

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

September 29, 2019 | Archived Famulus

September 2019 Meeting

President Mike Matson brought the meeting to order and announced all the magic showing around Orlando. Dan Stapleton gave a summary of the Magicpalooza Magical History Conference and says that he is ready to do it again in 2021.

Bev Bergeron’s Monthly teach in was on the classic Thumb Tie. He used twist ties, as opposed to Willard’s hemp rope, which he demonstrated at the Francis Willard lecture at Magicpalooza.

Phil Schwartz marked his Magic History Moment series #99 in September with a talk on Dr. Hugh Simmons Lynn.

Hugh Simmons was likely born in Bristol, England circa 1836. After a stint in the Royal Navy, he assisted magician Dr. Shaw before starting out on his own. From an Asian tour, he brought the invisible thread and Black Art to Western Magic. As Washington Simmons he performed in China, Japan and Australia before coming to America in the 1860s. Simmons and America’s first comedian, Artemus Ward, did shows for Brigham Young. He performed the floating paper ball, a self-decapitation and Palingenesis in his act. In his forties, he became a medical doctor, but continued in magic. As Dr. H.S. Lynn, he returned to Great Britain, did another tour of Japan and India and, then back to England where he died in 1895. He wrote *Adventures of the Strange Man* and *Travels & Adventures of Dr. Lynn*.

Phil concluded by showing a Dr. Lynn broadside from performances in Glasgow in 1886 from his collection.

Mike Matson did a short “Theory and Thaumaturgy” showing a clever way to do a card pass.

The Ring Show started with Bob Swadling doing a very entertaining cut-the-cards-to-a-story routine. Greg Solomon threaded the rope on his thumb and a spectator assistant comic spelling to cards. Dan Stapleton played poker with two assistants and they could not win. Dennis Phillips showed MAK magic’s seldom-seen Bamboo Chest and Glass. Ari Novick had a selected card signed and it jumped from one envelope to another. Ryan Stiner borrowed two quarters which he returned bent. Kent Gunn finished with his own biographical cut-the-cards-to-a-story routine about his young magic life in San Francisco.

Dennis Phillips



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

October 2019

[Amateurs] send hours working on elaborate sleights and methods that would have no meaning except to another magician who already knows the secret of some old trick...Both versions would look the same to an audience.

-Bill Severn, in *Magic and Magicians*

MAY 1964, LANCASTER, PA Newspaper

With this article we know that Blackstone Sr. stopped touring in 1956. He semi-retired as a regular at The Magic Castle.

I was fortunate to see him at the Center Theater in Norfolk, Virginia on one of his

last tours, just before his retirement. In the audience was a young Bob McAllister, sitting on the front row with a pair of binoculars!

As Blackstone was introducing the Rabbit to Chocolates Trick, he

saw Bobby and stopped at the foot of the stage and said, “Young man! What is that you have? Come here.” He motioned for Bobby to come to the floor in front of the stage apron.

Blackstone look down and said, in a commanding voice, “Can I have a look?” and he motioned for Bob to hand him the binoculars. Blackstone stooped down and took them. The audience howled with laughter. Blackstone then stood up and comedically took the binoculars and

looked them over with one eye cocked, saying “hum”. Then held them backwards with one hand looking in the wrong end as he waved his other hand in front of them. He said, “Interesting! This makes my magic look even better!” The audience was in hysterics with laughter.

He handed them back to Bobby and asked, “Did YOU see anything?” Bobby shook his head with a big “No”. Blackstone said in a stern and commanding voice of finality, “Good!” He gave them back to Bob. The audience roared with laughter and broke into thunderous applause.

This was the showmanship of Harry Blackstone Sr. He was in command. Nothing was serious. He was not the adversary in fooling you and you knew he was your partner in entertainment.

TV's Magic Too Big: Blackstone

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — The hands of Blackstone the Great remain as supple and steady today as when they baffled audiences from coast to coast.

