

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

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Welcome back to J.F. Swartsel Lodge my Brothers! If you feel comfortable attending, we would love to see you, and show you what we've been doing to improve our second home... and the Lodge experience as a whole!

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

W. Jerry M. Snell, Jr. - W. Stephen Edson – Br. Raymond Ciunci - Br. Allan A. Jenkins

Who does J. F. Swartsel Lodge support in the community?



The Lutz Fire Department TOPS (take off pounds sensibly) Lutz chapter 56 BSA (Boy Scouts of America) pack and troop 12; Lutz Lutz Little League Baseball Awards college scholarships in N.W. Hillsborough County McKitrick Elementary "Helping Paws Program" Rainbow Assembly (Hillsborough County) De Molay (Hillsborough County) Shriners' Hospital Lifepath Hospice Jobs' Daughters Monthly Bingo jackpots at the Florida Masonic Home in St. Petersburg

Freemasonry will make you a better man... but it is up to the efforts of men like us to make this a better Fraternity!

Farewell My Dear Friend Stuart Graff

From Wade Angel -Senior Deacon

This Month we say goodbye to our Treasurer, Worshipful Stuart Graff. Stuart was my instructor, as he was for many of our Brothers. He was also my mentor, Brother, confidant, and friend. While Brother Graff was instructing me in the three degrees, he was with me for the most troubling time of my life. My son had been killed by a drunk driver who escaped justice and fled. I quit my job to devote my time to searching for my son's killer to get justice for my son and family. Every week at my instructional sessions with Stuart he would ask me how everything was going. I would tell him what I was doing in my effort to find Christopher Ponce. I started a website to generate leads, a face book page to do the same. We got our story on TV multiple times. Each time I would share this information with Stuart. I did not tell anyone else. Just as I was the shoulder to lean on for my wife and family, Stuart Graff gave me his. He was there through it all.

Well, I did find Christopher Ponce. The first person I told was the US Marshall's of course. The second person was my wife, and the third was Stuart. It took months from the time I found out where he was to the time he was captured. Christopher Ponce then fought extradition, so I had to contact Congressman, State Department officials, even Spanish foreign dignitaries to get him back in the US. Stuart heard it all. Even though I had already been raised a Master Mason, Stuart was still my shoulder to lean on. Well, eventually we won, he was sent back. Then I had to go through all the legal meetings. Stuart would tell me that with everything I had done and gone through that he was "Right behind me". After a while, we were just weeks from Christopher Ponce's sentencing.

Three weeks before his sentencing, at our first Stated Communication of the month for January 2018, I asked the Worshipful Master if I could address the Craft. I told the Brethren my story for the first time. I asked them to please write a letter to the Judge stating that Christopher Ponce should receive the maximum penalty for his crime and flight. After my plea, Stuart asked to also speak. He informed the Brothers that he had gone through this with me and reminded them that we all had vowed to help a Brother in need, and that they should all write a letter. At Christopher Ponce's sentencing the Judge said that he did receive multiple letters of support.

As Master Masons we all understand that we are to keep a Brother's secret if he tells us one. Stuart Graff, my instructor, my mentor, my Brother, my friend, and my shoulder in times of distress, did not just talk the talk. He walked the walk. He helped me and kept my secret until it was once again time to help me again with his eloquent speech to the Brothers. I could never repay Stuart for his support. Until we meet again My friend.

A very special thank you to <u>all</u> of J.F. Swartsel's Past Masters - Who laid the foundation for us to build upon

The Past Masters of J.F. Swartsel that are still with us today, and continue to carry the torch of Light on behalf of Freemasonry

1965 W & Thomas B. Daughtey - 1976 W & Phillip V. Getz -1981 W & Edward B. Wilson - 1985 W & Charles Inman — 1986 W & Cha



