

J. F. Swartsel lodge No. 251 F. & A.M. Trestleboard



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Our stated Communications are: 1st and 3rd Thursday - - Supper 6:30 – Meeting 7:30

The third Friday of EACH month is reserved for a public Fish Fry at the lodge.

The fifth Thursday night of the month is reserved for family night at the lodge - open to the public.

3109 Lutz Lake Fern Road, Lutz FL 33558 Mail: P.O. Box 1475, Lutz FL 33548-1475

Email: info@JFSwartzel251.org

Website: www.jfswarsel251.org Phone: 813-949-4814

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IN THIS ISSUE YOU WILL FIND....

Masonic Education, Chair Chatter, Lodge News & Events, Calendar of Important Events, Lodge Officers, Sponsors and Website Information



Your Catechism Instructors for the three symbolic degrees in freemasonry are:

W.: David B. Lambert Sr., W.: Stuart J. Graff, W.: Jerry M. Snell Jr. and Brother Raymond J. Ciunci

Masonic Education Submitted by W.: Stuart Graff



The Hiramic Legend

Learned students have attempted to fix the date – as if dates mattered! – when the Hiramic Legend first made its appearance in Freemasonry. Their conclusions are more negative than positive, and none has gone behind the fact that in one form or another, the Hiramic Legend is among the oldest as it is among the dearest myths of the human race. One might agree that documentary evidence does not put the legend of the martyred workman into the third degree prior to 1725 and still see in it a recasting of the race-old drama of man's hope for immortality.

A dozen or more suggestions have been made by Masonic students as to what the legend means. Some take it literally even though the Old Testament says nothing of the death of that Hiram whom Solomon fetched out of Tyre who “wrought all his work”. Others believe it is another way of telling the story of Isis and Osiris – itself a legend which could hardly have been foisted on the people full born from the brain of some clever priest but must have been an heritage from the Hyksos, or even earlier inhabitants of Egypt. Fancifully, some see in it a modern version of the death of Abel at the hands of Cain, and of course thousands visualize it as the death and resurrection of the Man of Galilee.

Search the Great Light; you will find no account of the tragedy of Hiram Abif. You will learn of Hiram, or Huram. If you delve deeply enough in Hebrew you will learn that “Abif” means “his father” which may indicate another Hiram, a son. Modern scholarship translates Hiram Abif as :Hiram, my father” meaning a Hiram looked up to, venerated, given a title of honor, as the father of a tribe, the father of an art, the father of the sacred vessels of the Temple. But of the Three, the tragedy, the Old Testament is silent.

Nor will you find un secular history any account of the drama of Hiram. For its truth you must delve into the myths and legends and fairy stories in which the race has half concealed, half revealed, those truths that do not bear telling in plain words.

Is there A Santa Claus? For six year olds there is. For his elders Santa Claus is a means of telling a beautiful truth in teems which a six year old can understand. Is the legend “true”? What is meant by “true”? If the translation of “true” is “historically accurate”, obviously neither Santa Claus nor Hiram Abif is “true.” But if “true” means containing a great truth,” then both the myth of the Yuletide Saint and the Legend of the Master Builder are true in the most real sense.

Raised to the Sublime Degree, many men see in the living, the dying, and the raising of the Master only a literal drama, designed to teach the virtues of fortitude and inflexible fidelity. For those whose ears hear only the melody and are deaf to harmonies, for those whose eyes are not so blinded by the sunset as not to see the colors, this is good enough.

Yet any literal interpretation of the legend and our ceremony which exemplifies it misses its heart.

The legend of Hiram Abif is at once the tragedy and the hope of man; it is virtue struck down by error, evil and sin. And raised again by truth, goodness and mercy. It is the story of the resurrection of that “which bears the nearest affinity to that supreme intelligence which pervades all nature”. It is the answer to Job. It is at once the beginning of the even more sacred legend – of that which was lost – and the assurance that at long last he who seeks shall find.

