



MANATEE LODGE NO. 31 F. & A. M





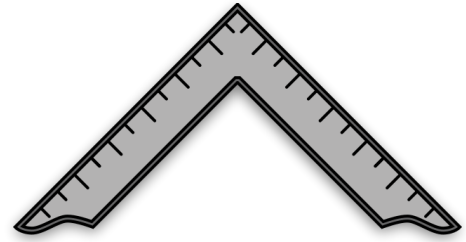
Annual Masonic Home Pilgrimage 2026

Every year, the First Lady of the Grand Lodge of Florida leads a major project that is close to her heart and passion. This year's First Lady, Angelina Atala, is focusing her goals to the Masonic Home in St. Petersburg, Florida. The 2025 First Lady's Project took on the challenge to update and modernize the hallways and lobby area of the third floor of the Masonic Home. The third floor consists of four wings and with one of the wings that was completely unusable. At last week's Masonic Home Pilgrimage, with most of the project completed, the official dedication was held with Masons, family and friends in attendance. Newly painted hallways and lobby area, polish floors, updated lighting, as well the replacement of the hung ceiling throughout the wind m wing were the large facets of the project that were achieved. In addition, updated furnishings, TV area, puzzle area, cabinetry, and décor were also big changes made. A tremendous effort of many, most especially First Lady Angelina, successfully hit a big milestone for the Masonic Home, it's residents, as well as The Fraternity.

Worshipful Master's Message:

Greetings from the East, Brothers,

Good April to you, as Spring is in the air. 3-months in and many have asked, "So how's it going in the East?" Well Brothers, I'm happy to say... 'I'm enjoying it'. I've faced a few challenges and situations, I never would've expected, however was able to resolve, along with learning opportunities that can be utilized, as the year continues forward. With some Brotherly love and "wise council" to help build Manatee's future leadership, the key to my recent success is Preparation. "Failing to plan is planning to fail". 4 years ago, with anticipation that my journey may entail time in The East, the preparations began to commence. Once confirmed this past December, majority of my preparations and plans have already been discussed, laid in place, and ready. Because of the preparations, these past 3 months have been smooth. Along with being prepared, it's the Brotherly Love of many that has been instrumental for my motivation and dedication. Blessed to have supportive Officers and active Brothers, it's those brothers who have made the decision to come back to lodge and share their lives, stories, and their renewed desire to be a part of our success this year.



Brotherly love is one of the core tenets of Freemasonry, embodying the principle that all people, regardless of background, should treat one another with kindness, respect, and support. In Masonic teachings, brotherly love is not just a passive sentiment but an active commitment to fostering unity and goodwill among members and the broader community. It encourages Masons to see humanity as one family, bound by shared values and mutual understanding. This principle is deeply rooted in the idea that Freemasonry unites individuals from different walks of life, promoting true friendship among those who might otherwise remain distant.

The Masonic interpretation of brotherly love extends beyond the lodge, urging members to practice compassion and empathy in their daily lives. It aligns with universal values found in various religious and philosophical traditions, such as the Christian call to love one another, the Islamic emphasis on fraternity, and the Buddhist practice of loving-kindness. Furthermore, In Judaism, brotherly love is a fundamental principle rooted in the Torah and expanded upon in rabbinic teachings. The commandment "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is central to Jewish ethics and is considered by many sages, including Rabbi Akiva, to be the essence of the Torah. This principle extends beyond fellow Jews to include strangers, as stated in Leviticus 19:34: "You shall love the stranger as yourself." By embracing brotherly love, Masons strive to create a more harmonious society, where individuals support each other in times of need and celebrate each other's successes. This principle also plays a crucial role in leadership within Freemasonry, as it fosters trust, respect, and meaningful connections among members. It is my fervent prayer that we all redouble our efforts to show brotherly love to everyone whom we encounter, especially given the divisive political nature of today's American society.

In my recent travels around the Magnificent 23rd District and the magnitude of our ever-changing Florida weather, it's been observed that many of our brothers and families have been dealing with illnesses, viruses, and other medical challenges. My Brothers, please continue to take care of yourselves. With the continued risk of catching something, I ask, if you have any symptoms or believe you may have been exposed to anything, please stay home. You'll surely be missed; however, it is incumbent upon all brothers to police yourselves and ensure everyone is doing their part to limit the risk of catching and passing on anything contagious. I look forward to seeing everyone, whether it's the Lodge or around the district. Take care and stay safe!

