

Trestleboard

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

MARCH 2007

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.

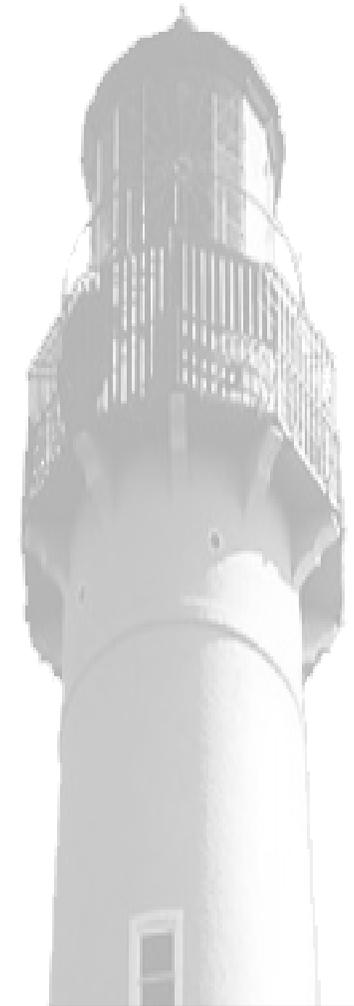
Next Communication

New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education meets on the fourth Saturday in January, March, May and September.

Our next communication will be held on
Saturday, March 24, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at:

**Union Lodge No. 19
60 Cedar Ave.
North Brunswick, NJ**

ALL MASTER MASONS ARE WELCOME!



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From the East

WB Jay Hochberg, Worshipful Master

Brethren, there are two motions on the floor to amend our by-laws, one to reschedule our meeting dates and the other to change the date of our Annual Meeting. Your elected line hashed out a number of options, considering every month on the calendar and all permutations of Saturdays before agreeing on what you're asked to consider.

A schedule of four meetings per year remains unchanged, but instead of our present January, March, May and September, we suggest March, June, September and December.

Instead of having an overloaded first half of the calendar year at the expense of a latter half with only one Regular Communication, this proposed change would evenly space our four meetings three months apart. In anticipation of as many questions as possible, let me share some of the thinking that went into this proposal.

1. By skipping January and February, we'd miss the worst winter weather.
2. By missing April, we'd avoid straining everyone's cabletows as regards Grand Lodge's Annual Communication.
3. By eliminating May, we would resolve the existing conflict in the current by-laws which has us meeting on the fourth Saturday, which usually is a legal holiday (Memorial Day) weekend, which our by-laws also say we're supposed to avoid. Also there is the Grand Master's Installation and festivities, several Scottish Rite Reunions and other major events that month on Saturdays.
4. We did discuss the summer months, but for obvious reasons we passed them over.
5. In October and November we have legal holidays (Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving) and major events for Royal Arch Masonry, Cryptic Masonry, Scottish Rite Masonry, DeMolay and other conflicting Masonic happenings.

Now, as regards which Saturdays to choose, we really did some fancy footwork. There was the temptation to mix and match Saturdays, like a first Saturday here and a fourth Saturday there, but we thought simple uniformity would be best. By settling on the second Saturdays of these four months, we were able to avoid conflicts with the annual York Rite Weekend in March, the Sciots Official Visit, Shrine Ceremonials and Scottish Rite Council of Deliberation in June, the Royal Arch Festival and DeMolay Class in September, and the Feast of Saints John and Christmas week in December, just to name a few.

As you can see, this proposal is a thoughtful one. We hope you will give it your earnest approval when we put it to a vote March 24. If we do adopt this proposed amendment, we also will vote on a second proposed amendment that would move our Annual Meeting from May to December. This change would bring our election and installation of officers and our fiscal year into line with our entire jurisdiction. Trust me, more than just an administrative adjustment, this change would go a long way toward alleviating bizarre suspicions and misconceptions about our lodge.

I look forward to seeing you March 24 and hearing your comments on these two proposals. If they meet your approval, we'll forward them to Grand Lodge for final review and hopefully we'll move forward from there with our new schedule.

Fraternally,



Worshipful Master

**A proposal to amend the By-Laws
of New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786**

To the Brethren of New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786, F&AM:

RESOLVED, that Article III, Section 1 of the Lodge's By-Laws which reads:

“Stated communications shall be held on the fourth Saturday of May, September, January and March, except if such be a legal or religious holiday weekend. The Worshipful Master may, at his discretion, change the date and/or time of said Communication when he deems it necessary. All Stated Communications will be held at the Trenton Masonic Temple located at 100 Barracks Street, Trenton, New Jersey commencing at 10 AM and ending no later than 3:00 PM.”

