

# Trestleboard

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*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, December 12, 2009 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**

Most of the research done at the NJ Lodge of Research (and Education) is historical research. We do not limit ourselves to history, but few papers have ever been presented on other aspects of Masonic research. I think it is appropriate that we call ourselves LORE, since lore – as in ‘lore and legend’ – is essentially a story, and the practice of history is itself an act of storytelling. But unlike legendary stories, history purports to be an account of actual facts or truth. Well written history is more than just a string of simple facts. These facts must somehow explain the present, or at least connect in some way with an audience in the present. Otherwise, what passes for history is just the mind-numbing collection of names and dates that generations of bored high school students have complained that they are forced to memorize and regurgitate, then promptly forget. So what is it that makes the act of historical storytelling at all satisfying to either author or audience? This is a question I have been pondering lately.

There are some authors who aim to do no more than make their subject seem alive and believable to an audience in the present. They can have their audience identify with the people in the situation, and see themselves in it. At its best, history of this sort is enjoyable and entertaining, and worthwhile as such. I sometimes wish I could write history like that. Such history is often informative, but no matter how accurate and well researched it may be, its value is essentially as entertainment, with no more meaning than if it was entirely fictional.

History of the more meaningful sort is storytelling that can illuminate the present, either by explaining what is taken for granted in present day human affairs, or by providing commentary on similar recent events. The danger with this sort of ‘history with a viewpoint’ is that the lessons, comparisons, and explanations it draws may often be no more than rationalizations and justifications of present political actions and conflicts. All conflicts between nations or peoples, both historical and current, have an attendant view of history that supports their actions. Very different stories can be told about the same ‘facts’ or events, depending on which side of the conflict you are on. Indeed, a person’s view of the



present is largely shaped by their view of the past. The current disharmony in the Middle-East is a perfect example, as is the vastly different stories about the same events as told by Fox News compared to MSNBC. All societies, therefore, feel compelled to insure that their own versions of history are presented to their young as 'the truth'.

History is storytelling. The same historical events can have different meanings to different people depending on the story, or history, by which they already view their world. So how is the historian able to accomplish his intended purpose of accounting for a series of events in a chain of cause and effect that 'really happened' if events have no inherent meaning or connection apart from the story told about those events? Even the historian himself has his own historical narrative through which he filters and selects the events he wishes to account for. How is objectivity even possible?

It strikes me that the pursuit of objective history involves several elements. First and foremost, the historian must acknowledge that he has his own filters, even if he is not aware of all of them, and approach his subject so far as he is able with a willingness to have his previous understanding completely overturned. The second technique is to suspend judgment and dispense with any notion of finding heroes and villains. Otherwise the attempted history inevitably becomes a mere rationalization and objectivity may be entirely compromised. This leads to the third technique, which is to attempt to understand the stories and motivations of the participants in the events that are the historian's subject. Just as the historian himself views historical events through his own filters, so did the actors and participants in those events have their own stories and interpretations of those same events that led them to take further actions, and so move along the chain of events. In many respects this is the highest aim of the historian's art, and is the point where history as entertainment merges with history as explanation.

Fraternally,

*Ben Hoff*

Worshipful Master

### **LODGE HAPPENINGS...**

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

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

Logic, as one of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, was a course routinely taught in colleges and universities during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and even into modern times. But today, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, with the possible exception of its connection to geometry, Logic is not taught as a discipline .

Perhaps this is what politicians want.

A syllogism is an argument with two statements and a conclusion. Perhaps you are familiar with this syllogism: All dogs have four legs. I have a pet dog. Therefore my pet dog has four legs.

Candidate A might use a syllogism like this: All dogs have four legs. My opponent, Candidate B, says his pet has four legs--but Candidate B doesn't own a dog! Therefore Candidate B is a liar!"

Most people capable of rational thought would respond with a head-snapping "What?" Most of Candidate A's supporters, who are rational, would roll their eyes and chalk up the statement to exuberance of the campaign.

But Candidate A's hardcore supporters, who are also rabidly anti-Candidate B, would respond, "Yea! Candidate B's a liar!" This is what gets the headlines. This is what the media talk about. This powers Candidate A's campaign.

These hardcore supporters, on their own and without additional evidence--and therefore without logic--will take their hatred of Candidate B from "Candidate B doesn't own a dog" to "Candidate B hates dogs" to "Candidate B is a puppy killer."

