

# TRESTLE BOARD

April 2024

## Ionic Composite Lodge No. 520

2244 Westwood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90064  
(424 273-1054) / [ioniccomposite.com](http://ioniccomposite.com)



Dear Brethren,

As I write this article, the sun has just set, and the Jewish holiday of Purim is just beginning. The holiday (the story of which is recounted in the Biblical Book of Esther) commemorates an occasion on which the courage and goodness of two Jews saved the Jewish community of Shushan in Babylonia many centuries ago. I want to take a moment to highlight two different aspects of the Purim story that have direct implications for everyone today, regardless of their religious or political leanings. For this, some review of the story is necessary.

In the Book of Esther, a young Jewish woman – Esther (or Hadassah, by her Hebrew name) – became Queen of Babylonia through what amounted to a beauty pageant. However, her status as a Jew was not disclosed to the King at that time. The King's vizier (chief minister / advisor) developed a hatred of Jews when one (named Mordechai) refused to bow to him in the street, and so arranged to have the King unknowingly sign off on a decree that would allow the citizens of the city to butcher the Jews of Shushan without consequences on a specific day. Learning of this, Mordechai, Esther's cousin, went to Esther and told her to go to the King and seek to have him revoke his decree and save the Jews. Makes sense, right? No problem!

Not quite. What made this request less than simple was the fact that the custom at that time was that without being specifically *summoned*, to approach the King was to risk immediate execution on Esther's part at the King's whim. Mordechai pointed out to Esther that it might have been for just such an occasion that she had been made Queen by God's will in the first place and told her to summon her courage and act, despite the very real risk. Ultimately, Esther fasted, summoned her courage, and successfully approached the King and was able to reveal Haman's plot in such a way as to cause the King to call for the vizier's execution. Thus, the Jews were saved without slaughter, the bad guy died, and everyone got their happy ending. Right?

Wrong. It didn't quite happen that way. Most people – even most Jews – never pay attention to the real *ending* of the book. The King was a proud man, and in his arrogance, he had long since decreed that no signed and sealed royal decree could *ever* be undone or revoked – not even by his own order. How then were the Jews saved? Simple: the King made a second decree that allowed the Jews of Shushan to preemptively kill everyone who was planning to kill *them* – one day *before* the set date for the slaughter of the Jews. To save themselves, the Jews of Shushan went on a royally sanctioned killing spree a day before *they* were set to be massacred.

Many people quite properly take the lessons of speaking up about injustice, leveraging privilege and position for the good of others, and personal courage from the story of Esther. That is entirely right and proper. The lessons most people forget, however, are equally important. First, not to be so rigid or proud as to be unwilling to admit fault or error, and when one discovers that one *has* made a mistake, *not to simply double down on it!* Practically all the deaths at the end of the Book of Esther could have been prevented if two overly proud men had not allowed their egos to rule their behavior. Certainly Haman, whose pride at not being bowed down to by a Jew caused him to pursue genocide, but also the King, whose need to project infallibility caused the Jewish community to have to slaughter those who might have otherwise been spared simply to survive. While it is true that were it not for Haman's actions, the King would not have needed a *second* decree and there would have been no resultant slaughter, it was the pride of the King that prevented the sparing of everyone else because of his unwillingness or inability to publicly admit to an error by retracting his *first* decree. The slaughter of the non-Jews was a necessary evil for the Jews, but it need not have been necessary at all, and became such only because of both Haman *and* the King.

Purim is the one day in the Jewish calendar year when Jews are actually *commanded* and *obligated* to be happy, and (for adults) to drink if they are able. In fact, the commandment is to become drunk to the point that one can no longer tell the difference between the goodness of Mordechai and the evil of Haman.

This year, though, I pray that even as we follow that commandment and look for a moment of joy, we don't lose sight of the more subtle kinds of evil – the pride and arrogance of believing that our own prejudices and viewpoints ought to be imposed on others, and that we, as mortals, are or ever could be infallible.