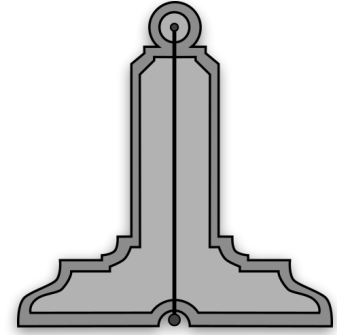
Sincerely and fraternally,

W:. M.: Kevin

Brethren,

Senior Warden's Message:

Spring has arrived, and with it comes that familiar sense of renewal and purpose — a call to roll up our sleeves and put our hands to the trowel. As your Senior Warden and chairman of both the Building and Finance Committees, I am pleased to bring you an update on one of the most tangible expressions of our collective stewardship: the care and maintenance of our Lodge home.



Building Committee Update

Our Lodge building is more than four walls and a roof. It is the place where we meet on the level, part on the square, and where future generations of Masons will be received into our ancient and honorable Fraternity. It is our duty — and our privilege — to pass it along in better condition than we found it.

To that end, the Building Committee met recently to conduct a thorough and candid assessment of the work that lies before us. We developed a comprehensive list of projects, ranging from those demanding immediate attention to those we can address over a longer horizon. Each item on that list was examined, discussed, and assigned a level of urgency, so that we may be deliberate and responsible in how we direct both our energy and our Lodge's resources.

For those projects that require outside expertise or materials, we are actively in the process of soliciting quotes from qualified contractors. Our goal is to ensure that the Lodge receives fair value for every dollar spent and that the work is done properly and to a lasting standard. As those quotes come in and are reviewed, the committee will present its recommendations to the Lodge for action.

Lodge Work Day — Mark Your Calendars

Not every project requires a contractor. Many of the items on our list are well within the abilities of our own Brethren — and there is no small amount of satisfaction in looking at something repaired or improved and knowing that the hands of Lodge members did that work.

With that in mind, we are planning a **Lodge Work Day** in the near future, where we will gather together and tackle the DIY projects on our list as a team. Details on the specific date and the work to be done will be communicated as soon as they are finalized.

I am earnestly requesting volunteers. Whether you can give a full day or just a few hours, whether you come with a toolbox or simply two willing hands, your presence will make a difference. Masonry has always taught us that great things are accomplished not by one man alone, but by Brethren working in harmony toward a common purpose. This is that opportunity made visible.

Please watch your email and this Trestle-board for the announcement, and do not hesitate to reach out to me directly to express your interest or to ask how you can help.

A Lesson from the Beehive

It is no coincidence that our ancient Craft has long looked to the bee and the beehive as symbols worthy of our contemplation. The beehive represents industry — not mere busyness, but organized, purposeful, collective labor directed toward the good of the whole. Each bee knows its role. Each bee does its part. And the result is something greater than any one of them could achieve alone.

Spring is, in a very real sense, the season of the bee. As the world warms and flowers open, the hive awakens in earnest. The heavy lifting of the year — the gathering of nectar, the building of comb, the rearing of the next generation — all of it begins now. The industrious bee does not wait for a more convenient season. It works while the work is to be done.

Brethren, let us take that lesson to heart. Our Lodge's needs are before us. The season for work is upon us. Let us be as the bee — purposeful, united, and unwilling to leave for tomorrow what we can accomplish together today.

Fraternally,

Senior Warden

Bro. Ben Sleight



Brethren,

Practice for the upcoming Fellow Craft Degree has already begun, and I would like to thank the Brothers who have been attending and putting in the time to prepare. Your effort and commitment are what help make our degrees meaningful and well-executed.

The Fellow Craft Degree is now officially scheduled for Saturday, April 25th at 9:00 a.m. I encourage all who are able to attend and take part in this important occasion. Degrees are a central part of our work, and it is always rewarding to see the Lodge come together in support of a Brother advancing in his Masonic journey.

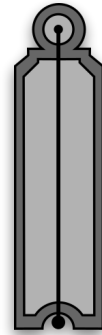
As we continue through the month, I hope to see strong participation both in our practices and on the day of the degree. Every Brother's presence contributes to the overall experience and reflects the strength of our Lodge.

