

Trestleboard

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2

June 2012

NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education

Celebrating 10 Years of Educating and Enlightening New Jersey Freemasons!

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 9, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. at:**

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

All Master Masons are Welcome!

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From the East

Bro. Raymond Thorne, Worshipful Master

Dear Brother,

How far away is the sun? A simple question, but one that took a long time to answer.

Astronomy no doubt had its origins when people noticed objects in the sky moved in a predictable way. In modern astronomy, the study of positions of celestial objects is called 'astrometry.'

The ancient Babylonians recorded the movements of the sun, moon and planets against the backdrop of fixed stars. They were the first to divide the circle into 360 degrees. They were apparently the first to recognize that planets moved along the zodiac and to divide the zodiac into twelve constellations of 30 degrees each.

It was the Ancient Greeks who turned observation into cosmology. Pythagoras (b. about 572 B.C.) was one of the first to say that the earth was round, apparently for philosophical reasons (his view of the world was spheres within spheres). But Anaximander (c. 611-546 B.C) said that earth is shaped like a stone pillar or a cylinder. He also said that the sun was the same size as the earth and its orbit around the earth was 27 or 28 times the size of the earth (sources vary) and that the moon's orbit was 19 times the size of the

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LODGE HAPPENINGS...

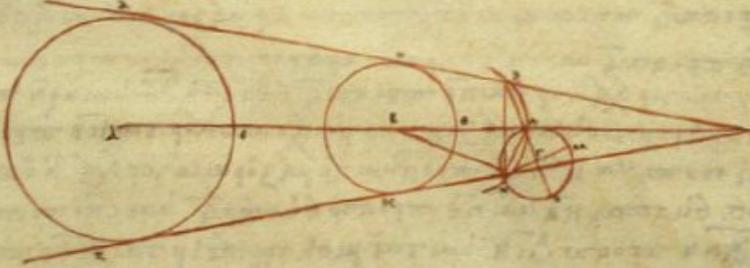
NJ LORE No. 1786's next meeting will be held at the Trenton Masonic Temple on Saturday June 9th, at 9:30 a.m.

On the Agenda:

- Short Business Meeting
- The Noodge, The Amulet and the Stairway
- Measuring the Distance to the Sun
- Discussion on the future home of NJ LORE.

Coffee and danish will be served prior to our meeting and Lunch will be served after. Members should make every effort to attend.

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Aristarchus of Samos (310 - 230 B.C.) was the first to propose a heliocentric (Sun-centred) model consistent with the Solar System

earth. For Anaxagoras (b. about 500 B.C.) the sun was as large (or larger, sources vary) than the Peloponnesus peninsula of Greece. He also said that the sun illuminates the moon and that lunar eclipses sometimes occur when the earth is between the sun and moon (and other times when a dark unseen body passes between the earth and moon).

But as time went on, certain things were codified. The earth was round and stationed in the center of the universe. Circling around the earth were, in increasing distance: the moon, Hermes (Mercury), Aphrodite (Venus)--both Mercury and Venus appear as the Morning Star and as the Evening Star--the sun, Ares (Mars), Zeus (Jupiter), Kronos (Saturn), and finally the fixed stars--which were not necessarily the same distance from earth, but they were all so far away that it seemed that way. This is the conclusion of Geminus, who lived perhaps in the 1st century B.C. The arrangement of the seven movable cosmic bodies was based on how long it took them to move through the signs of the zodiac. This is basically the view of the universe Ptolemy codified c. 150 A.D.

The diameter of the earth was also speculated upon. Aristotle said that some of his predecessors tried to prove the perimeter of the earth was about 300,000 stades (about 29,400 miles). But, giving no reason, he supposed the size was 3,000,000 stades. He then went on to say that the diameter of the earth was larger than the diameter of the moon, the diameter of the sun was

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greater than the diameter of the earth and the diameter of the sun is no greater than 30 times the diameter of the moon. He went on to say that the diameter of the sun is greater than $1/1,000$ the diameter of the outer sphere of the universe. (If you wish to compute this, be my guest!)

Ancient Greek author Cleomedes compared how two Greek mathematicians computed the circumference of the earth. Eratosthenes (276-192? B.C.) lived in Alexandria. He said that Syene was located on the same meridian as Alexandria, 5,000 stades to the south. When the sun is on the meridian at the summer solstice the gnomons (pointers) of sundials in Syene show no shadow, while gnomons in Alexandria do cast a shadow.

A straight line drawn from a gnomon in Syene down to the center of the earth and a similar line drawn from a gnomon in Alexandria will produce an angle. Eratosthenes assumed that the sun was so far away that its rays in Alexandria would be parallel to those in Syene, so any angle created by the sun's rays hitting the end of the gnomon in Alexandria would produce an angle congruent (same number of degrees) with the Alexandria-center of the earth-Syene angle.

