

The Grand Lodge



Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons for the State of New Jersey

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My Brothers,

A few of you have reached out to the DDGMs of your districts, or to me personally when sending me copies of the postings, questioning why the Grand Lodge allows this so called "Lone Ranger" to continue to publish his defamatory lies. Recently he even tried to persuade you that the reason the Grand Master does not respond to his tauntings is that he is telling you the truth. In fact, he tends to capitalize and bold print, and repeat the word, "Truth", as if his repeating it and emphasizing it will somehow convince you that he was actually telling the truth, when he is not. Nothing could actually be further from the truth. Neither I, nor M.W. Sharpe before me, have bothered to respond because this cowardly person does not deserve any response, and we did not feel the need to dignify his ramblings with any response. Neither are we about to let ourselves get dragged down into the gutter where this individual apparently likes to dwell. We also recognize that everyone has the right to express their opinions. The Freedom of Speech which we enjoy, however, is not absolute, and is tempered with liability for false and defamatory writings. Unfortunately, the Cowardly Ranger, has not been satisfied with attempting to demean the numerous worthy brethren that you have seen fit to elect as the leaders of our craft, but has seriously crossed the line by the publication of what I understand is called defamation per se, which defamation is not protected.

Many of you who were present at the annual communication of the Grand Lodge may recall the spontaneous standing ovation that was given to M.W. Grand Master Sharpe, when, in his Grand Master's address he apologized to you for the imposition that this person had forced upon you, and commented that this individual certainly does not display any of the principles of Freemasonry that you and I hold near and dear to our hearts. You may recall when I called for the vote on who stood with the Grand Master in his motion regarding the Ancient Landmarks, and who stood with this "Lone Ranger", that virtually the entire room stood to vote for the Grand Master and to reject this purveyor of hate. Only 3 stood, out of room of over 1000, in support of this coward, who hides in anonymity and casts aspersions upon those who dedicate their lives and efforts to the benefit of our craft. You overwhelmingly established that the Landmarks which he continues to attack are beyond question, yet he seems to simply choose to ignore your voices, and continues to reject your vote, pretending that you did not so heavily vote against his unfounded positions.

It certainly appears that his person, or persons, hiding in the shadows did not get the message from you that you have no interest in his defamatory, personal attacks, his outright lies, and his perversion of our fraternal principles, because he continues to assault you with his distorted perceptions, in total disregard for the truth. I am writing this now, and shall not respond to him again, in order that you may know the whole, actual truth, and be able to discern the hypocrisy despite his false and deceitful tongue.

I have to question whether this person is actually a Mason, since we are taught that Truth is the center of Freemasonry, and we take an obligation that includes, "neither will I speak evil of a brother Master Mason behind his back". Mr. Ranger clearly cares nothing for the truth and spits his venom at the worthy brethren you and I have elected to lead our craft, behind their backs, from the anonymity of his hiding place. His conduct is openly UnMasonic, and that is what most of you who have complained to me are most offended by. Not only does he lack the intestinal fortitude to put his name to any of his lies, but he does not even send them directly to the targets of his attacks. He does not send them to me, or the Past Grand Masters or the Right Worshipful Brethren whom he targets. We receive them only from having them forwarded to us by you, who do receive them, when you care enough about our craft to complain about this person, and to urge that I take action. If he ever was a Mason, he has clearly abandoned Masonic principles, and demonstrates, by his grossly UnMasonic conduct, that his Masonic obligations were meaningless to him.

I am told that many years ago the Honorable Frederick Lacey, a United States District Court Judge in the District of New Jersey said, while sentencing a witness for perjury, that the oath that witnesses take when testifying is to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth for a reason, for to tell less than the whole truth is to tell a lie. This malcontent who plagues you and our fraternity with his deceit, telling half-truths, is, my brothers, a liar. While he claims that he believes that I, and my predecessor Grand Masters have not denied his rantings, because he tells you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and that truth is his answer, he is wrong. His lies and half-truths have gotten increasingly worse, however, to the point that he has now openly accused numerous honorable brothers of criminal conduct and spread openly defamatory and malicious falsehoods, maligning not only Past Grand Masters, the Grand Lodge Trustees and others, but, most recently, the entire District Deputy Grand Master Corps. I am persuaded by the Elected Grand Line that you deserve to hear the actual truth, and I am not afraid to sign my real name to the truths I share with you, nor am I afraid to send a copy of this letter to the Cowardly Ranger.