I look forward to seeing many of you there and sharing in this important moment together.

Fraternally,

Junior Warden

Eidel Matos-Carpio



Senior Deacon's Message:

Open Books,

My Brothers, in a previous article I wrote to you about opportunities to improve your knowledge of Blue Lodge Work. Attending a proactive session is one of the several ways to accomplish this task. Another way to improve your knowledge is your study at open books. This activity encourages self study specific to your Masonic interest. During this activity Books are available that are not available in any other venue. When two or more Brothers share a common interest they may retire to an anteroom. There they may recite or question each other without disturbing others. Open Books is sponsored by the 23rd Masonic District, and is currently held on the third Saturday morning of each month. The event is open to all Master Masons in our Masonic district. Past Masters and other learned Brothers are often there to help others find what they seek or to answer questions. It is held at a lodge, location changes from month to month. Please consult the District 23 event calendar for the location.

Fraternally, R. John Fleming SD

Junior Deacon's Message:



What a vision can create,

If Manatee Lodge No. 31 F. & A. M. leans into **harmony and simplicity** in its exterior design, you're not just changing how the building looks—you're shaping how people *feel* before they even walk in. That can have a real impact on community engagement, inclusivity, and overall perception.

Here's what becomes possible:

Harmony in design often translates subconsciously into *social harmony*. When the building feels open and balanced, it signals that the organization values inclusivity.

- Open sight lines and visible gathering spaces suggest transparency
- Avoiding overly ornate or exclusive-looking features can make newcomers feel they “belong”
- Thoughtful landscaping (benches, pathways) invites people to linger, not just pass by

Simplicity pairs beautifully with natural elements, which can make the lodge feel like part of the neighborhood rather than separate from it.

- Native plants and shaded seating areas create a relaxed, approachable vibe
- Incorporating greenery softens the structure and reduces perceived formality
- Outdoor spaces can become informal meeting spots, extending the lodge's presence beyond its walls

Fraternally, Aral Abuhan JD

Lodge Cleanup

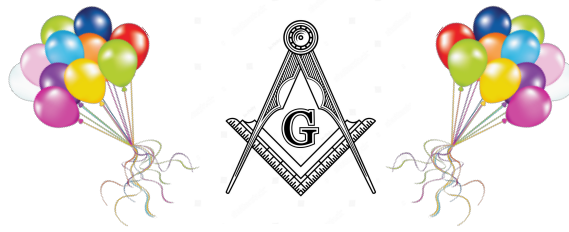
1st Saturday
Each Month
at 8:00 am

Contact Br. Senior Warden for
further details



Open House

4th Saturday
Each Month
at 9:00 am



Happy Masonic Birthday!

Brothers Celebrating Masonic Anniversaries in APRIL

Brother:	Raised on:
Denis Keller	2nd
Michael Starcher	3rd
Stephen Smith	6th
Dozier Walker	8th
Murray Silver	12th
Roy Winterbottom	13th
Earl Dennis Jr.	13th
Adam Hahn	21st
Michael Orsini	21st
Daryl Leeworthy	21st
Edwin Holman	21st
Andrew Purcell	21st
John Hokanson	22nd
Charles Keeler III	22nd
Gary Carter	23rd
George Benjamin	24th
Anthony DiMauro Jr.	26th
Timothy Clifford	26th
Dennis Robert's Jr.	30th
Richard Rietz	30th

