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RICHMOND RANDOLPH LODGE NO. 19

MARCH, 2026 BULLETIN



FROM THE EAST - THE VERNAL EQUINOX, BALANCE, AND REBIRTH



Brethren,

After one of the coldest winters I can remember in my time in Richmond, we are finally reaching spring. Meteorological Spring begins on March 1, but the vernal equinox—often thought of as the traditional beginning of spring—falls on March 20 this year. The equinox has a natural Masonic significance.

On this date, the day and night are nearly equal in length. The equinox has long-reflected balance in various philosophies and cultures - and is one of the central lessons in Masonry. The 24-inch gauge symbolizes the balance of time between the respective duties of our lives. The cardinal virtues emphasize balance between the extremes of human nature. The point within a circle and the Saints John represent the balance between impulsive action and overthinking. We can take the equinox as a reminder to seek these balances as we seek to live well.

Spring also ties into our philosophical topic on February 27th - Rebirth. Spring has long represented renewal. The earth turns green and seems to come back to life. Masonically, it can take us back to the significance of initiation. Whether we recognized it at the time or not, when we stepped through the West Gate, we experienced a rebirth as a Mason - united by the mystic tie.

The mystic tie is that intangible link one Mason feels when meeting another. It's that immediate sense of connection that can make even a first meeting feel meaningful. In that sense, initiation is a new beginning - as students of

Masonry, especially when we apply ourselves to learning the ritual, studying its lessons, and exploring their roots.

Hopefully, this spring can serve as a reminder to strive for the balance that leads to a well-ordered life. It can also remind us that we share an instant connection with hundreds of thousands of others across the world, a connection that began when we stepped through the West Gate.

Come enjoy that mystic tie this month at one of our events.

The March Stated Communication on March 14th will feature M.W. Don Strehle, PGM of Masons in Virginia in 2023. He will be speaking on “Aristotle: The Great Philosopher.” M.W. Strehle is always interesting to hear and is a major supporter of Masons’ Hall. We will also be recapping/discussing the Philosophical topic from this month.

The April Stated Communication on Saturday April 11th will feature Brother Mike Czech, Past Grand Historian of New Jersey. He will be giving his presentation on “Vile and Impious Wretches.” He fills in the potential backstories of the Hiram legend and offers cultural context to that period. I’m in the middle of his novelization of that presentation now and it is very eye opening.

Also, every Wednesday, we are at Masons’ Hall at 6:30 PM for ritual practice. This is a great chance to reinforce ritual as we do a catechism practice at every one of these. This is followed by conviviality at Rosie Connolly's pub.

Matthew Maggy, P.M.
2026 Worshipful Master

FROM THE WEST



After a bitter winter with more snow than we’re accustomed to, February 28th was the first day that felt like Spring was possible. I’m definitely going to be spending a lot more time outside as soon as possible. We’re lucky to live in a city that’s got a lot of natural beauty in the James River Park system, so if you haven’t been in a while, make sure it isn’t just the tourists that get to enjoy the best parts of River City.

It’s been a real pleasure over the last few years to see the regular get-togethers at Rosie's on Wednesday nights after ritual practice. Some brothers want to come early and polish their catechism, others just want to meet up for social time afterwards. All are welcome, including your friends. Our lodge is lucky to have a “hang out spot”, like our own personal Cheers (where they know our names & orders). Over the past few years, I’ve seen how important that is as a spot where we can meet prospects, they can meet us, and we just get time to enjoy each other’s company. I’ve been doing a lot of ritual work myself towards my Warden’s certificate, and I can tell you: all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

Brother David Allen
Senior Warden

FROM THE TREASURER

Last month we went over the process of “stepping off” as an investor. We covered starting a new investment account or investing additional money into a tax deferred account like an IRA or a 401k. Once the first step has been made, and the retirement or investment account has been opened, what should the process be for choosing an investment with the money that I’ve put into the account?





If you speak with your advisor, you are likely to get industry jargon like risk tolerance, diversification, and hedging. There is a simpler way to convey this message, “don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” The process of avoiding overinvestment in one option is easily done by buying groups of stocks often called funds or indexes. A fund, like the S&P 500 tracking fund that I mentioned last month (ticker SPY) simply buys shares of stock from all of the largest 500 companies in America, it then slices up the pool of stocks and sells shares of the fund at a much more affordable price. For example, Berkshire Hathaway stock (ticker BRK/A) is on the market for \$757,890 per share, and that’s obviously not a good starting point for an investor. However, a small slice of Berkshire Hathaway stock is included in the S&P 500 tracking fund, and that fund can be bought for \$686 per share. Buying into a fund like SPY inherently divides your money into the biggest companies in America, and it kicks off a quarterly dividend to boot.