By measurement, he found the shadow of a sundial in Alexandria on the summer solstice to be one fiftieth of a circle. Therefore, the distance of Alexandria to Syene, 5,000 stades, was one fiftieth the circumference of the earth, making the earth's circumference 250,000 stades. He later tweaked the number to 252,000, making the diameter equal to about 24,662 miles.

Cleomedes then wrote about Posidonus, c. 135-51 B.C.) who said that Rhodes and Alexandria were on the same meridian. On Rhodes, the star Canopus (Canopus) rises no higher than the horizon. But sail 5,000 stades to



Alexandria (sic) then the star at its meridian height was one quarter of a sign, or one forty-eighth of the zodiac above the horizon. This meant that the distance from Rhodes to Alexandria was one forty-eighth the circumference of the earth, that is the circumference of the earth was 240,000 stades, or about 23,500 miles.

But what of the original question, How far away is the sun? Aristarcus of Samos (c. 310-230 B.C., which means he died during Eratosthenes' lifetime) said that the sun was greater than 18 times, and less than 20 times the distance of the moon, and that their sizes had the same ratio, but apparently never computed actual distances. But what did Aristarchus know? He was labeled impious for saying the earth moves around the sun.

Hipparcus was an active astronomer between 161 and 126 B.C. He discovered the precession of the equinox, calculated the solar year to within 6½ minutes of today's value and the average lunar month to within 1 second of current calculations. But he said that the distance of the sun was 1,245 earth diameters. Using Eratosthenes' calculations, that would make the distance 30,704,640 miles. Using Posidonus' measurement the distance would be 29,242,500 miles.

And there things stood for about 1,300 years. Earth at the center of the universe and everything circling around it; the moon, sun, five planets, all the stars. Two different computations on the size of the world, both falsifiable although no one apparently tried. Several different guesses on the distance from the earth to the sun. Many conclusions, but few thought processes.

Then came Copernicus, who put the sun at the center of the universe and everything circling around it. This was followed by Tycho Brahe, who made extremely accurate and voluminous observations on the movements of celestial objects and came to the conclusion that the sun circles the earth, but everything else circles the sun.

And then the universe changed.

To be continued at our next meeting.

The Transactions of New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786

Volumes III & IV

2007-2010

**Will be arriving in your mailbox sometime this
summer! Keep an All-Seeing Eye out for it!**

Pulling Up Roots???

Bro. Val Korsniak , Treasurer

At the December LORE meeting there was discussion and direction to explore the possibilities of a more accommodating and user friendly location for our NJ LORE quarterly (or non-traveling) meetings. Hightstown - Apollo Lodge location became the prime target for our investigation. The target criteria based on finding a location that is mid-state from north/south & east/west with convenient access to a major transportation pipeline with ample parking.

On Friday 10 February 2012, I attended the monthly communication at Hightstown Apollo Lodge (in Hightstown, NJ) on a fact finding expedition. I found the lodge to be centrally located (if you discount the Cape May promontory). I feel a very slight northerly bias is justified considering the higher member density from the upper part of the state.

The lodge room is more than adequate to accommodate our purposes. The ceiling is lower than at the Trenton Temple, and it has no carpet, so it seems to be a little better acoustically. The seats are not the standard movie theater or box seating, they were actually individual chairs (padded) that you might find in an office break area or cafeteria. The building has plenty of room on the lower basement floor that is set up as their eating/social area with full service kitchen. This was originally the Grange Hall... now the Grange rents it from lodge.

There is sufficient parking on site, and no apparent security concerns in a very nice/friendly upbeat area. The building is located only a stones throw from the "downtown" commercial area with several restaurants, sandwich shops, etc. (and a Dunkin Donuts a mile away on Rt. 130), which may be convenient for either an after Lodge meal or for ordering our continental Breakfast/coffee and lunch in. It is also pleasantly located only minutes (less than a mile actually) from the NJ Turnpike exit 8. The lodge itself is clean, orderly and fairly basic (as are most lodge buildings). I forgot to ascertain if the building had an internet connection. In any case, all felt very user friendly, and based on this investigation, I thought it was superior in most ways to our Trenton home (and to the Lodge in North Brunswick). I would personally recommend this as a prime candidate for future LORE meetings.

