

# Trestleboard

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

June 2009

*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 13, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at:**

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

*All Master Masons are Welcome!*



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the East 2

From the West 4

It Came From  
the Internet 5&6

## From the East

**Bro. Ben Hoff, Worshipful Master**

I find it especially satisfying to read something which I thought was completely unrelated to Freemasonry only to find myself stumbling across something that relates directly to what the fraternity is supposed to be about. In this case I was reading Arthur Herman's *'How the Scots Invented the Modern World'* which describes how the ideas and experiences of the Scots in the early 1700's – the same time that our Fraternity was assuming its current form – led to the completely modern way of thinking about the world that we all take so much for granted today that we are hardly aware of these ideas and assumptions.

For instance, there is the ultimate unity of belief and science (*the universe is the temple of the deity whom we serve...*). That men are made to be social creatures, learning to balance our generous with our selfish impulses by social interaction, so that our rougher parts are polished like worked stones. That knowledge and education can liberate us from subservience to our passions and appetites. All of these notions, so familiar to us from our rituals, were all a part and parcel of the Scottish Enlightenment. They were formulated and expressed by some of the most influential men of that age, who devised social structures and organizations on the basis of these beliefs. And nowhere in that book is the word 'Freemasonry' mentioned at all, even though I thought I was reading a commentary on Masonic lectures!

All of a sudden I realized that the statement that Freemasonry was founded by wise and virtuous men with the praiseworthy design of recalling to our minds the most solemn truths in the midst of the most innocent social pleasures, might not be just a platitude, but perhaps rather an accurate description!

Many of us involved in Masonic research are rather inclined to look to the mystical and esoteric as the sources of inspiration for the fraternity, and perhaps its organizational precursors as well. The notion that the fraternity was formed as a pure social club, and with no more purpose than conviviality does not sit well with most of us, even myself, who is one of the least mystically inclined among our

*(Continued on page 3)*

circle. It strikes us as incongruous that so much effort, engagement, and complexity of symbolism contributed by so many members could possibly be motivated by mere meaningless sociability. On the other hand, esoteric based theories of origin, whether Templars or hermeticists or others, suffer not only from a lack of evidence, but also a bad fit of what evidence as does exist. Esoteric elements are combined from a number of sources and traditions, plucked seemingly at random and without any underlying unity of thought or organization.

This purposefully social aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment, with its higher purpose of making good men better through social interaction could be the missing link we have been searching for that explains the ultimate motivation for the fraternity's formation in the correct time and place. This social aspect of enlightenment thought has long been overlooked by later historians, who have tended to focus on the scientific and political aspects of that time. Something finally makes sense.

Fraternally,

*Ben Hoff*

Worshipful Master

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

NJ LORE No. 1786's next meeting will be held at the Trenton Temple on Saturday June 13th at 9:30 a.m.

This month we have three interesting topics presented by our distinguished Brethren. Brother Jeff Alexander will give a presentation on the Crescent Shrine—Then and Now

Brother Val Korsniak will present his review of the Masonic Library and Museum Association.

Of course, the Worshipful Master will present something the will leave us contemplating Freemasonry in a whole new way.

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**

One of the major aims of Masonry--one could claim the only aim--is to better know God. What about improving one's self, or practicing charity, or... Well, yes, a stated aim of Masonry is self improvement; being nicer to others is aiming towards the unobtainable goal of perfection--which is a striving to be more Godlike.

One way of trying to understand the Deity is, of course, reading the Bible, the rule and guide for our faith and practice. This is, unfortunately, today the only way most people consider attempting to understand the Great Creator.

But our ritual also talks about studying the mysteries of science to revere the majesty of the Creator by a contemplation of His wondrous works. As someone in the 19<sup>th</sup> century once put it, and I have no idea if he was a Mason, "...the laws of nature, which are the thoughts of God..."

The concept of better understanding the Deity by a study of the physical world started in the Renaissance and continued through the beginning of the last century. Over this period, the emphasis shifted from scientific enquiry, called natural philosophy, as a minor adjunct to the teachings of the Church to a discipline totally divorced from--and even ignoring or distaining--religion.

The two disciplines parted ways because, to oversimplify, being fixated on different problems they ask different questions. Science asks the how of something and studies its physical reactions. Religion asks the why of something and studies its spiritual meanings.

The answer you get depends on the question you ask. Quite often the two disciplines have decided that since they have reached different answers, their conclusion is right and the other side is wrong. They are too focused on their side of the coin to even acknowledge that the coin has another side.

To paraphrase Galileo, God wrote two books, one is how to go to Heaven, the other is how the heavens go. A Mason should be familiar with both books.

## It Came From the Internet

Bro. Matt Korang, Secretary/Editor

### Ex-Porn Star To Arouse Italian Freemasonry

(Found on <http://freemasonsfordummies.blogspot.com>)

Less than a year ago in her autobiography "Per amore e per forza" ("By Love and Strength"), 57 year old Ilona Staller told about her life with the challenge of achieving decency and finding true love. Today the former Mrs. Cicciolina (the first porn star elected to parliament) and former spy in the pay of the Hungarian secret service, returns to talk about herself after the special offer that comes from the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy, the only Italian Masonry recognized by the English.

