

Trestleboard

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 2

June 2010

NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education's purpose is to foster the education of the Craft at large through prepared research and open discussion of the topics concerning Masonic history, symbolism, philosophy, and current events.

Next Communication

New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education meets on the second Saturday in March, June, September and December. Our next communication will be held on **Saturday, June 12, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at:**

**Trenton Masonic Temple
100 Barracks Street
Trenton, New Jersey**

All Master Masons are Welcome!



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From the East

Bro. Ben Hoff, Worshipful Master

Old Charges and New

I had long believed that the charge given when closing a New Jersey lodge in long form, '*Brethren, we are about to quit this sacred retreat ...*', was a Victorian era composition, most likely penned by Robert Morris, who also authored the so-called 'Canadian Charge'. But much to my surprise, while recently sorting through the holdings of our Grand Lodge's library, I happened to come across an almost identical version of that closing charge in a 1790's book of constitutions of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. While the early date for that piece was a gratifying surprise, the fact that it appears in a book of constitutions was no surprise at all. Masonic publications of that era usually attempted to be general purpose guides, including as much helpful material as the authors deemed permissible to openly publish. From the frequency and variety of various charges and addresses printed at that time, it appears that Masons of the era must not have considered them to be masonic secrets.

The original charges read to candidates were in fact the so-called 'Old Charges' or manuscript constitutions such as the Regius and Cooke manuscripts. It appears that the earliest masonic obligation was simply an oath to obey the regulations. Over time, the various points of the old charges were incorporated into the obligations themselves, beginning with keeping the secrets of the lodge. Also, Grand Lodges began to expand the number of regulations. Imagine – if you can – reading our entire book of constitutions to a newly initiated brother as part of the degree ceremonies! It quickly became the practice to deliver a more summarized and artful exhortation to new brothers explaining what was expected of them. Thus the new style charges were born.

These new style charges may have been given in the lodge room, in French lodges by an officer called 'orator'. Some exposures of the time make reference to long harangues following the ceremonies. At other times, these charges were in the form of after dinner speeches, since lodge meetings were usually held in taverns and included dinner. Both then and now, good after dinner speakers were in great demand. Quite often the particularly good speeches or charges were published, and reused by other lodges. The famous Ramsey's Oration, which is said to have inspired the notion that Freemasonry derived from the Knights Templar, was simply a widely reprinted charge written and delivered by brother Ramsey. One early influential masonic book was Calcott's '*Candid Disquisition*' (1769), which in addition to introducing much of current symbolism, was mostly a collection of charges and addresses. It also is the first publication to include the EA charge much as we know it today.

But returning to the matter of the closing charge, how did it migrate from Massachusetts to New Jersey when no other Massachusetts practices

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accompanied it, and it is not universally used elsewhere in the United States? The link appears to be the Baltimore Masonic Convention of 1843. Brother Charles W. Moore of Massachusetts, a member of the convention and masonic publisher, undertook to print the recommended revisions of Webb's monitor under the title of the '*New Masonic Trestle-Board*'. This book included the closing charge as it was published in the 1790's. Even though New Jersey did not send a delegation to the Baltimore Convention, it nevertheless tried to follow the convention's recommendations on ritual as closely as possible. In unofficial New Jersey ritual ciphers from the 1920's, the closing charge in a revised form is included as an *optional* part of the closing. And there is a decided tendency for anything optional to become either mandatory or forbidden. It may be that Rob Morris had a hand in revising the closing charge to its current form. But it originally came to us from Massachusetts by way of Baltimore. And before that? Who knows.

Brethren,

You are cordially and fraternally invited to an Regular Communication of NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786 to meet on Saturday, June 12, 2010 at the Trenton Masonic Temple, 100 Barracks St., Trenton, NJ at 9:30 a.m.

Order of Business

- Continental Breakfast (served 9:00 a.m.)
- Opening Lodge (9:30 a.m.)
- Short Business Meeting
- Presentations by members
- Closing

Officer's Dress – Business Attire

LODGE HAPPENINGS...

NJ LORE No. 1786's next meeting will be held at the Trenton Temple on Saturday June 12, at 9:30 a.m.

