

# JEPHTHA LODGE 494

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Huntington, New York 11743 ♦ 631.351.8361 ♦ <http://www.jephtha.com>

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## GREETINGS FROM THE EAST



Dear Brothers,

We are fast approaching the last quarter of the masonic year for Jephtha, the lodge that doesn't quite go dark. This has been an interesting year thus far for all of us, to say the very least. There have been some great challenges and great losses among our brothers, their families and friends. Recently, it seems too often we are sending out our prayers and condolences, some COVID related and some not. I would like to give, if I may, the brothers of all the lodges in all the districts and their family members a warm hug and words of encouragement to stay strong and

keep a positive outlook. At the risk of making light of it all, I dub this the masonic year of facemasks and fistbumps. Alas, the days are finally getting noticeably longer as the sun begins its track on a more northerly route. This marks a time for rebirth and renewed hope.

March has also given us an indication of new growth with the initiation of five worthy candidates into the Craft on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. I would like to congratulate Brothers Douglas Henningson, Gunnar Herbert, John Prodomakis, Brian Shulbaum and Stephen Vogel. I look forward to seeing our new Entered Apprentices in lodge. I have scheduled another first degree for April 26th.

Benevolence has been on the forefront of my agenda as Worshipful Master. On Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, we will be having a "virtual cocktail hour" in effort to raise funds for benevolence whose directive will turn toward helping children with cancer. Details will be announced in lodge, on Jephtha Facebook, on Band and on Our Lodge Page.

Masonic education has also been a focal point during our stated communications. For our March 8<sup>th</sup> stated communication, Brother Tim TenClay gave us his wonderful insight into Freemasonry in Italy and its struggle to survive schisms and social discrimination. Worshipful Robert Previto, in recognition of International Women's Day, gave an interesting and informative lecture on women in Freemasonry and the birth of their sororal organizations. (In last month's edition of the newsletter there was an error I would like to correct. Bill Friedman and Per Dobler both collaborated in creating the lecture for Black History Month.)

In spite of a difficult year for Freemasonry, the outlook for Jephtha is very inspiring. Owing to the great effort on behalf of our trustees we are financially stable, and spiritually, we are as strong as ever. Our members have shown great compassion for each other and continue to contribute toward the preservation of our ancient Craft. All we need now is to get our collation dinners back! We patiently wait for the Grand Lodge to allow lodges to safely resume all the functions this global pandemic took away. In the meantime, we keep a chin up and face the next day, as we have for centuries. God bless us all.

I would like to wish my brothers and their families Happy Passover, Happy Easter and Happy Ramadan! May this holiday time be blessed. I pray for your good health and happiness now and throughout the year.

Sincerely and Fraternally,  
Brother Anthony Colonna,  
Worshipful Master  
Jephtha Lodge 494

### GREETINGS FROM THE WEST



My brothers, I hope all is well with you and your families. It's been a year since our lives changed in an instant. However, there's light at the end of the tunnel. We are starting to see the country open up and more in-person gatherings. The excitement of seeing my brothers and their families again without Zoom keeps me motivated. We must continue to be vigilant in overcoming this pandemic by taking all safety measures and precautions.

To my brothers who are not able to attend meetings due to safety concerns, we understand. We are doing everything in our power to keep the lodge sanitized and providing the proper PPE with the help of the trustees. Please know we are thinking of you and we are here if you need us.

We are keeping a close eye on the Grand Master's messages and awaiting news about lifting restrictions regarding curfews and more allowable capacity in the lodge room. Until we meet again, I wish health and wellness to my brothers.

Sincerely and Fraternally,  
Jeremiah Campbell  
Senior Warden

### GREETINGS FROM THE SOUTH



While listening to the first podcast episode of Craftsmen Online, I picked up on something the interviewee said about the strength of the cable tow, in reference to a lodge he was affiliated with a few years ago. I would like to share the same.

As I was thinking about this month's newsletter, trying to leave you Brothers with some knowledge, sentiment and laughter, I was reflecting on our past Masonic year, our cable tow and the length of it. With this past year's work, I would like to replace the word *length* with *strength*, as Brother La Marca mentioned in the aforementioned podcast.

The power of our cable tow displayed this Masonic year would be not of mere rope, but of chains that anchor the biggest cruise ships.

"NO" was never a response once a plan was made for presenting Worshipful Jack Dowling with his DSA, our monthly communications resuming, two degree installations, our Zoom meetings, and the entire list of our charitable and public service volunteering. Whatever obstacles we encountered we found a way to overcome them and obtain the results to which we aspired.