Be amended to read as follows:

“Stated communications shall be held on the second Saturdays of March, June, September and December. All Stated Communications will be held at the Trenton Masonic Temple located at 100 Barracks Street, Trenton, New Jersey commencing at 10 a.m. and ending no later than 3 p.m.”

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Hochberg, Worshipful Master
January 27, 2007

**A proposal to amend the By-Laws
of New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786**

To the Brethren of New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786, F&AM:

RESOLVED, that Article III, Section 2 of the Lodge's By-Laws which reads:

“The Annual Communication of the Lodge shall be the Stated Communication in May. Notification of such will follow the appropriate procedure for a Stated Communication.”

Be amended to read as follows:

“The Annual Communication of the Lodge shall be the Stated Communication in December. Notification of such will follow the appropriate procedure for a Stated Communication.”

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Hochberg, Worshipful Master
January 27, 2007

Your attention please!

In the January 2007 trestleboard, the Worshipful Master erroneously stated that one's suspension from our research lodge would result in the same's suspension from his mother lodge, per the Constitutions and Laws of Grand Lodge. That statement is hereby retracted. The statement was based on a misunderstanding of NJ LORE's current (third) warrant which states that NJ LORE members shall “be conformable” to “all the decrees and Orders of the Most Worshipful, and the said Grand Lodge of New Jersey.” Worshipful Master Jay Hochberg regrets and apologizes for the error.

Astronomy—A Liberal Art and Science

Brother Val Korzniak

We are so often immersed in our daily routines that we forget to look around and appreciate our world for what it actually is. So comfortable are we with the world being “here” that seldom do we wonder where and what “here” really is. Even when we observe the Sun and Moon and stars, we forget we are inhabitants on a spherical rock that orbits an average star that floats aimlessly in space. I find it amazing how our Earth is much less than a grain of sand in the enormity of the universe, and how all of human history and knowledge is not much more than some noise. For me, it is sobering to understand humanity’s place in this vastness, while having the intellect and self-awareness to try to make sense of it. In general, humankind gives a low priority to penetrating the mysteries of the cosmos, but Freemasonry helps a man find and respect his place in the universe. In our Masonic journey, we hear many references in ritual to the great beyond of the heavens. As we climb the staircase to the Middle Chamber, Astronomy is brought to our attention as one of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, the very same Trivium and Quadrivium that led to the glory of the Renaissance.

It would be easy to dwell on the cosmic menagerie of planets, stars, asteroids, comets, quasars, nebulae and so on, but it’s more fun to speculate on the questions of how it all works while also realizing that things may not be as they seem. We know there is something we call gravity and we know its effects, but what really makes it work is still unknown. Another good area to ponder is motion. In our experience the world just slowly ticks by as we fail to perceive how we are in full motion. On Earth’s surface, we rotate at approximately 500 miles per hour at our location, but at 1,000 m.p.h. at the equator. We orbit the Sun at about 67,000 m.p.h. The Sun and solar system orbit the center of the Milky Way at about 500,000 m.p.h. Our galaxy races toward a grouping of other galaxies (the “Great Attractor”) at about 2.23 million m.p.h. We are moving at tremendous velocities and have no perception of it.

Even light requires time to travel. When we look at the Sun, we are seeing something that actually happened eight minutes ago. This holds true for all distances. To look into a mirror at arms length and see my reflection takes about six nanoseconds, and when we look into the heavens we mostly see ancient history. In other words, everything you see and hear has already happened. Chew on that for a while!

So my brothers, the next time you gaze upon the Sun, Moon or stars, remember that you are not only *in* the universe, but that you are part of it, and nothing is what it seems. Sleep well.

(The above is a synopsis of the presentation on Astronomy given by Bro. Korzniak at our January 2007 Regular Communication.)



From The West

WB Ben Hoff, Senior Warden

The Long and the Short of Rods.

One of the more noticeable aspects of Masonic ceremonial practice is the use of rods by certain officers. In the United States, these rods are typically six or seven foot long spear-like affairs. But not all rods are the same length or form in all Lodges around the World. The officers who carry rods also varies. In some places, rods are used by the Masters of Ceremonies and Stewards, as well as by the Deacons. But in other places, only the Deacons use rods, which are the particular implement of their offices. In still other places, Stewards carry rods, but the Masters of Ceremonies do not even exist. Moreover, even in places where US style long rods are used, the methods of their use can vary quite significantly.