A high ranking officer in the Lodge - Grand Secretary Sergio Facchini, spokesman for the Grand Master Fabio Venzi, confirmed the meeting with Ilona Staller in the Zen Restaurant in Rome, "only to evaluate her hypothetical entry into Masonry, and nothing else." If Cicciolina really becomes a Mason, it would be a small revolution within the so-called Freemasons. Being part of the English network, Italian Masonry is not to admit women. This certainly applies to the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy, while elsewhere, openness to women is greater.

Removing Masonry from the museum - According to Facchini, Masonry is "going through a dark period that sees itself as a huge museum remembering old glories. Freemasons are no longer like those of the past, who if not on the public stage were members of the bar." The commitment of the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy is to remain at the forefront of culture, so who knows what will happen if Cicciolina is admitted to the order.

Dreams of Ilona - Pending the Masonic response, Staller records her dreams in her autobiography. She writes, "I wanted to become an archaeologist or a violinist: it sounded good. But things have gone well, basically. I have been used by others, but I also, consciously, used my body for my own purposes."



## It Came From the Internet II

Bro. Matt Korang, Secretary/Editor

# The New Generation of Freemasonry

By Adam Tschorn, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer May 18, 2008

IN LOS FELIZ, across from a 7-Eleven on North Vermont Avenue, a few dozen men in their early 20s to late 80s share a dinner behind closed doors. Some wear full tuxedos with bow ties and jeweled cuff links, some have shoulder-length hair, and others wear open-collared shirts that reveal the slightest filigree of tattoo arching across their chests.

Over Italian food, retired lawyers and judges sit elbow-to-elbow with owners of scrap metal yards and vintage clothing boutiques. They hold forth on philosophy, the weather; they rib each other and joke about saving room for cannoli. As they reach for seconds, they reveal skull-cracking rings emblazoned with a compass and a square.

Meet the millennial Masons. As secret societies go, it is one of the oldest and most famous. Its enrollment roster includes Louis Armstrong and Gerald Ford, and it has been depicted in movies such as "The Da Vinci Code" and "National Treasure." Once more than 4 million strong (back in the 1950s), it has been in something of a popularity free-fall ever since. Viewed with suspicion as a bastion of antiquated values and forced camaraderie, the Masons have seen membership rolls plummet more than 60% to just 1.5 million in 2006.

Only now the trend seems to be reversing itself, and nowhere more noticeably than in Southern California. The reasons seem clear. In another Masonic Hall, this one on La Cienega, a Sri Lankan-born banker, a sunglasses-wearing Russian immigrant and a continent-hopping Frenchman break bread, poke at their salads and chat about



*Jonathan Kanarek, owner of a men's vintage clothing boutique called Everything's Jake, displays a tattoo that includes the Masonic symbols of a compass and square. Another tattoo on his back references the three pillars of Freemasonry: strength, wisdom and beauty.*

(Continued on page 7)

their health.

“For a time it looked as if Masonry was going into a sharp decline, if not the death throes,” said UCLA history professor Margaret C. Jacob, who has written extensively about the fraternal order. “But it looks like it may be making a comeback.”

That’s because the Freemasons, whose tenets forbid soliciting or recruiting members, have enthusiastically embraced the Internet as a way to leverage curiosity about an organization with its roots in Europe’s medieval stonemasons guilds. Freemasonry today sees itself as a thinking man’s salon, a learned society with a philanthropic bent.

“We had a record number of new members last year,” said Allan Casalou, grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of California. “We added 2,000 men, which is the most since 1998 and our seventh straight year of membership increases.”

And, to paraphrase that Oldsmobile campaign, these definitely aren’t your father’s Freemasons. They are bar owners, male models and olive-oil brokers. They are men like Zulu, an L.A. tattoo artist with



*New or old, one hallmark of Freemasonry fashion is a penchant for rings, usually in a precious metal and bearing a version of the square and compass logo. Here Zulu, left, Jonathan Kanarek and Daemon Hillin show off their Masonic bling.*

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Continued from page 7)*

a swirling Maori-inspired design inked across his face and a panoply of metal piercing his ears, nose and face. They are men like Jonathan Kanarek, who runs a men's vintage clothing store on Hollywood Boulevard and whose retro chic wardrobe of polka-dot ascots, glen-plaid jackets and smartly pressed pocket squares earned him a spot on Esquire magazine's 2007 list of best-dressed real men in America. And they are men like Daemon Hillin, whose surfer-dude looks and blinding white smile can be found on Japanese TV, where he plays sidekick and comic foil to the Japanese version of the Hilton sisters.

They are also all men who want to be part of an all-for-one and one-for-all brotherhood built on shared ideals, philosophical pursuits and a penchant for rings, aprons and funny hats. As Zulu bluntly put it: "I joined because I was looking for people to hang with that were like-minded but also hip and cool, and a lot of tattoo artists tend to be drunks and druggies."