Recommended & Required Practices to Employ when Returning to Lodge Operations

- MASKS: As of the time this Trestleboard was published, Hillsborough County requires us to ensure compliance by denying admittance to any indoor location to people who aren't wearing a face mask, or removing people from our Lodge who aren't following the mandate. Once you are seated at appropriate distances in the dining room or Lodge Room, masks can be removed.
- <u>SICK? STAY HOME.</u>: *If you are sick in any way*, have a fever, and especially if you have any symptoms of sickness related to COVID-19, *stay home and do not attend functions*.
- AGE & CONDITIONS: Members classified as <u>"senior citizens" aged 65 or older and members with significant underlying medical conditions</u> (such as chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised status, cancer, diabetes, severe obesity, renal failure and liver disease) are <u>strongly encouraged</u> within the Florida Governor's Executive Order 20-112 <u>to stay at home and take all measures to limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19</u>. If attending events, <u>extreme caution</u> should be employed. Such individuals are known to have the most likeliness of potential <u>severe illness or death</u> from the illness.
- **SOCIAL DISTANCING**: No individuals should stand, sit, meet, or congregate in groups without appropriate recommended <u>6 foot spacing & distancing</u>.
- **TESTING**: It is recommended to be <u>tested for COVID-19</u> at any of the local, free test sites. See <u>www.hillsboroughcounty.org</u>, click the "STAYSAFE" link at the top for COVID-19 info, then click the button for "Getting tested for COVID-19" to find free testing sites. If you are found to be positive, remain home in quarantine for 14 days or as directed by health officials.
- **<u>BE EDUCATED</u>**: Know the <u>basics on what to do, and not do</u>, concerning interactions. Resources are available at https://floridahealthcovid19.gov.
- **HAND WASHING**: <u>PROPER 20 second hand washing</u> as described on posters is required as frequently as possible (before entering the dining room & Lodge Room, during breaks).
- **HAND SANITIZER**: It is recommended to obtain (if possible) and *carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer* in your pocket to use frequently.
- HAND SHAKING: Hand shaking as a greeting should be discontinued at all times.

Your 2020 J. F. Swartsel Officers are as follows:

Worshipful Master W : Adam Scott Feldman

Senior Warden Brother Samuel McPherson

Junior Warden Brother Raymond Joseph Ciunci

Treasurer W .: Stuart Jay Graff

Secretary W ∴ David Bruce Lambert Sr.

Chaplain W .: Jerry Marvin Snell Jr.

Marshall Brother William Joe Schmidt

Senior Deacon Brother Wade Edward Angel

Junior Deacon Brother Dennis Morgan Victor Martin

Senior Steward Brother Brian Andrew Reach

Junior Steward Brother Allan Arthur Jenkins

Tyler W .: Danilo Orlando Valdez

Musician Brother John Nagy

Historian W .: Jeffrey Thomas Sklet



Your Amazon purchases can be helping the Fraternity!

Next time you need something, go to smile.amazon.com instead of www, and select "the Masonic Home Endowment Fund, Inc.", and ½% of your purchase will be donated to provide help, aide, and assistance to the residents of the Masonic Home!

The link is http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-2740213



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

Chair Chatter

From the Secretary: Worshipful David Lambert, Sr.

Brethren,

Please look at your Dues cards, if you do not have a current 2020 Dues card, please send in your Dues.

Calendar of Important Lodge Dates: October 2020.

- 1st Stated Communication of Swartsel Lodge, Dinner @ 6:30 PM, Lodge Opens at 7:30 PM.
- 6^{th} 6:30 7:30 Degree Practice.
- 7th 6:PM, MLT @ John Darling No. 154. District School of Instruction to follow
- 9th 7:PM Masonic Park Board Meeting **on ZOOM.**
- 13th J.F. Swartsel's Traveling Lodge Visit: Hillsborough 25 (6:30 PM Meal, Lodge Opens at 7:15 PM)
- 15th Stated Communication of Swartsel Lodge, Dinner @ 6:30 PM, Lodge Opens at 7:30 PM.
- 17th Zone 4 Open Books @ Tampa Scottish Rite, 8:30 AM Noon.
- 19th OES Meeting POSTPONED, next meeting November 16th
- 20th 6:PM 7:30 Officer's meeting (Moved from 10/13)
- 23rd 6:30, Hillsborough County Master Masons Association @ John Darling 154, Memorial Lodge to follow.
- 27^{th} 6:30 7:30 Degree Practice.
- 29th Family night cancelled.

From the Worthy Matron: Elizabeth McAbee

Dear Sisters and Brothers.

Although not everyone voted, a significant majority either voted "NO" due to concerns regarding COVID-19 or will be out of town for our October meeting.

Because I'm unsure if we would be able to have a quorum, I will ask our Secretary to request a Dispensation to suspend our October meeting (which will be granted by our WGM since Hillsborough County is considered a "hotspot"). There will be NO meeting in October. The dinner to honor veterans scheduled for Monday, November 2, is rescheduled to Monday, November 1, 2021.