This is the work of being a Mason, as well as the officers in line presenting degrees. My Brothers, if you are thinking of going in line, please do so; the work is studying your lines, learning ritual and fulfilling your role as an officer. The rewarding part for me in my continued journey East is that I have gained valuable knowledge for each chair I have occupied. Your journey should not be rushed, and the eventual knowledge you obtain from these enjoyable experiences makes you wiser and wonderfully prepared as you approach the Higher Chairs.

With April upon us I want to first wish everyone a happy April Fool's Day, to remind everyone who has young ones at home to try and fool them that day, and when your young ones try to fool you, act as if you have been fooled even if you haven't been. Except in my case, my Daughter always fools me, such as changing the filling of my Oreo cookies with toothpaste! That went over really well, and if I didn't mention it in this newsletter, I probably would fall for it again!

I wish those who celebrate Easter, a Happy Easter. As we celebrate the Resurrection, I hope our lodge rooms will be able to return to our pre-Covid ways, and society as a whole. Wishing you, my Brothers, a safe and healthy beginning to springtime as we all enjoy the longer and warmer days, more freedom from COVID as we venture outside, and always remember the whole world is a circus, just don't be the clown. (As April 15th looms, remember Uncle Sam and hope you receive a refund instead of paying)

Sincerely and Fraternally,  
Brother Michael S. Crispino  
Junior Warden

### GREETINGS FROM THE CORNER DESK



New York Masonry has taken the pandemic seriously; both the Grand Lodge and Jephtha have recognized that each of us has a different level of comfort related to COVID precautions. Mask and distancing requirements are determined by Grand Lodge edict, but we have also recognized that some of our brethren will be more comfortable joining lodge activities if they do not have to use communal aprons. As described during the most recent Communication, we are making the option available for you to purchase your own "fine white linen" (50/50 cotton/polyester, stain and wrinkle resistant) apron for \$15. If you would like to have us order an apron for you, please contact me by May 1. (These do *not* come with an apron case.)

If you would like to store your apron at the lodge, I would ask that you also buy an apron tube. They are heavy fiberboard with a blue leatherette cover and cost \$3. These are also perfect for new Master Masons who are looking for a suitable way to store their lambskin.

If you would like to purchase a higher quality apron case, there are a number of places you can do so online – feel free to contact me if you need help finding what you are looking for.

Some of our newer brothers have asked me about using the lambskin you received upon becoming a Master Mason. There are a variety of (strongly held) opinions on that matter. In New York, it is most common to preserve one's lambskin in order to keep it in pristine shape so that it will be unblemished when it comes time for one's burial. However, there are many brothers who find it meaningful to wear their "original lambskin" to regular communications – as a physical reminder of their raising. There is not universal "Masonic policy" on the matter. In the end, you are welcome to do whichever you prefer.

Grace and peace,  
Tim TenClay, Secretary

## APRIL 2021 CALENDAR

Monday April 12, 2021 7:30 PM Stated Communication:  
Committee Reports and Reading of the Slate  
Reading of the new candidates for the Entered Apprentice Degree

Wednesday April 21, 2021 7:30 PM Benevolence Committee Meeting

Saturday April 24, 2021 7:00 PM Virtual Cocktail Hour to raise funds for children with cancer

Monday April 26, 2021 7:00 PM Special Communication:  
Conferral of the Entered Apprentice Degree



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Eric P. Bencivenga	Frank L. Nantista
James E. Beyer	Russell Penzer
Chuck A Brady	Michael Perri
Michael R. Denkovich	Michael J. Rittenhouse
Michael Eckstein	Richard H Schultze
Eric M. Freedman	
Richard Galletti	
Robert R. Gaudio	
Stuart Koenig	
Raymond C. Mahdesian	
Miguel M. Melgar	
John D. Muller, Jr.	