At 78, Harry Blackstone lives in Hollywood and still keeps in touch with the art of magic.

Blackstone is the sole survivor of the great era of American magic that also produced such names as Houdini and Thurston. Blackstone was the last to leave the field.

"I quit eight years ago," he said. "I just couldn't buck TV. People didn't want to pay \$5.50 a seat to watch magic when they could stay at home for nothing and watch television and drink beer."

His 200 major tricks were put into storage in Hollywood, New York City, Philadelphia, York, Pa., and his long-time home at Colon, Mich.

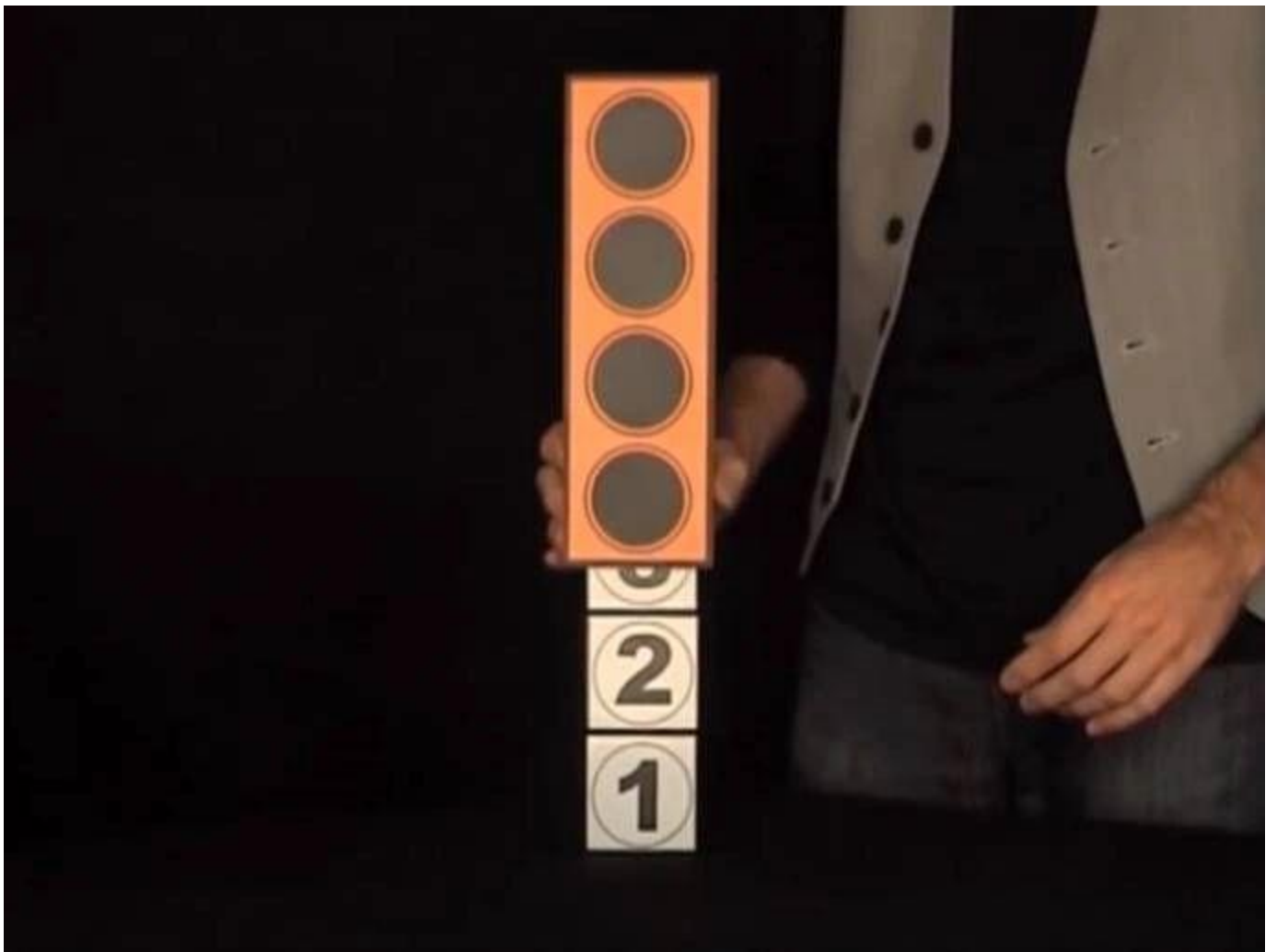
Blackstone began in amateur shows, then was able to leave his steel foundry job for his first professional date: playing a St. Paul hotel with a brand-new movie, "The Great Train Robbery."

