

Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and Accepted Masons

St. Augustine, FL

Chartered January 18, A.D. 1888, A.L. 5888

904-826-4086



February, 2023



STATED COMMUNICATIONS

Masonic Temple

4 Martin Luther King Blvd.

St. Augustine, FL

1ST & 3RD Thursdays

Meal – 6:30 p.m.

Stated Communication — 7:30 p.m.

DEGREE WORK AND PRACTICE

2nd & 4th Thursdays

CHARITY OF THE MONTH

St. Augustine Youth Services

On February 2nd, we will have Malinda Everson, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity (one of our monthly charities) presenting on the work they do, how Habitat for Humanity works, and how we can come together for a day as brothers to help them fulfill their mission. I hope you can join us to hear about the important work they do providing affordable housing in our community.

We have scheduled a Fellowcraft degree on February 16th (second stated communication date - third Thursday of the month). It will be performed by the Widow's Sons degree team. We will also have RW Walt Barner share some Masonic education that night. We will have dinner at 6:30 pm and the degree will start at 7:30 pm.

For those Brothers interested in joining me, I plan on visiting Cabul Lodge on Thursday, February 9th and attending the District Association meeting on Wednesday, February 22nd at Melrose Lodge.

I look forward to seeing you soon and hope you all have an amazing 2023!

Tom Torretta
Worshipful Master

From the East

Hello Brothers!!

I hope 2023 has started off well for you all!

By the time you read this, we will have raised 3 new Master Masons on Saturday, January 21st and will be getting ready to raise 3 more on Thursday, February 23rd. The MM degree on 2/23 will start at 6:30pm.

We have received a couple of petitions that I want to let you know about. One is for a new candidate who wants to receive the three degrees named Arthur Franklin May. The other is a transfer named Brother Richard Stephen Griffin.

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 RAINBOW 7 pm	2 STATED COMM 6:30 PM	3	4
5	6 OES	7	8 District In- struction Bunnell 200 6:20pm	9	10	11 OES Souperbowl 12:00 pm
12	13	14 SHRINE CLUB 7:00 pm	15 RAINBOW 7 pm	16 Wid- ow's Sons FC Degree 6:30 PM	17	18 Sweet- heart's Lunch Shrine Club 11:30 am Open Books Pineland 86 9- noon
19	20 OES	21 YORK RITE CHAP- TER/ COUNCIL 6:30 PM	21 Dist. Assn. Melrose No. 89 6:30 pm	23 MM Degree 6:30 pm	24 Fried Chicken Shrine Club	25
26	27	28 YORK RITE COM- MANDERY 6:30 PM				

FROM THE WEST

"New Beginnings, and old truths"

From the South, It's been a long time tradition to acknowledge Valentine's Day among others. One of the staple duties that we so much enjoy is to bring our Master Mason's widows to a sweetheart luncheon which will be held February the 18th, 2023 at the Saint Augustine Shrine Club, from 11:30 Am thru approximately 2:00 PM. We will furnish them a fine meal of their choice, between stuffed fish with crab filling or chicken cordon bleu. After dinner they will have entertainment from our own Lodge's, Brother Manfredi, and receive gifts, flowers, and sweets from their extended masonic family.

I would like to have five or six brothers' help to escort these lovely ladies to their seats, and serve them as needed. Our dress attire should be a coat, tie, and a smile! The least we can do is remember our obligations, and be there in times of need, especially around holidays that revolve around matters of the heart. We want to remind those ladies that they are still very much in our hearts and thoughts. It can be amazing how a small light from the smile of a brother can ignite an even brighter light in their day. After all, isn't it more light we seek? our light shouldn't stop at receiving it, it should also be about spreading that love and light to those whose world might be a little darker than ours on days like these.

Please let me know as soon as possible who can be of any assistance on this beautiful occasion, at the present moment we have 37 invitations out circulating in the USPS awaiting their destinations. An old truth is; that to hold on, is to believe that there is only a past, only in the end of one thing can we see that there is a future to a new beginning. Don't let last year's voice speak this year's words. I look forward to seeing all of our new brothers as well as the return of our existing brothers this year.