How long is a rope? A silly question! It can be answered, presumably, if one can find one end and measure it to the other. Suppose the rope has only one end? Sillier and sillier! But if two ends are true of a rope, they are true of space and time and eternity. If time has a beginning, it has an ending. If space commences somewhere, there also will be its end to be found. *If eternity has a beginning, it is not eternal!*

Here is the shock, the surprise and the glory of the third degree. It presents us with eternity in the midst of life. It pushes back the confines of our little dimensions, our tiny measurements of time, our small comprehension of space and shows us that we enter eternity neither at birth nor death. We have always been in eternity if we are in it at all. Hiram Abif was gathered to his fathers when the selfishness and sin of misguided men struck him down. But they were powerless against the Paw of the Lion and the might of Freemasonry. Each of us is born, lives his little life and, wearing his little white apron, and is laid where our forefathers have gone before us. The drama of the third degree assures us that the life from birth to death and including both is but an episode, a single note in the great symphony.

The Hiram Legend is the glory of Freemasonry; the search for that which was lost in the glory of life.

Never may we find it here. You shall gaze through microscope and telescope and catch no sight of its shadow. You shall travel in many lands and see it not. You shall listen to all the words of all the tongues which all men have ever spoken and will speak – the lost word is not heard. Were it but a *word*, how easy it would be to invent another! But it is not just a word, but *The Word*, the great secret, the unknowableness which the Great Architect sets before His children, a will o’ the wisp to follow, a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Never *here* is it to be found, but the search for it is the reason for life.

The Sublime Degree teaches that in another life, it may be found. That is why it is the Sublime Degree.

NEWS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE: In the very near future your Trestleboard will **only** be mailed to you on a quarterly basis. Shortly afterwards, (and during this time) the Trestleboards will be available to you through our website. This transition is necessary for the lodge to stay within the budget. Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated. **www.jfswarsel251.org**

Chair Chatter

From the Secretary's station: W.: David B. Lambert, Sr.

Please take a look at your Dues Card and see if the year on it is 2017, if not please send in your dues, if you are having financial difficulties please give me a call, it is every brothers responsibility to help aid and assist their brothers. Brothers, we have been having some wonderful meals before our Stated and Called meetings, and we have our Junior Warden, Worshipful Jerry M. Snell, Jr. as well as one of our Order of the Eastern Star sisters, Mrs. Cindy Long to thank for it. She has been helping for the past 3 years. What a great lady and sister, we cannot thank her enough. **Thank you Cindy for all you do for us.**

It sure has been a busy couple of months here at your Lodge; we have a couple of new Master Masons, **Bro. Wade E. Angel & Bro. Troy Rendueles, (Congratulations Brothers)**, and welcome to lots of fun and fellowship.

Calendar of Important Lodge Dates:

July 2017

- 1st 4th of July Picnic @ John Darling (11: AM – 3: PM).
- 3rd DDGM'S Official Visit to Community No. 292.
- 5th **6:30 Degree Practice @ Swartsel**
- 6th **Stated Communication of Swartsel Lodge Dinner @ 6:30 PM, Lodge Opens at 7:30 PM.**
- 11th DDGM'S Official Visit to Fellowship No. 265.
- 12th **6:30 Degree Practice @ Swartsel**
- 13th DDGM'S Official Visit to Holyrood Lodge No. 257.
- 19th **6:30 Degree Practice @ Swartsel.**
- 20th **Stated Communication of Swartsel Lodge Dinner @ 6:30 PM, Lodge Opens at 7:30 PM.**
- 21st **Third Friday FULL Menu Fish Fry at J.F. Swartsel Lodge – Serving from 5 - 8: PM.**
- 26th **6:30 Degree Practice @ Swartsel**

From the Worshipful Master's station: W.:M.: R.: W.: Sam Pesola

Your degree team is diligently practicing for our next Entered Apprentice initiation and your attendance at the initiation will be greatly appreciated; after all, isn't this a great part of what Masonry is (or at least, should be) about? We have a lot of brothers who either have learned or are learning their chosen parts and will do their best to make us all proud. The family night program was well attended and all had a terrific meal as well as a great time. If you missed it, you really missed a good thing. There is no charge for the meal or the brotherly love and affection that comes along with it. We hope to see you at the next one.

From the Senior Warden's station: Brother Marty Greif

Last month our Most Worshipful Grand Master, Richard G. Hoover, had his official visit to the 19th and 20th Masonic districts. J.F. Swartsel was very well represented at the meeting and for this I wanted to personally thank all who attended.

In the month of July there are many opportunities to gather with our brethren; most of which are on our lodge calendar which can be found on the website (www.jfswartsel251.org/calendar).