This means our next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Monday, November 16, which is S.H.E.A.F. night. We will also be required to observe R.E.S.T. (which would have been observed in October). Additionally, our November meeting is our Memorial night and we have had several PGMs/PGPs pass away since we last met so we'll drape the Altar as well. We still have several Officers to install and will receive a petition for membership.

SAD NEWS: NO refreshments.

Hope that covers it. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Still missing you and continuing to pray that you remain healthy and safe.

In His and fraternal love.

Elizabeth McAbee, PGC Worthy Matron Friendship No. 209

From our Lodge Mentors

My Brothers, with the passing of Worshipful Stuart Graff, it's appropriate to reflect on what it means to be a good Mason, a Brother, a Friend, and a Mentor. Why? Because our Brother was all of these things to many people.

Worshipful Stuart Graff was always positive, or as he would say, he was always "Shockingly Well". Imagine if you will that you are a new Mason going through the Degrees and you were assigned Worshipful Stu, as he was known to many, as your catechism instructor. For many Brothers, they don't have to imagine this as it actually happened.

His dedication to his students was legendary. He made the time for each and every student to become proficient. More than that though, he made time to connect with them as Brothers.

He also spent many hours researching Masonic history sharing his love of the Fraternity with us all. He consistently improved himself in Masonry and worked at always being better. He spent time studying our esoteric work because it was important to him that he be not just proficient, but as good as possible.

All of this is what made Worshipful Stuart Graff a good Mason, a good Brother and a Mentor. But he was also a friend. He gave of himself freely and was there for all of us. He contributed to our Lodge, our Fraternity and our Brothers unselfishly.

Worshipful Stuart Jay Graff, you will be missed, but not forgotten.

So my Brothers, what can we learn from our departed Brother? How can we honor his memory? Let's start by asking ourselves the following questions:

Are you dedicated to being a better man and Mason? When was the last time that you reached out to a Worthy Distressed Brother, his widow or orphan? When was the last time you reviewed our esoteric work? When was the last time you researched anything Masonic? When was the last time you went to a Lodge meeting or a Degree?

Are you open to improving yourself in Masonry? I know we are!

Worshipful Master: Brother Adam Feldman

My Brothers, September was a very busy month for our Lodge. At our DDGM Official Visit, we were commended for the accuracy of our books, and Worshipful David Lambert was given a well-earned standing ovation from the Craft. The current state of our Lodge is evident... with 3 of our Brothers serving as Committeemen for the 19th District, and new (non-Past Master) Brothers occupying most of the Chairs. We have become one of the Lodges people visit to see what fresh ideas they can bring back to their home Lodges. I caution us to never become complacent though... as we should always strive to be at least a little better than we were yesterday.

Our Lodge Visit in September was to John Darling Lodge #154, and it was a great pleasure to see our Brother Wasam (Sam) Itani in the East!

Back at our Lodge, we were able to have the asphalt redone, and the difference in curb appeal of the building alone is amazing! I have one remaining project I would like to see completed in my year, and that is to adorn the hallway leading up to the Lodge with famous Freemasons. I hope you will join me in turning this dream I've had since joining into a reality.

Our Lodge Visit in October is to Hillsborough #25, which has earned the nickname "Grand Lodge South." Its Charter predates the City of Tampa by 9 years, and they coincidentally hold the Traveling Gavel. Given we may have some competition from DeSoto Lodge (among others) to take the Gavel for themselves, I humbly request a strong showing to this visit.

Speaking of strong showings, J.F. Swartsel won the customary neck tie at the Master Mason Association of Hillsborough County meeting by having the most members in attendance, 7. This marks the 13th consecutive time we have won, dating back to July of 2019!

Congratulations to our newest EA, Brother Raymond Stefanski, who was initiated to the Order 9/24/20. While we do not have a Degree scheduled for October, we have finalized the date for our Annual Farmer's Degree to be Saturday morning, 11/7/20. Coffee and donuts will be served at 8 am, with the Degree to begin at 9 am. Br. Wade Angel be sitting in the East, and WM Roscoe Love will be delivering the Lecture. If you've never seen him perform one, you owe it to yourself to come out and be astounded! Acceptable attire includes bib overalls, jeans, and plaid shirts.

Finally, it was with a heavy heart that we said goodbye to our friend, Brother, catechism instructor, and Treasurer Stuart J. Graff. I greatly appreciate RW Tony Chavez for officiating, as well as the many Brothers and Sisters from Swartsel and other Lodges who made it a point to come to our Lodge to pay their respects to so great and good a man as our Brother, Worshipful Stu Graff. Video of the service will be available to view on our website as soon as possible.