## APRIL RAISINGS

Scott D. Bloomfield	Joseph E. Malat
Christopher J. Camilleri	Vladimir A. Nelson
Michael Carey	Matthew A. Pantoja
William P. Fenty, III	Brian C. Rodriguez
Gregory T. Gatto	Peter M. Rolfe
Robert R. Gaudio	Christopher Sikes
Kenneth T. Hall	Timothy J. TenClay
Kirk E. Hall	Christopher J. Tilley
Wendell M. Hannaford	Jason L. Van Loan
Norbert Heuser	
Robert L. Hylton, Jr.	
William Kanzler	

## KEEPING IN TOUCH



BAND (Jephtha): <https://band.us/band/77740271>



FACEBOOK: Jephtha Lodge No. 494



INSTAGRAM: Jephtha 494



MASONS OF JEPHTHA #494: <https://www.jephtha.com>



OUR LODGE PAGE (Jephtha): <https://494-ny.ourlodgepage.com>



GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE STATE  
OF NEW YORK: [nymasons.org/site](http://nymasons.org/site)



## GREETINGS FROM THE JEPHTHA LODGE HISTORIAN

### THE MYSTERIOUS PAINTING



Walking around the antiquated rooms of Jephtha Lodge, I am constantly searching for clues that uncover forgotten memories, broaden the history of our lodge and its place in Huntington for over 160 years. Patience, determination, enthusiasm and, above all, curiosity are the main attributes of a lodge historian. Short of donning a dusty fedora and cracking a leather whip, the “fortune and glory” that many may envision is usually tempered by long hours of internet research. We need to “forget any ideas about lost cities, exotic travel, and digging up the world. We do not follow maps to buried treasure, and “X” never, ever marks the spot.”

But the “X” may be right in front of our faces every day we walk into our lodge room.

Masonic lodge historical records sometimes suffer from the lack of detailed provenance of an artifact’s origins. It is exceedingly rare a lodge historian or trustee is trained in the skill of database management or basic record keeping. Many times, the historian will be required to pore over the thousands of pages of lodge-meeting-minute-books to uncover a brief detail from where a piece of the lodge history originated. Illegible handwritten notes aside, digital scanning documents does not alleviate the challenges in research, and an archivist would still need to implement optical character recognition (OCR) to enable the search function in a converted PDF document for more manageability.

But one recent discovery started a long path based on just one word, or in this specific case, one name.

On display in our lodge room for several years without any details of its origins is a 3’ x 2’ painting that depicts the builders of King Solomon’s Temple. Simply signed on the bottom right corner “Gerard Tempest,” my interest in this unknown and overlooked piece got the best of me.

My first instinct was to look up the list of all Jephtha Lodge members dating to 1860 to see if we ever had a member with the name “Tempest.” When that option was exhausted, the next step was to photograph the painting with a closeup of the signature and resume the research on my home computer during my spare time.

My google search turned up an intriguing discovery, but it was so extraordinary my skepticism restrained any premature enthusiasm. Gerard Francis Tempest (1918-2009) was a painter, sculptor and architect, and is considered the father of Abstract Spiritualism. The painting the lodge has on display is far from any form of abstract art. Additional research led me to Gerard Tempest III’s widow, Connie, wife of the artist’s eldest son.

His widow referred me to her brother-in-law, John Tempest, an accomplished artist in his own right and a renowned expert of his father’s work. I doubted this painting was a Tempest original as it did not fall into

his usual style of surrealism which kept my enthusiasm restrained, but I noticed some early portraits on his official website to which this piece may be similar.



John Tempest's reply to my email and attached photos stunned me. "Yes, it's original. I can tell by his handwork and colorization. I assisted him in his last 20 years of painting. He painted it during the period we lived at the Villa Tempesta from 1959-66 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Next door to the Villa was a Masonic Temple that must have commissioned him."

The Italian born Tempest, the protégé of Giorgio de Chirico, the forerunner of Surrealism, received the Gold Medal at the Cannes Art Festival in 1987 and was honored by the Holy See during the reign of Pope John Paul II. His work became a part of the permanent collection of the Vatican Museum in 1982 and 1990.

Tempest's impressive resume also includes his time as an allied officer during World War II, serving under General Omar Bradley in the 82nd Airborne Division. Tempest fought in campaigns all over Europe, including Normandy on D-Day, the Battle of Hürtgen Forest, the Battle of the Bulge, and with the French Underground in the Liberation of Paris. One of the main characters in the film *Is Paris Burning?* (1966) is said to have been based on him. Tempest received the Bronze Star Medal in 1944 and designed the 101st Airborne Division's insignia, the "Screaming Eagle".



There are no records that Gerard Tempest was a Freemason. I reached out to University Lodge No. 408 A.F. & A. M. in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the lodge located next to Tempest's home, Villa Tempesta, between 1959-1966. Brothers of University No. 408 and I have started a correspondence which, unfortunately, has been delayed due to the current pandemic crisis which has prevented them from further research.