On the Agenda:

- Eureka! - Bro. Howard Kanowitz
- The Legal Aspects of the Morgan Abduction - Bro. Thorne

Coffee and Danish will be served prior to our meeting and Lunch will be served after. Members should make every effort to attend.

From the West

Bro. Raymond C. Thorne, Senior Warden

What makes Homo sapiens human? That is, what behavior, what ability is manifest in humans that is totally lacking in all other species?

Years ago it was thought that only man (meaning humans) used tools. But it turns out there are a number of species, not all of them primates, who use tools. A tool is something an individual uses to extend its reach or amplify its strength. It is usually a found object, such as a rock or a stick, but it is a non-self item used to increase the ability of the self.

Another claim for unique humanness was that only man can use language. Of course, many species can communicate through a variety of sounds to communicate concepts such as danger! or, here I am. But, it was thought, that only humans could put nouns and verbs together in an intelligent way.

While it is true humans are the only primate that can vocalize concepts, several non-human primates can use American Sign Language or master a made-up language by pointing to abstract symbols.

But while they can sign, “Give me banana,” or, “Tickle me,” their communications apparently do not extend beyond their current wants or needs. No chimpanzee has ever been observed walking up to another chimp (or a human trainer) and talk about the weather, let alone give a Masonic lecture.

Apparently, most non-human primate species do not instruct at all. Parents do not tell their children any version of “Eat this. Do not eat that.” Primates are curious and they learn by observing and imitating. “Monkey see, monkey do” might be true for humans (...by the regularity of your own conduct provide the best example for that of others less informed), but in most non-human primate species it is literally a matter of life and death.

Some non-human primates can be taught by a human trainer, but only to an extent. Chimpanzees, for example, can be taught that three pieces of candy is more than two pieces and four pieces is more than three, and so on, up to about eight. But apparently for chimps the fact that three is more than two is a concept separate and distinct from four being more than three.

And this brings us to an apparent division between human and non-human



Oops! Someone forgot his apron!

species. A human child old enough to understand basic concepts being shown that three pieces of candy is more than two pieces and four pieces is more than three will have a eureka moment that three is one more than two, that four is one more than three, so therefore five will be one more than four.

If you are ever instructing a person, especially a child, when that metaphorical light bulb goes off you will see that person experiencing pleasure, if not outright joy.

One theory on what makes humans human is that our species is the only one that can draw pleasure from purely intellectual activity (...on the discovery of which, in the joy of his heart, he exclaimed, "Eureka!"...). Such as realizing that two plus two equals four. Or that it has to be Colonel Mustard in the study with a candlestick. This, believe it or not, is called the aha! theory.

Another theory of what makes humans unique is that we are the only species that can store information outside our bodies. Every lodge has several such examples. Think about it.

I'm not saying that being a Mason (or a member of LORE) is what makes you human. But I do find it interesting that certain principles of Masonry (and LORE) just happen to be that which is considered uniquely human.

I firmly believe that one of the most important purposes of Freemasonry is to expand your mind for a wider and more extended range of thought. While this should be one of the duties practiced by all lodges--not to mention a great many appendant bodies--it is LORE's reason for being.

At our last meeting we talked about taking our lodge on the road one or two meetings a year. As the presumptive next Worshipful Master of LORE, I am interested in this concept and would like your feedback.

NJ LORE Takes to the Road!

NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education is looking to visit other Masonic districts in New Jersey. This is a great opportunity for a Lodge to host a meeting of NJ LORE as an event in its District. You set up the visit and provide refreshments and we do all the work!