I presented the above details at the March LORE meeting. Some brethren expressed that there were questions regarding our departure from usage of the Trenton Temple from either Mercer Lodge or Grand Lodge and that they wanted to discuss further. To date no one has bothered to contact me regarding this. In any case, I believe we are obligated to do what is best for LORE and our membership and to pursue the means to boost our attendance and participation. My intention will be to arrange the September LORE meeting at the Hightstown location for the lodge to form an opinion and to decide if this location is a more suitable option for the NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education.

This subject will most likely be discussed at the next NJ LORE meeting. Please keep an open mind. I hope everyone will do what is in the best interest of the Lodge be it we stay in Trenton or Move to another location. We all want the New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education to continue to flourish for the next 10 years!

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It Came from the Internet

Submitted by Bro. Matt Korang, Secretary

France: Where Freemasons Are Still Feared

Magazines and newspapers all have stories they run in one form or another, year in, year out. The details may differ, but the stories are largely the same everywhere, striking universal chords of sex, health, and money. A few of these perennials, however, don't travel. They drill deep into one country's psyche while everyone else scratches their head and says, "Huh?"

In France, the story that keeps coming back is about Freemasons. It's everywhere. Most big French magazines run at least one big Freemason cover a year. Books dissect the "state within a state," to borrow from a recent title. Blogs abound.

"France has several of these marronniers—chestnuts," says Alain Bauer, former grand master of France's Grand Orient lodge and president Nicolas Sarkozy's Masonic liaison. "There's real estate prices and there's how to cure headaches, and then there's Freemasons. The ultimate French magazine story is a Freemason with a headache who's moving. We don't like these stories, but at the same time, we love them, because they make us feel like we're still important."

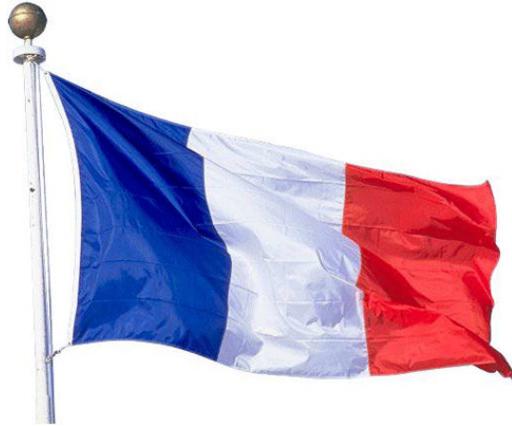
Huh? Yes, Freemasons: the old fraternal order known in the U.S. for the Masonic lodges that dot American cities, musty reminders of an era when Masonry stirred the American melting pot. Or for the arcane Masonic symbols engraved on every dollar bill. Or on a sillier note, for the Shriners in their red fezzes. (The Shriners were founded in the 1870s to add a little levity to regular Freemasonry. Mission accomplished.)

In France, though, there's nothing funny about Freemasons. The way the French see it, Masons are a fifth column at the heart of French society, a cabal of powerful politicians, businessmen, and intellectuals with a hidden agenda that is difficult to pin down because it's, well, hidden. Nobody knows quite what the Masons are up to, but everybody suspects they're up to something.

"Freemasons—How they manipulate the candidates," ran the cover line on the Jan. 10, 2012 issue of L'Express, one of France's three big newsweeklies. After several readings, the "how" and the "manipulate" parts remain unclear, and even Francois Koch, its author, admits that the headline is "completely exaggerated." Le Point, the second big newsweekly, followed in its Jan. 26 issue with "Freemasons—the infiltrators." The third weekly news magazine, Le Nouvel Observateur, got ahead of the game this election cycle: They ran their Masons-and-politics cover last August.

"The subject never fails to generate interest," says Koch. "It's the

mystery of it that attracts attention.” Koch’s cover story sold 80,000 copies on the newsstand, almost 10 percent more than L’Express’s average of 73,000 copies. “We always get at least average sales, and sometimes sales that are really big. It’s always a gamble worth taking.” Two years ago, Koch, who normally covers criminal justice, launched a blog devoted to Masonic matters.



The early Masons made enemies on all sides. The church branded them anti-Christians, the established political order branded them revolutionaries, and a lot of other people just found them elitist and creepy. This might have been expected. Any international brotherhood with secret handshakes and symbolic jewelry is begging to put its name on a conspiracy theory. The Masons have provoked many, right up to the Nazis, to decimate Masonry on the European continent.

In many ways, French Masonry has struck out on its own, ignoring the basic precepts of its Anglo-Saxon brethren and positioning itself as a counterweight to the deeply conservative Catholic and monarchist strains of French society. “Freemasonry has always had a political role in France,” says Pierre Mollier, director of archives at the Grand Orient de France, the country’s largest and most important lodge. “We would never tell people who to vote for, but we’re a moral authority.”