Catechism Student Progress

Entered Apprentice

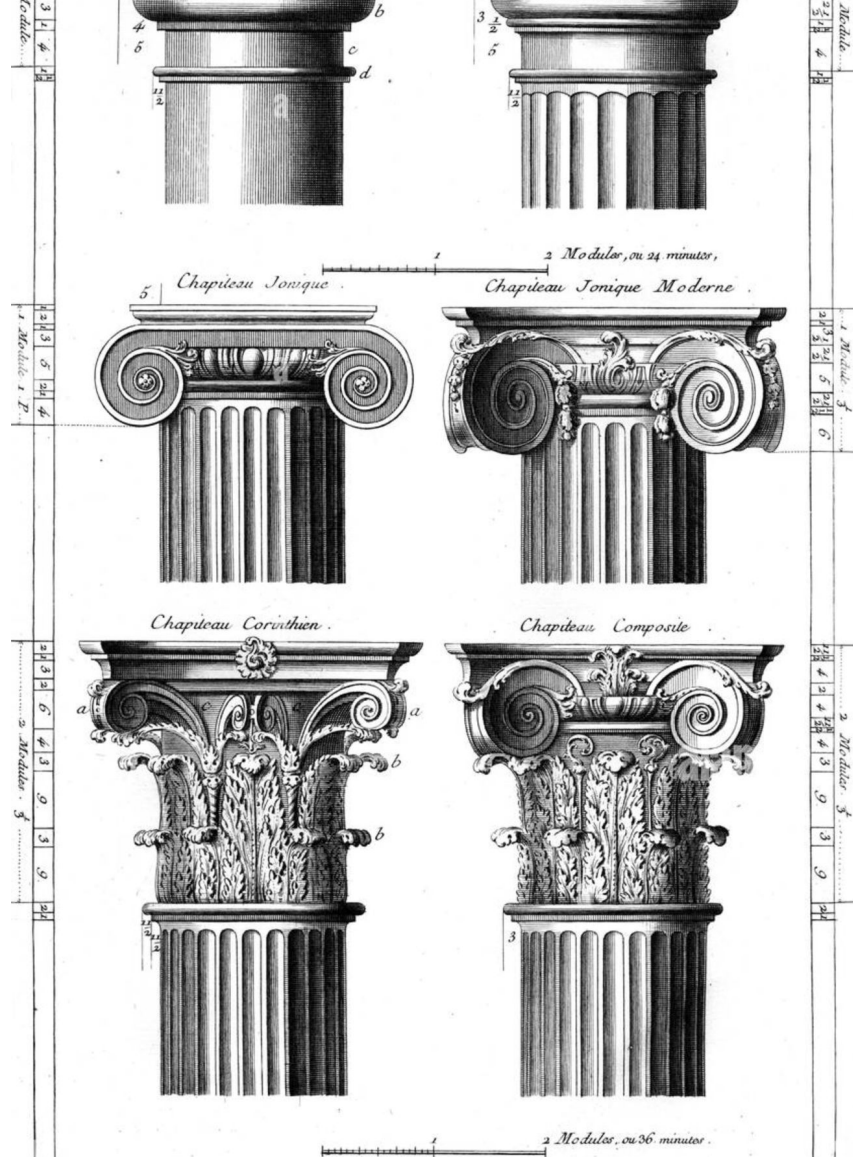
- Br. John Brown
- Br. Juan Diaz
- Br. Aiden Wingate.
- Br. Eugene Forestall
- Br. Eryc Bowen
- Br. Jose Sinfontes
- Br. Ryan Litwin
- Br. Richard Stone
- Br. Zane Hancock
- Br. Zac Fox
- Br. Brad Champigny
- Br. John Sandford
- Br. Chris Grimes

Fellow Craft

- Br. Lynn DeForest Horne III

Master

- Br. Kris Townsley
- Br. Brandon Burton
- Br. Jason Slone
- Br. Brian Wingate
- Br. Craig Richter
- Br. Jimmie Hamrick
- Br. Donnie Olmstead
- Br. Eidel Matos-Carpio
- Br. David Braggalla