Since the start of my Grand Master's year, I have become aware of at least nine of the Cowardly Ranger's messages, fired at the fraternity. Indeed, I am the victim of virtually all of them, as was Grand Master's Sharpe in his Grand Master's year. In this letter, I shall address the major topics of his abusive e-mails, and demonstrate to you how each is a lie. I shall save his September 3rd propaganda for a little later in this letter, other than to note, as I have above, that in it he tries to convince anyone who will listen that he has something to say, has some legitimate purpose, and he expresses the incredible delusion that he represents every Mason and that he is "incorruptable and untouchable". Such delusions should be your first indication that this person

who seeks to poison our fraternity with his deceit, is likely unstable and suffers from some sort of hero complex, needing to try to feed his self-importance by envisioning himself as some fictional character.

His writings, since Grand Lodge in April, have focused on principally two topics, on which he has written a number of times. These are the Grand Lodge of New Jersey Ashlar Fund, Inc, and the litigation that is Grand Lodge of N.J. v. The Masonic Temple Association of Belvidere. While he tries to sensationalize each as “The Battle for Warren Lodge” and “The Ashlar Affair”, there is no battle for Warren Lodge and there is no Ashlar Affair, except in the mind of the Cowardly Ranger.

The matter which involved Warren Lodge has to do with the apparent misappropriation of funds from the Lodge by a small group who were trying to control the finances of both the Lodge and the Temple Association, without being accountable to the Lodge. That resulted in a request being made by a member of the Lodge for an audit. There were a number of issues which erupted from that request, including an effort by this small group to vote to oust the officers coming up in the line of the Lodge, and replace them with their own select few, at least one of whom was not eligible, who would not question what was going on. M.W. Trautmann did not allow that and the Lodge ultimately installed the properly elected Officers. He directed the Temple Association to transfer the title to the Lodge Building, back to the Lodge, which this small group who controlled the Association refused to do. He also summoned several brothers, in regard to UnMasonic conduct, and gave them an opportunity to be heard. Some of those were, thereafter, suspended or expelled. The Temple Association held a meeting and voted to amend their By-Laws to provide that if the Temple Association dissolved, the building would go back to the Lodge. This small group disagreed with that revision, and attempted to hold meetings to undo that action, albeit they included expelled and suspended former members in that process, since they were, essentially the ones controlling the Association by way of intimidation. Now, in the litigation, they are seeking to have a judge undo the vote of the members of the Lodge and Temple Association, which strips them of their opportunity to take more from the Lodge. M.W. Dorworth found it necessary to arrest the Warrant of Warren Lodge, and directed the initiation of the lawsuit, the purpose of which is exclusively to transfer the title to the Lodge Building to the Lodge. The Grand Lodge is not trying to take anything away from the members of Warren Lodge, but instead seeks to put their building back into the hands of the Lodge and not some select few who are trying to make it their private piggy bank. The Cowardly Ranger has seriously misrepresented the truth of this suit. He has, notably, also failed to inform you that the desperate motion by the usurpers of the MTAB to have our attorney “disqualified” was unceremoniously rejected by the court.

Warren Lodge has not been sued. The Temple Association and the few renegades have. The Temple Association’s certificate of incorporation expressly provides that its purpose is to “... maintain and operate a Masonic Temple in the Town of Belvidere, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey for the use and accommodation of Warren Lodge No. 13 of Free and Accepted Masons.” It also provides that the association, its officers and members “shall be subject to the control of Warren Lodge No. 13, of free and Accepted Masons.” Somehow, the rogue group that is involved in the litigation has tried to pervert that purpose and control into existence for the benefit of those few in their group, and subject only to their control, at the

expense of the Lodge.