Photos from the Magicpalooza 2019 trip to The Great Magic Hall in Old Town Kissimmee.

Below is Atilio performing the “Cubes”. His performance generated a lot of talk.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORiy_nOrP2Q



Here is the source: <http://www.carambamagic.com/products?lang=en>

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cubes!

Based on an original idea of Selbit and Conradi (early twentieth century), which over the years has been known with many different names: "Magic Bricks", "Bewildering Blocks" or "Cube-Libre".

Made in high quality lacquered wood.

The black circles, where the numbers are written, are made of slate.

The different pieces have been carefully calibrated to ensure perfect operation of the trick.

Includes a new routine with a variety of effects and a strong finish: the sequence of numbers written in black circles IS FREELY CHOSEN by viewers (instructions on paper and DVD).

Click [HERE](#) to see some reviews

STANDARD COLORS: YELLOW, ORANGE, GREEN AND RED.



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Jafo did an excellent job with parlor and close-up magic

https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g34352-d8353009-r616482633-The_Great_Magic_Hall-Kissimmee_Florida.html#REVIEWS



Caution: This story may contain offensive materials to some.

“Burning Man” attracts many billionaires and some magicians like , Jeff McBride, have supported the concept. <https://www.prweb.com/releases/2003/09/prweb79921.htm>

The McBride approach seems an attempt to infuse mysticism and a kind of religious animism into magic.

I make no secret that my preference in magic is more to the visual spectacular, such as circus style, full evening illusion shows and large theatrical stage productions. I even like smaller cabaret and supper club magic.

Because of my age, I am removed from the “modern” era and cannot relate to “post” and “post-post” modernism. This is where my basic understanding of “reality” rooted in reason with all experience is interpreted through reason, is in contrast.

It is frustrating to see American culture degenerate into irrationality and individualism. All traditional ideas of abandoned. Irrational Cults are on the rise,

Magic is no different... Everything seems to now be focused on “in your face” individualistic experience. Often it degenerates into hedonism.

The classic stage show, with prop magic and story line, are about gone in most places.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/dark-truth-behind-burning-man-19433475>

Dark truth behind Burning Man with stage 'sex acts', arrests and the super rich

DJ Flume sparked controversy when he was reported to have carried out a sex act on stage at the week-long festival in the Nevada desert

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COMMENTS

By **Jane Lavender** Assistant Editor
12:54, 4 SEP 2019

CELEBS



Dan Sperry has been burglarized in Las Vegas. Many of the props from his act ,along with his van, were stolen from his warehouse.





Surveillance video shows two people and their car. They used a crowbar and ripped the deadbolt out of the metal door frame on his storage unit and went to work grabbing cases and loading up the hatch back and whole car - spending about 20 minutes doing so.

Then they spent about 45 minutes inside trashing the place and stealing everything they could cram into their car and van. His van, that was stolen, is a white 2001 Ford Econoline Superduty 15 passenger v-10 with a sliding door on the side.

Nevada plates 04B242 and the last on the VIN is 8284.

It seems absurd to steal Sperry's props. They are so identifiable with his "look" and stage persona, no one could use them. Offers to lend him props have poured in from sympathetic fellow magicians.

It would be wise to always insure your props. Yes, it takes away from profits but you really need to build that cost into your price.