This will bring howls of protest from supporters of Candidate B, so Candidate A will pretend to mollify the supporters by saying something like, "To the best of my knowledge Candidate B doesn't kill puppies," and Candidate A's hardcore supports would take that as reinforcement of their claim that Candidate B does indeed kill puppies because why would the subject be brought up if it wasn't true?

Candidate B would respond by getting the support of the Tri-State League of Cat Lovers, even though it doesn't logically follow that his non-dog four-legged pet is a cat.

Another way politicians use



**Logic: another thing that penguins aren't very good at.**

illogic is in their political advertisements. An ad from Candidate B might say "Candidate A is a thief/ is incompetent/ pals around with piccolo players. Therefore vote for Candidate B."

But even if any or all the claims are true about Candidate A it doesn't logically follow that you must vote for Candidate B. Candidate B could also be all those things. Or he could be other bad things--after all, he is being accused of being a lying puppy killer.

And there are other reason a non-vote for Candidate A is not automatically a vote for Candidate B. There could be a Candidate C. Or the voters could decide to not vote.

Come election night, the pundits will discuss the importance of the anti-cat pro-piccolo player vote and what anything in the campaign had to do with the office the candidates were running for--or was it just another campaign full of distracting illogical issues?

Ray Thorne,  
Senior Warden

P.S. While I mentioned several examples of how candidates use illogic, it does not logically follow from these examples that politicians do not want Logic courses taught in school.

## **From the South**

**Bro. J.R. Avanti, Junior Warden**

Brethren;

"As the Sun in the South at Meridian"

Where ever your Sun is in your life, do you maintain a warm and friendly outlook? Does Brotherly Love Abound in your dealings with yourself and all mankind?

We can always work to improving ourselves and our fair dealings with others, especially the brethren!

Do we view the lodge room half empty? Or do you take pleasure in those brothers who make the effort to attend on a regular basis? And attempt to remember their names as we greet each other.

Masonic communication is an ongoing living thing that warmth of Brotherly Love that can make a man feel welcomed and gladhe became a member in the greatest fraternity in the world.

Let us all look forward to our meeting in December and greet each other as brothers on a path of light that is unfolding with the assistance of one another.

Sincerely With Brotherly Love,

J.R. Avanti

Junior Warden

## Grammar and Ritual

**Bro. Ben Hoff, Worshipful Master**

When I was a recently raised Master Mason visiting other lodges in my area, I made the acquaintance of an English teacher whose pet peeve about masonry - we all have one, don't we? - was the supposedly atrocious grammar of the ritual. He lamented that the Grand Lodge didn't fix it: "Preserving what we received is one thing, but why preserve something that is wrong!" I often recalled his comments over the years as I pursued my inquiries about where our ritual came from, and how it got to be the way it is. One of the things I learned about our ritual is that notions similar to that held by my grammarian brother were in fact one of the driving forces behind how our ritual acquired its current form. Various Masonic ritual reformers thought the ritual they had received was inelegant or outdated or incomplete or complicated or corrupted or some other variant of the word 'wrong', and used their perception of this wrongness to guide their 'correction' of the work. In their own minds, they were seeking to preserve and enhance the essence of freemasonry and its symbolism, but the results were invariably something new.

While certainly not the first such reformer, William Preston (active from the 1770's to 1790's) was perhaps the most extensive exemplar of this process. Curiously enough, among some Masonic historians, Preston is considered to be a conservator of ritual. This opinion is based on his self-serving justification in the introduction to his 'Illustrations of Masonry' where he describes how he and a cadre of like minded friends visited as many lodges as they could to collect examples of ritual - this in the days before anyone even thought of a standardized ritual - out of which he refined his material. The conventional wisdom was that Preston's work was long and tedious because he packed in too much material, using the best of the best of everything he had collected. When researchers unearthed Preston's actual lectures in the late 20th century, it became apparent that the length of Preston's lectures had as much to do with his padding the work with complicated transitions and unnecessary dialogue. He invented the Masonic practice of never using one word when three would do. He was also quite free with rearranging material. For instance, he took the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, which older lectures used to explain why seven formed an EA lodge, and promoted them to the FC lecture. He appears to have taken the symbols he found in the various lectures he had collected, recombined them in novel ways, and explained them in wording entirely of his own creation.

Why did he do this? As he explains in that same introduction, he thought that the lectures had degenerated since King Solomon's day, so he took it upon himself to restore them to a level of elegance worthy of King Solomon. It apparently never entered his head that the lecture material of his day was rough and coarse by his standards because it did not come from Solomon, but rather English sources of an earlier age before English grammar and usage was codified and standardized along the lines of ancient Greek or Latin literature by classicists scholars in the century leading up to his own time. So in fixing the grammar, he was

led to fixing the story. But truth be told, masons of the time liked what he did, despite most of it being innovation.

