

Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and Accepted Masons

St. Augustine, FL

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

904 826-4086



August 2016

STATED COMMUNICATIONS

Masonic Temple
105 King Street
St. Augustine, FL
1ST & 3RD Thursdays
Meal – 6:30 p.m.

DEGREE WORK AND PRACTICE

2nd & 4th Thursdays

CHARITY OF THE MONTH ST. AUGUSTINE YOUTH SERVICES

FROM THE EAST

Brethren, First I would like to give a big shout out to Brother Bill. Br. Bill will be celebrating his Happy 100th Birthday on Aug 5th. Our SW is setting up a date so we can go celebrate his Birthday with him, so keep an eye out for the email.

I would like to thank all the Brother's for coming out and supporting our First Responders night and our Stewarts for the great meal. It meant a lot to them and their family's. It really shows that we care especially the way the World is today. We will be having a FC Degree coming up shortly with our JW. Br Bo sitting in the East so watch the Calendar for the Date so we can welcome our newest FC Brothers.

If you know or see a Brother that hasn't been

to the Lodge in a while, invite them to come and enjoy some great fellowship and meet a lot of New Brothers that would love to meet them. Hope everyone has a great August and be safe.

Fraternally
Brother Rick Bailey W.M.:

FROM THE WEST

Brothers, as a Freemason you agreed to certain principles and practices. Let's review a few of them.

1. You agreed to be a good man and true, and to obey moral law.
2. You agreed to be a peaceful subject and to conform to the laws of your country.
3. You agreed to hold in veneration the original charges of Freemasons
4. You promised to be respectful of true Brothers and to guard your Lodge against cowans and dissenters.
5. You agreed to promote the general good of the Society not your personal agenda or belief system.
6. You agreed that any innovation in the work of Freemasonry and its ritual may be done only with the consent of the Grand Lodge.
7. You agreed to regularly attend Communications, called and stated, upon receiving due notice. In our Lodge system, the Trestleboard is due notice.

August 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Rainbow	4 Stated Communica- tion	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 OES	16 York Rite chapter/ council	17 Rainbow	18 Stated Communica- tion	19	20
21	22	23 York Rite Commnadery	24 District Association	25 Lodge Practice	26	27
28	29	30	31			

8. You agreed to support your Lodge financially within your ability to do so. This may require more than paying annual dues.

9. You agreed that no person may be made a Freemason without due notice, strict inquiry, and conformance to our Charter and by-laws.

10. You agreed that no Visitor shall be received into a Lodge without Due Trial or proper voucher, and that you would not vouch

for a Visitor unless you knew him and had sat in Lodge with him thus knowing him to be a true and regular Freemason.

11. You agreed, above all, to be a Good Brother and to aid your Lodge and your Brothers as their necessities require and you are capable.

Converse with the Brethren, be not only their friend, but their Brother.

Bro. Oscar Patterson
Senior Warden

Important Reminder

If you don't have an Ashlar Lodge Parking Pass see the Senior Warden Oscar Patterson. The tag will allow you to park at the Lodge during the day or night without being towed.

September 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Stated Communica- tion	2	3
4	5	6	7 Rainbow	8 FellowCraft Degree	9	10 Grand Masters Visit
11	12	13	14	15 Stated Communica- tion	16	17
18	19 OES	20 York Rite chapter/ council	21 Rainbow	22 Lodge Practice	23	24
25	26	27 York Rite Commnadery	28 District Association	29	30	

Chaplain's Message

My Brothers

In John Sherer's book *The Masonic Ladder*, he discusses faith in his section on the Entered Apprentice Degree and I believe his thoughts are worthy of our attention.

Faith

“The first of the three principal rounds in the Masonic Ladder is denominated Faith. This is a grace of which the Holy Writings are full. It is the cheer of the sorrowing, and the life of the just. It is the credit we give to the declarations of God, or to the evidences of the facts or propositions presented us in the Bible. The faith, without which we can not please God, combines assent with reliance, belief with trust. True faith involves the forsaking of all known sin and a cheerful and constant obedience to God's commands.”