M.W. Dorworth also demanded an audit of the books of both the Lodge and the Temple Association, by a CPA firm. That firm ultimately reported that they could not complete the audit because of numerous "missing" materials required for that audit. It did disclose, however that there were some \$282,000.00 which was not accounted for. Strangely, the Cowardly Ranger has never asked you to inquire of those defendants, what happened to the \$282,000.00. Apparently that, and real truth, are not part of his agenda to attack the Grand Lodge. He does not ask why the MTAB aspect of that litigation is being controlled by only a few, unelected people, some of whom are expelled Masons. He fails to ask why are regular Masons having Masonic communications about the Lodge and the Temple with suspended and expelled Masons. Clearly his abandonment of the obligations of regular Masons also includes the obligation we all took not to have Masonic communications with suspended or expelled Masons.

He fails to advise you that over a year and a half ago, in May of 2014, M.W. Sharpe attempted to resolve this entire matter with a most generous offer. He proposed that the title to the building be put in the brothers of the Lodge and to consolidate all of the bank accounts in the name of the Lodge. He could not perceive of any reason why anyone would reasonably object to putting the Lodge in charge of their building and their money. He offered to restore the Warrant to the Lodge, and allow the Lodge to hold open and honest elections to elect their officers. He offered to provide all of the former brethren who had been expelled a review of their expulsion on a case by case basis. He reiterated that offer, in writing, in September of 2014. A copy of his letter is attached to this letter. It was rejected out of hand by the rogue culprits running the MTAB, who never even advised the members of Warren Lodge that the offer had been made. He fails to ask you to question what they were so afraid of that they would not even tell the brothers of the Lodge what had been proposed to resolve all of the issues? He fails to ask you to ask, "Why would these people object to giving the property of the Lodge back to the Lodge?" He fails to ask you, "Why do the personal interests and greed of these few outweigh what is right, and in the best interests of the Lodge?" He does not ask, because it does not fit his agenda.

He suggests, with his photo shopping, that this is some sort of entertainment, by placing R.W. Brother Trautmann into a picture of Judge Judy. I assure you brethren, this is not entertaining. This is a very real case of certain unscrupulous members of that Temple Association attempting to protect their fiefdom, and where they have hidden the money that should be in Lodge coffers, at the expense of their Lodge, and of the effort of the Grand Lodge to champion the cause of the actual Lodge. You should be asking, "What interest does the Cowardly Ranger have in the outcome of that suit, and what is he going to personally gain?" "Is he really just one of those suspended or expelled Masons running roughshod over the MTAB, who are trying to steal their former Lodge's building for their own gain?" "Why are he, and those defendants, so paranoid that they will ultimately be proven for what they are that they demand that they be reinstated regardless of whether they deserved their expulsions?" "Why does he believe that persons expelled for crimes involving children, or direct, open and admitted violations of their Masonic Obligations should be reinstated, and make that a condition of their agreeing to let the members of Warren Lodge even know what the offer from the Grand Master was?"

He misrepresents to you that Grand Lodge is “losing” this litigation. That, my brethren, is another lie. It was only by this litigation that we were able to secure a court order which prevented these people from disposing of the building and lining their secret accounts with the proceeds that belong to the Lodge. While the temporary restraining order application by R. W. Kalish was denied, that was actually expected, but it was the fastest way to get before the court and to have a judge prevent them from disposing of the building while the suit was pending. It did have the desired result because it stopped their theft of the building from the Lodge, and prevented them from disposing of it until the court decides this whole case. While he cites to you excerpts from motions having only to do with what is called “discovery”, and the Temple Association’s refusals to disclose what they have done with the unaccounted for money, which the judge decided on procedural grounds, there has not been a single determination yet made on the merits of the suit, except the recent rejection of their disqualification motion which the court found had no merit, and you may rest assured that this Grand Master is not about to allow this group, who have tried to steal the building and property of Warren Lodge, to get away with that. Ultimately, there is no question in my mind that your Grand Lodge will be the successful party to this suit. I submit that is the reason that the Cowardly Ranger so desperately tries to mislead you. The only battle being waged in this litigation is the effort of the Grand Lodge to force the Temple Association to return to Warren Lodge the property and money that belongs with the Lodge, which is being opposed by a small handful of individuals, who seek only their own personal profit. The question all of you should be asking the defendants, and the Cowardly Ranger, is, “Why are you opposing giving the Lodge its building and its bank accounts; and why were you so unwilling to provide the documents that would have permitted the audit to be completed, if it were not to hide your wrongdoings?”