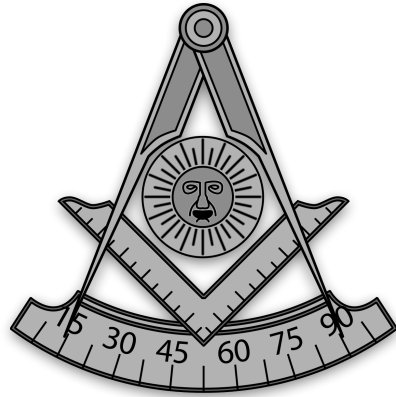
Perpetual Members of our Lodge

- W.: Kenneth Ammons
- Br. Mark Atkinson
- R.: W.: Ronald Baber (P.D.D.G.M)
- W.: Kyle Bachman
- W.: George Benjamin
- Br. Brady Chapman
- Br. John Collins
- W.: Robert Coverdale
- Br. James Cramer
- Br. Jeff Curry
- W.: Earl Dennis
- R.: W.: Doug Dobbs (P.D.D.G.M)
- Br. Michael Dobbs
- W.: Allen Donahue
- W.: Joseph Fenton
- Br. Andrew Gluchov
- Br. Earl Grimes
- W.: John Hokanson
- Br. Edwin Holman
- Br. Ryan Johnson
- W.: Robert Leonard
- Br. Hutton Lewis
- Br. Donnie Olmstead
- Br. Stanley Preston
- Br. Ray Rankl
- W.: Brad Ranney
- Br. Kenneth Reese, Sr.
- W.: Joseph Rowland
- W.: Alessio Ruggiero
- Br. Nicolas Ruggiero
- Br. Thomas Simpkins
- W.: Theodore Simpkins, II
- Br. Robert Springer
- Br. Billy Staffiles
- Br. Butch Thurman
- Br. Benjamin Sleight
- W.:M.: Kevin Oatman



Living Past Masters of Our Lodge

- 1967 - W.: Wallace Davis
- 1973 - W.: James Sellers
- 1976 - W.: George Benjamin
- 1978 - W.: John Breeze
- 1983 - W.: Riley Hardy
- 1984 - W.: Dozier Walker
- 1989 - W.: Gary Carter
- 1990 - W.: George Vomvorris
- 1994 - W.: Marc Gilner
- 1996 - R.: W.: Ronald Baber (P.D.D.G.M)
- 1996 - W.: Earl Hasenflu
- 2001 - W.: Charles Reibold
- 2001 - W.: Elwood Williams
- 2002 - W.: Joseph Rowland
- 2005 - W.: Richard Cooper
- 2006 - W.: John Hokanson
- 2007 - W.: Charles Keeler
- 2008 - W.: Robert Coverdale
- 2009 - W.: Albert Thurman
- 2010 - W.: Brian Johnson
- 2012 - W.: Michael Grimes
- 2013 - W.: Les Ruggiero
- 2014 - W.: Joseph Fenton
- 2015 - W.: John Steiner
- 2016 - R.: W.: Doug Dobbs (P.D.D.G.M)
- 2017 - W.: Kyle Bachman
- 2019 - W.: Michael McCullough
- 2020 - W.: Allen Donahue
- 2021 - W.: Anthony DiMauro
- 2022 - W.: Tracy Martin
- 2023 - W.: Brian Miller
- 2024 - W.: Bradley Ranney
- 2025 - W.: Chuck Knapp



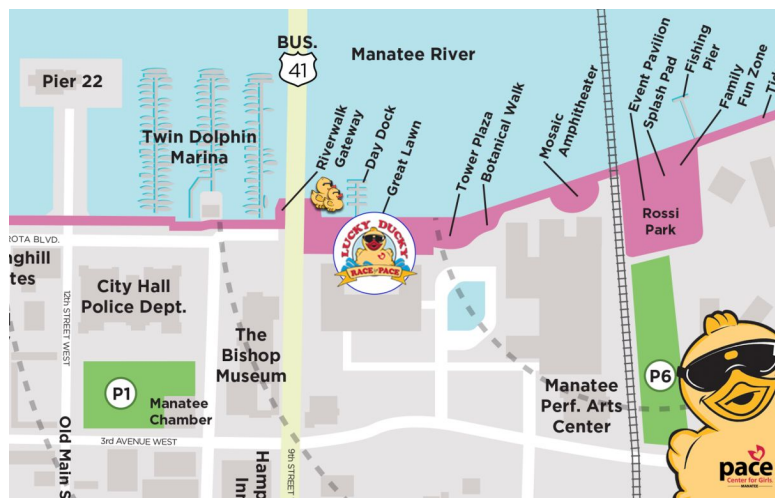
“To become the model Master of a Lodge should be the ambition of every brother; and to discharge with efficiency and zeal the duties of that office should be his most anxious desire.”