I look forward to you seeing the changes we have made (and continue to make) whenever you feel comfortable returning to your second home!

From the Senior Warden: Brother Samuel McPherson

Brothers, as we prepare to move forward with our lives in the new normal life; planning here and there, the rumor is COVID will be around for at least another year or two... so with that said, how do we as Brothers move forward? Let's get back to our prospective Lodges by being more committed, coming to Lodge, being a part of Lodge. Let's just get back to what we do, and remember to be cautious and stay safe.

This past month, one of our Brothers transitioned to the celestial clouds. Our Brother and friend, W: Stuart Graff was a great inspiration and encourager to me, was instrumental in my becoming a Mason, and was one of my mentors as well as my instructor. R.I.P. my Brother, shockingly well.

I also want to congratulate our newly obligated brother Bro Raymond Stefanski on starting his journey in Freemasonry, welcome to the Fraternity!

Question: How are you behaving as a Mason?

Behavior William R. Fischer

Masonic behavior is a subject, if taken into the Lodge for debate, could take up a lot of time. Behavior changes with attitude and the ever-shifting social structure.

In the old charges' behavior was divided into six sections:

- 1. Behavior in Lodge
- 2. Behavior after Lodge with members who did not attend.
- 3. Behavior when brethren meet outside of the Lodge.
- 4. Behavior in the presence of non-members.
- 5. Behavior at home and in in your neighborhood.
- 6. Behavior toward a strange Brother.

Behavior is generally affected by two means:

1.by those around you

2. by age

Normally, we are respectful of the people around us, more now than when we were Younger. We also have much more tolerance, mainly because of those who tolerated and respected us. Our behavior is a reflection of who we are and as a mason this image either improves or taints our institution. To be a considerate member of the Lodge and our brethren is easy.

To be a person of integrity to strange brothers, non-members, and even those who would seek to discredit the Fraternity, is the most important act of Brotherly Love one could do for his Lodge and its members. A Lodge is only as good as its worse member, therefore strive to be a better person.

Bro. McPherson SW

From the Junior Warden: Brother Ray Ciunci

Well its October brothers and greetings from the South!!

I will continue to do my best to provide meals that will keep your time in the serving line to a minimum and be fulfilling as well.

If you have been at Lodge for the most recent communications you probably have noticed that I have expanded the menu a bit while still avoiding the service line exposure by providing food in covered dishes. I hope to continue this approach, on occasion, just for variety.

I ask you to pray for the repose of the soul of Worshipful Stuart Graff who passed away recently.

Below you will find a few interesting items from a masonic dictionary all related to the dates we refer to

Take care and be safe.

ANNO BENEFACIO: (A.B.) Latin for "In the Year of the Blessing." Used by the Order of High Priesthood for dating their documents. (1930 added to the current date.)

ANNO DEPOSITIONIS: (A.Dep.) Latin for "In the Year of the Deposit. "The Cryptic Masonic date designation. (Add 1000 to the current date.)

ANNO DOMINI: (A.D.) Latin for "Year of our Lord."

ANNO INVENTIONIS: (A.I.) Latin meaning "In the Year of Discovery." The Royal Arch date designation. (Add 530 to the current date.)

ANNO LUCIS: (A.L.) Latin meaning "In the Year of Light, "the date used by Ancient Craft Masonry. (Add 4000 to the current date.)

ANNO MUNDI: (A.M.) Latin meaning "In the Year of the World." The date used by the Scottish Rite. (Add 3760 to the current year until September; if after September, add 3761).

ANNO ORDINIS: (A.0.) L thin meaning "In the Year of the Order." The date used by the Knights Templar. (**Subtract 1118 from the current date.**)

Bro. Ray Ciunci, JW

A Random Assortment of Masonic History (Part II)

