

Trestleboard

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1

March 2016

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 12, 2016 at 9:30 a.m. at:**

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

All Master Masons are Welcome!



From the East

WB David Tucker, Worshipful Master

Hello Brother. I hope this message finds you well. I also hope you have read the messages of LORE and taken them to heart. It seems few members of our Fraternity enjoy the deeper purposes of our Craft. If you are reading this, you are among the select that “get it”. I only hope you are going a step further and “using it”.

In the last year, your LORE has enhanced both its online presence and the meeting format. These changes are intended to provide you with great sources of information and enjoyment. Our meetings are well attended and the Brothers leave chatting about topics and buzzing with enthusiasm. That Masonic energy is taken back to the Lodges and shared, as it should be.

I encourage you to journey a little more. In your personal time, read some Masonic information. Group discussion and Lodge talks are fun and educational but the quiet time you spend contemplating Masonic themes is invaluable to your development. Pick a topic or a book and search for something new. Let your mind consider different views on our Fraternity, its origins and its future. Your opinion counts. Your thoughts can be shared with others and will make an impression. Learn and share.

I strongly suggest this book: THE MASON’S WORDS, The History and Evolution of the American Masonic Ritual by Robert G. Davis (2013). Robert is a tremendous intellect. He is a good writer. This combines to make a great book (and not his first). Robert Davis gives a presentation of what we are, where we have recently developed and, importantly, he explains his research into why. This is a book that is required reading for every Mason serious about his understanding of Masonry.

Enjoy your Masonic journey. Let the knowledge gleaned from that journey enhance every aspect of your life. I look forward to seeing you in Lodge.

LODGE HAPPENINGS...

NJ LORE No. 1786’s next meeting will be held at the Hightstown/Apollo Lodge #41 on Saturday, March 12, at 9:30 a.m.

On the Agenda:

- Short Business Meeting
- Anti-Freemasonry in WWII - Bro. Martin Bogardus

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

Prestonian Lecturer visits LORE

Submitted by Bro. Jay Hochberg, PM

Bro. Richard “Ric” Berman, the United Grand Lodge of England’s 2016 Prestonian Lecturer, visited our beloved research lodge January 14 to present his historical lecture. We gathered at the Stage House Tavern in Scotch Plains. Forty-five Masons from all over New Jersey, plus Pennsylvania, New York, and the Czech Republic(!) gathered for dinner and to be among the first in the world to hear Bro. Ric’s lecture, titled “Foundations: New Light on the Formation and Early Years of the Grand Lodge of England.”

The Prestonian Lecture is an English Masonic tradition that dates to 1822. It is named for William Preston, the author and printer and ritualist whose book *Illustrations of Masonry* provides the basis of the ritual used in New Jersey and most of the English-speaking Masonic world to this day. He died in 1822 and bequeathed the sum of £300 to the United Grand Lodge of England for the purpose of endowing a lecture of Masonic education that would be presented to the brethren every year. This endured to the 1860s, when it fell into abeyance, but the tradition was revived in 1924 and—except for the years of World War II—has continued to the present day, with the UGLE’s Board of General Purposes selecting a Prestonian Lecturer annually.

In 2016, the honoree is an authority on 18th century Freemasonry, having published three books on those early decades of the Craft. Ric holds a doctorate in history from the University of Exeter, and a master’s degree in economics from Cambridge. (In a previous life, before becoming the academic researcher and author who joined us that night, Ric had a career in international finance.) He was a Senior Visiting Researcher at Oxford’s Modern European History Research Center, and a Visiting Research Fellow at Oxford Brookes University. He has been a Freemason since the late 1970s, and currently serves as Treasurer of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, the first lodge of Masonic research and education, and he is a past master of the research lodge in Middlesex, England.

The lecture is available in book form for purchase—with proceeds benefitting the Library and Museum of Freemasonry at UGLE’s headquarters—from on-line retailers, like Amazon, so I won’t recapitulate its content in detail, much less divulge spoilers. “Foundations” guides us from medieval times to the 17th century and Freemasonry’s embryonic years, to the first decades of the Grand Lodge of England. We all know about the Antients versus the Moderns in competition for Masonic hegemony, and of the Jacobites’ battles against the Hanoverians for control of the state, but the intrigues also extended into Parliament. Tories and Whigs who were Freemasons organized themselves into factions that set the Craft very far apart from all other clubs and societies in England.