There are many other themes that are similar to the SPY. If an investor were to choose the fund that tracks the NASDAQ (ticker QQQ) it would be exposed mostly to tech companies like Nvidia, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and many more. The Schwab Dividend Tracker Fund (ticker SCHD) is a fund that exposes the investor to older companies that offer higher dividends and the tradeoff is that the companies tend to be slower growing companies because they’re in more mature industries like medical supplies and oil companies.

There are endless possibilities when it comes to stock funds, so the wise investor looks for the stocks or funds that have made money over a period of time. For example, SPY has made its investors an average of 14.48% per year for 5 years and has made an average of 14.8% per year over the last 10 years. For the beginning investor, we want to look at how much money is being returned over the long run.

These principles can be applied to the investor’s 401k account as well. In your 401k you will find a fact sheet that shows the rates of return for the different investment options and the investor can choose which options they would like. For example, one could choose to put 50% of their money into an S&P 500 index fund, which is large companies, 25% into mid-sized company funds, called Mid Caps, and 25% into small company funds, called Small Caps.

While this isn’t investing advice, (because every situation is different) you should speak with a professional. Doing so should help understand the process of spreading out investments to increase the investor's odds of long-term prosperity.

This month’s reading recommendation, “Where Are All the Customers’ Yachts.”

Brother Richard Meador
Treasurer



FROM THE SECRETARY



Thank you for again electing me as your Secretary. Our e-Bulletin has a new look! We will be sending the newsletter to you through the Grandview system.

Please [log into the portal](#) and update your contact information if anything changes. If you have not yet logged into the member portal, use this link: https://va.grandview.systems/membership_registration

I am excited that this year's Philosophical Society will be "back to basics" as we study from Allen Roberts book, *The Craft and Its Symbols*. For the March meeting, we will study the idea of "Entrance" into the new world of Freemasonry. See The Trestleboard for details.

Lodge dues of \$344 were due by December 31, 2025 but you have until December 31, 2026 to pay them. The easiest way to pay them is on our website at www.richmondrandolph19.com/store.

Donald Moro, P.M.
Secretary

THE TRESTLEBOARD - MARCH, 2026

March 6, 2026, 6:30 PM

First Friday
Greek Taverna Restaurant
1903 Staples Mill Rd., Richmond
[More information and Reservations](#)

March 22, 2026, 7:30 PM

RR19 Philosophical Society Discussion
"The Craft and Its Symbols" - Topic: Entrance
[Zoom - More Information Here](#)

March 14, 2026

Stated Meeting - Speaker: M.W. Don Strehle
Masons' Hall
Breakfast Served at 8:00 AM
Attire: Dark Suit

April 3, 2026, 7:30 PM

First Friday
Mama Cucina Italian Restaurant
2048 Cox Rd., Glen Allen, VA
[More information and Reservations](#)

RECENT LODGE ACTIVITY





Proficiency Certificates

At the February 14, 2026 Stated Meeting, Worshipful Maggy presented Brother Shane Phillips (left) and Brother David Eaton with certificates of proficiency in the three catechisms.



Commonwealth Researchers of the Paranormal

At the February 14, 2026 Stated Meeting, Brother Gene Wells of Commonwealth Researchers of the Paranormal presented his findings after an evening spent at Masons' Hall. Brother Wells is seen here describing unexplained lights and sounds which were present during his visit.

FRANK "DAD" LAND AND THE ORDER OF DEMOLAY

An Invitation to Join DeMolay by Worshipful Donald Moro



On March 14, 1919, Frank Land launched the Order of DeMolay, an official appendant body of Freemasonry. Thirty-one boys, all from the same high school in Kansas City, met and agreed to form a club with "Dad" Land as its advisor.

DeMolay International is the premier organization based on timeless principles, committed to developing and inspiring leadership, team building, and networking for young men ages 12-21.

DeMolay believes that every young man has the potential to become a leader of extraordinary character. With thousands of members worldwide, DeMolay's approach is simple: give young men the tools to lead and the guidance to succeed. The members take ownership of their DeMolay experience. From generating ideas, planning events, coordinating logistics, and executing their plans, each DeMolay Chapter is responsible for defining their success. All of

this is accomplished under the mentorship of trained Advisors, selected from the local community, enabling each Chapter to be uniquely tailored to support the interest of its members.

Westhampton Chapter, sponsored by Westhampton Lodge No. 302, went dark shortly after COVID, but it plans to restart thanks to a group of motivated advisors. An Open House and Information Meeting is planned for **Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 PM** at the Westhampton Lodge. If you know of a young man who is looking for fileal love, patriotism, comradship, and lots of fun, please contact Worshipful Brother Donald Moro at donmoro@gmail.com. We

are also looking for enthusiastic Advisors who are interested in giving their time and talent to the future leaders of our fraternity and our country.