One Masonic brother shared an interesting hypothesis that this piece may not be a commissioned work. While most present members of University No. 408 may not remember when the lodge was originally built in 1960, it is known that it required major excavation for the building to be constructed at the same elevation next to the Villa Tempesta. The area also witnessed major road relocation during the early years of Tempest's residency.



*The Villa Tempesta today is Whitehall Antiques.*

The brother continued, "Considering Mr. Tempest's abilities as an artist, is it not possible, with all this going on around the villa, he transposed the real into the surreal qualities of the painted temple's construction?" The brother continued, "I remember the road project, but the Villa was under construction. I can see the connection between our lodge and the amazing painting. The realignment of Franklin Street was the end of the Village of Chapel Hill and the beginning of the Town of Chapel Hill as we know it today. I choose to believe that while the painting gives the appearance of surrealism it is Mr. Tempest's view of his surroundings during that time. "

The mysterious painting has partly revealed itself to the

members of Jephtha Lodge, but there are several unanswered questions. Was the painting commissioned by University Lodge No. 408? When was it painted? Was Tempest inspired by the construction around his villa when he was in North Carolina? How did the painting end up over 500 miles away at Jephtha Lodge in Huntington, New York? And, was Gerard Tempest a Freemason?

The mystery continues...

Sincerely and Fraternally,  
W.: Ronald J. Seifried, DSA  
Jephtha Lodge 494

## MASONIC MOMENTS

### THOUGHTS ON MASONRY FROM THREE UNITED STATES PRESIDENTS

*It has not been my fortune to know very much of Freemasonry, but I have had the great fortune to know many Freemasons and have been able in that way to judge the tree by its fruit. I know of your high ideals. I have seen that you hold your meetings in the presence of the open Bible, and I know that men who observe that formality have high sentiments of citizenship, of worth, and character. That is the strength of our Commonwealth and nation.*

Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933), 30<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1923-1929)

\* \* \*

*Masonry aims at the promotion of morality and higher living by the cultivation of the social side of man, the rousing in him of the instincts of charity and love of his kind. It rests surely on the foundation of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.*

William Howard Taft (1857-1930), 27<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1909-1913)  
Made a "Mason at Sight," Kilwinning Lodge No. 356, Cincinnati, Ohio  
Initiated February 18, 1909

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*I ask of each Mason, of each member, of each brother, that he shall remember ever that there is upon him a peculiar obligation to show himself in every respect a good citizen; for after all, the way he can best do his duty by the ancient order to which he belongs is by reflecting credit upon that order by way in which he performs his duty as a citizen of the United States.*

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1901-1909)  
Master Mason, Matinecock Lodge No. 806, Oyster Bay, New York  
Initiated January 2, 1901

Respectfully submitted,  
Br. Richard Gentile  
Jephtha Lodge 494

## FAMOUS APRIL MASON

### GIACOMO GIROLAMO CASANOVA

April 2, 1725, Venice (Republic of Venice, present day Italy) -  
June 4, 1798 (Dux, Bohemia, Holy Roman Empire, present day Duchcov, Czech Republic)

The mores of eighteenth-century Venice were very different from those of today – intimate relations tended to be casual without any seriousness. Nobles married for social connections rather than love so flirtations, bedroom games and short-term liaisons were common. Venice was ruled by political and religious conservatives and social vices were encouraged making it the pleasure capital of Europe. Young men coming of age made Venice a must on their European tour. Beautiful courtesans, gambling houses and the famous Carnival preceding Easter were powerful draws. This was the milieu in which Casanova grew up.

Giacomo Girolamo Casanova was the eldest child of six of Gaetano Casanova, an actor and dancer, and Zanetta Farussi, an actress. They were often away on tour, so he was brought up by his grandmother. When he was nine, he was sent to a boarding school in Padua and always resented how his parents “got rid of me.” He disliked the school’s poor conditions, so he appealed to Abbot Gozzi, one of his instructors, to take him in to live with his family, which Gozzi did, though Casanova’s teenage years. Bettina, one of Gozzi’s sisters, caressed him at age 11 awakening the “first sparks of a feeling which later became my ruling passion.” Casanova and Bettina, as well as the Gozzi family, remained lifelong friends.

Casanova had a quick mind and was perpetually inquisitive. He entered the University of Padua at age 12, graduated at 17 (1742) with a degree in law. His guardian Gozzi was hoping he would become an ecclesiastical lawyer. While at the university he also studied medicine, chemistry, moral philosophy, and became a serious gambler, often in debt. His grandmother recalled him to Venice hoping to break his habit, but she was unsuccessful. While in Venice he was made an abbot and took minor orders. With his 6’ 2” frame he was imposing for his era and became a dandy with long powdered, scented and elaborately curled, dark hair. (The average height for men of Casanova’s time was about 5’, a bit taller in northern Italy than in the south.)

