

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev Bergeron Ring” SAM Assembly #99

December 31, 2019 | Archived Famulus

December 2019 Meeting

President Michael Matson called the December meeting to order. Our annual officer elections were held and last year's slate of officers were re-elected. For the year 2020, it will be: President Michael Matson, Vice President Craig Fennessy, Treasurer Thom Parkin, Secretary Dennis Phillips and Director-at-Large David Freeman. Phil Schwartz is our Magic Historian.

Most members brought food and desserts for the holiday party. Jacki Manna was our entertaining host and emcee. She opened by teaching us ventriloquism. She was taught by the late Howard Olsen and introduced us to the figure that Howie willed to her, his 1905 Charlie Mack made, Cowboy Eddie. Mack was a famous Chicago figure maker who is also known for Edgar Bergen's, Charlie McCarthy. After a hilarious routine, she showed the “genie voice in the vase” followed by her signature character, Mathilda, who may seem to be an old woman but never ages and is always young at heart.

Jacki then introduced a team game. We broke into a 6 groups and the idea was to separate M&Ms from a small bowl into individual colors in other bowls. It was a race to see who was first. Finally we had a creativity contest, where a bag of random objects was given in a paper bag and the idea was to use as many of the objects as possible to create a magic routine. We can be proud that every contestant was able to create a great routine. The grand winner was Steve Nelson with a side-splitting routine somewhere between The Great Ballantine and The Amazing Jonathan.

The concluding event was the gift exchange. Historian Phil Schwartz had two contestants whose names were drawn to come up and the one who answered his trivia question got to choose a gift. The other person had to try later when their name was drawn again. The gifts were taken and we had a wonderful time of food and fellowship.

Dennis Phillips



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

January 2019

"Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth"
-Sherlock Holmes-

The Magician's job is to confuse them so they think the impossible is possible.

Sad to report that Dick Oslund, an old friend has died. Dick Oslund was 87 ,just 8 days shy of his 88th birthday. He passed away today December 3rd.

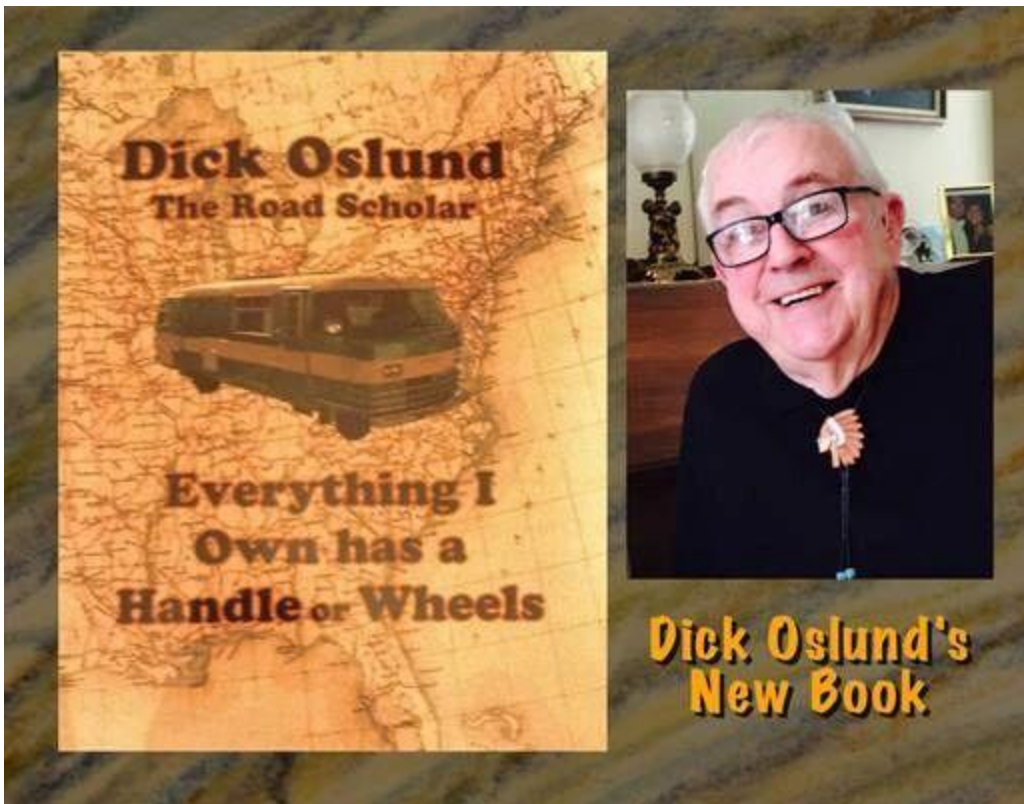
I met Dick in the 1950s when he was in the Navy and stationed in Norfolk and was a frequent visitor at Earl Edwards Norfolk Magic Shop. He left the Navy and spent some time

studying for the ministry in seminary but ended up being a Boy Scout Executive, before hitting the road for years of doing school assembly shows.