More information about Westhampton DeMolay can be found here: <https://www.westhamptondemolay.org>

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In the Story of His Success
this is Chapter One

Open House
 Sunday, March 15
 2:00 - 4:00 PM

9290 Three Chopt Road
 Henrico, VA 23229

A Masonic Youth Organization
 YOUNG MEN AGES 12-21

For over one hundred years,
 DeMolay International has given
 young men the tools to become
 leaders on their path.

Learn more at [BeADeMolay.org](https://www.BeADeMolay.org)

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DEMOLAY
 VIRGINIA

MASONIC EDUCATION

What do Virginia Masons Disagree About? - by Brother David Allen

Recently in a discussion with a masonic mentor, the topic of the Methodical Digest came up, the rule book which has governed Freemasonry in Virginia for hundreds of years. Virginia Masonic law originally started with the Ahiman Rezon (original book of constitutions) and then grew and changed over all that time through the Grand Lodge process:

Grand Master edicts, decisions, and amendments voted on at Grand Lodge. The mentor's assertion was that: "you could tell what Masons disagreed on by reading the methodical digest and seeing where the action was."

I decided to test that assertion. So, using a process that used AI tools, I had software read the entire methodical digest and produce a list of every single section in the document along with how many decisions and amendments those sections had seen over the years. I had the software note the date of first amendment (or decision) & most recent amendment or decision. Then, it's just a simple matter of sorting the spreadsheet to find the spiciest parts of the methodical digest. You can find that spreadsheet here. But it's too much to go through today, so we'll approach this in a simpler way.

Let's discuss the top 3 most controversial sections of the Methodical digest and see what they teach us about Freemasonry in Virginia.

Section 2.48 — The Duties of a Master

This section has seen 54 decisions spanning 1903–1999. The most argued section in the entire Digest. There are two large decision clusters: one in 1905 under Grand Master Davis and 1909 under Grand Master Eggleston. Both essentially codified the doctrine that the Master is a near-absolute sovereign within his Lodge. The recurring friction point was Lodge funds: members and Lodges kept trying to curb the Master's financial authority, and the members kept losing. The alcohol-related edicts in the Methodical digest (1983, 1989, 1999) form a subplot, which goes from strict prohibition to qualified tolerance in one generation.

Section 2.13 — Masonic Occasions

This section has seen 42 decisions from 1895–2001. The majority of decisions concern the funeral procession and specifically, who marches where. A remarkable cluster of seven decisions in 1906 alone addressed the precise choreography of Masonic burial, reflecting an era when Masons, Odd Fellows, veterans' groups and other orders all competed for the "post of honour" immediately before the hearse. The most striking decision (1977) denied Masonic burial to a Mason who murdered his wife and then himself. The section reveals that the Masonic funeral was not merely a private rite but a public claim on civic life, and so every detail became contested.

Section 2.95 — Petitions and Balloting

This section has seen 32 decisions from 1893–2025, and controls who is allowed into the fraternity. Freemasonry in Virginia has something we might call the ballot finality doctrine. Once a ballot is declared, it's never reconsidered. This rule was hammered home in at least nine decisions across seven decades: no take-backs. Yet Grand Masters kept carving out equitable exceptions for ballot-box failures. The key moment is a set of three decisions in 1990 when Grand Master Cobbs set aside the secret ballot's finality to override rejections based on national origin and race, and in the most dramatic case simply ordered the candidate received and given the degrees. These decisions reveal the secret ballot's darkest function: as a tool of exclusion that the fraternity had to consciously learn to override in its own name.

What do we make of this?

The three spiciest sections of the Digest share an underlying theme: Freemasonry promises brotherhood and equality, but installs structures like sovereign Master, ranked funeral processions, and an anonymous blackball that can contradict that promise. Disputes pile up because people keep testing rules, hoping it will come out differently when applied to their specific situation. The ballot finality rule was restated six times over sixty years. The Master's financial authority was challenged and rejected across a century. Human stubbornness is not deterred by clear precedent.

Fraternal ritual is symbolic, but not only symbolic, it's also a set of claims. Who marches closest to the hearse is a public statement about institutional standing. Who gets through the ballot is a definition of who counts as a brother. And anonymous mechanisms of exclusion, however well-intentioned at their origin, tend over time to accumulate the prejudices of their users. The 1990 race decisions make explicit what had long been latent. Every fraternal organization, at its core, is a machine for generating belonging, and that always requires boundaries. The entire legal structure of the Digest is, in part, a discussion spanning more than a century about where that boundaries lie and who gets to draw them.

LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL...



RICHMOND RANDOLPH LODGE NO. 19 PRESENTS

Ruffian: the Making of a Murderer

A TALE OF THE MASTER MASON DEGREE



How did the three Ruffians become the most reviled men in Israel? What is the backstory that led to their crimes? Who were the craftsmen involved in the fate of the first recognized Grand Master of Masons? Join R.W. Michael Czech in his fantastic version of history that provides the basis for the Hiramic legend and Master Mason Degree, an overview of his novel: *Vile and Impious Wretches*



R.W. BRO. MICHAEL CZECH
ATLAS PYTHAGORAS LODGE NO. 10
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
PAST GRAND HISTORIAN
GRAND LODGE OF NEW JERSEY

APRIL 11, 2026
BREAKFAST 8:00AM

STATED MEETING
9:00AM

PRESENTATION TO
FOLLOW

OPEN TO MASTER
MASONS ONLY

RICHMOND RANDOLPH
LODGE NO. 19
1807 E. FRANKLIN ST
RICHMOND, VA

DIGITAL AND PRINT COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE ON SITE

HAPPY MASONIC BIRTHDAY

Most Worshipful Stuart Vernon Cook, 3/17, 60 Years
 Worshipful Oran Curtis Jamison, 3/13, 20 Years
 Worshipful Matthew August Maggy, 3/10, 16 Years
 Brother Pheylan Blue Martin, 3/31, 6 Years
 Brother Ryan Richard Mumby, 3/19, 7 Years
 Brother Francis Love Romero, 3/26, 13 Years
 Brother Erik Michael Schroeder, 3/31, 21 Years
 Brother Christopher Lee Shuman, 3/1, 20 Years

Total - 163 Masonic Years

2026 LODGE OFFICERS

Worshipful Matthew August Maggy, **Worshipful Master**
 Brother Matthew David Allen, **Senior Warden**
 Worshipful Kyle Douglas Holland Bourne, **Junior Warden**
 Brother Richard Scott Meador, **Treasurer**
 Worshipful Donald Francis Moro, Jr., **Secretary**
Mobile: (804) 652-9311, Email: secretaryrr19@gmail.com
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 Brother Bailey Gavin Moro, **Junior Deacon**
 Rt. Worshipful William Robert Heltzel, **Chaplain**
 Brother Tyler Cole Esteppe, **Senior Steward**
 Brother Shane Douglass Phillips, **Junior Steward**
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MASONIC VETERANS

60 YEARS OR BETTER

Brother Bedros C. Bendazion (63)
 Mt. Worshipful Stuart Vernon Cook (60)
 Mt. Worshipful Frederick Garrison Martin, III (63)
 Brother John Hjalmar Stenstrom (60)

50 - 60 YEARS

Brother Irvin Franklin Beadles

Worshipful Robert Burney Bedell
Worshipful Lothar Arthur Bernhard, Sr.
Worshipful Charles William Hundley
Brother Waverly Carroll Marshall
Brother Mark Lewis Perkins
Brother Earl Anthony Sale, Sr.

LIVING PAST MASTERS

1971 Robert B. Bedell
1988 Lothar A. Bernhard
1995 J. Larry Dixon, P.D.D.G.M.
1997 Anthony C. Pearce
1999 Marc D. Graham
2000 Gordon H. Sprigg, Jr.
2005 Barrye L. Absher, P.D.D.G.M.
2006 Thomas E. Breeden
2010 William R. Heltzel, P.D.D.G.M.
2011 James H. Duke, Jr. P.D.D.G.M.
2012, 2013 Paul A. Dierickx
2014 Lee A. Oppenheim
2015, 2016 Michael D. Joyner
2017 Charles W. Hundley
2018 Preston Chad Vanderpool, D.D.G.M.
2019 Donald A. K. Cunningham, Jr., P. D.D.G.M.
2020 Donald F. Moro, Jr.
2021 Jacob A. Crocker
2022 Chandos J. Carrow
2023 Kyle D. H. Bourne
2024 Shane C. Flansburg
2025 Matthew A. Maggy

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 Curtis L. Thompson

A Legacy Membership in Perpetuity can be purchased for \$8,600. This exempts the member from paying RR19 dues and contributes an amount perpetually back to the Lodge. For details, see section 5.00 of the Methodical Digest, or contact the Secretary at secretaryrr19@gmail.com.

OUR GRAND MASTER

"Living Our Obligations"



Matthew Todd Szramoski
180th Grand Master of Masons in Virginia

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Email: secretaryrr19@gmail.com

Masons' Hall Website: www.masonshall.org

Social: [Facebook](#)



THE GRAND LODGE OF VIRGINIA
ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

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