

Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and Accepted Masons

St. Augustine, FL

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

904 826-4086



October 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 WEST

WHY WE DO RITUAL

Man is a ritual creature. All societies are permeated with rituals: weddings, parades, graduations, and funerals. Ritual is an integral part of group membership. When we fully understand ritual, we learn that it has the potential, when properly done, to transform individuals and society.

As Freemasonry transformed from operative guilds based on the practical knowledge of skilled workmen to the speculative fraternity of today, its rituals changed from the transmission of construction and trade secrets to the rituals of initiation with which we are familiar and through which we transfer speculative knowledge and understanding.

Prior to about 1725, no reference can be found to three separate degrees in Freemasonry. Men were “made a Brother” or “made a Free Mason.” The simple “making” ceremonies of the 17th and 18th centuries developed into three discrete degrees that allowed for more in-depth reflection on the allegories and mysteries of each degree. These degrees offered measured advancement with accompanying philosophical and moral instruction.

Masonic ritual arose out of the business practice of obligating an apprentice to a term of service and the necessity of maintaining trade secrets. This was done then, as it is now, through ritual. Ritual provides the

FROM THE EAST

I hope all of our Brothers made it through the hurricane with little or no damage to their homes and property.

November will be a busy month for Ashlar Lodge. We are hosting District Instruction on the 9th and our Outdoor Degree will be on the 12th with the first section will begin at 4:00 pm. I hope to see all our Brothers at both.

December 1st the Lodge will elect new officers and we all need to be there and participate in shaping the future of our Lodge.

Finally, I encourage everyone to spend quality time with your families this Thanksgiving.

Fraternally
Brother Rick Bailey W.:M.:

November 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Rainbow	3 Stated Comm	4	5
6	7	8	9 District Instruction Ashlar	10	11 Veterans Day	12 MM De- gree 4pm At Ashlar
13	14 OES	15 York Rite chap- ter/council	16 District Association Palatka Rainbow	17 Dark	18	19 Night Of Lights Park- ing Lot Rent
20	21	22 York Rite Com- mandery	23	24 Thanksgiv- ing	25	26
27	28	29	30			

means for decoding, interpreting, and internalizing everyday events as well as esoteric instruction. It enables the participant to go beyond the external meaning of the symbol or allegory and it provides a storehouse of information as well as rules for governing how information is obtained, transferred, and processed.

All humans engage in ritualistic behavior. First because of ritual's lofty endeavors and appeal to the sacred part of man. But rituals are also part and parcel of everyday life. Rituals enable us to create ideas and to hold beliefs. They are the means by which we communicate, negotiate, understand, teach, and, even, engage in war. They are part of our imaginative lives and utilize art, music, literature, and human psychology as well as sociology to further our understanding of our lives and our universe.

Above all, ritual brings us together. It facilitates humans living in an orderly social relationship by maintaining group unity. It takes separate individuals and makes them part of a group or, in the case of Freemasonry, a great Fraternity.

Joseph Campbell in *The Power of Myth* writes "If you want to find out what it means to have a society without rituals, read the *New York Times*. . . destructive and violent acts by young people who don't know how to behave in a civilized society. . . This [Freemasonry] is a scholarly attempt to reconstruct an order of initiation that would result in spiritual revelation. . . This is God's creation, and this is our society."

Bro. Oscar Patterson
Senior Warden

December 2016

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

				1 Stated Comm	2	3
4	5	6	7 District Instruction Middleburg Rainbow	8	9	10 Newly Elected Of- ficer Meet- ing 12:00
11	12 OES	13 York Rite chap- ter/council	14	15	16	17 Education for WMs and Secretaries at Ashlar 8:30
18	19	20	21 District Association Lake Lodge Rainbow	22 Lodge Practice for Installation	23	24
25	26	27 Open Installation of Officer at 6:00pm	28	29	30	31

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	904 797-8710
Tyler:	Ron DeRoco	904 599-1584
Musician:		
Lodge Instructor:	Oscar Patterson	904 955-9175
Bob Adair Mentor Program	Jim Davis P.M.	904 392-4565

Military Veterans of Ashlar Lodge No. 98, F. & A. M.