In 1969 we were together at the Abbott's get together and he would visit me in Charlotte, in the early 70s, when he was on the road with his school shows with his motor home. He would park his motor home in front of my house and , Dick would talk for hours with me and my wife, Cindy, and tell stories of life on the road and people who he knew and , of course, show his magic and techniques.

He was old school and a trooper. He lectured for the Orlando Ring, about 15 years ago, while working here in Orlando. Recently he was active on Facebook. He was the last of a passing era. If you want to "Make Magic Great Again" look at what Dick Oslund thought and did.





Dick Oslund

My point in writing this tribute to Kid's TV is to show what was is "old" and "classic" can still be good and powerful. At the end of this article is a link to show that kids still enjoy watching Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. I believe a well crafted magic show, that many modern magicians believe is old and dated and too slow moving, still works. If the presentation has merit, it never gets old.

In light of the new Tom Hank's Movie about Fred Rogers:

Many of us worked in Kid's TV: Bev Bergeron, Steve Hart and others.

As many of you know, I worked in Children's TV in the 1960s and 1970s. Being at Geneva College, near Pittsburgh, and working in Pittsburgh broadcasting in college meant that it was inevitable that I would met Fred Rogers, who worked at WQED TV, the Public TV station, in Pittsburgh.

Few realize that many of the actors on the Neighborhood show were local Pittsburgh radio personalities. Many from KDKA. Fred had graduated from Rollins College with a degree in music and later became an ordained Presbyterian Minister.

WQED was not, at first, a high budget operation but became the production facility for his shows. I can recall him playing the studio piano with one of his compositions. The first hundred or so episodes of his show were in Black and White. Fred was colorblind, so he had to rely on others for his color schemes when the show went to color.

In 1967 Fred wanted to return to Pittsburgh after doing Canada TV for the CBC. He and was putting together the format and funding for his Neighborhood. Most of the sets had been designed by the CBC