Casanova was always in need of money, so he often ingratiated himself with a patron. His first was the Venetian senator, Alvise Gasparo Malipiero, who taught Casanova about good food and wine, and how to behave in society. Their association came to an abrupt end when Casanova was found dallying with Malipiero’s intended girlfriend, the actress Teresa Imer. This was the first of many scandals which created the persona of Casanova we know today, often enhanced by Hollywood.

After he left Malipiero he entered a seminary for a short period of time but was soon imprisoned for his debts. He managed to eventually become employed by the powerful Cardinal Acquaviva as a scribe, met Pope Benedict XIV, and wrote love letters for another cardinal. A scandal ensued while working for the cardinal which brought an abrupt end to his church career. He then decided to become a military officer for the Republic of Venice but left after a short time.

Now 21, broke and an inveterate gambler, he returned to an old benefactor, Alvise Grimani, and became a violinist at the San Samuele Theater thanks to Grimani’s intervention. He didn’t last long as a violinist as he got into trouble with his friends roaming the streets of Venice at night. Fate, however, would change his life.

While riding in a gondola one evening, one of the other riders, Venetian Senator Bragadin, had a heart



attack. He was immediately bled and brought to his palace where the doctor put mercury ointment on his chest, a common remedy of the time. When Casanova saw the senator was getting worse and a priest was called for the last rights, Casanova removed the ointment and washed his chest. Bragadin recovered and Casanova was virtually adopted by the senator, invited him to live in his home, showered him with funds allowing him to live like a playboy aristocrat, dressing well and gambling heavily. Bragadin became Casanova's lifelong patron, but because of several scandals Casanova had to flee Venice.

Casanova fled to Padua where he met the Frenchwoman Henriette, the love of his life. It was probably the most profound love he ever experienced, since Henriette combined beauty, intelligence and culture. The affair lasted three months. After a good gambling streak in Venice, he reached Paris in 1750. He became a member of the Lodge of the Duke of Clermont and a Master Mason, eventually achieving the highest degree of the Scottish Rite; he never had any Masonic censures against him from his lodge. He loved the secret rites and the men of intellect and influence he met. They would also prove useful providing valuable contacts. He stayed in Paris for two years, learned French, met many influential people, but because of his numerous liaisons, he had to flee Paris.

Casanova then traveled to Dresden, Prague and Vienna. He returned to Venice where the inquisitors blamed him for blasphemies, seductions, fights and public controversy. The inquisitors were also interested in his knowledge of cabalism, Freemasonry and his collection of forbidden books. His old friend, Senator Bragadin, told him to flee immediately or suffer stiff consequences. Sometime afterward in Venice at age 30, Casanova was arrested for outrages against religion, common decency and was imprisoned for 5 years on the top floor of the Doge's Palace, reserved for prisoners of higher status. Against extraordinary circumstances he managed to escape and fled to Paris.

Realizing his stay in Paris this time would be longer than previously, he had to be more calculating and deliberate, especially as he needed a new patron. This was an old friend, François-Joachim de Pierre de Bernis, now Foreign Minister of France, who told him he should think of a means of raising funds for the state to gain favor. He became a trustee of the state lottery and quickly earned a large fortune because of his excellent salesmanship. With this money he traveled in high circles with new seductions. Because of his excellent memory he duped many with his occultism and numerology. He claimed to be a Rosicrucian and alchemist which made him popular with many prominent figures of the era such as Voltaire (a Freemason) and Madame de Pompadour (official mistress of Louis XV). He was soon asked to sell state bonds in Amsterdam and was rich enough to found a silk manufacturing company the following year. Unfortunately, he ran the company poorly, along with spending on his new conquests, and ran into debt. He was again imprisoned for his debts but was released on the insistence of a good friend and he fled to Holland. He was not safe there either and was on the run fleeing to Cologne, Stuttgart, Einsiedeln (Switzerland), Marseille, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Modena, Turin, back to Paris and then England. By 1760 he was calling himself the Chevalier de Seingalt or the Count de Farussi (his mother's maiden name). During this time Pope Clement XIII presented him with the Papal Order of the Éperon d'Or (Order of the Golden Spur) which is rarely bestowed and given to those who have rendered distinguished service by promoting the Catholic faith or having contributed to the glory of the Church by armed defense, writing or some other noble achievement. (Other recipients have been Raphael and Mozart.)