“The Grand Lodge of England was the creation of an inner circle at the Duke of Richmond’s Masonic lodge in Westminster,” said Ric, explaining some of the politics. “Its members included aristocrats and politicians alongside senior public officials, such as an undersecretary of state and the government’s anti-Jacobite spymaster, and William Cowper, a leading magistrate and the clerk

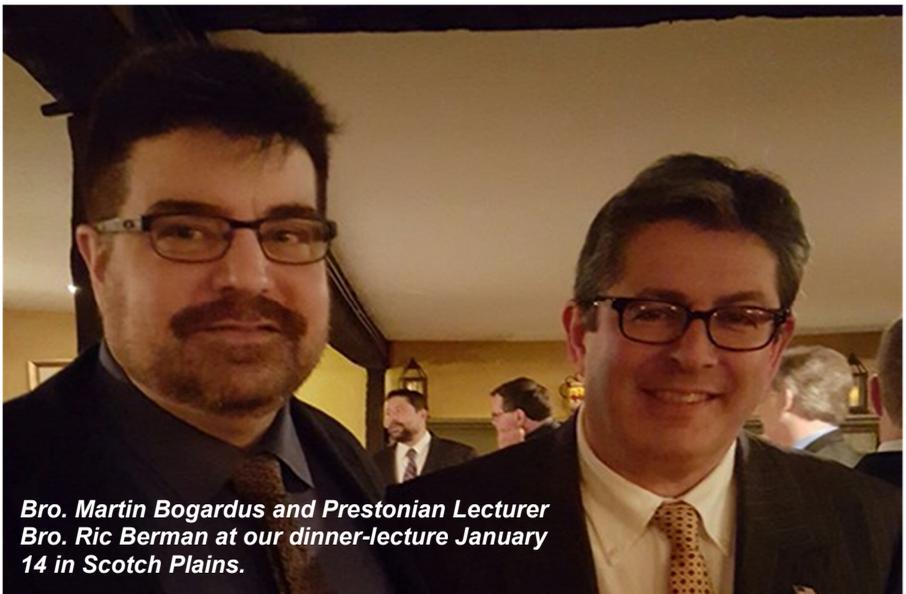
to the Parliaments, the highest ranking administrator at the House of Commons and House of Lords.”

“The magistracy and the government’s association with Freemasonry gave the organization a judicial and political imprimatur that was reinforced by many instances of *de facto* official endorsement,” he added. “Prominent examples include the raising of the Duke of Lorraine and the initiation of the Duke of Newcastle, and the initiation of other senior figures, including Prime Minister Robert Walpole, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and numerous members of both Court and Parliament.”

Ric spoke for about forty minutes, and the Q&A went another half an hour, and still the brethren crowded around Ric for private conversation for long after that, but I had to steal him away to return him to the hotel so he could get some rest before his trip to Virginia the next morning. (No one knows this until now, but Ric had been functioning on almost no sleep or food for the twenty-four hours previous to our dinner-meeting.) This Prestonian tour took Ric from North Carolina, where he spoke at four events in four nights, to Des Moines, to our event, and finally to Virginia before returning to England. He indicated he would like to return to the United States later in the year.

New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786 especially gives warm fraternal thanks to the brethren of Inspiratus Lodge No. 357 for providing our guests copies of the “Foundations” book, which made for a perfect souvenir of the evening. Also given away freely that night were petitions for joining our lodge, which hopefully will result in a larger L.O.R.E. family.

It was a memorable night of savory food, great company, and brilliant Masonic Light—actually, a number of the brethren told me how much they loved the meal—and while our lodge had budgeted a thousand dollars to pull it off, the whole thing cost us less than fifty bucks. I say we should do it every year!



**Bro. Martin Bogardus and Prestonian Lecturer
Bro. Ric Berman at our dinner-lecture January
14 in Scotch Plains.**

It Came From The Internet

Submitted by Bro. Matthew Korang, Secretary

Tennessee Freemasons Oust Married Gay Couple, Threaten Supporters with Suspension

A wedding photo on Facebook leads to the suspension of two Tennessee Freemasons, sparking debate within one of the country's oldest secret societies.

There's still a bit of mystery surrounding the Freemasons, a secretive fraternal order dating back to the 17th Century. Their symbols appear on dollar bills and in movies like "National Treasure."

But there's no mystery around why Dennis Clark and Mark Henderson joined in 2007. They met the basic requirements for membership: they believed in a higher power and enjoyed charity work.

"We embraced Freemasonry right away," Clark says. "We loved the idea of the fraternity coming together to promote charity in our community."

Clark, a corporate leadership trainer, and Henderson, a deputy sheriff, live on a farm outside Memphis. Their lodge, in Midtown Memphis, leans liberal, like the neighborhood in which it resides.