One recurring meeting to note is the District Deputy Grand Master's visits to lodges in our district. I'm sure that R.:W.: Osborne would be happy to have a little extra support as he and his committeemen travel throughout the district. So if it's within the length of your cable tow, please consider joining him at one of the lodges.

From the Junior Warden's station: W.: Jerry M. Snell, Jr.

Well my Brothers, as we move half way through another year, time seems to go by so fast that we sometimes lose focus on the important things in life. I would like to congratulate our two new master masons Brothers Wade Edward Angel and Troy Rendueles and look forward to seeing them in the Lodge.

As all of you may know R.:W.: Osborne is now our District Deputy Grand Master. W.: Sklet and I are traveling with him to visit all the Lodges in our District. It would be good for all the Brothers to show their support to our District Deputy and also travel to a few Lodges with us, meet other Brothers and see other Lodges. If you are interested just ask me for the dates and times. I was so glad to see the support you gave not only our Worshipful Master, but also our District Deputy and our Grand Master at his first official visit.

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Your 2017 Lodge Officers



W. M. R. W.: Sam Pesola
sampes@verizon.net
 (813) 293-3581



S.W. Brother
 Marty Greif
martin@privacypartners.com
 (813) 334-3867



J.W. Worshipful
 Jerry M. Snell
isnell01@verizon.net
 (813) 309-4711



Treasurer W.:
 Stuart Graff
sgraff2@gmail.com
 (813) 924-3215



Secretary W.:
 David B. Lambert
dlambert7907@gmail.com
 (813) 996-4001



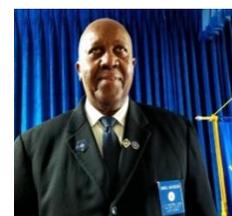
Chaplain Brother
 Frank Penny
GEPFEP@aol.com
 (813) 830-3436



Marshal Worshipful
 Danilo O. Valdez
danny842@hotmail.com
 (813) 833-7339



S. D. Brother Adam
 Feldman
afeldman@advancedfilmfl.com
 (727) 504-7671



J. D. Brother
 Sam McPherson
smcpherson@verizon.net
 (813) 240-9038



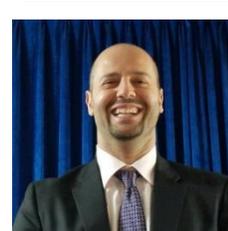
S. S. Brother
 Craig Muth
Bluemist31@icloud.com
 (813) 713-1394



J. S. Brother
 Kevin Duhaime
kevin.duhaime@hpe.com
 (813) 285-8421



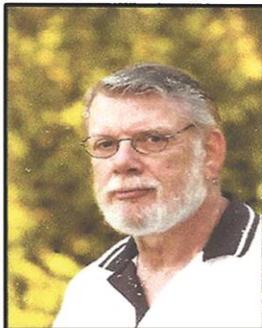
Tyler Brother
 Frank Fernandez
tampanative@gmail.com
 (813) 446-6633



Historian Brother
 Wissam Itani
samitani@yahoo.com
 (813) 297-7523



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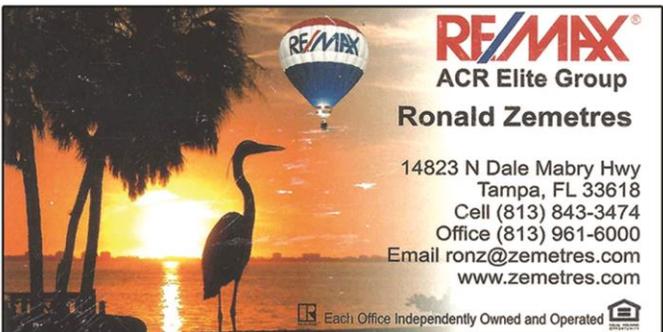
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Please remember your Lodge boosters and thank them!