As Masons, let us remind people that part of meeting on the Level is the recognition that we are no better or worse than they. That acting by the Plumb means that we can never forget that no matter our Earthly station, we are all still subject to the Divine, and as such must maintain both our moral rectitude as well as our humility. That treating with people by the Square means that we should never attempt to impose our beliefs or prejudices on others, nor, by action or inaction, force them to take steps out of necessity they would not have otherwise wished or needed to take. Let us remember that the Compass is meant to circumscribe our desires, and keep our passions within due bounds towards *all* mankind, even those we may dislike or even hate. To me, these are the real lesson of the Holiday of Purim, and they apply even to those who do not share the same religious faith, for they are, at their core, Masonic lessons.

To my Jewish brethren, Chag Purim Sa'meach! (Happy Purim)

Fraternally,

Jacob Gershbock, PM

Worshipful Master

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## April 1<sup>st</sup> Menu

April 1st: Stated Meeting and Annual Visitation of the Inspector

7:15 pm

Beet & Carrot Salad  
Red Wine Braised Lamb Shank  
Hasselback Potatoes  
Chocolate Matzo Cake

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April 8th: 1st Degree Practice 7:15 pm

All Officers required to attend. Sideliners and all Masons welcome

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April 15th: 1st Degree for Oliver Viletta 7:15pm

Come support our newest brother and make his initiation memorable!

Sideliners and all Masons welcome!

EA's especially encouraged to come.

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April 22nd: Dark in observance of 1st night of Passover

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April 29th: OSI

All Officers required to attend. If unable, you must contact both the Master *and* the Inspector in advance!

Please RSVP to Michael Bear, PM  
michael.bear@mac.com

## HOW TO GET YOUR DUES CARD

With the installation of the iMember 2.0 online system a few years ago that all brothers can access upon registration, lodge secretaries no longer receive all the dues cards to mail out after payment.

The dues card is now online and can be printed or downloaded in an 8 ½ x 11 format which can be printed or downloaded to a phone.

There are 2 ways to get you dues card:

1. Login to [www.member.freemason.org](http://www.member.freemason.org), select Imposite Lodge bar, then select Virtual Card.
2. Send an email to our lodge Secretary Mike Bear PM ([michael.bear@mac.com](mailto:michael.bear@mac.com)) requesting that it be mailed to you.

If you need help registering for iMember contact the Secretary.

Masons4Mitts

The 2024 campaign is just kicking off. Watch for details in upcoming Trestleboards. Inn 2023 our Media Central Titans team had its best year and we hope to outdo it this year.

Masons Night at Dodger Stadium will be Thursday, September 26 against the San Diego Padres. We will notify you when we get ticket locations and prices for our group order. Last year we sold 30 tickets.

If you have any questions, please contact Bernie Morse PM at (310)704-2262 or email [brnhrd18@yahoo.com](mailto:brnhrd18@yahoo.com)

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Don't miss May 20th Festive Board, Honoring the Grand Royal Matron of the California Order of the Amaranth, Honored Lady Cindi Tabrisky and her husband Joe (a Past Master of Beach Cities Lodge and a member of Liberal Arts Lodge).

## **Think About It – Ron Koretz, P.M.**

### **Think About It**

Ron Koretz, P.M.

Brian Wansink was a professor at Cornell University who, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, gained an international reputation for a series of interesting research projects that described eating behaviors and methods to favorably alter them. For example, he claimed that people would eat less if they used smaller plates, thereby limiting portion size. The problem was that, when his data were more closely examined, a large number of discrepancies and errors were found. Some of his data were duplicated and other numbers were not believed to be possible values. His use of statistical tests was questioned and criticized. Ultimately, at least according to Wikipedia, 18 of his papers were retracted, seven others received expressions of concern, and another 15 had to be corrected. In 2018, Cornell judged that he committed scientific misconduct and stopped his research and teaching duties. Wansink resigned in 2019.

Currently the United States Department of Agriculture, or USDA, is considering whether or not school cafeterias should serve chocolate milk, at least to children in grammar and middle schools. This movement may date back to 2010, when Carrie Frazier, a parent in Oregon, believed that her son was consuming too much of this sweet drink, organized local parents, lobbied the school board, and got the school district to remove chocolate milk for part of the 2011-2 school year.