"We were a couple then," Clark says. "Everybody knew that we were a couple."

They got to work raising money for charity and renovating the Park Avenue Lodge (539 S. Cooper St.). Soon, Clark was a Master Mason and a rising star in the organization.

That all changed with one Facebook post -- photos of their wedding, taken last June, the same day as the Supreme Court's ruling on marriage equality.

The snapshots caught the eye of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee in Nashville, the governing body of the state's Freemasons. Within weeks, charges were brought. Clark and Henderson had violated the constitution's penal code.

According to the constitution, members are not supposed to "engage in lewd conduct. To promote or engage in homosexual activity. To cohabit immorally in a situation without the benefit of marriage."

The charges took many Masons by surprise, including Chris Hodapp, a Master Mason and author of "Freemasons for Dummies."

"Pretty much overwhelmingly most Masons agree that what goes on in a Freemason's bedroom is none of our business as a fraternity," Hodapp says.

He says that only two state organizations ban gay men -- Tennessee and Georgia. Their rules, he says, pose an embarrassing dilemma for a national organization faced with a declining membership.

"When a young man hears that Masons in a state are throwing gays out or have rules against them, they just see that as the whole organization doing that and not being isolated to a particular area," Hodapp says.

Paul Rich, a scholar of Freemasonry, says that the society was originally founded as

a safe haven for ideas and Enlightenment values.

“It largely eliminated sectarian references and welcomed diversity. Because of that, it attracted prominent people and made an important intellectual contribution,” Rich says, adding that America’s regional ideologies are affecting that spirit. “The Northern lodges are having difficulties being associated with all of this.”

Chris Sanders of the Tennessee Equality Project says that backlash to same-sex marriage, as evidenced by the Kentucky clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses, includes growing reprisals in other areas of society where religious people hold policy power.

“Certainly the Supreme Court’s marriage decision has intensified the fear and the focus among the far right on these kinds of so-called ‘solutions’ to the issue,” Sanders says.

The Grand Lodge of Tennessee is just a few blocks away from the state capitol building, where legislators have tried and mostly failed this year to pass laws as a rebuke to marriage equality. Sanders believes it’s a reaction to openness. In the past, quasi-religious groups like private schools and Freemasons could turn a blind eye to suspected homosexuals.

“But if you’re in a marriage, that’s a public record,” he says. “In a lot of small towns, all marriages are published in the paper every week.”

The Grand Lodge held Clark and Henderson’s trial in Nashville, without the couple present to defend themselves or provide character witnesses.

Grand Master Phillip Hastings, the current leader of Tennessee’s freemasons, did not respond to multiple interview requests. Last November, he outlined the organization’s position of silence in an open letter sent to lodges:

“Brethren, this Masonic matter is to be handled by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee within the State of Tennessee and any further un-authorized discussion on this matter outside of the Tennessee Masonic fraternity will be considered a Masonic offense and will be dealt with accordingly,” Hastings wrote.

Tom Evans, a fellow Mason in Clark’s lodge, was outraged.

“What difference does it make?” he asks. “I don’t care who you love. Doesn’t matter to me. I don’t see why it matters to anyone else.”

But it did matter to Tennessee’s leaders in Nashville, who informed members that their Facebook pages were being monitored. Masons could be kicked out for speaking out. The Grand Lodge then threatened to revoke the charter of the Park Avenue Lodge if members spoke to the media.

Evans shrugged when asked if he was worried about punishment.

“If free speech isn’t there, there’s a problem,” he says. “Considering some of the founding members of our country were Masons, that says a lot, where we should be with this.”

The gag order didn’t sit right with Brian McMurray either. His Masonic tattoos reveal a deep devotion for what members call “The Craft.” For him, democratic

debate is part of a Freemason's DNA.

"Just like our leadership changes, so does the opportunity to fine-tune our constitution," he says. "Constitutions aren't laid in stone. They're not supposed to be."

In March, Tennessee Freemasons will meet to elect a new Grand Master and vote on changes to the constitution. One proposed amendment would remove the ban on homosexuality.

The writer of that amendment can't be there to argue a case for it, because the writer was Dennis Clark.

<http://wknofm.org>

Dialogue with Masons? Is There Any Point?

Some Cardinal named Ravasi has apparently called for dialogue with Freemasons. Here's a translation of the passage from his letter, provided by a reader of Rorate Caeli:

"...These various declarations on the incompatibility of the two memberships in the Church or in Freemasonry, do not impede, however, dialogue, as is explicitly stated in the German Bishops' document that had already listed the specific areas of discussion, such as the communitarian dimension, works of charity, the fight against materialism, human dignity and knowledge of each other.

