

Trestleboard

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 1

March 2014

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, March 8, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at:

**Hightstown/Apollo Lodge #41
535 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520**

All Master Masons are Welcome!



From the Secretary's Desk

Matt Korang, Secretary

The Worshipful Master is having issues with his personal computer and was not able to provide a From the East in time for this issue. I stepped up and provide some LORE news.

Every January and February I get numerous questions like "How much do I owe for Dues?" and "I must have missed my dues notice, do I owe anything?" The answer is usually "No." The reason for the confusion is that I do not send out dues notices until March.

There are several reasons for this but the easiest reason for me is purely financial. NJ LORE members, like so many other Masons, belong to numerous Masonic organizations. Most of these organizations request payment of dues around the December time frame. As a family man, this is a very hard time of year financially for me. Not only do I have to provide a nice, present-worthy holiday for my kids, I also have to deal with my wife's birthday on the 23rd of December. All of this makes for an empty wallet by the New Year. I usually push off paying any dues I owe until February or March.

This was the driving decision for moving dues payments to March. There are others like, we do not pay assessments and are not held accountable for a fiduciary report like regular NJ lodges. So, enclosed with this Trestleboard is your dues notice for 2014. Thanks for your continued support of NJ LORE!

LODGE HAPPENINGS...

NJ LORE No. 1786's next meeting will be held at the Hightstown-Apollo Lodge #41 on Saturday, March 8, at 9:30 a.m.

On the Agenda:

- Short Business Meeting
- Freemasonry and the Social Dynamic — Bro. Martin Bogardus
- Knights Templar— WB J.R. Avanti

Coffee and pastries will be served prior to lodge and lunch will be provided following. Hope to see you there!

Our next Transactions should be coming out later this year. If you have presented a paper to NJ LORE in the past several years please make sure that you have provided me with an electronic copy. Without an electronic copy, I will not include your paper in the upcoming publication.

The Annual Grand Lodge gathering is coming up in April. As usual, at the December meeting, discussion about a table featuring information about NJ LORE and its good works was discussed. There seemed to be plenty of interest in having NJ LORE represented at the Grand Communication. We have brochures and I can have other handouts like samples of our work, our Transactions, and applications for anyone who would like to setup a table and represent our lodge.

Contact me or the Worshipful Master if you would like to do this for NJ LORE. Your assistance will be gratefully accepted.

March's meeting is the first communication of NJ LORE for 2014 yet we must look forward to the future of the lodge. We are in need of officers to fill the chairs for the upcoming term (2015-2016) — especially Senior and Junior Warden.

Brother Tucker will be looking for good men to assist him during his term. These men will be the future of NJ LORE so I hope that some of you will step up and ensure that the direction of our Lodge continues straight and true.

See everyone at the March meeting!

Tired of getting your Trestleboard too late? Have you received it looking like this? ↓

You can help NJ LORE save trees and dollars by electing to receive your Trestleboard via e-mail!

To do this send an e-mail to **mkorang@comcast.net** indicating you would like to receive Electronic Trestleboards in the future.



It Came From The Internet

Submitted by Matt Korang, Secretary

A Freemason Handshake in Turkey

In my last piece I quoted from the novel "The Babylon Gene" by Alex Churton. This story of spies, jihadi terrorists, Freemasons and genetic science is his first novel but he is not a novice author. He was the founder editor of the periodical "Freemasonry Today" and has written 10 research books, including a number on Gnosticism and secret societies.

To be honest, until the bombing of the Free and Accepted Masons Grand Lodge Association's building in Yakacık near Kartal in İstanbul by the terrorist group Islamic Great East Raiders Front (İBDA-C), I hadn't really thought about whether Masons existed in Turkey or not.

Now I knew about the Lions Club because of their charitable work. Similarly, I knew there was a strong Rotary Club network in Turkey, since an American businessman I knew who used to visit the city regularly would always go to the İstanbul Rotary Club meeting if it coincided with his trip.

But the Masons are much more of a closed, secret society. They are known in popular culture for a special handshake which only members know and are believed to take part in strange rituals involving rolling one trouser-leg above the knee.

Then, back in 2004, some four months after the tragic bombings at a synagogue, HSBC's head office and the British Consulate in İstanbul were the scenes of violent bombings again. The target was a lodge, so I discovered there were freemasons in Turkey.

Churton's novel starts with this violent event and over the course of the adventure he describes I learned quite a bit about the history of freemasonry in Turkey.

Masons are often viewed with suspicion by those outside the organization, fearing that they close ranks in a sort of "old-boys network" to protect each other. Secrecy appears undemocratic and there are often accusations that politicians or public servants who are Masons may act to help other Masons rather than for the public good. Whether being a Mason affects the way a judge or a policeman carries out his responsibilities is often debated.

