

RING 180, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA – Horace Bennett Ring

Meets 2nd. Wed. each month, 7:00 pm, Children's Museum, 2626 West

Broad St., Richmond, VA 23220
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Before the meeting convened, Sean Boutchard, a graduate student of marketing at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) conducted a group interview. This interview was part of a documentary that Sean is preparing for a class project.

President Watt Hyer opened the October meeting with announcements of the recent past appearance of members at the Second Street Festival and their planned appearance at the coming Richmond Folk Festival. Our "landlord," the Children's Museum of Richmond, has venues at these events and the appearance of Ring members is one way of paying the "rent." Watt introduced the evening's performance theme, "Spooky or Bizarre Magic," by showing an old style key, like an old skeleton key, and placing it in his hand where it mysteriously rolled back and forth. This effect was the classic "Haunted Key." Watt then showed a box or trap that he had constructed to catch and hold an unknown critter that lurked around his rural home. There was a loud noise as the box's door sprung open and a strange critter (constructed from a feather boa) leapt out and landed in Tom Olshefski's lap. This gag was Watt's take on the classic "Mongoose Box."

Mike Kinnaird performed his adaptation of "Houdini's Influence" by Wayne Houchin. He spoke of encountering an elderly dealer at the I.B.M. convention in Norfolk from whom he acquired photographs of playing cards used by Houdini. Zack Gartrell selected a photo and Mike showed an ancient newspaper story of a Houdini show in which the same card had been selected by the audience. Mike continued his "influences from beyond" patter by placing a small wand on the mouth of a standing soft drink bottle and showing that it rotated strangely without apparent cause.

Larry Lessner spoke of fate and belief systems. He gave Watt Hyer a small envelope. Watt looked inside to learn the value of the playing card which it held. An examined deck was repeatedly cut and its audience-chosen halves removed until only six or seven cards remained. At each stage Watt verified that the matching card was in the remaining portion of the deck. Finally, Mike Kinnaird touched a card and it matched the one that Watt held.

Bill Baber introduced a tarot deck in new deck order and explained its composition by showing its major and minor divisions and its four suits and their ranks. He noted that many of its cards matched those in a modern, standard deck. He removed the Ten of Chalices and asked those

who had standard decks to remove the Ten of Hearts – the cards that predicted good fortune. All with cards formed a set of thirteen cards and mixed and removed them, following their own desires and Bill's instructions. In the end all were left with the single card foretelling a happy new year, beginning with the Celtic festival of Samhain, October 31. Bill reassembled and mixed the tarot deck. He had members pass it among themselves, and five members each selected a card. Bill then divined the five selected cards. His first effect was an adaptation of Jim Steinmeyer's "Enigmatic Tarot" from *Subsequent Impuzzibilities*. His second effect was Christoph Borer's "Tossed out Tarot," published by Card-Shark.

Zack Gartrell told a story of a father and his young daughter, who enjoyed coloring books. Spooky elements appeared as he told of an evil spirit compelling the little girl's behavior as the coloring book that Zack held became colored and ended with completely blank pages. All at the meeting resolved not to spend that night in a room that held their "Magic Coloring Books." Zack's patter came from "The Colouring-In Books" in *A Lightning Rod to the Spirits* by Paul Voodini. *Wm. C. Baber*