The second focus of his propaganda, relates to the proceeds from the sale of Acacia-Lumberton Manor, Inc., a residential property, operating under a 501 (c)(4) tax exempt status, which he endeavors to sensationalize as an “affair”. It is in regard to topic this that the Cowardly Ranger has seriously crossed the line and has undeservedly accused a number of your elected representatives of criminal conduct and corruption, and of being gangsters. Those deliberate, willful and wanton misrepresentations, and the suggestion that the Attorney General might have an interest in the Grand Lodge of New Jersey Ashlar Fund, Inc. are untrue and constitute, I am informed, what is called defamation per se. At the outset, let me say that I would have no reluctance of any kind in having the Attorney General review anything that the Grand Lodge Trustees and the Elected Line have done, although I have no doubt that he would have no interest since everything that has been done is completely transparent and above board.. I doubt that the Cowardly Ranger, however, would be able to withstand such scrutiny. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that he hides in the shadows.

You should all recall that M.W. Glenn Trautmann informed you that the Grand Lodge Trustees were contemplating the sale of Acacia-Lumberton Manor, Inc. During his Annual Communication he made Grand Master’s recommendations about how to best use the funds from that sale once they came into the hands of the Grand Lodge. It was certainly the hope of everyone that they could be used to ease the burden on every N.J. Mason, and the brethren voted that way. What the Cowardly Ranger omits to tell you is that as the process was proceeding,

and outside tax attorneys were advising your Grand Lodge Trustees, it was learned that the proceeds from that sale could not legally be transferred directly to the Grand Lodge as had been originally envisioned. Acacia-Lumberton Manor was, as noted above, a 501 (c)(4) entity. Grand Lodge is a 501 (c)(10) entity and IRS regulations forbid a 501 (c)(4) from giving funds to a 501 (c)(10). The tax advisors counseled that the only way to accomplish the intent was to create a new 501 (c)(3) entity to which the funds could legally be transferred when Acacia-Lumberton Manor ultimately dissolved. Those tax advisors assisted in establishing the New Jersey Ashlar Fund, Inc., and in having it approved by the IRS as a 501(c)(3), tax free entity. Those tax attorneys filed a standard application which included that there were no “members” of the new corporation. That is, that NO ONE would be able to personally profit from the corporation. This process was openly discussed at the regular Meetings of your Grand Lodge Trustees, whom the Cowardly Ranger seems to forget are elected by you and me. As he suggests in other of his writings, those Trustees were elected by you to be responsible to manage the business affairs of the Grand Lodge. (See Title 4, Article 2, Section 3) They are specifically empowered by the Constitution of the Grand Lodge to invest the funds of the Grand Lodge as they determine are in the best interests of the Grand Lodge. Contrary to the absurd suggestion of the Cowardly Ranger that these Trustees were derelict, they actually did exactly what you elected them to do, and followed the advice of independent tax counsel as how to best accomplish what the members had indicated was their intent. While the Cowardly Ranger complains that no one came before the Grand Lodge to approve the establishment of the new corporation, he omits to mention that there is and was no need to do that, since this was an investment decision, properly made by your elected Trustees, as they were specifically empowered to do. He is delusional and deliberately attempts to tell you that every decision made by the Trustees has to come before the general body of the Grand Lodge. That is untrue and a complete absurdity. Any of you who own stock in any corporation know, you get annual reports, and the opportunity to attend annual meetings and to elect the Officers and Directors of the corporation, and then those elected person run the daily operations of the corporation. You do not have any opportunity to vote on every decision the elected managers make, during the course of the year, nor should you. THAT IS WHY YOU ELECTED THE TRUSTEES IN THE FIRST PLACE. The formation of the new entity, as a holding entity for the proceeds of the sale was entirely proper and was discussed at numerous open Trustees meetings, which any member of Grand Lodge is permitted to attend. There was nothing “secret” or nefarious in any way. He has lied to you about you’re not having any say in what happens to those funds, since you elect the persons who are the Trustees of that Fund, as I will explain further below.