The ceremonies and oaths that involve religious imagery and belief in a Supreme Being didn't seem to sit easily in my mind with the majority Muslim-faith in Turkey. Back in the 19th century, atheist and mason August Comte



was believed to have tried to use the Masonic network to break the link between the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic religion. Since it started in the Ottoman Empire some 200 years ago, Freemasonry has been banned many times.

I learned from Churton's novel that Masons themselves are split into two groups over whether members must recognize a Supreme Being or whether they are a completely atheistic organization. The former branch is governed from the United Kingdom and the latter from Paris. In the same way there are two branches in Turkey. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Turkey is the older and larger one, with nearly 200 lodges and some 10,000-15,000 members. It is formally recognized by the Scottish Masons. The Grand Lodge of Liberal Freemasons of Turkey was established as a breakaway in 1966 and follows the European style.

In the public's eyes, Freemasonry is often linked with Zionism and Israel. This may be because many of the Masons in the time of the Ottoman Empire were Jewish subjects of the sultan. The BBC reports that the "secretive international society of Masons is seen by radical Islamic groups as a supporter of the policies of Israel and the United States."

In more recent republican-era politics, the Masons have been under the spotlight. Former President Süleyman Demirel in 1964 took the unusual step of writing a public letter to state he wasn't a Mason before he won his party's nomination for presidential candidate. And former President Necmettin Erbakan took up an anti-Masonic position in his political theory Milli Görüş (National Vision).

I think I'll leave the last word to Dan Brown, the author of "The Da Vinci Code," in his book about the Masons called "The Lost Symbol" (which was a bestseller in Turkey): "If Masonry is not a secret society, not a corporation, and not a religion, then what is it?" "Well, if you were to ask a Mason, he would offer the following definition: Masonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

Charlotte McPherson (<http://en.cihan.com.tr>)

An Irish View of Freemasonry

'There are ladies' nights. I don't particularly enjoy them and I don't think the women do either. If you asked them what they thought about Freemasonry, the answer would be that they find it hilarious' - Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Irish Freemasons Morgan McCreddie

A freemason is a man of honour, living in good repute amongst his neighbours. Strabane during the Troubles was a town under siege. I needed some repair work done and the builders recommended to me were Freemasons. It stuck with me that, even in this staunchly nationalist town, the Freemasons were respected.

When I applied to join, they didn't know me from Adam. It was about a year before my application was considered. One mason who worked around

the corner would drop in regularly and say hello. He said there was a backlog of applications to sort through. Of course, I realise now I was being evaluated.

Freemasons are ordinary men working ordinary jobs. We don't have any high opinion of ourselves.

To be a Freemason, you must believe in a Supreme Being. That is to say you must belong to some religion. But I do have a lot of respect for atheists. They have to think about what they believe in. We don't.

There are currently about 25,000 members in 850 lodges around the country. Each lodge meets once a month. There's an opening ceremony, minutes and a treasurer's report. Then, unless we have a Masonic Ceremony to do, we just go down to supper. Fish and chips -- something like that. Membership costs about €100 a year. So there isn't a pot of gold.

We're not a secret society; we're a society with secrets. In the past, a whiff of brimstone about the place was good for business. Now it just looks like we have something to hide. I can't talk about secret handshakes and that sort of stuff. I've taken an oath not to reveal them. But if anyone is interested, they can find it all on the internet.

People talk about Freemasons ruling the world and all of that Jim Corr nonsense. Only a truly gullible person would believe that. We have enough trouble keeping a roof on this place, not to mind ruling the world.

We don't really do much work in the wider community. If you wanted to be cynical, you could call this a social club. There's a philosophical side to it, but that's not forced down anyone's throat. To me, that would smack of a cult.

A lot of people join the Freemasons out of curiosity. Once that curiosity is satisfied, we never see them again.

Women aren't allowed join because of 18th-century prejudice. Plain and simple. But if the Irish Freemasons were to admit women, we'd immediately be ejected from international freemasonry and the whole structure would be destabilised. I'm not making excuses, just telling you like it is.

People perceive the Freemasons in Ireland as being exclusively Anglo-Irish and Protestant. That's not true. The papal ban on Catholics joining the Freemasons in the 19th century was a cause of huge regret to us. Anglo-Irish protestants are thin on the ground. And who wants to play with the same few friends all the time?
(<http://www.independent.ie>)



Officers for 2013-2014

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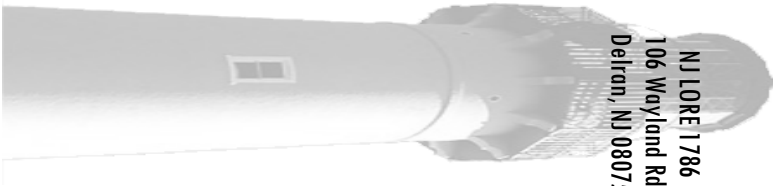
From the Editor's Desk.....

The next Trestleboard will be published on or about June 1, 2014. We are always looking for articles. All articles must be submitted by May 15, 2014.

Matthew Korang, 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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Web!!
njlore1786.org**