



Hamilton Thompson No. 37

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Virginia
www.hamiltonthompson37.org

Stated Communication – March 17, 2022
Dinner at 6:30p, Lodge at 7:30p

March 2022

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2022 Officers

Worshipful Master

Joshua V Goff
16339 Woodgrove Rd.
Round Hill, VA. 20141
571-230-7446
WMHT37@gmail.com

Senior Warden

William Craig

Junior Warden

Larry Brissing, PM

Treasurer

Greg Levine

Secretary

Jim Cromer, PDDGM

Senior Deacon

Bradley Vaughn

Junior Deacon

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Chris Thompson, PDDGM

LEO

Ed Ziemba, PM

From the East

Thank you everyone who attended our February Stated meeting. Also thank you brother Brett Choyce for providing dinner. I look forward to seeing you all at our March 17 Stated meeting. Its St Patrick's day do not forget to wear your green and PM Larry Brissing will be providing dinner. Bangers and mash are on the menu. One of the programs being presented at this month's meeting is on The Masonic Ring. Here is a preview from the brothers at the Midnight Freemasons.

Joshua V Goff
Worshipful Master.

Masonic Rings: Points In Or Points Out?

by Midnight Freemasons Contributors

Noble Brian Schimian

&

Todd E. Creason, 33°

Todd Creason: Some time ago I wrote a piece about whether President Obama was a Freemason or not. There was a photo circulating at the time of what was purportedly the President's hands, and the right hand was clearly wearing a Masonic ring. All the photo showed was two hands holding the Presidential Seal. There was a lot of buzz at the time that this was evidence that President Obama was a Freemason. However, the President is not a Freemason--the photo wasn't of the President's hands. It was posed by a photographer for a magazine piece. Some years ago, the President was speaking for an audience, and suddenly, the Presidential seal fell off the podium and crashed to the floor. The President took it in stride, walked around the podium, picked it up off the floor and rehung it on the podium to the amusement of the people in the audience. The piece was written about that funny incident, and the photo was taken later for the piece--the hands belonged to a stand-in.

But I made a mistake in the piece--I questioned whether the stand-in was a Mason, because (at least according to me) he was wearing his ring upside-down. I got over a hundred emails on the subject. As I quickly learned, the custom for wearing a Masonic rings varies a great deal by locale. I was dead wrong on that point. As it was quickly pointed out to me, many Masons wear their rings with the points out. Live and learn.

A couple weeks ago, the subject came up again--on Facebook. I posted a picture of a friend of mine, the Illustrious Brother William J. Hussey, Jr. 33°, and one of the Midnight Freemasons, Brother Brian Schimian, asked why he was wearing his ring upside-down. Bill Hussey was wearing his ring the same way I wear mine. I thought to myself "oh boy, here we go again!" There were a number of comments on that post--over 90 in an hour--including comments from *Midnight Freemason* Bill Hosler and our newest member Aaron Gardner. Brian Schimian and I later talked on the phone and decided this would be an excellent topic for a piece on the *Midnight Freemasons*. Since he was taught to wear his ring points out, and I was instructed to wear mine points in, we decided to write the piece together and compare the reasons why we wear our rings the way we do.

Points In?

In my part of the world, Masons wear their rings with the points down--towards your wrist. When I was a new Mason I didn't know it mattered. Ever since the day I was raised a Master Mason, I wear my ring each and every day, and in the beginning, I wore it which ever way I happened to put it on that morning. I was at a degree one evening, and afterwards, we're sitting around a table in the dining hall, and a Brother noticed how I had my ring on and told me I was wearing it upside-down. That particular day, I'd put it on points up. I looked around the table and noticed everyone at that table was wearing it points down. We had a discussion about it. The explanation is that the points of the compass should point towards your heart, to remind you of your obligation. That ring, according to our local custom, is a reminder to the wearer of those tenants we honor, and the Fraternity we represent. I've worn it that way since. I thought it was Universal at the time--as I learned later, it certainly is not. There are those that wear it points down. Like Brother Brian Schimian.

Points Out?