Deacons' rods come in several sizes. In addition to the long rods used in US lodges, there are short three-foot rods called "wands" that are used by Deacons in many English Constitution lodges. There are also middle-length, four or five-foot short rods – or long wands, depending on your point of view. These might more properly be considered Staffs, and are found in many Scottish, Irish, and English Constitution lodges. Finally, the foot-long baton carried by the Marshal in many places is, strictly speaking, also a sort of rod.

Whatever their length, in a symbolic sense the Deacon's rods all derive from the caduceus, or staff, carried by the mythological Mercury or Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods in the Greco-Roman pantheon. This is entirely appropriate given that the Deacons' primary responsibility is to carry messages. The figure of Mercury was used as the Deacon's jewel in many 18th century lodges. But a messenger's staff is also a generalized symbol of authority, particularly symbolizing that the holder is acting on the orders of a higher power or authority. Batons have been used to symbolize this commission of authority since Roman times. Even today, the baton is the symbol of the rank of Marshal in most European armies, while the scepter symbolizes a monarch's divine authority to rule. So it is also entirely appropriate that the Marshal in a lodge carries a baton representing his authority derived from the WM. It even appears that in some 18th century lodges the Wardens also carried batons as symbols of their authority.

It is in the nature of messengers to travel, and so the messenger's rod also can represent a walking stick or staff. This was probably the original symbolism of the caduceus before it came to symbolize authority, and may explain why Deacons in some places use the five-foot short rods or staffs. In some places, staffs are used in Royal Arch chapters, where the Companions represent sojourners who traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem to assist in the rebuilding of the Temple. The Royal Arch was strongly favored by those Masons who formed the Antient Grand Lodge, and who worked the degree in ordinary lodges rather than separately organized chapters. This may also account for the use of the short rod or staff in some lodges descended from the Antients.

The long rods used in American lodges convey the impression of weapons, namely spears. This seems to be the intended symbolism of long rods, especially where they are used by Stewards and Masters of Ceremonies. In these places, the Stewards represent the guards at the South Gate of the Temple or the outer door of the Middle chamber, and the Masters of Ceremonies the guards at the West Gate or inner door. Likewise, the Deacons are each responsible for one of the two doors to the lodge, in addition to their duties as messengers and conductors. But this is not a universal practice. Pennsylvania is unique in this regard, as lodges there have three doors, each guarded by a sword-bearing officer, namely the Pursuivant and two Masters of Ceremonies. It should be no surprise, then, that our MoC's rods and jewels are decorated with crossed swords. This substitution of swords for spears or staffs is reflected in some other Royal Arch chapters where swords rather than staffs are used. Other lodges have only one door guarded by an Inner Guard, while the Deacons have no responsibility for any doors. Deacons use long rods only in places where they are also responsible for doors.

The differences in rod length lead directly to differences in their use. In my next trestleboard piece, I will discuss the various ways that rods are used. But for now, there is only space enough to introduce the differences in their form and symbolism.

From The South

Bro. Raymond C. Thorne, JW

Dear Brother,

In a recent church newsletter, my minister asked for better attendance at services and for parishioners to step up as volunteers. He admitted sounding like “the Masonic Lodge or the local PTA.” On another page, the church lay leader told about a community outreach program, then commented that the church could be better if each member prayed and read the Bible, if only a few verses, every day.

A house of worship and a Masonic lodge have different purposes, but there are overlaps and that church newsletter touched on five of them.

A Masonic lodge meeting opens and closes with a prayer, the candidate is prayed over at the beginning of the first degree and later in that degree is told before beginning any great or important undertaking to invoke the blessing of Deity (pray for help and guidance).

The Holy Bible is “the rule and guide for our faith and practice.” We are taught to live our lives according to the teachings in the Bible. Physically the Bible is in the center of the lodge and one could take that symbolically to mean that the Bible should be in the center of our lives.

Self-improvement is, or at least should be, a goal of every Mason and while prayer and Bible reading are important, they only go so far. Most people need a support system for help, aid and assistance in fortifying their minds against the snares of the insidious. There is also something to be said for joining together for innocent social pleasures.