We have begun a project to recognize all **VETERANS** who are now or who have been Members of our Lodge and who are not listed on the World War II memorial hanging on our West Wall. An appropriate plaque is being constructed to display the names, military affiliation, and service of all Brothers who are Veterans.

If you are a Veteran, please complete the form below and return it to Bro. Oscar Patterson, our Senior Warden. If you know of a Brother who is deceased or who does not attend regularly and you can attest to his military service, complete a form for him, as well.

FULL NAME: _____ Membership No.: _____

BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____ PERIOD: _____

Examples: Alfred W. Adams, U.S. Coast Guard, Korea
 James J. Smith, U.S. Army, Vietnam
 John Q. Public, U.S. Navy, Gulf War
 Samuel A. Everyman, U.S. Air Force, War on Terrorism
 Jones, U.S. Army, 1955-1958

Freemasonry in the age of social media

Freemasonry originated centuries before the digital age and is currently experiencing some problems associated with these ever-changing and all so prevalent methods for communicating between ourselves and the world at large. Using social media has become essential in the 21st century, but it, like all communication, has its pit-falls as well as its heights.

There are some basic principles for social media that we should all keep in mind when posting on Facebook, Twitter, or any other site.

Everyone has an opinion and everyone has a unique life situation. They are all different. We each have the freedom to believe as we choose and to express those beliefs. The key to expression is to keep a proper balance. There is a balance to be struck between realizing that others believe the same as you, but there is also a balance to be struck by realizing that yet others do not believe that way.

Social media is an excellent way to join in others' happiness and to congratulate them on their successes. It also enables us to commensurate at a distance. Social media can quickly lead to happiness, but it can also lead just as quickly to sadness or anger.

Sometimes it is best to let life flow, to let opportunities pass, to control your passions. This is relatively easy in face-to-face communication but much more difficult, it seems, when the internet is involved.

Social media is a weak substitute for in-person communication, but it works wonders over distances. And most of us think of it as “free” and “unlimited.” There is nothing wrong with social media, it keeps us in touch with those with whom we would have lost contact at other times. But interactions over social media should be thought of as face-to-face contact. Take a breath, count to ten, and ask yourself: Would I say this to that person’s face?

For Freemasons, social media presents myriad rewards and problems. When presenting oneself as a Freemason on social media, it should be done with the same civility and upright conduct as any other interpersonal contact. What people think of you; they also think of our great Fraternity. We must also bear in mind that all things on social media are a permanent record. Nothing—say again NOTHING—goes away.

For Freemasons, there are some simple guidelines to follow.

Do not post Ritual or Esoteric Work on any social media outlet.

Freemasons do not discuss outside the Lodge what was said in the Lodge. What you say there, hear there, see there, do there, stays there.

Charity, temperance, justice, truth, tolerance, and justice are our eternal virtues. Social media does not abrogate you of your obligation.

Information about petitions or petitioners, background investigations, or the election or rejection of a candidate are not social media content.

One Freemason should not identify any other Freemason without their expressed consent unless he has already so self-identified.

All communication within Freemasonry follows a hierarchy. Masonic protocol calls for communication between Grand Jurisdictions through the Office of the Grand Secretary.

A Freemason should not use social media to obtain personal advantage in political, religious, or business activities except for businesses engaged in Masonic products.

Read and re-read our Constitution, Digest, Rules, Regulations, and Edicts and in doing so ask yourself this question: Do my social media posts reflect positively on myself and on Freemasonry as a whole?

All Freemasons who identify themselves as such on any social media post are “digital ambassadors” and have a duty not to engage in conduct which is contrary to the law of the land or that will bring Freemasonry into disrepute. It is best practice to share Masonic content which contributes to a positive public image of our Great Fraternity and to present yourself in the same light. Moderation is the key, as is forethought.