The Cowardly Ranger also goes on to lie to you about what has occurred with the Trustees and the funds from the sale of Acacia-Lumberton Manor. The truth is that ALL of the proceeds are still in the possession of either the Grand Lodge, under the direction of the Grand Lodge Trustees, or still in Acacia-Lumberton Manor’s possession. Neither the Trustees of the Ashlar Fund, nor of Acacia-Lumberton Manor ever contemplated giving a “donation of \$2 Million to Scottish Rite”, as he writes, nor he certainly never came to any meeting of those Trustees to suggest otherwise, as he intimates in his September 24, 2015 diatribe. That, my brothers, is pure fantasy from the mind of that delusional writer. I will explain exactly what has occurred in regard to the proceeds from Acacia-Lumberton Manor.

The Acacia-Lumberton Manor sale occurred, which did, as the Cowardly Ranger reports, yield approximately \$7 Million to Acacia-Lumberton Manor, Inc. Contrary to his lies, you did vote, in 2013, to authorize that sale. In order to best fulfill the voted intent of the brethren at M.W. Trautmann's recommendation, the Trustees of Acacia-Lumberton Manor, The Grand Lodge and the Historic Trenton Masonic Temple, Inc. (HTMT) determined that as much of those proceeds as could be reasonably and legally made to come into the hands of the Grand Lodge was by way of the arms length sale of the Trenton Temples to the HTMT. You will recall that when the HTMT was incorporated in 2004, its purpose was, in particular, "to own and operate real property known as the Trenton Temple, for its preservation and continued operation for the Masonic Meetings of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons for the State of New Jersey and its Constituent Lodges, together with charitable and education uses of the Masonic Museum and Library". That corporation was also designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) entity, and over the years various fund raising efforts were undertaken to fund that corporation with enough to purchase the buildings and to fulfill their purposes. This sale provided the perfect opportunity to do that, and simultaneously fulfill the wishes of the brethren as voted upon at the Annual Communication in 2013. Acacia-Lumberton Manor was empowered to gift funds to HTMT to fund that purchase. Your Trustees hired independent appraisers to provide fair market value appraisals of the value of both the Trenton Temple and the Old Temple. Those appraisals, combined, totaled \$2,505,000.00. The appraisal of the contents of both building, including the Museum and Library, added an additional \$500,000.00. The HTMT Trustees estimated an immediate need for approximately \$100,000.00 for repairs and maintenance expenses, which would otherwise have had to come from the Grand Lodge budget. The Acacia-Lumberton Manor Trustees gifted that \$3.105 Million to the HTMT Trustees. They, in turn, entered into a contract with the Grand Lodge to actually proceed with the purchase of those two buildings and their contents for \$3,105,000.00. That closing took place on February 25, 2015, as a result of which \$3,005,000 came into the hands of the Grand Lodge, and \$100,000.00 going into the maintenance of the buildings. Contrary to the Ranger's lie and his misplaced reference to New Jersey Statute 15A:10-11, no vote of the members of Grand Lodge was required since this did not constitute a sale and disposition of substantially all of the assets of the Grand Lodge. What it constituted was simply an exchange of assets (buildings and contents for cash) in an arm's length transaction. Pursuant to the motion voted upon by the brethren, made upon M.W. Brother Trautmann's recommendation, that \$3 Million has been transferred to the Grand Lodge Permanent Fund where it shall remain invested and the interest, to the extent of at least \$100,000.00 per year, shall be available for the operations of Grand Lodge. Contrary to the Cowardly Ranger's lies, those funds have gone exactly where you all voted they should go, and nowhere else.

That leaves, of course, the remainder of about \$4,000,000.00. The Trustees of Acacia-Lumberton Manor, Inc., have approved a resolution to transfer those funds, save \$10,000 for the expenses anticipated in winding down and dissolving that entity, to the Ashlar Fund. As of now, that transfer has not yet taken place, and all of the balance of the sale proceeds remain with Acacia-Lumberton Manor. That exchange should take place shortly.