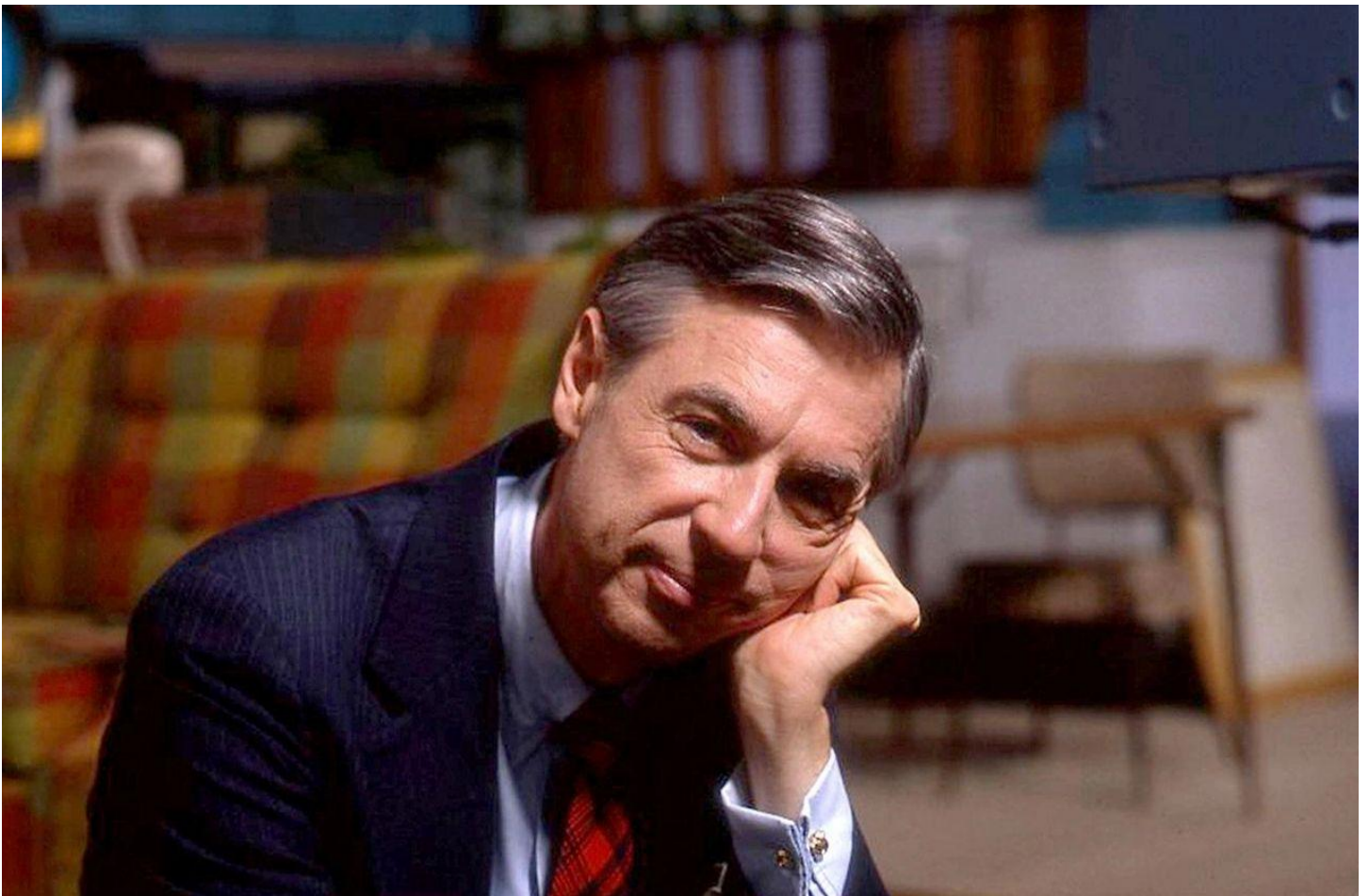
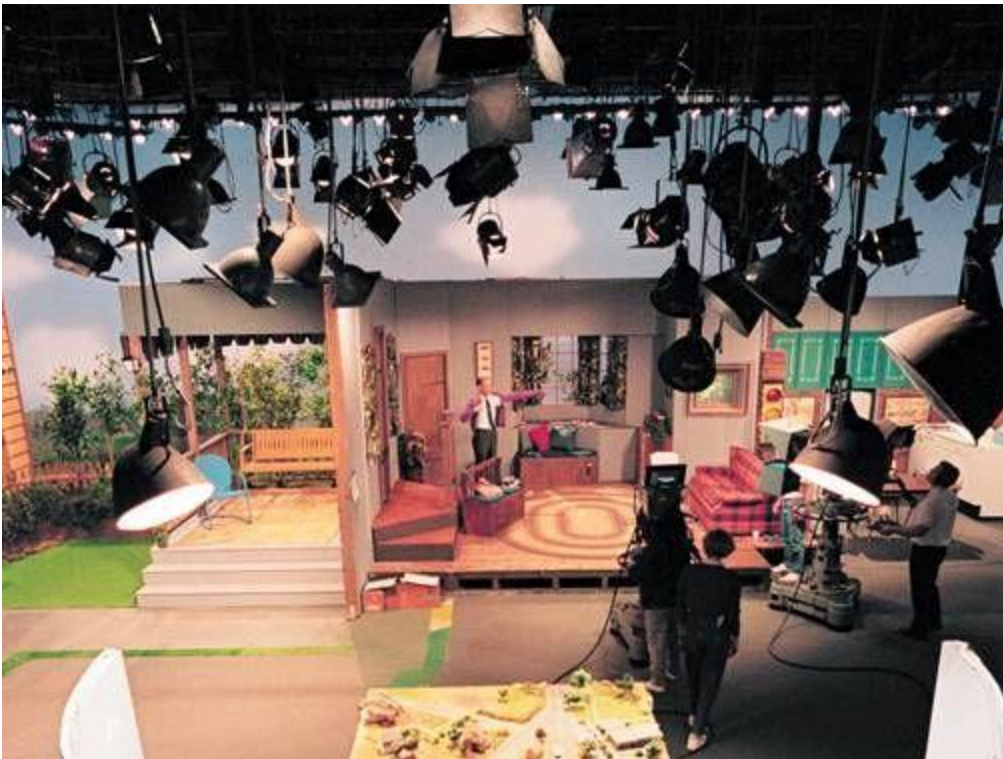
and used in Canada. When I was busy doing Kid's TV in Washington, DC, in 1968, I take the 5 hour drive back to Pittsburgh to see the running of the show. Fred and his wife, Joanne, did many visits to Rollins and he loved Winter Park. The last that I saw him was at Holiday House, the old homestyle dining restaurant on Aloma Avenue was around 2000. He said the blessing before we ate.