Brian Schimian: For as long as I can remember while I was growing up, I wanted to wear my father's Masonic ring. It represented everything that he was and what I strove to be. As I moved my way through Masonic education, that ring and the symbolism therein came to mean more. The typical Masonic ring is a combination of Masonic symbols. The Square, or earthly perfection, and Compasses, or heavenly perfection. Frequently, the letter G is incorporated into the center. Along my journey of enlightenment, I came to understand that the ends of the Square point up to show ones aspirations toward God and the points of the Compasses point down to represent heavenly qualities coming down to earth from God. The ring, as all Masonic symbols are displayed in the same manner, to show others that I know what my obligations are and to show the rest of the world I am a Mason. The ring exemplifies how I live my life: upright & on the level. If someone asks what that ring represents, it is easier for them to see the design as you show it to them and describe the different points if it is worn points down.

I remember one Brother explaining it like this as he showed me his ring: *"Sharing the light of Masonry or advertising, if you will, being a mason is being "Upright" and "On The Level" as so should be the emblem of a Mason. By displaying the ring points out, a Mason makes the statement that as others see his actions, so will they gain a upright perception of the Craft."* This Brother wore an old Masonic Signet ring that was older than both of our ages combined. He continued, "The original Masonic signet rings had to face this direction to ensure that when the wearer pressed the ring into warm wax to validate and seal an authentic Masonic document, the legs of the compass pointed down on the resulting wax seal."

Todd Creason: Well there you have it--two different ring customs, and two different philosophies on how Masonic rings should be worn. And I'm sure if our readers would chip in, you'd find there is a lot more diversity than just these two we've presented here, and I hope our readers will share those with us.

Brian Schimian: Should it look right side up to Him, you or them? In the end it may not matter how one chooses to wear the Points, as long as you act upon them and remember what it means to be able to wear them. Probably the most encompassing explanation I have found is this: *"You are supposed to wear the ring with the Compasses pointed into yourself. Until such a time that you become a Past Master of your Lodge. At which time, you can turn the points out to the rest of the world, as spiritually speaking, you have reached the point of Master, and have mastered the art of the Quadrant, and you may now share your wisdom with others."*

Another answer to this question can be found in a new style of Masonic ring that is beginning to make itself around the market. The laser etched Square & Compasses are placed in both directions around the ring. So there you go, the free market has solved the dilemma for us.

~BJS/TEC

From the West

William Craig
Senior Warden

From the West

Thank you to WM Goff, WB Zimba, and Brother Orsinger for your work on the bell tower this month. Metal wire has now been put up behind the louvers and the two floors up there are a bit cleaner. We had a moment to talk about other building repairs to include fixing a water leak in the vestibule and some lighting issues. If any brother would like to lend a hand, we would love to have you out there.

March 26th is the Ken Shelton school. For those who have not had the opportunity to attend one, I highly encourage you to go. It's a great way to watch degree work performed, without an actual candidate, and be a part of the question/answer periods. This year Ashburn/Sterling Lodge 288 will be hosting the school and as always, it's free to attend. Doors expected to open at 8:00 and the school to start at 8:30, breakfast and lunch will be provided. This year, your Hamilton-Thompson officers will be putting on the EA degree for the district.

Remember to keep our ill and distressed brothers, and their families, in your prayers. If there is something that you need, please reach out to me.

-Bro. Craig, SW

Living Past Masters

William Rodgers
Chris Thompson
Fred Meyer
Herb Goodfellow
Bob Gardner
Greg Jay
Jim Cromer
Paul Bock,
Jeff Gould
Jamie George
Joe Ray
Don Young
David Marsh
Mike Cox
Jason Wolfe
Ed Ziemba
Larry Brissing

From The South

Larry Brissing
Junior Warden

Call the craft from labor to refreshment, call them on again so that he may have honor and they profit thereby
Great workday cleaning the belfry!
Thank you for those that took time out of there day to complete the critter exclusions. Still more to do on lodge improvements. A spring cleanup will be scheduled in the near future. It was also great to see so many faces these last couple of meetings. We have a fair amount of prospects looking to receive degrees. We will be seeking men to conduct masonic interviews and such. Be on the lookout for these prospects at stated dinners. Speaking of dinner, the month of March we celebrate Saint Patrick. We will do so in accordance with Irish traditions to include a touch of green and a taste of mash. Hope to see you there.

S&F

Larry Brissing PM