The Ashlar Fund, Inc, has never, as the Cowardly Ranger lies, reduced the number of Trustees down to 2 members, nor have they made the 4 Elected Grand Lodge Officers "Perpetual

Members”. As I explained above, there are no “members” and no one can personally profit from this entity. There are, in fact 11 Trustees. They are, as provided in the By-Laws:

- *The 4 members of the progressive Elected Grand Line, elected each year by you.
- *The President and Vice President of the Grand Lodge Trustees, which Trustees are elected by you.
- * One Trustee elected by the Grand Lodge Trustees.
- * Four Trustees appointed by The Grand Master elected by you.

That current Board of Trustees has taken action in regard to the funds to be received from Acacia -Lumberton Manor. They have voted, unanimously, that ALL of those funds shall be invested immediately upon their receipt and left to grow, without being touched for at least a year, in order to generate income, which could then be used to benefit the brethren of the Grand Lodge. A Finance Committee has been appointed to investigate the means and methods to best utilize those funds in conformity with the wishes of the brethren at the 2013 Annual Communication.

The defamatory lies told to you by the delusional Cowardly Ranger have even grown more absurd. After attempting to intimate that the Grand Lodge of New York is somehow buying into the Ranger’s fantasy and taking a preliminary step to withdraw recognition of New Jersey, he goes on to attack the dedicated brethren who are among the hardest working in our fraternity, The District Deputy Grand Master Corps! Brethren, I can assure you that the Grand Master of New York is not doing anything to withdraw recognition of New Jersey. He has unequivocally indicated that he supports our Grand Lodge. (See his message of support attached..) Neither is any other Grand jurisdiction. Indeed the Grand Masters of the Northern Jurisdiction have just recently determined that they will not interfere with any internal squabbling of other grand jurisdictions, and leave each to deal with the malcontents of their respective jurisdictions on their own. I cannot imagine what the Ranger was thinking when he purported to speculate about what other jurisdictions thought of his delusions, but that suggestion was merely another of his desperate lies.

I shall not stoop to his level to address his maligning of the Elected Line, the District Deputy Grand Masters, the Elected Trustees of Grand Lodge, the advisors to the Grand Lodge, the HTMT Trustees, or the Ashlar Fund Trustees, other than to simply say that such comments are unworthy of any man who is true to Freemasonry and our Masonic Obligations. All of those dedicated Masons he attacks have done nothing but work for decades in the best interests of this fraternity, and do not deserve to be so disrespected and ill-treated.. The Cowardly Ranger seeks to demean the persons of these brethren, since he knows that the message of hate he pronounces is entirely false, and utterly without merit. It seems that in his mind if you do not agree with him, you are automatically unworthy, or “Less Than” what he seems to think he is. Based upon your responses to me, I, and the Elected Grand Line know that you consider the only truly “Unwanted” persons in this sorry story to be the Ranger himself, and his equally UnMasonic “Deputy Rangers”, if any truly exist other than in his own mind.

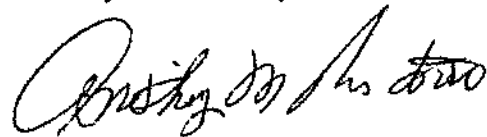
I noted in his letter of September 3, 2015, where he asks, “Who is Your Masonic Lone Ranger”, that he appears to truly fantasize that he is some sort of hero. He also suggests that he,

and you by implication, should adhere to his fictional Lone Ranger Creed. Brethren, he is certainly welcome to his Creed. I for one, however, and trustfully you, am content to adhere to the Obligations that I took at our Masonic Altar; those of a Master Mason, and a Past Master and of Grand Master. I have lived by those obligations for over 40 years, and I continue to do so every day. I shall continue to do so. Unlike the Ranger, I have not forgotten nor abandoned those obligations. I invite you to continue to walk with me and the brethren of this Grand Jurisdiction as Freemasons. If Mr. Ranger wants to form his own Lone Ranger Society, and abide by his creed, and have you abandon Freemasonry to join him I wish him well. I, for one however, will choose to remain a Freemason, and I urge you, if you receive any further communications from this person, to click on delete, or to simply respond to him that you no longer wish to be imposed upon by him, and to delete you from his distribution list.