The Grand Lodge of Florida’s Social Media Policy applies to Official Social Media pages sponsored by the Grand Lodge as well as those moderated by and through the Grand Lodge. Consent, reflection, and consideration are the key words in all social media interaction. The Digest of Masonic Law applies to social media posting when applicable.

Freemasonry is neither a religion nor a political movement. We do not identify ourselves as being, religiously, Freemasons. We have good men and true of many countries, sects, and religious beliefs in our Lodges. We have good men and true of every race and various political persuasions. The decision to restrict the discussion of religion and politics in the Lodge was made long ago to remove from the Lodge the possibility of conflict and division. This prohibition does not apply outside the Lodge and never did. But when representing yourself on social media as a Freemason one must be aware that, to many, you represent Freemasonry as a whole and just may be the only Freemason that person knows or ever will know.



The Legend of Hiram Abif

By W. Bro. Kent Henderson

Fifteen Fellow Crafts, of that superior class appointed to preside over the rest, finding that the work was nearly completed and that they were not in possession of the secrets of the Third Degree, conspired to obtain them by any means, even to have recourse to violence. At the moment, however, of carrying their conspiracy into execution, twelve of the fifteen recanted; but three, of a more determined and atrocious character than the rest, persisted in their impious design, in the prosecution of which they planted themselves respectively at the East, North, and South entrances of the Temple, whither our Master had retired to pay his adoration to the Most High, as was his wonted custom at the hour of high twelve.

Having finished his devotions, he attempted to return by the South entrance, where he was opposed by the first of those ruffians, who, for want of other weapon, had armed himself with a heavy Plumb Rule, and in a threatening manner demanded the secrets of a Master Mason, warning him that death would be the consequence of a refusal. Our Master, true to his Obligation, answered that those secrets were known to but three in the world and that without the consent and co-operation of the other two he neither could nor would divulge them, but intimated that he had no doubt patience and industry would, in due time, entitle the worthy Mason to a partici-

pation of them, but that, for his own part, he would rather suffer death than betray the sacred trust reposed in him. This answer not proving satisfactory, the ruffian aimed a violent blow at the head of our Master; but being startled at the firmness of his demeanor, it missed his forehead and only glanced on his right temple but with such force as to cause him to reel and sink on his left knee. Recovering from the shock he made for the North entrance where he was accosted by the second of those ruffians, to whom he gave a similar answer with undiminished firmness, when the ruffian, who was armed with a Level struck him a violent blow on the left temple which brought him to the ground on his right knee. Finding his retreat cut off at both those points, he staggered, faint and bleeding, to the East entrance where the third ruffian was posted, who received a similar answer to his insolent demand, for even at this trying moment our Master remained firm and unshaken, when the villain, who was armed with a heavy Maul, struck him a violent blow on the forehead which laid him lifeless at his feet.

A Comment

As a degree the Third is not much older than 250 years - the first recorded mention is in the year 1723 - but the Hiramic Legend, it seems, is much older than we realize. The Graham Manuscript, discovered as recently as 1936, records events of the thirteenth century, and mentions similar legends connected with Noah and Bezalel.

There are those that believe that the Hiramic Legend is derived from a Phoenician interpretation of the Egyptian legend of Isis and Osiris, and brought to England many centuries later by the Crusaders. There it remained suppressed, because of the domination of Masonry by the Church of Rome, which could not be expected to accept anything emanating from the Jews, whom they intensely hated for their crucifixion of Christ. According to this line of argument, the legend saw the daylight only as the domination of the Church waned; but there is, of course, no proof of this, even if it does sound feasible. Nevertheless, the Hiramic Legend is an indispensable part of Freemasonry, and the following Prestonian Lecture plants a beautiful thought in the mind of each of us, for we have all passed through the great Masonic ordeal. Here is the lecture, "Making of a Nation", by George Draffen (1966):

"During the ceremony of the Third Degree, which is so well named the Sublime Degree, you can hardly fail to have been impressed by the tragedy of Hiram Abif. To understand it, and to appreciate to the full its profound richness of meaning, is something that will remain with you as long as you live.