"Further, we need to rise above that stance from certain Catholic integralist spheres, which – in order to hit out at some exponents even in the Church's hierarchy who displease them – have recourse to accusing them apodictically of being members of Freemasonry. In conclusion, as the German Bishops wrote, we need to go beyond reciprocal "hostility, insults and prejudices" since "in comparison to past centuries the tone and way of manifesting [our] differences has improved and changed" even if they [the differences] still remain in a clearly defined way."

So, he's saying that it's still true that Catholics are not allowed to be Masons, but that it's okay to talk to Masons, and that since some decent people of good will are Masons, maybe we can find some stuff in common if we spend time with them. And then he's saying, "And for goodness sake, please don't just go, 'Oh, really? Are you sure you're not a Mason, Cardinal???' because we can do better than that."

In response, the internet said, "Oh, really? Are you sure you're not a Mason, Cardinal???"

But the part that has me really scratching my head is this:

There is widespread contempt for the word "dialogue." Errrrrrbody hates dialogue. We all know that dialogue is squishy, meaningless, effeminate twaddle that impotent progressives favor because they're too limp-wristed to handle the truth.

Dialogue is for camp counselors and Episcopalians. Dialogue doesn't do anything. It's pointless, and is never effective.

This is the first argument that gets trotted out every time someone says "dialogue." The second argument that turns up, hand-in-hand with the first one, is this:

But! Pope Leo XIII denounced Catholics who become Freemasons! He used the strongest terms possible to warn us away from becoming entangled with this pernicious threat!

So I'm left wondering: If dialogue is really so meaningless and ineffective, what could possibly be the danger of having a dialogue with Freemasons? Pope Leo XIII is pretty clearly denouncing becoming a Freemason, and wants to keep Freemasonry out of the Church. Okay, so don't be a Freemason. Cardinal Ravasi, like Leo XIII, is also saying, "Don't be a Freemason" -- and he's saying: also, don't be such an "integralist" that you persuade yourself that Freemasons are subhuman, because they're not. Dun dun dunnnn.

It's lazy and obnoxious to automatically dismiss dialogue as liberal nonsense. "Dialogue" just means meeting with someone and being willing to talk and listen. When St. Francis met with the Muslim Sultan Malik Al-Kamil of Egypt, that was "dialogue." When Pope Benedict XVI met with Fidel Castro, that was "dialogue." When he met with Obama, that was "dialogue."

Dialogue just means meeting, talking, and listening. Sometimes it does some good, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it's fruitful, sometimes it's not. Sometimes it does lead to dangerous entanglements, and we have to be careful that we don't open ourselves up so much that we allow harmful influences in; but sometimes it leads to better understanding, an increase in love, and yes, conversion of heart on both sides -- or at least a small movement toward conversion. It's a matter of prudence, and we need to know when to draw the line, when to be more open, and when to be more guarded.

I understand the instinctive dislike of the word "dialogue." I really do. It sounds like felt banners and burlap vestments and liturgical silliness. Well, get over it! We're adults, and we can think past our first visceral response. It is childish and incestuously vain to imagine that dialogue, as an idea, has no place in Catholicism. My friends, when I go into the confessional and tell Jesus my sins, and He tells me, "I forgive you," that is dialogue. Dialogue just means making contact. We are all in need of contact with God -- and, with very few exceptions, God comes to us through the mediation of other people.

Dialogue is not all we need. Just pure communication is not an end in itself. But it's a start, and if we refuse to start, how can we expect to finish?

All of life on earth is a kind of dialogue. Breathing in and breathing out is a kind of dialogue, and when we refuse to do this, how far will we get? When we refuse to engage in dialogue with other people, whether they're Masons or Muslims or Communists or public school kids or homosexuals or the Son of the Living God, then we are dead.

<http://www.ncregister.com>

Malay groups threaten to derail international Freemason meet in Penang

GEORGE TOWN, Feb 18 — Several Malay groups in Penang said they will block an international Freemasons conference scheduled to be held here next week if authorities do not do so.

The groups including Gabungan Perwakilan Melayu, Persatuan Muslimim Pulau Pinang, Perwira and Persatuan Muka Buku Pulau Pinang also lodged nine police reports today against the Scottish Masonic Conference.

“After looking through their website about the conference and although they have been in our country for a long time, we still feel uneasy and uncomfortable with such an international conference to be held here in Penang,” said Mohd Hafiz Mohd Nordin, chairman of the Jaringan Muslimim Pulau Pinang which is an umbrella body for 13 Malay non-governmental organisations.