In the Bonds of Friendship
Jim Davis



Ashlar Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master:	James "Rick" Bailey	386 283-0108
Senior Warden:	Oscar Patterson	904 955-9175
Junior Warden:	Bo Bozard	904 501-4370
Treasurer:	Bob Gagnon P.M.	904 501-7446
Secretary:	David Pierucci	904 460-9477
Senior Deacon:	Matthew Sweeney	904 806-0571
Junior Deacon:	Ken Shaffner	386 864-9162
Senior Steward:	James Carrick	904 501-4348
Junior Steward:	Robert Wilson	386 763-8727
Chaplain:	Jim Davis P.M.	904 392-4565
Marshall:	Brian Iannucci	904 708-9765
Tyler:	Ron DeRoco	904 599-1584
Musician:	Ted Cassford P.M.	904 797-8710
Lodge Instructor:	Oscar Patterson	904 955-9175
Bob Adair Mentor Program	Jim Davis P.M.	904 392-4565

Ashlar Lodge Hosts 100th Birthday Celebration

Please come and join your Brothers as we celebrate with Brother Bill Tatel his 100th birthday. The celebration will be held on Sunday, August 7th at 2:00 pm at Ashlar Lodge.

The event will last until 3:00. Cake and light refreshments will be served.

We Hope To See All Our Brothers There



The Future

When we look around us or just turn on the television, we find enough division, defeat, and disaster to discourage any man. Overwhelmed by current, pressing problems, who even want to read history, much less consider the future? Life seems to have become an ongoing struggle to stay above the ever rising waters of change and turmoil. The chaos has led us to turn inward rather than outward, but this is short-sighted. The future not only lies before us, it is immediately upon us.

We cannot stop the inevitable movement forward, but we can lay a solid foundation today and plan for what comes tomorrow. We must be concerned about the future because that is where we will spend the rest of our lives. It is the only world our children and grandchildren will ever know. It is ours to make or destroy.

We as Freemasons must confront the inevitability of change while maintaining our core beliefs and principles. What is right and moral today, will be right and moral tomorrow. We must sharpen our vision and our skills. We must seek out new concepts and technologies, and adapt them to our use. They should not control us, but we them. Technology is progressing at quantum speed leaving man seemingly behind. And barring a universal holocaust, cannot be stopped. Consider the story written by Mary Shelly about a baron and doctor named Frankenstein who took body parts to make a new creature. Today it is common to replace kidneys, livers, even hearts. What lies on the horizon, replacing a brain or creating a virtual man?

As Freemasons we should be the guides into this “brave new world.” We provide sound moral instruction as well as the wisdom and history of our Craft as a foundation for the future. Since its creation as a speculative art more than 500 years ago, Freemasonry has led men through the gate and along the straight path.

Change can be traumatic when you are unprepared for it. But review how Freemasonry brought order, hope, and real accomplishment out of the American Revolution thus contributing directly to the creation of the greatest nation the world has ever known. In our founding fathers—Franklin, Revere, Washington—the principles of the Craft were tested and were not found wanting. The Truths of Freemasonry provided the message which still rings across the world today: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

Just as Freemasonry served our Nation well in 1776-1783, it remains the touchstone of truth for those who seek wisdom. We have only to look to the past and apply what we find there to the future and know that the core of Masonic doctrine will carry the message of into the future through our good example, conduct, and high accomplishments.

“Progress,” wrote George Santayana, “far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual.

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

As Freemasons we achieve our goals by following the prime tenet of our Craft: Know thyself. The Lodge is the “school” of the future as it was of the past. The Craft’s wisdom is our text, and we are all students and teachers. Benjamin Franklin spoke of his self-education as a “Project of Arriving at Moral Perfection.” Guided by Freemasonry, Franklin (and so many others) recognized the basic Truth found in our Fraternity. Virtue lies in the heart and makes it possible to fully develop all other attributes. Humility teaches us to be responsible and dedicated, and leads the sincere Brother to realize the full role of Freemasonry: service to God, Country, and Mankind.

We should, therefore, look forward to a bright and great future for America. A future in which, to draw on the words of John F. Kennedy, we will match our military strength with our moral strength and restraint; our wealth with our wisdom; and our power with our purpose. And leading the way into this future must be Freemasonry. Are we up to the task?

A Temple of Living Stones: Examining the Concept of a Chain of Union

W.: B. : Andrew Hammer, PM

Alexandria-Washington Lodge No 22

Published in Living Stones magazine, April 2012

Most readers of this publication will already be familiar in some way with the Chain of Union, if not already using such a ceremony in their own lodge. A common misconception among some brothers, however, is that the general concept of a Chain of Union is an import from European Masonry, recently brought forth by a few American Masons who are seeking a more esoteric experience in closing their lodges. In fact, the idea need not be imported at all; it may be found right here in the United States, within the rituals of our own Grand Lodges.