Manatee #31 Deployment Crew



Annual Duck Race April 11, 2026

Bradenton Riverwalk



APRIL Events:

MON 06 Stated Communication
 THU 09 OES No. 87 - Stated Meeting
 SAT 11 Liberty Stated Meeting
SAT 11 Annual Duck Race @ Riverwalk
 SUN 12 Manatee DeMoley.
 SAT 18 Open Books - Punta Gorda 115
MON 20 Stated Communication
 THU 23 MMA Punta Gorda 115
 SAT 25 Liberty 412 - Open House
 SUN 26 Manatee DeMolay

MAY Events:

MON 04 Stated Communication
 SAT 09 Liberty Stated Meeting
 SUN 10 Manatee Demolay
 MON 11 Manatee 31 Planning Meeting
 THU 14 OES No. 87 Stated Meeting
 SAT 16 Open Books - Sarasota 147
MON 18 Stated Communication
 SAT 23 Liberty 412 - Open House
 SAT 23 Manatee 31 - Open House
 SUN 24 Manatee Demolay
MON 25 Annual Grand Communication
 THU 28 MMA Phoenix 346

The 23rd Masonic District’s Calendar can be found at: <https://www.district23fl.org/calendar>

Our sister lodges in the District and their meeting times/places are as follows:

Lodge	Meeting Days & Times	Meeting Locations
Peace River Lodge, No. 66	1st and 3rd Thursdays - 7:30 pm	909 NE Oak St, Arcadia, FL 34266
Punta Gorda Lodge, No. 115	1st and 3rd Thursdays - 7:30 pm	25349 Airport Rd, Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Sarasota Lodge, No. 147	2nd and 4th Tuesdays - 7:30 pm	2160 Main St, Sarasota, FL 34277
Venice Lodge, No. 301	1st and 3rd Mondays - 7:30 pm	118 E Venice Ave, Venice, FL 34285
Phoenix Lodge, No. 346	1st and 3rd Tuesdays - 7:30 pm	240 S Tuttle Ave, Sarasota, FL 34237
Englewood Lodge, No. 360	1st and 3rd Tuesdays - 7:30 pm	265 Pine St, Englewood, FL 34223
West Coast Lodge, No. 409	2nd and 4th Mondays - 7:30 pm	600 7th St W, Palmetto, FL 34221
Liberty Lodge, No. 412	2nd Saturdays - 9:00 am	402 15th St E, Bradenton, FL 34208

Lodge Leadership Contact Information

Position	Name	Email	Phone
Worshipful Master	W.:M.: Kevin Oatman	kc.willow@yahoo.com	(941) 549 - 0403
Sr. Warden	Ben Sleight	jw.manatee31@gmail.com	(314) 412 - 9264
Jr. Warden	Eidel Matos-Carpio	eidelmatoscarpio@icloud.com	(508) 246 - 3079
Treasurer	Ray Rankl	treasurer.manatee31@gmail.com	(941) 276 - 3777
Secretary	Chuck Knapp P.M.	wm.manatee31@gmail.com	(815) 693 - 8364
Sr. Deacon	R. John Fleming	rjf48@verizon.net	(941) 779 - 3668
Jr. Deacon	Aral Abuhan	a.apd@verizon.net	(727) 599 - 8152
Sr. Steward	Kris Townsley	kristopher.townsley@icloud.com	(941) 720 3830
Jr. Steward	Aaron Mitchell	aaron.m053@gmail.com	(562)243 - 3910
Marshal	Tracy Martin, P.M.	tjmrtn@gmail.com	(931) 561 - 4845
Tyler	Brad Ranney, P.M.	comish@tampabay.rr.com	(941) 737 - 7851
Chaplain	George Vomvorris, P.M.	keymaster5050@yahoo.com	(941) 524 - 8333
District Deputy Grand Master	R.: W.: D.D.G.M. J.J. Albritton	j_albritton@hotmail.com	(941) 209 - 8340
District Instructor	R.: W.: D.I. Tom Haber, P.D.D.G.M.	23rd.ddgm2018@gmail.com	(941) 545 - 1726

Committees

Committee	Chairman	Email	Phone
Finance	Ben Sleight	kc.willow@yahoo.com	(314) 412 - 9264
Lodge Property	Ben Sleight	kc.willow@yahoo.com	(314) 412 - 9264
Charity	W.:M.: Kevin Oatman	wm.manatee31@gmail.com	(941) 549 - 0403
Petitions	Eidel Matos	jw.manatee31@gmail.com	(508) 246 - 3079
Board of Relief	W.: M.: Kevin Oatman	kc.willow@yahoo.com	(941) 549 - 0403
Vigilance	Eidel Matos	jw.manatee31@gmail.com	(508) 246 - 3079
Masonic Education	W.: M.: Kevin Oatman	kc.willow@yahoo.com	(941) 549 - 0403