He claimed the Freemasons were linked to Zionists and propagated “evil conspiracy theories against Islam and Muslims”.

He further claimed that the organisation was masquerading as a welfare movement, but could have a “secret agenda that even the media are unable to reveal”. No evidence was provided to support any of the allegations.

“We want the police to investigate the conference, to find out what it is about, to check if the organiser is a registered society, to find out their activities here and why they chose to hold it here in Penang and at the Bayview Beach Resort,” he said, adding that they also want the police to investigate if the hotel had any links to the organisation.

In his police report, he urged the police to stop the conference if it posed a threat to the harmony of the society especially if it causes discomfort and uneasiness among Muslims.

“If the police don’t stop them, we will stop the conference because we do not want it to be held here,” he said.

The four-day Scottish Masonic Conference, to be attended by Freemasons from 15 countries worldwide, is scheduled to be held from February 24 to 27.

Two days ago, a senior member of the organiser, the District Grand Lodge of the Middle East (DGLME), rejected allegations that the organisation is part of the Illuminati.

He told Malay Mail Online that the DGLME was a registered society consisting of professionals such as lawyers and doctors and that the organisation is a charity and self-development organisation like the Rotary Club.

Last week, Umno Youth executive council member Armand Azha Abu Hanifah labelled the conference as an “Illuminati agenda” by the Freemasons on his blog.

He called on Islamic groups to rally against the conference here and also demanded that the state government stop the conference.

Freemasonry is a collection of diverse worldwide fraternities that started out as local groups for stonemasons, steeped in rituals and symbolisms.

It has been linked to the Illuminati in a conspiracy theory of a secret group of masterminds allegedly controlling world affairs and trying to establish a New World Order, although there is no evidence suggesting such a group exists.

Some Muslims oppose Freemasonry, claiming that it is linked to Jews, Zionists, Satan worship, and even linking it to Dajjal, the purported anti-Christ in Islamic tradition.

Freemasons worldwide are divided by districts, and DGLME is among the 26 District Grand Lodges under the main organisation, Grand Lodge of Scotlands — with jurisdiction over 22 lodges in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

DGLME started operations in Kuala Lumpur in 1916, bringing together three lodges in then Malaya — Lodge Scotia in Penang, Lodge Tullibardine in Kuala Lumpur, and Lodge Malay in Klang.

Besides DGLME, there also exists the District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago under a different movement, the United Grand Lodge of England, dating back to Penang's founding by Francis Light in 1786.

www.themalaymailonline.com/

Undeterred by small turnout, 20 'red-shirts' protest Freemason conference

GEORGE TOWN, Feb 25 — Despite numbering only 20, a Malay group calling itself Gerakan Merah is demonstrating outside the Bayview Beach Resort in Penang's touristy Ferringhi belt, demanding the cancellation of an international Freemason conference that is underway inside.

Dressed in red T-shirts, the demonstrators have been shouting "Allahu Akhbar" as they gathered in front of the hotel entrance under watch from several policemen on duty.

"They are Jews and anti-Islam, they must respect us and stop this conference," several members of the group shouted, referring to the Freemasons.

They were earlier barred from entering the hotel by the police, but insisted they would not disperse until the conference is called off.

They also demanded a meeting with the hotel manager to make clear why the Freemason conference must not go on.

One of the protesters, president Jaringan Melayu Malaysia Azwanddin Hamzah, accused Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng of sponsoring the event.

"We want the Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng to explain if the DAP state government is the one sponsoring this event," he said.

Azwanddin labelled the Freemasons as Jews, anti-Islam and the group that started wars against Muslims.

"They are also the ones supportive of the LGBT," he claimed, referring to the lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders," he added.

www.themalaymailonline.com/

Officers for 2015-2016

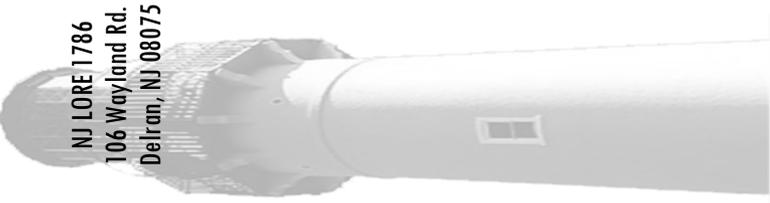
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From the Editor's Desk.....

The next Trestleboard will be published on or about June 1, 2016. We are always looking for articles. All articles must be submitted by May 15, 2016.

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New Jersey Lodge of Masonic
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