Following Preston's lead, 19th century innovators further elevated the language of Masonic ritual. The Rev. Dr. George Oliver, an English mason quite influential on both sides of the Atlantic in the period after the Morgan Affair, was also a proponent of fancy ritual. He argued that Masonry was the ideas it contained, not the particular wording that expressed those ideas. If Masonry was to continue to appeal to worthy and educated men, it must perforce reflect the rising level of polish and elegance that such men equated with worthwhile endeavors. A similar argument was made by the American Jeremy Cross, a student of Thomas Webb, and the particular inventor of the ritual we use in New Jersey. He was challenged by some fellow masons about his invention of Hiram's memorial (broken column, weeping virgin, etc.). It wasn't really masonry, they said, so why did he add it? Cross tried to evade whether his innovation was masonry, but argued that it was good for the Craft to think that such a paragon as Hiram had a memorial suitable for his station. It set a good example, and reassured the brethren. Specious arguments to my mind, but again, the popularity of his invention cannot be denied.

Times and masons continue to change. Nowadays, fancy wording and complicated, stylized procedures are not appreciated as they once were. And standards of grammar and usage continue to change. Only now the particular appeal of Masonry in many quarters is its antiquity. Preston's complicated prose that sounds like the Declaration of Independence is valued as a token of antiquity. The long form proficiency which we no longer use contained even older material that continues to show through despite being updated for grammar. ("Where was you made a Mason" became "Where were you...") Many new brothers feel they have missed something by not being required to know them, although they are equally relieved of the burden at the same time. And so it goes. Innovation and conservation along through time. Too bad I will not live to hear what has become of our ritual in 500 or a thousand years time.

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, December 12, 2009 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

## It Came From the Internet

**Bro. Matt Korang, Secretary/Editor**

*(The following was reported on the website Rasta Livewire. It originated from a BBC report. Trust me, though, the Rastafarian view of the happens are much more entertaining. Misspellings have been left untouched from the website report.)*

### **Masonic Skull and Bones Busted By Fijian Villagers: Occult and Socerries – Rastalivewire Reports**

#### **Fiji freemasons held for sorcery**

Rastalivewire picked up fresh reports that some prominent Freemasons from Australia and New Zealand were busted and arrested as they practised some wicked occultist pale magic sorcery rituals in a remote part of Fiji Islands.

The group of freemasons spent a night in jail in Fiji, after local villagers complained they were practising witchcraft against them and seeking to channel their psychic energies and live blood to serve as sacrifice for the Masonic brotherhood.

They were at least 14 men apprehended by the villagers although many might have escaped in the ensuing confusion. These 14 men had been holding some secret power rituals at midnight on the Denerau Island one of the Islands of the Fijian archipelago.

Police recovered among other things, wands, broomsticks, compasses, coloured candles, magical scripts and some human skulls. The 14 men were promptly taken to jail where they spent the night before their power network of masonry brotherhood was able to spring into action and have them released the next day.

Yet, the cat had been let out of the bag. Someone finally busted the Freemasons and brought their mysterious practices to light.

#### **Freemasonry**

Freemasonry is a centuries-old club that practices secret rituals, sorceries of power domination. It has more than five million members worldwide. It is linked with other secret powerful global fraternities such as the illuminati, the Knights of the Hospital, and the Knights of Columbus.

It is a shadowy network of networks of very powerful of men, settled in the top tiers of politics, law, sciences, the academia, the media and the church. They are committed to “democratic ideals of science egalite, fraternity.”

But they are much more; they are the standing army of white supremacy and domination. They are sworn to the preservation by all means of the hegemony of the western civilization, another code word for the oppression, exploitation and deprivation of the earth’s indigenous peoples.

They say they stand for democracy but they meet at night times, exercising necromancy in secret places.

They appear grandfatherly, but they step gingerly. No one under the skies is safe from their conspiracy.

Many non-initiates the world over view them with suspicion despite their avowed philanthropic aims. Millions of people globally have been troubled, even dismayed by powers and influence linked with freemasonry.

Thus the Fijian villagers are not the first to puzzle over such Freemasonry's rituals. But they might be the very first in this world to have busted up a freemason meeting and revealed their tools of sorceries and witchcraft to the eyes of an unbelieving world.