Hillin, who originally joined the Masons in Temecula, moved to L.A. and is interested in the Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge No. 307, one of the youngest and most diverse congregations in the state (the average age of active brothers is just 33). The lodge's senior deacon, Jim Warren, calls it " 'Star Trek' without the chicks." "We have every possible national origin, ethnicity and religious denomination you could imagine," he said.

Warren credits the Internet. "We were one the first lodges in the state to have a website up," he said. "That led to a huge spike in membership."

Other lodges followed suit, putting up their own sites and drawing a crowd. That's how prospective Mason Johnny Royal ended up at the door of Elysian Lodge No. 418 last month. Intrigued by the distinctive Masonic architecture that graces most halls, the 31-year-old publicist with sideburns to his chin and hair to his shoulders and a Renaissance lute player tattoo on his right forearm hit the Web.

What he read about the Masonic ideals — wisdom, strength, beauty and the pursuit of knowledge — made him decide to pursue membership. "My generation wants to be part of something beyond itself," Royal said. "I want to learn; I want to participate."

### **The Web generation**

THE INTERNET hasn't only made it easier to learn about the Freemasons, Casalou says, it's changed the type of men coming forward. "There is so much information on the Internet that by the time

*(Continued on page 10)*

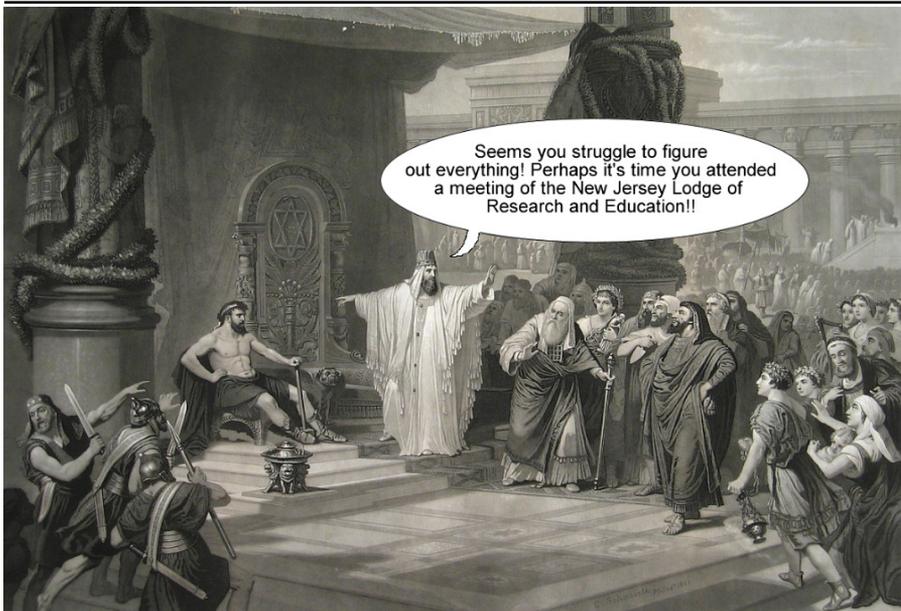
Brethren,

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 13, 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
- Lunch and Fraternal Discussion

Officer's Dress – Business Attire



*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 13, 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!!!***

*(Continued from page 8)*

someone comes to a lodge to seek membership, they already know a lot about Masonry," he said. "Which is a big departure from previous generations. And it means they are more likely to be active participants."

Zulu became curious about Freemasonry after tattooing Masonic symbology on several clients. He joined five years ago at age 39 and now serves as webmaster and senior warden of North Hollywood Lodge No. 542. He has also gone on to become both a Scottish Rite Mason and Shriner (Masonic membership is a prerequisite for both), and next year he will become the leader of his lodge. "I'll be the first black worshipful master in the lodge's history," he said, using the proper term of respect.

But he probably won't be the last. Because California's contingent of Freemasons is expected to grow, the average age of its members, once 71 and now 65, is expected to drop. By 2018, as Casalou predicts, the state will be awash in 55-year-old pre-retirement Masons giving each other secret handshakes, wearing ritual aprons and invoking the Grand Architect of the Universe.

The Internet continues to help. Zulu said that he gets at least four e-mails a week from prospective Masons around the globe who see his tattooed and pierced visage at the lodge website and want to be reassured such an alternative look isn't a barrier to membership.

"Yeah, I think it's going to become hip and chic to be a Mason," Zulu said. "And that could be a dangerous thing."

(This was found on <http://warofillusions.wordpress.com>)



*In addition to his Masonic ring and several tattoos with Masonic motifs, Zulu also sports a skull ring and carries a skull-topped walking stick.*

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

*Next Trestleboard will be published on or about September 1, 2009. We are always looking for articles. All articles must be submitted by August 15, 2009.*

*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!*

**We're On the  
Web!!  
[njlore1786.org](http://njlore1786.org)**