WQED



WQED



[What happened when I showed vintage Mister Rogers to my 21st-century kids](#)

My last regular TV show was Whistlestop which aired regularly on the Jefferson-Pilot stations WBTV Channel 3 Charlotte, NC and WWBT Channel 12 Richmond, VA. I created, wrote and produced the show from 1972 to 1975. Portions were rerun into the 1980s.

You can read the details

here: <http://www.btmemories.com/articles/programs/whistlestop/whistlestop.html>





The cast: Jim Patterson, Fred Kirby,
Dennis Phillips and Clara Lowry



The puppet show stage
manned by Dennis and
Jim.

I saw this and recalled the days when Abbotts had two pages in their catalog showing all the trick glasses they sold. I believe in the 1960s they were earliest plastic glasses

and called “Blue Mist Tumblers”. (See below) You could get a “coin slot” glass, a bottomless glass, a ball glass (had a hole in the back to roll out or in a ball), an Okito glass with a center tube, a mirror glass...

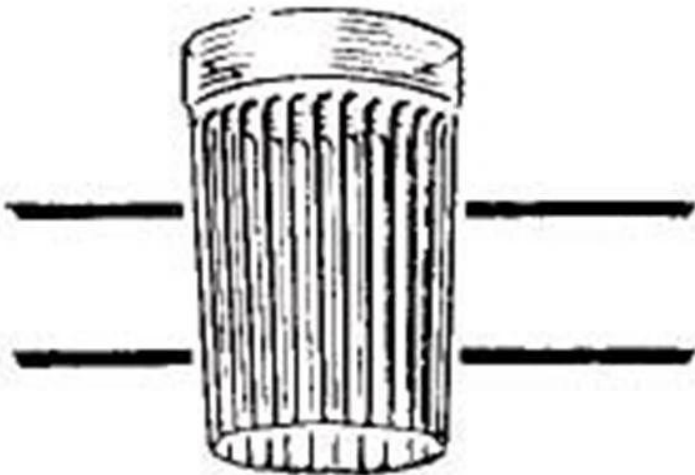
My favorite real-glass gimmick was the Chen Lee Water Suspension with the plastic insert on a hook or maybe the Miracle Glass with the upside down insert for a cheap

version of a milk pitcher. In fact, I used that glass in my youth more than the old Milk pitcher. No one serves milk in a pitcher like D. Robbins EZ Magic used to sell!

Today, I use the milk carton with the white dowel rod gimmick. It looks real.

If I really want to sell the idea that there is milk in the cone, I have a small baggie with a 1 inch cube sponge in it. A slight squeeze and it releases enough fluid to be convincing.

“The Blue Mist Tumbler”





Stu MacDonald with another winner. I like it. It is an update on the Billy McComb “McComical Prediction” using a spectator’s cell phone.

It is simple, fun and has a great premise.

A sad day for card magic: Simon Aronson passes.



Simon Aronson

Simon Aronson, anonymous to the masses even though he has been a veritable magic trick incubator for decades has died. Aronson was 76. He had a longtime career as a corporate attorney in the Chicago Loop, and was a luminary in the world of magic .

Even magicians who are not card specialists, like me, have heard of The Aronson Stack and his work. I have to confess that I have made fun of his tedious stacks and card counting presentations, But I respected his creativity and cleverness and anyone who does Card Magic.

While working typically wild hours as an attorney, Aronson managed to publish five books on card magic, a sixth coming out shortly after he retired.

Throughout his career in real estate law at Lord, Bissell & Brook, he was rarely seen without a deck of cards, or a coin between his fingers that would alternately appear and disappear. He'd put business calls on speakerphone to free his hands to shuffle or practice sleight-of-hand techniques, and he'd try new tricks out on everyone: law partners, mail clerks, clients.