R.:W.: Ronald E. Stanley - R.:W.: Donald R. Bell - Mark L. Lager - Daniel Allen - Brad Sollberger - Ernest P. Sidlow



Freemasonry Defined

A real Freemason is distinguished from the rest of mankind by the uniform unrestricted rectitude of his conduct. Other men are honest in fear of punishment which the law might inflict; they are religious in expectation of being rewarded, or in dread of the devil in the next world. A Freemason would be just if there were no laws, human or divine except those written in his heart by the finger of his creator. In every climate, under every system of religion, he is the same. He kneels before the Universal Throne of God in gratitude for the blessing he has received and humble solicitation for his future protection. He venerates the good men of all religions. He gives no offense, because he does not choose to be offended. He contracts no debts which he is certain he cannot discharge, because he is honest upon principle. – Farmer’s Almanac, 1823

Freemasonry is the world’s largest, oldest and best known “secret society.” Since its modern formation in London in 1717, literally millions of men the world over have knocked at the door of Masonic lodges, just as George Washington did. It’s members have been presidents, kings and statesmen; shopkeepers, blacksmiths and dustmen; business leaders, ministers and common laborers. From the highest social strata to the lowest, within the confines of their Masonic lodges, men have met “on the level,” to socialize, to freely discuss the issues of the day over a lively dinner, and to improve each other’s lives - “to make good men better.”

At its most basic level, Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that bases its initiations, ceremonies and symbolism on the tools, practices and vocabulary of the ancient and medieval stonemasons. It obligates its members to aid and assist each other and their families, to keep the secrets of its ceremonies and methods of identification, as well as the secrets of its members. The flip side of that secrecy is that it directs its members to remind each other of their faults, and to aid in their reformation.

Freemasonry’s mythic legends originate in the great building projects of the Bible – the Tower of Babel, Noah’s Ark and, most important, King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. The legends and rituals of modern Freemasonry use the allegories of the Temple of Solomon and the cathedral builders of medieval Europe to build a cathedral in the heart of each member – a strong, everlasting place for God to dwell, constructed over the course of a lifetime, and made more perfect by a group of fellow craftsmen. By encouraging its individual brethren to practice brotherly love, charity and the embracing of truth and honesty in the world around them, Freemasonry seeks to have a positive effect on society as a whole. Early American communities must have believed in its lofty mission. Between the end of the revolution and the late 1820’s, Freemasonry in the United States grew at a soaring rate, and nearly every town and village of any real size had its own Masonic Lodge.

Freemasons generally claim their true origins to be in the 10th century, when England’s King Athelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great, allegedly granted a Royal Charter officially creating The Guild of Stonemasons in the city of York. The role of the Guild was to act as a labor union, setting uniform wages, training workers, assuring a certain level of quality in their work, and caring for its members’ welfare. The Guild also protected the trade secrets that made Stonemasons the most sought-after workers in Europe.

The Stonemasons practiced the magical science of Geometry. Using it, they could translate small drawings into massive structures. They could measure and carve giant stone blocks to fit together so carefully that they did not require mortar. Their understanding of physics slowed them to move these huge stones into the air and stack them at dizzying heights. And by the 1500’s the cathedrals had evolved into soaring works of art that defied gravity. Massive stone walls of the old Roman and Norman architecture disappeared, to be replaced by breathtaking stained glass that seemed to float with no visible means of support. The Gothic style transferred the crushing weight of the building and ceiling into amazing exterior supports called flying buttresses. Outside was a complex array of delicate stone archways that did the job of holding the building and preventing its collapse. Inside, the stone virtually vanished, and the stories told on thousands of intricate panels of colored – glass windows stretched upward, nearly to heaven.

The Stonemasons, with their connections to these sacred monuments to God, quickly became legendary for their skills. Masons were taught never to reveal the secrets of their trade to outsiders, nor to write them down. Additionally, their members, once qualified, were given certain modes of recognition – grips or handshakes, signs or tokens, and passwords. These devices were developed so that Guild members could travel to other worksites and prove their membership. The Master Mason was in possession of the “Master’s Word,” an equivalent of carrying a union card. Members gathered in lodges (temporary buildings) at the jobsite where they ate, socialized, studied and perhaps even slept.

Over the years, ceremonies were developed to initiate boys into the Guild as apprentices, and to “graduate” masters. Stories of the Guilds origins were embellished and the Masons developed a code of conduct for their members. Geometry became venerated as a sacred science, and it became a popular Christian motif in art to represent God as an architect holding a pair of compasses in his hand while peering at the Earth. Geometry could be used to design and construct buildings, circumnavigate the globe, predict the seasons, measure the heights of mountains and plot the movements of constellations and planets. In short, Geometry was a science descended from God, and so the Masons must be divinely inspired. They certainly enjoyed a reputation that barrel makers, shoe cobblers and blacksmiths couldn’t claim.