Of course, the way a lodge is structured requires that some of its members must rule and teach, to see that the lodge and its members obey the Grand Lodge Constitution and lodge by-laws, and above all the be true to the Holy Scriptures. Without volunteers to be officers and committee members, to prepare refreshments and do the many incidental but important things needed by an organization such as a lodge, that organization would rapidly cease to exist.

A lodge would also cease to exist before long if it kept to itself and only practiced charity among its members; how can one have a favorable opinion conceived of the Institution if that Institution, or a segment of it, does nothing to publicize its name? One way, perhaps the best way, to be favorably noticed by the world at large is to practice charity as far as our ability to give will permit. This could be done as quietly as mailing a check, or as publicly as raising money via a pancake breakfast.

Masonry is something that can and should be practiced alone, within the lodge, and also when abroad in the world. Whatever else it might be, it is not a spectator sport.

ATTENTION ALL NJ LORE MEMBERS

In an endeavor to cut costs for New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research & Education, we are asking members to receive their quarterly Trestleboards via e-mail instead of standard first class postal mail. If you wish to receive your Trestleboard via e-mail and assist the lodge in this endeavor, please send an e-mail to the Secretary (mkorang@comcast.net).

Your assistance in this will enable our lodge to become fiscally responsible without having to raise fees due to postal price increases.

Thanks for your consideration.

NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education

Important Information

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, March 24, 2007 at the Union Lodge No. 19, 60 Cedar Ave., North Brunswick, 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

Grand Master of Masons of the State of New Jersey

Most Worshipful Douglas R. Policastro
620 Weston Drive
Toms River, NJ 08755-3271
732-240-6112

Like to Write?

Interested in Masonic History or Theory?

Why not consider submitting a paper to NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education?

NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education is looking for individuals interested in the history and activities of Freemasonry in both New Jersey and the world.

Only papers concerned directly with Freemasonry will be considered for presentation and publication: The history of Lodges, active or demised; biographies of Masons distinguished in the annals of Freemasonry; its ceremonies, usage, and practices; the speculative or philosophical aspects of Freemasonry; and any other Masonic subject of general interest to the Fraternity.

Interested? If you have a paper you would like to submit or would like more information concerning writing and submitting papers, please feel free to contact : **Bro. Ben Hoff at 732-398-1230**

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From the Editor's Desk.....

Next Trestleboard will be published about May 1, 2007. We are always looking for articles. All articles must be submitted by April 15, 2007.

Matthew Korang, PM, Secretary
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New Jersey Lodge of Masonic
Research and Education No. 1786

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*Bringing Light to New
Jersey Freemasonry!*

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njlore1786.org**

Back Page Book Review

WB Jay Hochberg, Peninsula Lodge, No. 99

“Freemasonry: Symbols, Secrets, Significance”

By W. Kirk MacNulty

Thames and Hudson, 2006, 320 pp.

Surely we bask in the golden age of Masonic publishing, as today's technologies bring great resources to the science of research and unprecedented sophistication to the art of publishing. Meanwhile, there are authors busy exploring new theories of the Craft's meanings and origins; one of the most articulate and persuasive of our time is W. Kirk MacNulty.

MacNulty's theory says Freemasonry has more to do with Renaissance philosophy than with medieval building guilds. In “The Way of the Craftsman,” (1988) MacNulty presents Masonry as a “God-centered psychology” that enables Masonic man to find within himself the potential to journey internally toward spiritual perfection and nearness to God. His second book “Freemasonry: A Journey Through Ritual and Symbol,” (1991) tells Masonry's story through many illustrations. “Symbols, Secrets, Significance” is a magnificent marriage of “Craftsman” thesis — that the three Craft degrees interpret, respectively, Psyche, Soul and Spirit — to the publishing beauty of “Journey,” but with much refinement and three times the number of expressive illustrations.

Alongside MacNulty, the designer and printer are at least the co-stars of this publication for the marvelous layout and deployment of color. The reader practically wants to grasp these vivid images as they arise from the page, or even enter the ornate lodge rooms and other settings depicted in equally stunning clarity and radiance. Indeed the medium is the message here as these 386 illustrations, many published for the first time, depict the depth of Masonic symbolism while the author's written words narrate the action in terms that enlighten and guide.

In addition to all that, MacNulty sheds light on some facts that are unknown to most Masons, perhaps most notably the longtime existence of women Freemasons, but also in the chapters on the “higher degrees.” There is plenty of familiar ground as well, such as the chapter on famous Masons. The book concludes with several appendices listing contact information of dozens of grand lodges, museums, libraries and publications, plus other useful resources for the curious Mason.