Fraternally, Terrell W. Jones SR
Senior Warden

March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 RAIN- BOW 7:00 PM	2 STAT- ED COMM 6:30 PM	3	4
5	6 OES	7	8 District Instruction Palatka No. 34 6:30 pm	9	10	11
12	13	14 Shrine Club 7:00 pm	15 RAIN- BOW 7:00 PM	16 DARK VISIT TO PINE- LAND No. 86	17	18 Open Books Pine- land 86 9AM -NOON
19	20	21 York Rite Chap- ter/Council 6:30 pm	22 Dist. Assn. ASHLAR No. 98 6:30 pm	23 LODGE INSTRUC- TION TBD	24 Fried Chicken, Shrine Club	25
26	27	28 York Rite Command- ery 6:30 pm	29	30	31	

From the South
J.W. G. Maultsby

Masonic Etiquette (GL 208)

Freemasonry solicits no man to join it; it permits no man to make innovation in its body of principles and Landmarks; its Candidates come of their own free will and because they have heard good reports of its reputation and formed a favorable opinion of its work, and by all means throughout its entire system, and through all its bodies and Degrees whatever, by tradition, Landmarks, usage, custom, law, rule, Edict, Regulation, and Constitution, it is in every way secured that a Mason shall stand to it in an attitude of reverence and respect. Of that reverence and respect, etiquette is one of the forms.

In principle, Masonic Etiquette belongs to the empire of good manners, that code by which gentlemen the world over govern their conduct; but this principle with us is found to apply in two directions: on the one hand it becomes a manifested respect for the Craft as a whole; on the other hand it is a form of courtesy to the individual. Long ago Lodges of Freemasons discovered the grave necessity of decorum; among the Old Charges to which every Candidate was required to acknowledge obedience, they gave the most prominent place to the sections under the general head of "Behavior."

Reverence and respect for the Brotherhood of Masonry requires each of us to practice proper etiquette when in the Lodge and when abroad in the world.

LODGE OFFICERS 2022

Worshipful Master

Thomas Torretta 602-881-3206

Senior Warden

Terrell Jones 904-669-5249

Junior Warden

George Maulsby 703-956-0228

Secretary

Troy Usina 904-451-5283

Treasurer

Oscar Patterson III 904-955-9175

Senior Deacon

Mark Williams 904-669-9694

Junior Deacon

Darrell Lindsey 904-814-7158

Chaplain

Robert Harry, Jr. 904-806-1255

Tyler

Russell Sellers 512-801-7831

OTHER 11th MASONIC DISTRICT LODGES

Palatka No. 34

Palatka—2nd & 4th Mondays

Lake No. 72

Crescent City—1st & 3rd Mondays

Pineland No. 86

Peniel—1st & 3rd Thursdays

Melrose No 89

Keystone Heights—2nd & 4th Tuesdays

Middleburg No. 107

Middleburg—1st & 3rd Tuesdays

Cabul No. 116

Green Cove Springs—2nd & 4th Thursdays

Hastings No. 183

Hastings—2nd & 4th Tuesdays

Bunnell No. 200

Bunnell—1st and 3rd Tuesdays

FRATERNAL NOTICES AND DATES

O.E.S. Chapter #12.....1st & 3rd
Mondays

Rainbow Assembly #42.....1st & 3rd
Wednesdays

York Rite Bodies.....3rd & 4th
Tuesdays

The Masonic life is symbolically described as a journey from west to east in search of intellectual and spiritual light. For many, this journey appears to require two distinct paths: one moral or spiritual, the other educational or intellectual. This is the result of a common misunderstanding of the ultimate objective—understanding. Both science (the intellectual mechanism) and religion (the spiritual mechanism) seek the same thing: an understanding of the totality of existence; a final definition of reality, the universe and man's place in it.

