investigation's Committee Report.

After a favorable report of the Petition's Committee, the Secretary with the approval of the Worshipful Master, should read the Petition in a Stated Communication, and if accepted by the Craft, the Worshipful Master should name the Investigation Committee. The first name being the Chairman unless otherwise stated by the Master. The Background report will assist the Investigation Committee with any criminal matters regarding the Petitioner, but it is not the final word as to his approval, there are so many other important things that may qualify or disqualify a Petitioner besides a criminal record.

The three Members of the Investigation Committee must visit the Petitioner's home separately, as required in the By-laws of the Lodge. (See the Masonic Leadership Manual for more information on the proper procedures of this Committee Pg. 118- 121). Then make a written report to the Secretary of the Lodge as to whether he is qualified or not to become a Mason.

If I were to be charged with the serious duty of investigating a Petitioner, the first thing I would do is to have a discussion with the two Brothers that signed on as recommenders to the Fraternity, because they are the ones that best know the Petitioner. From there, I can determine if the Petitioner's recommendation was solid, or of no worth whatsoever.

With that information on hand, you need to make sure that you go the extra mile looking into the Petitioner's character, or lack thereof. You need to examine every aspect of his life that may have an impact on his ability to become a Member of this Ancient, and Honorable Fraternity.

Now, the process needs to be in-depth, thorough, and fair. Under no circumstances should any Member of the Committee have a bias towards the Petitioner for, or against. His home, work, neighbor, religious and patriotic life needs to be examined. No stone left unturned, speak with his wife and kids about their thoughts on their husband, or father joining Freemasonry. Do they understand that this will take some time from them

while he is going through the Degrees, for studies, and afterwards attending Meetings, a minimum of twice a month. Is his joining the Lodge going to cause a financial burden on the family? Is his financial situation stable where he can afford the Lodge, and be a charitable giver? Is the house a home? Is it kept clean? Is he vulgar in speech and style? Is he well-groomed, and dressed? Has he been previously divorced? If so, and he previously had children, does he have contact with his kids? Is he behind on child support? Is he active with his children's school and sports? Is his faith compatible with Freemasonry? Is his wife and parents' faith accepting of Freemasonry? Is he an active practitioner of his faith? Was he solicited to join Masonry by Members of the Institution? Is he coming to us of his own free will and accord, and any other question pertinent to be asked to determine his moral, civil, and religious duties.

Ask his coworkers, or employer about his personality, reliability, punctuality, ability to get along with others or if he is a loner. Is he argumentative at work? Does he follow commands? Does he share? Does he respect private property?

Talk to the neighbors and ask them if he is a good neighbor? Does he have a feud with any of the neighbors? Is he involved with any of the neighborhood projects? Has the police been to the home? Are there quarrels in the family? Have they seen any signs of misbehavior from parents or use of alcohol or drugs? You can see if the home is on par with the neighborhood, and yard well kept.

Is he active with his civic activities as required of a good citizen? Is he charitable, kind, and caring? Is he concerned for those less fortunate? Is he loyal to the Country in which he resides? Does he obey the laws? Has he ever entered any conspiracy to overthrow the government? These are just a few of the things we need to investigate before you render your report. Remember the Brethren of your Lodge depend on your skill and assiduity in the performance of this all important duty in which they will place their trust. Do not take your duties lightly.

The actual Petition must be signed by the Investigation Committee, and select whether he is accepted or rejected. The Secretary is never to read the names of the Investigators, just the findings of the report and of their acceptance, or rejection.

Once the report has been received, and the Master approves of the second reading of the Petition, the Secretary must read the Petition for acceptance, or rejection by the Craft. No one can be excused from voting on the Petition unless it's by majority vote of the Members present and for good cause. No one should be allowed to leave the Lodge before, or during the ballot, to avoid balloting on the Petition.

The ballot must be taken with a ballot box that is qualified according to our statutes, that has equal number of balls and cubes to the Brethren present, that everyone has an opportunity to vote according to their own free will, and accord.

No one, and under any circumstances shall they reveal the way he voted, or the way another voted, and no one can ask another how they voted. All these actions are serious violations, and must be dealt with accordingly.

If the ballot comes out clear, the Petitioner is elected to receive the Three Degrees of Freemasonry. If the Petitioner is rejected, he will have to wait six months before Petitioning the Lodge again. Remember the Declarations of Principles approved in 1993, and the following Ruling and Decision regarding the violation of those principles. *“A dark ballot cast based solely on a Candidate's race, creed, or Country of origin shall be found CLEAR, and the Candidate shall be Initiated, Passed, and Raised WITHOUT OBJECTION unless a valid objection is forthcoming. (2008 Proc. 107-108)”* ❖

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The Florida Mason
Above & Beyond

The Official Newsletter of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Florida

Volume 2, Issue 1

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