"I enjoyed the practice of law, but it wasn't my highest priority," said Aronson, who retired in 1999. "Law has a certain sense of propriety. Magic and entertainers inherently break that down. I always wanted to play."

And play he did. A fellow lawyer in his firm once said Aronson was one of the brightest lawyers he's ever known, but he recalls seeing the hobbyist magician break out card tricks after completing big real-estate deals, or using magic to break the ice with new clients.

When he met his wife, Ginny, while they were both at the U. of C., he asked her to become his partner in a mind-reading act that he'd spent years refining. The couple performed at nightclubs and private parties across Chicago from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, taking them into their early years as attorneys. In the act, a blindfolded Ginny Aronson sits facing away from her audience. Aronson walks among the crowd and gets people to take items out of their pockets or wallets. He has them hold the items in their hand, and Ginny miraculously identifies them. One of the more spectacular nuances is her ability to recite, still blindfolded, the serial number off any random dollar bill.

"That's probably among the top acts of its kind in the world," said Chicago magician John Bannon. And unlike many of Aronson's published card tricks, the method behind the mind-reading routine remains a secret.

When Aronson ended his legal career, he decided he wanted the mind-reading trick to be his grand finale. A typical retirement party for a law partner would be filled with droll but complimentary speeches. Aronson insisted that there be no speeches, just a chance to read the minds of about 80 normally staid law partners.

Larry Gray, fellow lawyer, admitted it was an unusual moment in the world of high-powered law, but the act went off like a charm. "There are some things they did that you just couldn't believe," he said. "People who hadn't seen things he does in the past, they were just amazed."

And that is all Aronson has ever wanted--to amaze people, to make them believe the impossible is happening before their eyes.

This is worth the read. (Get the pun? "Worth"?)

Highest-Paid Magicians 2019: David Copperfield Conjures \$60M To Top List



Hayley C. Cuccinello Forbes Staff
Billionaires
Following the world's richest people.

David Copperfield boasts a net worth of \$875 million, the world's largest collection of magic memorabilia and the title of world's highest-paid magician—now for the fourth consecutive year—yet the 63-year-old is hardly ready to disappear.

Copperfield performed a stunning 654 shows at the MGM Grand in 12 months ending in June, helping him tally an estimated \$60 million in pretax earnings. The famed illusionist, known for walking through the Great Wall of China and making the Statue of Liberty disappear, also mints millions from exclusive tours and concerts on Musha Cay, his private-island resort; he owns 11 private islands in the Bahamas.

“I never wanted to be a businessman. It just happens,” Copperfield told *Forbes* in 2017. “You have to attend to the business side of things. ... My work is how I have fun—though not without stress—and the islands, the museum, and developing them into something I’m proud of.”



Cruise Ship Card Magicians will recognize this as an “At Sea Top Change”? Just scrape off that top card and leave another.

Okay. Bad joke:



Watch two Carnival cruise ships collide

The Carnival Glory hit the docked Carnival Legend in Cozumel, Mexico. One passenger was injured.

Source: CNN Business



Carnival Cruise Ship Mishap

His card techniques are incredible. Then you realize that he is blind!

This is “a must see” see for all the card guys. (Sorry! Another pun)

Dealt is the inspiring film story of sixty-two year old Richard Turner who is renowned as one of the world’s greatest card magicians, yet he is completely blind. In this documentary, Richard traces his journey from his troubled childhood, when he began losing his vision, to present day as he relentlessly pursues perfection while struggling with the reality that his biggest weakness might also be his greatest strength.

I have an illusion builder friend from upstate New York whose day job is working in a regional theater. He is a great acting and set designer. He is about where I was 35 years ago in wanting to build every Paul Osborne Illusion Plan. Poor guy.

He decided that he needed to build Osborne’s “Pass Key” illusion. It is an intriguing puzzle where a girl passes from the top box to the bottom box and through a small keyhole in a metal plate. Paul told me that he wanted a simplified and

Easy to build version of Dante’s “Barrels” illusion, which is why he created it. It was one of his more popular designs. Former Central Florida magician and Gospel Minister, Ned Way built one. <http://noway.org/Kidzmania/>

The plans are in Osborne’s Book Two from the mid-1980s.



PassKey Illusion

So, I advised my friend that Ali Bongo had created a similar effect and, I think, superior version for the Old David Nixon British TV Show.

I sent him this link. He is now building this version also.





May 2020 be a happy and fulfilled year for all your magical wishes!

Dennis Phillips