In the oldest literature of Assyria (abt. 1300 b.c.e.), we find evidence of this spiritual quest. A half millennium later it is obvious in Pythagoras' search for the "meaning of life" through the divine understanding of numbers and their relationships. And two millennia after Pythagoras, Galileo, Pascal and Leibnitz echo him as they refer to mathematics as the "speech of God." This search for the ultimate answer, the final authorization, had as its most powerful impetus the search for the divinity.

In the late seventeenth century, three English Protestants laid the foundations for physics, psychology and biology in this spiritual quest. Isaac Newton saw God's speech in the great laws of physics and celestial gravitation. John Locke defined the self, theorized that the mind was a blank slate and that knowledge is obtained logically through the senses and our perceptions of reality. And John Ray, a minister without a pulpit and who is considered the father of English natural history, classified plants according to similarities and differences that emerged from observation thus advancing scientific empiricism. In this search for natural history, the perfection of the Divine Creator was both obvious and benevolent.

But while most contemporary scientific and spiritual movements tend to make rear projecting allusions telling us what *has* gone wrong and even hinting at some unbounded previous catastrophe, the Masonic quest looks forward. We endeavor to make good men better by looking forward. We utilize a stability and firmness of principle to fully discover ourselves and the world in which we live.

In the second or Fellow Craft Degree, the intellectual part of this quest is explained in terms of the liberal arts, the five senses and the orders of architecture. The liberal arts, often considered synonymous with the introductory courses in the university curriculum, provide us with the foundation necessary to our intellectual quest. The five senses, as Locke noted, provide us with the information essential to the final objective—understanding. And the five orders of architecture speak to the orderliness of the quest as well as to the artistic and creative potential of man.

Anciently, the liberal arts (*artes liberales*) were considered the essential skills required for a free person, a citizen, to participate in public life. These arts made the citizen truly a "free man." In modern times, the term most often refers to the disciplines of literature, language, philosophy, history and mathematics, as well as to the social and biological sciences.

In the classical world, the liberal arts were divided into the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*. The *Trivium* included grammar, logic (also named dialectic) and rhetoric. The *Quadrivium* included arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Arithmetic and geometry, along with trigonometry and other numerically based studies now fall under the rubric of mathematics, and astronomy, now based on observable, replicable science, was anciently known as astrology and included the auguries of that pseudo-science. Let us take a closer look, however, at the liberal arts and consider them as an experience essential to reaching the Masonic goal of enlightenment. This is the liberal arts experience.

This explanation of the liberal arts experience will not specifically focus on any one or, even, all of the seven steps described in the degree. Instead, we will consider what we, as free men, receive when we utilize the steps to our and society's betterment.

The first goal of the liberal arts is to give the individual the ability to reason well and to recognize when reason and evidence are not enough. The liberal arts give us the ability to be creative—to connect two previously unconnected concepts in a new and novel way or to find a previously unknown connection between already joined concepts. They encourage in us serendipity and analysis. The key to reason is to recognize fully when more evidence is needed.

The liberal arts enable us to read, write and speak with some level of distinction and style. Reading the words alone is not sufficient to knowledge. And writing simple sentences does not create understanding on the part of the reader because it does not sufficiently express the thoughts of the author. Simply speaking words does not make one a great orator. Grammar is the set of structural rules that govern the way in which we speak and write and includes morphology, syntax, and phonology, as well as phonetics, semantics, pragmatics, spelling and punctuation. It is truly the key to understanding human communication and governs our thought process.

Rhetoric or dialectic refers to the reasoned utilization of dialogue and the “art” of logical discussion. The purpose of rhetoric is to find the truth. It requires not only that the speaker “speaks well,” but that the audience “listens well.” One of the oldest manifestations of rhetoric may be found in the Socratic Method which tests beliefs through questions as it examines the structure and reason behind the belief or idea. Rhetoric focuses not on persuasion but on truth seeking and requires that the audience reflect critically on the topic. Rhetoric, when properly and effectively used, can change opinions.