How could Masons in a given jurisdiction not know about their own ceremonies? Very easily. Many of our lodges have a virtual attic of discarded ideas and practices that have been worn away by fear, lack of interest, or general laziness. In the same way that some Grand Lodges have done away with the penalties of the degrees, or allowed elements of Craft ritual to be removed away into appendant bodies, elements of lectures or charges that convey

a special meaning or indicate a particular experience can find themselves lost before our very eyes. In some situations, we might find ourselves engaged in an activity that is clearly derived from a more specific point of origin, but those engaged in it are not aware of what precisely they are doing, or how it was meant to be done. This is the case with the Chain of Union.

A number of Grand Lodges in the United States, most of them east of the Mississippi, have in their work a *closing charge*, intended to be used at the end of meetings. For most of these Grand Lodges that charge is optional, which—human nature being what it is—unfortunately translates to “feel free to ignore”. However, in my Grand Lodge [Virginia] this closing charge is a mandatory part of our ritual, and is used at the end of all Master Mason’s lodges. The language goes back at least to the time of William Preston, and is monitorial in those jurisdictions that include it.

While its form varies slightly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the text is essentially some variation on the following, used in Virginia:

Brethren: We are now about to quit this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue, to mix again with the world. Amidst its concerns and employments, forget not the duties which you have heard so frequently inculcated and so forcibly recommended in this Lodge. Remember that around this sacred altar, you have solemnly bound yourselves to befriend and relieve every brother who shall need your assistance. You have promised, in the most friendly manner, to remind him of his error, and aid a reformation. These generous principles are to extend further. Every human being has a claim upon your kind offices. Do good unto all. Recommend it more especially to the household of the faithful. Finally, brethren, be ye all of one mind; live in peace; and may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you.

This charge is given by the Master, after he has instructed the brethren to assemble about the altar, and in this act, the circle is formed which constitutes the chain of union by way of forming a temple of living stones. It is not the custom in Virginia to join hands, but it is also not prohibited, and one may well imagine a time when this surely must have been done in Virginia lodges [partially because the joining of hands *is* found in the closing ritual of an appendant body in Virginia]. In any case, the actual joining of hands is not the measure by which such an assembly should be judged; the image of Stonehenge and the concept of a sacred circle points to the higher purpose of the chain therein created. The Master then, while this circle remains intact, moves to declare the Lodge closed.

Some might point out that there is no reference to a chain in this charge. But interestingly enough, using language that is in part almost identical to that quoted above, the older Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania adds the following line:

Remember always, Brethren, that these solemn rites of which you have been partakers, and your parts in them, are as binding on your conscience outside the lodge as within it. They

are links in that chain made in life for eternity.

Beyond that allusion to an actual chain, one should look closely at the words that are used throughout the charge. The purpose of a chain of union is to signify and validate the unbreakable oneness of the brethren by the bonds of the fraternity. In this particular charge, while the brethren are assembled, they are told that “around this sacred altar”—not *at*, when each man himself was obligated, but *around*, as a circle of brethren assembled in a chain of union—“you have solemnly bound yourselves” to each look after the other. At the end of the charge, an extraordinary line for an organisation of free-thinking individuals is uttered: “*be ye all of one mind*”. In this simple phrase, a psychological chain is formed to reinforce the physical one. Clearly, the brethren who composed and enacted this charge nearly 300 years ago knew the nature of what they were doing.

In a few lodges I have visited, the practice of a chain of union is implemented using words either from other rites or jurisdictions, which then necessitates the Lodge having to close first, in order to do what becomes an unauthorised [but not prohibited] ceremony outside of a tyled Lodge. The advantage of the closing charge I am quoting here in this article is that it is not something that has to be done after the lodge is closed; it is already part of our ritual, and again, in Virginia, required in order to close the Lodge. Considering the number of American Grand Lodges where this exact version of a closing charge—or a variation thereof—is “on the books”, it would behoove brethren to take a closer look at their respective rituals to see if they might find something in their history which would take them to their own native version of a chain of union.

The lesson to be learned from such an investigation is that often the things we think we need to improve our Craft are not necessarily to be found from without, but from within. In this case, the Chain of Union is something to be found within our own histories and rituals as American Masons. In putting this ceremony to use within those boundaries, we bring to life the notion of the “temple of living stones” alluded to in our ritual, and demonstrate a tangible meaning of that concept to every brother present.

As brothers consider how they might implement a Chain of Union in their lodges, it is apparent that far from being a “foreign innovation”, it is instead a forgotten treasure of our own Masonic history that merely need be restored.

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