He wasn't too fond of the English mainly because he didn't speak English well, and travelled on to Moscow and St. Petersburg. In Russia he met with Catherine the Great, and tried to sell her on his lottery ideas, but she was not interested. From there he went on to Warsaw, then Breslau (Prussia) and Dresden. By now he had a venereal infection, and his health was declining. That did not stop him from traveling on to Spain to meet Charles III to gain favor, thanks to well-placed contacts, often Freemasons.

He was allowed to return to Venice after an eighteen-year exile but found Venice had changed and he was not as dynamic a citizen there as he once was. He learned his mother had died and soon afterwards,

Bettina Gozzi died in his arms. The Inquisitors of Venice put him on the payroll as a spy, one of his more important investigations was the commerce between the papal states and Venice. Things eventually did not go well so he fled again to Paris, this time meeting Benjamin Franklin. (One of their discussions included hot air balloons). He then went on to Vienna where he met Lorenzo Da Ponte, Mozart's librettist. Casanova spoke with Da Ponte and it's possible their discussion found its way into the libretto for Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni*, since the opera is based on a fictional libertine and seducer, Don Juan.

A reversal of fortune forced the aging Casanova, now 60, to accept the position of librarian to Count Joseph Karl von Waldstein und Watenberg, chamberlain to the Holy Roman Emperor, at Dux Castle in Bohemia (Duchcov in the present day Czech Republic). It was a lonely, boring and frustrating job and he became ill-tempered often fighting with the staff, even over how to cook pasta! But he was well paid, and it became his more productive time for writing. His health was also deteriorating dramatically. He did manage to visit Prague in 1787 to meet again with Lorenzo Da Ponte and see the first production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, considered to be one of Mozart's masterpieces (along with *Così fan Tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Die Zauberflöte*).

In 1797 he learned Napoleon Bonaparte had seized Venice, the republic ceased to exist, and it was too late for him to return home to Venice. Thirteen years after his arrival, Casanova died at Dux and was buried in the cemetery of St. Barbara's church. His exact gravesite is unknown. There is a Casanova Festival in Duchcov (Dux) each year, and Duchcov Castle is often referred to as Cansanova Castle by the locals.

While at Dux, Casanova wrote his memoirs, *Histoire de Ma Vie (Story of My Life)*, in French because it was the language of eighteenth-century intellectuals and he wanted as wide a readership as possible. He bequeathed his memoirs to his nephew whose descendants later sold it to the German publisher, Friedrich Brockhaus of Leipzig. The Brockhaus family kept it for the next 140 years under lock and key, and miraculously, it survived the allied bombings of Leipzig during World War II. In 2010 the 3,700-page original manuscript was acquired by La Bibliothèque Nationale de France (The French National Library) after some ferocious bidding for \$9.6 million, a new record for a manuscript. The French consider it a national treasure because it is an intimate chronicle of eighteenth-century France where Casanova spent a great deal of his adult life. (When it was first published in 1821, in highly censored form, it was placed on the Vatican's Index of Prohibited Books.) The first uncensored edition in French was published in 1960, and the English translation in 1966. (His letters, saved by the Waldstein family, are in the State Regional Archive in Prague)

Casanova was recognized by his contemporaries for his far-ranging intellect and curiosity. (Today he is surrounded by so much myth many think he was a fictional character.) He was religious, a devout Catholic, believed in prayer but was also a participant in secret societies and sought answers beyond the conventional. During his lifetime he was a lawyer, clergyman, military officer, violinist, con man, gourmand, dancer, businessman, gambler, astrologer, diplomat, spy, politician, medic, mathematician, social philosopher, cabalist, playwright, translator (*The Iliad* into the Venetian dialect) and writer (a science fiction novel, a proto-feminist pamphlet, and several mathematical treatises). He, like Benjamin Franklin, was a genuine polymath.

Respectfully submitted,  
Br. Richard Gentile  
Jephtha Lodge 494

*All brothers of Jephtha Lodge are encouraged to contribute articles for Masonic Moments and Famous Mason (the same birth month as the month's publication). Kindly submit articles to the Communications Committee: Br. Bill Fenty III (wfenty@gmail.com) and Br. Richard Gentile (rg.jlnews@aol.com) by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. If you have any questions, kindly contact the two brothers above.*