"Since the drama of Hiram Abif is ritualistic, it is a mistake to accept it as history. A ritualistic drama does not pay heed to historical individuals, times or places. It moves wholly in the realm of the spirit. The clash of forces, the crises and fates of the human spirit alone enter into it, and they hold true of all men everywhere, regardless of who they are or when or where. There was a Hiram Abif in history, but our Third Degree is not interested in him. Its sole concern is with a Hiram who is a symbol of the human soul, that is, its own Hiram Abif. If, therefore, you have been troubled with the thought that some of the events of the drama could not possibly have happened, you can cease to be troubled. It is not meant that they ever happened in ancient history, but that they are symbols of what is happening in the life of every man.

"For the same reason it is an inexcusable blunder to treat it as a mere mock tragedy. Savage peoples employ initiation ceremonies as an ordeal to test the nerve and courage of their young men, but Freemasonry is not savage. Boys at school often employ ragging, which is horseplay caricature of the savage ceremonial ordeals, but Freemasonry is not juvenile. The exemplification of our ritualistic drama is sincere, solemn and earnest. He who takes it trivially betrays a shallowness of soul, which makes him unfit ever to become a Mason.

"Hiram Abif is the actual symbol of the human soul, yours, mine, any man's. The work he was engaged to supervise is the symbol of the work you and I have in the supervision, organization and direction of our lives from birth to death. The enemies he met are none other than the symbols of those lusts and passions, which are in our own breasts, or in the breasts of others, and make war on our character and our life. His fate is the same fate that befalls every man who becomes a victim to those enemies: to be interrupted in one's work, to be made outcast from the lordship (or mastership) over one's own self and, at the end, to become buried under all manner of rubbish -- which means defeat, disgrace, misery and scorn. The manner in which he was raised from that dead level to that living perpendicular again is the same manner by which any man, if it happens to all, rises from self-defeat to self-mastery. And the Sovereign Great Architect, by the power of whose word Hiram Abif was raised, is that same God in whose arms we ourselves forever lie, and whose mighty help we also need to raise us out of the graves of defeat, or evil, and death itself.

"Did you ever wonder, while taking part in that drama, why you were personally made to participate in it? Why you were not permitted to sit as a spectator?

"You were made to participate in order to impress upon you that it was your drama, not another's there being exemplified. No man can be a mere spectator of that drama, because it takes place in his own soul. Likewise it was intended that your participation should itself be an experience to prepare you for becoming a Master Mason, by teaching you the secret of a Master Mason - which is that the soul must rise above its own internal enemies if ever a man is to be a Master Mason in reality as well as in name. The reality of being a Master Mason is nothing other than to be a master of one's own self.

"Did you wonder why it was that the three enemies of Hiram Abif came from his own circle, and not from outside? It is because the enemies to be most feared are always from within, and are ignorance and sins. As the Sacred Volume reminds us, it is not that which has power to kill the body that we need to shun, but that which has power to destroy the spirit.

"Did you wonder why it was that after Hiram Abif was slain there was so much confusion in the Temple? It was because the Temple is the symbol of a man's character, and therefore breaks and falls when the soul, its architect, is rendered helpless, because the craftsmen are symbols of our powers, and they fall in anarchy when not directed and commanded by the will at the centre of our being.

"And did you wonder why the Lodge appeared to neglect to explain this ritualistic drama to you at the end of the Degree? It was because it is impossible for one man to explain the tragedy of Hiram Abif to another. Each must learn for himself, and the most we can obtain from others is

just such hints and scattered suggestions as these now given to you. Print the story of Hiram Abif upon your mind, ponder upon it; when you yourself are at grips with your enemies recall it and act according to the light you find in it. By doing so you will find that your inner self will give in the form of firsthand experience that which the drama gave you in the form of ritual. You will be wiser and stronger for having the guidance and the light the drama can give to you."