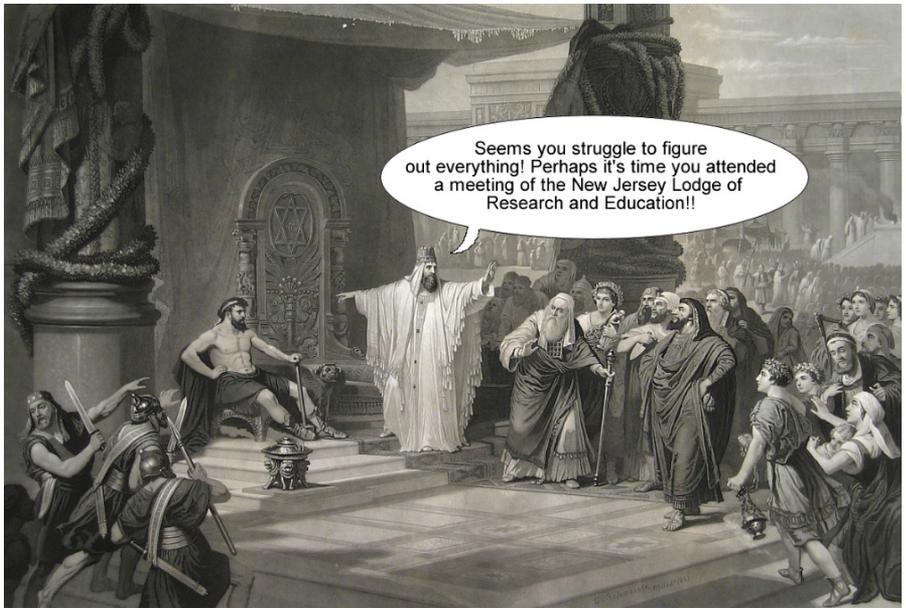
We are looking for visitation dates in September 2010 and March 2011. If you have interest in NJ LORE visiting your district, let your DDGM know of this program and contact our Worshipful Master or Secretary.



MASONIC TRIVIA AND FACTS

The earliest record of a lodge accepting a non-operative member occurs in the records of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel), 8 June 1600, where it is shown that John Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, was present at a meeting. The first record of the initiation of a non-operative mason in a lodge is contained in the minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) for 3 July 1634, when the Right Honourable Lord Alexander was admitted a Fellowcraft. The first record of the Initiation of a non-operative on English soil, was in 1641 when Sir Robert Moray was admitted to the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) at Newcastle.

<http://www.literacynews.com/2010/05/the-freemasons-its-english-origins-and-history/>



Finding it tough to figure out the meaning of all those symbols and allegories?

Hit a wall in your search for Masonic Knowledge??

Just frustrated with the same-ole, same-ole boring meetings???

Then it's time you gave NJ LORE No. 1786 a try!!!

Come out to our next meeting on Saturday June 12, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

We guarantee you will not leave a meeting without learning something new.

Stop being frustrated and start enjoying Freemasonry again!!!

Officers for 2009-2010

<p>Bernhard W. Hoff 409 Willowbrook Dr. North Brunswick, NJ 08902 Highland Park Lodge #240</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Worshipful Master 732-398-1230 bhoff1356@aol.com</p>
<p>Raymond C. Thorne 7 Thornolden Ave. Haddon Heights, NJ 08035 Audubon-Parkside #218</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Senior Warden 856-547-7839 rct21880@yahoo.com</p>
<p>J.R. Avanti P.O. Box 196 New Gretna NJ 08224 Belcher Lodge # 180</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Junior Warden 609-296-0238 avanti.pajra@att.net</p>
<p>Val Korsniak 5 E. Wood Ln. Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 Mt. Holly #14</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Treasurer val.korszniak@lmco.com</p>
<p>Matthew Korang 106 Wayland Rd. Delran, NJ 08075 Beverly-Riverside #107</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Secretary 856-461-0932 mkorang@comcast.net matthew.korang@lmco.com</p>
<p>Robert H. Morris Princeton #38</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Senior Deacon 609-924-6178 validude2001@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Dennis Huey Keystone #153</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Junior Deacon 609-927-0688 profhuey@earthlink.net</p>
<p>Jeffrey Alexander Mt. Holly #14</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Chaplain jeffalexander007@verizon.net</p>
<p>Tom Thornton Cincinnati # 3</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Tyler tomthornton@nac.net</p>

From the Editor's Desk.....

Next Trestleboard will be published on or about September 1, 2010. We are always looking for articles. All articles must be submitted by August 15, 2010.

Matthew Korang, Secretary
mkorang@comcast.net



New Jersey Lodge of Masonic
Research and Education No. 1786

Trenton Masonic Temple
100 Barracks St.
Trenton, NJ 08608



*Bringing Light to New
Jersey Freemasonry!*

**We're On the
Web!!
njlore1786.org**