It is Halloween Season and magicians again have to remind those who are superstitious and fearful that we have nothing to do with what they call "the Supernatural" or the "Preternatural". <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preternatural>

We are entertainers and amusers. We use psychological visual and aural techniques to give the experience of the impossible, unusual and uncanny. That is one element of the Preternatural.

I am talking linguistics and philosophy and only working with definitions and history. This is not a religious topic, but a topic for philosophy and psychology. Technically, in the theological talk of St. Thomas Aquinas, only God is above all nature and is Supernatural. However, he believed that some of God's created beings, such as angels and fallen angels (demons) and the Devil. In Thomist thought they are all created beings, as we are, and have no supernatural power.

They work in the area of the Preternatural. The fruit of the action of an angelical (good) or demoniacal nature (evil) is said to be Preternatural. The word comes from "praeter naturam", beyond nature. Supernatural is the action which goes beyond any created nature.

Preternatural means uncanny, unexplained in nature, but of this world. It is not Supernatural.

If your magic is psychological deception for amusement and entertainment, it is a good form of preternatural.

Atheists typically deny all belief in any God and view the universe as a closed material system, so they are not superstitious about demons, angels, or a devil. They deny supernaturalism. The good part is that Atheists do not hang witches..

However, some Atheists can believe in materialistic philosophies such as Racism, Collectivism and Totalitarianism. The result can be as cruel as hanging witches.

Some Fundamentalist religions, both Christian and Islam, can also be very cruel, excusing inhumanity as being demanded by God in what they believe as his dictated Holy Book.

There is no easy way to defuse some people's fear about magicians and suspicion of the magician's motives.

I generally explain that all Northern Hemisphere cultures in the temperate zones have a Fall Celebration. It coincides with the harvest and the end of summer labors. In Europe they brewed their first batch of beer from the newly harvested grain (Octoberfest) and began to watch nature die for the winter.

Lots of people were in Wittenberg, Saxony for “All Saint’s Day” (November 1st). The night before it was believed the dead Christians and Saints all stirred in their graves, to let the living know they were not forgotten. This was called “All Hallows Eve”. We call October 31st “Halloween”.

In 1517, Martin Luther, a theology professor in Wittenberg and a very pious monk was angry that the Roman Catholic Church was dealing in Indulgences, or, as he saw it, they were forgiving sins by paying money.(The Doctrine of Indulgences is a bit more complex than that. When you have wronged someone you make it right, as best you can, financially). Halloween was especially frightful that year because the Duke of Saxony was trying to pay back a huge debt for the money he had pledged to build a new St Peter’s Basilica in Rome. A dynamic priest, sent by Rome, named John Tetzel was giving long sermons about burning in the flames of hell or being trapped in Purgatory and offering escape by buying an Indulgence. This upset Luther who is said to have posted 95 theological questions, questioning those ideas, on his church door on Halloween. This unleashed many fears and anger on both sides of the issues and was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. This led to the fragmentation of Western Christianity. Five hundred years later, there are many different divisions in Christianity. Some continue to be superstitious.

Most denominations understand that a modern conjuror is simply an entertainer. In some cases there are ministers who use magic tricks to illustrate their Gospel Message.



<https://historyofmassachusetts.org/salem-witch-trials-victims/?fbclid=IwAR13-8LrzEy-Lm0bQbbTBo1g-RHCBGulT9PVPm3rPuxAKhIYaZzjl7Hctlw>

Jimmy Nelson September 24, 2019 (aged 90)

Jimmy had suffered a stroke a while earlier and was not in good health.

I saw him at the old Lake Buena Vista Village in 1976. He was performing on the outdoor stage.

He was one of the last of the Golden Age classic clean-act ventriloquists. Yes, Farfel, Nestles makes the very best “Chalk-Lot”.

Farfel, was named after the Jewish pasta dish he had seen on the menu of the Borscht Belt resorts in upstate New York where he often performed.

Enjoy! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOatEFSCgoU>



Dennis Phillips