From 1880 to 1905, the Grand Orient battled the Catholic Church for the soul of France, and still considers the Third Republic its stepchild. “The Republican party took its support from the Freemasons—a third of the deputies were Masons,” says Mollier. “All of the Third Republic’s progressive legislation comes from here,” he says, pointing around him at the Grand Orient’s headquarters on the Rue Cadet. “The current presidential candidates all knocked on our door this year. For an English or an American Freemason, that’s just horrible!”

Adding insult to injury, in 1880 the Grand Orient removed all references to the divinity. Freemasons everywhere steer clear of organized religion, and they never talk about God. But they insist on a belief in what Masonic jargon calls the Grand Architect of the Universe, however each member may define it. Phooey, said the French. That’s just religion through the back door.

All this has helped make France’s 160,000 Masons pariahs in the modern Masonic world. The United Grand Lodge of England doesn’t

recognize two of the three big French lodges, the Grand Orient and the Grande Loge de France. It recently suspended recognition of the third big lodge, the Grande Loge Nationale Française, but mostly because internal bickering is tearing it apart from within.

“The French take a rather fluid attitude towards what we do,” says John Hamill, director of special projects for the United Grand Lodge of England. Responds Pierre Millier of the Grand Orient: “Do Protestants care if they’re recognized by the Pope? We just turn the other cheek.”

Jean-Claude Zambelli is a French government employee who has lived in the U.S. for 30 years. He first joined an American Masonic lodge in San Francisco. In 1996 he helped re-found the George Washington Union, a lodge patterned after and recognized by the Grand Orient. It is very French. God: no. Women members: yes.

“When we explain this to American Masons, they sometimes recoil physically,” says Zambelli. “It’s just not the same Masonry. They do more charitable work, like the big Shriner hospital in San Francisco. We do a lot more work on ourselves. We’re not a social club. We’re here to progress spiritually. Otherwise, what good is all this? The Americans are proud to be Masons and show you their Mason rings. We find that shocking.”

The French do indeed play their membership cards closer to the vest than other Masons. The heightened intrigue does much to keep them on magazine covers. It also convinces people that the Masons must have something to hide.

Occasionally, they do. Their shadowy networks, no-questions-asked eagerness to help brother Masons, and code of silence has made the lodges a breeding ground for shady business dealing—what the French call *affaire*. Membership in French lodges has quadrupled in the past 40 years—an astonishing increase. Recent growth has been fueled by unseemly recruitment drives, principally by the discredited Grande Loge Nationale Française as it battled the Grand Orient for influence. French Masonry was a chicken coop with a sign reading: “Welcome, foxes.”

“We have a hard time defending ourselves against the *affaires*,” says Jean-Claude Zambelli. “It’s very difficult to show bad faith toward a brother Mason. That has helped various mafia outfits hide behind Masonic networks.”



Sophie Coignard covers the Mason beat at *Le Point* magazine and wrote the book *A State Within A State*. “Most of the Masons I know are hyper-honest,” says Coignard. “But it’s also fair to say that in most of the big financial-political scandals of the past 20 years, you’ll find Freemasons.”

Coignard ticks off the Elf-Aquitaine African bribery scandal, the Paris housing projects

scandal in the 1990s, and now the Carlton affair—an ongoing investigation of a prostitution ring in Lille. “They’re mostly all Masons,” says Coignard of the Carlton’s ringleaders (Dominique Strauss-Kahn, also embroiled in the Carlton affair, is not a Mason.)

The solution, says journalist and author Eric Giacometti, is for French Masons to come out of the closet. It would help them clean house, and it would take the fun out of trying to peek through the closet keyhole.

Francois Koch of L’Express says we’re just giving the Freemasons free advertising, but we don’t care. I would tell the Freemasons, ‘Be proud of who you are—there were some extraordinary Freemasons.’ Nobody knows that story!”

Meanwhile, the French presses continue to churn. Sophie Coignard says she’s sniffing around another financial scandal with Masons at its heart. “When it comes to the Masons,” says Coignard, “I’m never at a loss for inspiration.”

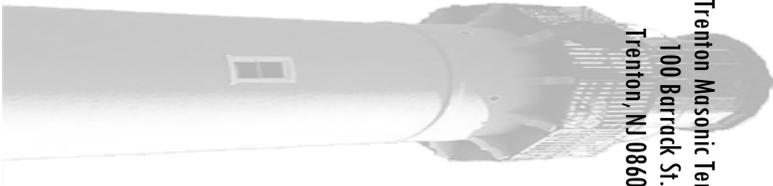
<http://www.businessweek.com>

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New Jersey Lodge of Masonic
Research and Education No. 1786

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*Bringing Light to New
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