The food service company for the schools then shared lunchroom statistics with Cornell (in particular Dr. Wansink, who had received a \$1 million grant from the USDA to identify methods to get children to eat healthier). When the research group analyzed

the provided data, they concluded that total milk sales declined and, perhaps more importantly, total lunch sales did as well when chocolate milk was discontinued. Since some of the students relied on lunch for their “healthiest” meal of the day, this became a concern for school districts around the country. A New York Times columnist referred to the chocolate milk ban as a “sadistic cafeteria experiment” that hurt children’s health.

The Oregon data lacked sufficient information to create a control group, so the Cornell group employed data gathered from a school district in New York. Furthermore, the amount of milk wasted in Oregon was not directly measured, but just visually estimated. A subsequent study from California that weighed milk cartons over several years concluded that removing chocolate milk only had a modest effect on milk consumption and did not significantly change the amount of key nutrients being consumed. Nonetheless, the USDA is still considering Wansink’s study in their decision-making process.

I have no idea if chocolate milk is or is not really a problem. However, as one who spent many years interpreting scientific studies, it is again a reminder about why the academic community needs to rigorously ensure that research is properly performed and reported. Perhaps the policy of “publish or perish” needs to be replaced by one of rewarding the quality, and not the quantity, of papers that professors produce.

Think about it.

## CASTING CALL

**Wannabe Actors, Thespians**

**And Those Who Want Great Ritual**

You can help enhance the Masonic degrees for our candidates by taking part in the ceremonies. We want to put together ritual teams in all three degrees that will create memorable experiences.

Note that Entered Apprentices can take part in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, Fellowcrafts in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees, and Master Masons in all three.

We are also looking for Master Masons who want to be officers. We have openings for 2024.

We want and need your involvement. If interested, please contact:

Bernie Morse, PM

Officer's Coach

(310)556-4463

### APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Jeffrey Lewis Bear, PM	16th
Marc Adam Behun	5th
Daniel Ben Ari	28th
Cliff Neil Dorfman	14th
Shahriar Joseph Esshaghian, PM	8th
Renato Sagun Garcia	9th
David Harris	30th
Clayton Barclay Jones	13th
Michael Joshua Katz	7th
Brandon Kelly Koretz	7th
Michael Christopher Leiaghat	28th

Mark Allen Mischel	3rd
Koorosh Moshtahedian	3rd
Jack Rapke	28th
Edward Eddie Segal, PM	27th
Misha Spiegel	3rd
Luis Enrique Tananta	10th
Andre Torosyan	4th
Simone Totti	12th
Michael Lane Turner	14th
Jon Michael Wax	1st

# BRETHREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS

## Sick and Visitation Committee Report

Roy Steinfeld      On the mend after a fall & hip related injury.

*Brethren Please, a Telephone call from you could brighten their day. To get the contact information of those listed please contact the lodge Secretary or Master. If you know of a Brother or a member of a Brother's family who is ill, please contact the Lodge Office.*

## BEWARE...

of scam / phishing emails asking for money or personal information.

Scammers are pretending to be Masons, even the Worshipful Master!

We'll never ask you to send money or gift cards via email.

Reach out to Lodge Leadership directly or by phone.

2024 OFFICERS	Master – Jacob Gershbock	Marshal – *
	Senior Warden – Jeffrey Bear, P.M. (Trisha)	Senior Steward – Kerin Surents, P.M. (Suzanna)
	Junior Warden – Steve Resnick, P.M. (Sheelah)	Junior Steward – *
	Senior Deacon – Chay Alexander Wright, P.M	Inspector for the 626th Masonic District Gevork Asatryan P.M.
	Junior Deacon – Luis Tananta (Maria)	Trestleboard Layout – Michael Mosbach
	Treasurer – Bernie Morse, P.M. (Carolyn)	Assistant Secretary – Michael Mosbach
	Secretary – Michael Bear, P.M. (Debbie)	Tiler – Roy Steinfeld, P.M.
	Chaplain – *	Officers' Coach – Bernie Morse, P.M. (Carolyn)

**“Soft and safe be thy resting place.”**

Harold W. Wax, P.M.

Born: April 13, 1925 Initiated 5/11/ 1953

Passed: 11/16/1953

Raised: 2/15/1954

Master 1979