In closing, I have no problem with assuring you that I am proud to be your Grand Master. I am proud of the other brethren you have elected to serve as the Officers and Trustees of your Grand Lodge and the related corporations which are involved with Grand Lodge. I am enormously proud of the District Deputy Grand Masters. I am proud of the fact that this Grand Lodge has and shall continue to act in the best interests of the Grand Lodge and its Constituent Lodges, and shall not be intimidated by disgruntled fringe elements lurking in the shadows at the margins of the fraternity, taking pot shots at this fraternity, yet unwilling to venture out from under their rock into the light which will display their hypocrisy to the discerning eye.

May the Great Creator bless you all and New Jersey Freemasonry.

Sincerely & fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony W. Montuori". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "M".

Anthony W. Montuori
Grand Master

09/07/14

Brothers of Warren Lodge

As you know, I inherited the problems associated with Warren 13 from the two immediate Past Grand Masters. I want to make sure that all are aware that I have made a proposal to settle the issue last May and from recent comments I am not sure the proposal is getting to everyone. I want to dispel any rumors, and provide clarity. As I understand it there were two issues that drew the attention of the Grand Master. First brothers seeking answers to lodge and temple association finances were not satisfied with the answers they were getting, and there was a contentious election that in the GMs view was not handled properly. When I took office, many brothers had been suspended and expelled, the warrant had been arrested, and audit of all lodge and temple association accounts was under way and the temple association was in a court battle over the ownership of the building. A tremendous mess to be sure. I stated publicly after assuming office, that we needed to see the outcome of the audit before determining how to proceed. I can now report that after four months the audit could not be completed. Very large sums of money were unaccounted for. Records of where these sums came from and where they went were unexplained. The C.P.A. doing the audit came to the conclusion that she had gone as far as she could and notified us in writing of the futility of continuing. This is not an allegation of dishonesty but we just don't know what happened. I needed to come up with a solution that insured the money of the brethren was properly cared for and the honor of Free Masonry was protected. I offered the following compromise back in May but have yet to receive an answer. The proposal goes as follows, put the Title to the building in the hands of the Brethren. Let the brothers who are paying the bills own their building. Consolidate the three accounts into one, a Warren Lodge account. There would no longer be a need for a Temple Association because the brothers would handle everything through the lodge. The lodge accounts are periodically checked by the District Deputy. All are protected and the light shines in. I don't know why anyone would object to the brothers of Warren being in charge of their money and their property. The lodge could propose a bylaw instituting a Temple management committee if the membership thought it necessary. In return for accepting this solution, I would give the warrant back. I would order new elections where the brothers would elect officers according to the bylaws and constitution without interference. I would give all suspended and expelled masons their due process and review each case on an independent basis. I would not make any promises except that each suspended and/or expelled brother would receive a fair hearing. This is where we are and there is a clear way out of this situation. I am still awaiting an answer.

Yours in the Craft

Gerald J. Sharpe, Grand Master

From: Bill Thomas [mailto:wjthomasnyc@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2015 4:27 PM
To: Anthony W. Montuori
Cc: Gerald L. Sharpe
Subject: Solid Relations

Dear Most Worshipful Montuori,

The Grand Lodges of New York and New Jersey have enjoyed a continuous and harmonious relationship for over two centuries. I am delighted that my own administration has added continuing luster and strength thereto - consistent with the work accomplished by your own administration and that of your predecessor.

It can be distressing to both of us when a single individual with a large collection of email addresses attempts to suggest that we are not close, or that we do not share the same Masonic philosophy, or that those relations are in jeopardy.

The relationship between our Grand Lodges has never been stronger. I am proud to share our Masonic experiences, and seek even further opportunities for Masonic opportunities among our Lodges and Brethren.

May God continue to bless you and the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

Bill Thomas, GM
407-927-8400
Visit our Grand Lodge Website:
<http://nymasons.org/>