The liberal arts also help us understand and utilize numerical data. They give us the ability to grasp and analyze the information presented. Much in the modern world is expressed in mathematical terms and, without the ability to understand and analyze the propositions presented, we are unable to determine if the conclusions (or answers) are valid. There is a common saying in mathematics: “Anything can be proven by the manipulation of numbers,” especially when the audience lacks the basic computational skills implied in this part of the liberal arts.

As humans, we must understand our history and the consequences of past actions as well as the uncertainty of human society. George Santayana wrote: “A man is morally free when, in full possession of his living humanity, he judges the world, and judges other men, with uncompromising sincerity.” He also wrote: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” An understanding of our history—not just names, dates and events, but outcomes and long-term consequences—is essential to the full and productive public life of a free man.

The liberal arts imply, but do not explicitly state, that an understanding of the scientific method is essential to the individual’s grasp of the reality of the world in which he exists. The use of the scientific method enables the individual to explain what he observes. It uses a system of techniques for investigating phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, correcting previous knowledge and integrating new observations with those previously made. It is based on empirical and measurable evidence, and is subject to repetition and confirmation. It has characterized the study of natural science since the 17th century. An individual using the scientific method seeks to let reality speak for itself and allows it to either support or disprove the proposition.

Inherent to the liberal arts experience is the ability to make ethical choices and to assume responsibility for those choices. Ethical choices, for our purposes, are defined as those choices that enable us to live together as one family regardless of race, creed, national origin or political persuasion. Ethics involves a methodical procedure for developing, systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of correct behavior. Ethical decision making is essential to the survival of any society.

Inherent to ethical decision making is the ability to assume responsibility for one’s actions, behaviors and choices. In a world where a common excuse is “the devil made me do it,” the strength of character exhibited in the ability to assume responsibility is paramount to our success both in our individual lives as well as in our Masonic journey.

“Art” describes a wide range of human activity to include the visual arts—painting and architecture, for example—as well as music, theatre and dance. In the 17th century, “art” referred to any skill or mastery and was not differentiated from crafts or sciences. One essential of art is its ability to have a direct impact on our psychological as well as physiological responses as is so eloquently described in the lecture of the Fellow Craft Degree’s explanation of the science of music. Through art, we are enabled to hear more, see more and experience more, and to do all at a significantly deeper level.

The liberal arts encourage sequential learning. As we learn to read beginning with simple three and four word sentences then progress to more complex expression, so all learning is sequential and based on the firm foundation of the liberal arts. Sequential learning is essential to the great leaps of imagination that generate new and great discoveries from the structure of DNA, to the complexities of the atom and the modern iPhone.

Along with sequential learning, we must also develop a grasp of the technological advancements that so rapidly overtake us. At the same time, we must understand how these advancements are to be applied in terms of their capabilities and limitations. The modern computer, for example, is a marvelous machine, but it still requires a degree of human input and imaginations to function.

The totality of the liberal arts experience may be expressed in three related statements:

To create insights and understanding not only of our world but of the rest of the world as well;

To develop the ability to see the world as it really exists and to understand what we see; and

To understand that change comes not necessarily through innovation, but through new ways of seeing. The liberal arts give us the ability to see in new ways.

The Masonic journey or quest for light (enlightenment) is often described as a trek that culminates when the traveler reaches the “top of the mountain” and attains a significant degree of self-knowledge. It may, however, be better to describe it as the exploration of a dense and entangled forest where it is easy to walk at some levels and on some paths, and difficult at others. The traveler’s problem is how to shift for himself. He is searching for direction rather than height. In this forest, many paths are tangled thickets, some overgrown from disuse, some fashionably clear and easy, and many interwoven. The challenge is created by the complexity and divergence.

Masonry, though its utilization of the liberal arts experience and its spiritual foundation, provides the guiding light essential to successful progress being made in the journey. It removes the ear-plugs and blinders. It enables the traveler to grasp and utilize the complexity and diversity to one’s benefit. In that sense, the forest and the mountain are one. We all travel in the same land; the terrain is difficult, the routes varied, but the goal is common to all mankind, especially Masons.