*And Fijians are scared of OUR ritual?*

### **Nothing Sinister**

One of the freemasonry lodge members from New Zealand who refused to give his name told reporters that he had spent a “wretched” time in jail, and blamed what he called the “dopey village people” for the embarrassing bust. Nothing sinister was going on, he claimed, but “such is the nature of life in Fiji”.

The New Zealander told reporters that the masonic's late-night meeting was “interrupted by a banging on the door, and there were these village people and the police demanding to be let in”. They were then taken to a nearby police station and were interrogated why they had been practising sorcery.

The freemasons insist they had a permit for the meeting.

They were then locked up in jail overnight by the police under their emergency powers. Emergency regulations imposed by Fiji's military regime allow police to detain people for up to 48 hours without charge.

### **Enter the Office of Prime Minister**

The men were all released after spending an uncomfortable and humiliating night in jail. They were all released pursuant to direct orders emanating from the Office of the Prime Minister of Fiji.

Yet, their busted sorcery rituals have cast an unwelcome spotlight on the activities and the secret rituals of the freemasonry lodges scattered all over the world.

Police director of operations Waisea Tabakau told reporters in Fiji that the group was still being investigated for “allegedly practising sorcery”.

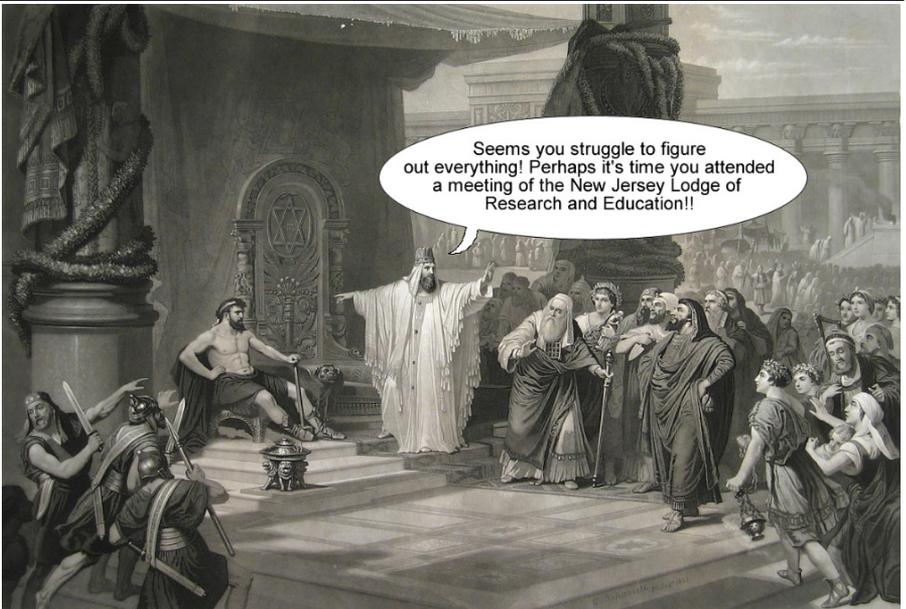
Rastalivewire Reports

Sources- The Fiji Village website

BBC @ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8153159.stm>

## **MASONIC TRIVIA AND FACTS**

Benjamin Franklin was 'Raised' in St. John's Lodge in Philadelphia on 24th June 1731; became Master in 1732; Grand Master in 1734 and Provincial Grand Master of the Moderns in 1749. His printing press on which he printed and published in 1734 the first Masonic books in American [that of Anderson's Constitutions] is now in the Smithsonian Institute.



*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 December 12, 2009 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!!!***

**Grand Master of Masons of the State of New Jersey**

M.W. William H. Berman

45 LaCosta Drive

Blackwood, NJ 08012

(W) 609-239-3971

E-Mail: [gmnj0910@yahoo.com](mailto:gmnj0910@yahoo.com)

## Officers for 2009-2010

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

### *From the Editor's Desk.....*

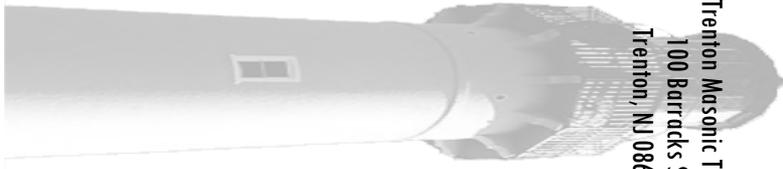
*Next Trestleboard will be published on or about March 1, 2010. We are always looking for articles. All articles must be submitted by February 15, 2010.*

*Matthew Korang, PM, 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](http://njlore1786.org)**