Article credit: theeducator.ca Topic suggestion: Brother Brian Reach

- Operative Lodge #150 in Aberdeen, Scotland is unusual in that it is only open to operative stonemasons.
- Edward Jenner, in 1789 discovered the vaccination process against smallpox. He was worshipful master of Faith and Friendship Lodge #270 in Berkeley, England at the time.
- In July 1863, Confederate raiders rode into Versailles, IN, capturing the local militia and stealing the county treasury. The next day, General John Morgan (CSA), learned that his men had also made off with the jewels of the local lodge. They were returned the following day. Morgan was from Davies Lodge #22, Lexington, KY.
- Wheelock Commandery No. 5 in Texas had all 55 of its members killed serving in the Confederate Army. The Commandery ceased to exist. Missouri's first Confederate Capitol was the Masonic Building in Neosho, MS. From here the legislature passed the Act of Secession.
- USA General Thomas Benton, also Grand Master of Iowa, ordered Federal troops to protect Albert Pike's home and prevent the library from being burned, when his troops took Little Rock, AR.
- July 2, 1751, Ferdinand VI of Spain issued an edict against Father Jose Torrubia secured a special dispensation from the Pope, joined a lodge, secured the names of its members, and proceeded to have them arrested. Hundreds were arrested, persecuted, and imprisoned.
- When Mussolini gained control of Italy, Masonic lodges were declared illegal and the Grand Master was arrested, tried, and imprisoned, where he Mussolini also ordered all Masonic references removed, including the emblems on the base of Garibaldi's monument in Rome. After the restoration of the republic, fascist emblems were removed and the Masonic emblems restored.
- In Fascist Spain under Franco, it was a crime to be a freemason. Masons convicted had to serve prison terms equal in years to the number of Masonic degrees possessed. Master Mason 3rd Degree = 3 years.
- Winnedumah Lodge #287 of Bishop, CA holds its meetings at 270 feet below sea level, the lowest lodge in North America.
- In 1954 Martin's Station Lodge No. 188 of VA was opened 952 feet below the surface of Cumberland Mountain in Cudjo's Cave, which lies between Cumberland Gap, Tenn. and Middleburo, KY. 345 Masons were present and a MM degree was conferred.
- Chicago, IL has three American Legion Posts whose memberships are entirely Masonic.
- All four Presidents of the Republic of Texas, David Burnett, Sam Houston, Mirabeau Lamar, and Anson Jones, were Masons.
- Between 1737 and 1779 two sailing ships of interest operated off the S. eastern seaboard, Freemason and Master Mason.
 The Freemason caught fire and sank in Marblehead Harbor, Mass in 1779.
- On November 10, 1928, the Grand Lodge of California held a special communication at Culver City, to lay the corner stone of the Masonic temple. The lodge room was so crowded that the Grand Lodge officers were unable to enter. They retired to the Ladies' powder room to open the grand lodge for the ceremony.
- In 1801, Czar Alexander I of Russia banned the craft. In 1803 he rescinded the order and became a Freemason. But in 1822 he again ordered Freemasonry banned in Russia.
- In May, 1843, a group of representatives from fourteen Grand Lodges met in Baltimore, MD, with the view of adopting uniform ritual. The meeting was presided over by John Dove of VA; Charles W. Moore of Mass. prepared the proposed ritual. The convention's work was not generally accepted.
- In 1799, Barton Lodge in Upper Canada accepted "good merchantable wheat" in payment of lodge dues.
- Lodge St. George in Bermuda has rented an old state house since 1816 from the Governor for the sum of "three peppercorns per year."
- Abraham Jones served as Grand Master of Kentucky 1833-34 and Grand Master of Illinois, 1840-41.
- Carlos Rodriguez-Jimenez was grand master of the grand lodge of Venezuela in 1947. In 1957 he became the grand master of the Grand Lodge of Japan.
- In 1892, the tallest building in the world was the Masonic Temple at Randolph and State Streets, Chicago, IL

What have we been up to?

RWDDGM Steven Fortier's well-attended Official Visit to J.F. Swartsel on 9/3/20



New asphalt for our second home, completed in one day on 9/4/20







EA Degree for Br. Raymond Stefanski on 9/24/20. Thank you to RW Silvers for an excellent Lecture!



MM Assoc. meeting for our 13th straight win 9/25/20



Masonic Funeral Service for W∴ Graff on 9/27/20



York Rite Lesson

Why was Hiram, the builder, and ancient Grand Master called "Abif"?

A Hebrew word signifying "his father." It is often used in the Scriptures as title of honor. It was given to Hiram, the Tyrian builder, probably because of his distinguished skill. The Scriptures refer to him as the "Widow's Son." 1 K 7: 13

"Life is a series of collisions with the future." Jose Ortega y Gasset

Fraternally, Zealously, and Courteously

Right Excellent Companion James F. (Robby) Robertson, KYCH Grand King, Grand Chapter of RAM of Florida Laus Deo



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Stu "The Taser Guy" Graff

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