

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring” SAM #99

March 30, 2023 | Archived Famulus



March 2023

President Ryan Stiner called the meeting to order. We had 23 attending. Ryan began by showing an antique compass coin said to come from an ancient tribe. He had hilarious patter about how it was used to find the way to travel. Yes, it was the old Hi Sign, but in a unique form. He got a big laugh when ending the bit by saying the best way to use it, the tribal chief advised, was to just flip it.

There were announcements of local magic shows at the Orlando area attractions and upcoming events. Lots of magic is happening in the Central Florida Tourist area. We then had a club raffle for a Rainbow Deck and an Insurance Policy effect.

The monthly meeting show began with Conner Kaplan. He presented a trick with 4 kings. In a matrix move, the king in each corner of a box shape mysteriously turned over, one at a time, face up, when his hand passed over each one. He ended by the backs changing colors from blue to red.

Dennis Phillips did his version of “Stretching the Truth”. It is a version of the Card-o-graphic effect using a box of animal crackers. He drew a simple nebulous animal and when the volunteer revealed the animal cracker that they chose, he comically altered the drawing, such as adding a trunk and ears to the elephant and humps to the camel. After two animals, the volunteer selected a giraffe, and he drew the spots and when the audience thought they had him, he explained that the animal had a rare short neck disease. Then the magic happened. The neck stretched to a full size and the drawing was torn off the pad and given to the spectator.

Paul Thomey had a clever card effect where a signed card ended up in a small box of mints. Then, he repeated it with another card and after the card was revealed folded in the mints, the box became filled with mints.

Greg Solomon predicted a volunteer's chosen card from 3 randomly dealt stacks.

Dan Stapleton presented some baffling number tricks and puzzles. He showed how you could fit 12 magicians into 11 hotel rooms and then how the hotel bellhop could pocket a dollar tip without anyone knowing. Much of the math was based on the old gag about demonstrating that you have 11 fingers. Dan really did show that he had 11 fingers . of course, with the help of a Vernet fake finger.

Jacki Manna, our talented ventriloquist and magician, closed out the show by presenting a large marionette that could fly apart and rejoin itself. She also had many animal puppets that talked. She has been doing schools shows teaching ventriloquism and letting each child manipulate a puppet.

Dennis Phillips

Meeting policy:

Face masks, if you wear one, will not be ridiculed. We are respectful that some people may be immunocompromised.

Stay prepared, healthy, and informed about current Public Health issues and contagious outbreaks.



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170, Assembly #99

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

Here is a sort of “Scotch and Soda” on steroids without any expensive coin gimmicks!

Thank you , Ring member Pat Hanna, for this great suggestion.

Are magic and illusion shows a thing of the past in Las Vegas?

The Las Vegas Strip has constantly changed and that means that some once-beloved things go away. Showgirls have a long tradition on the Las Vegas Strip, but they're actually no longer an active part of its present.

They haven't been seen since 2016. That's when the last Vegas showgirl show, 'Jubilee!' at Bally's, closed after 35 years. Now, along with showgirl shows being a thing of the past, another kind of Las Vegas show that has long been a staple on the Strip appears to be on its way out -- Broadway-style production shows.



"In the last quarter of 2022, five Las Vegas Strip shows failed to cross the threshold into 2023. 'Bat Out of Hell: The Musical' at Paris Las Vegas, Criss Angel's 'Amystika' at Planet Hollywood, 'Extravaganza' at Horseshoe, 'Legends in Concert' at the Tropicana, and Xavier Mortimer's magic show at The Strat all took an involuntary final curtain call.," [Casino.org](https://www.casino.org) reported.

Even "Hamilton" creator Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway hit "Freestyle Love Supreme" failed at the Summit Showroom at the Venetian, running for less than three months.

Strip casinos host or have recently hosted a stunning array of headliners including Adele, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Garth Brooks, Sting, Gwen Stefani, and many more.

Pretty much any touring act that still has a name -- or once was big -- plays Las Vegas for at least a few shows a year. And with Allegiant Stadium located just off the Strip, Las Vegas can also host major stadium acts like BTS, Taylor Swift, and others.

Add in the fact that Las Vegas now also serves as the home for pretty much every major name in electronic dance music, and music fans have more choices than they can possibly actually go to. That, of course, does not count the headliner comedians who play up and down the Strip or the National Football League and National Hockey League games Las Vegas now hosts.

"If you're coming to town to see basketball or NASCAR, you already paid a premium for both your tickets and your room rate," Mike Weatherford, former theater reporter and critic for the Las Vegas Review-Journal, told Casino.org.

"If you have any money left over, and you can find the tickets, then Usher, Keith Urban, Katy Perry, and Adele are playing residencies, and you have two nights of Jimmy Buffett."



Duck Dynasty with your Card Duck! The patter is a bit dated, but the lines are still funny.

Here I am with the "Clementine" country-duck version of Joanne the Card Duck. I was told that this prop

was made by Warren Hamilton in the early 1960s.

I want to share with you a routine that I have been doing for the past few months. My Card Duck has mostly sat of the shelf for years, only to be used at an occasional birthday party or event where I want to make a person's name magically appear. Harry Blackstone Sr. was said to have loved the trick . I first saw it on an

old Magic Land of Allakazam show performed by Mark Wilson.

The popular TV show Duck Dynasty breathed new life into this old and enchanted prop! I want to share my routine with you and if you have a duck, I hope you can use my routine and improve on it.

Just stick a little black fake fur on the side of the bill of the duck with some double-sided tape. Make it look like a wide beard. Use the toe-end of an old black sock for the toboggan hat. I guess that you could also wear a beard and a toboggan hat!

Use a Kazoo instead of a Duck call and build the skit around training the duck by using your “duck call”.

Force a 3 of Hearts and have them whisper it into your ear and show the audience. Hold your hand over the ducks’ ears.

“No Peeking Duck!” (To the audience) “I am telling him that, so he does not think that he is headed for a Chinese restaurant.”

Hum the Kazoo to the beat of the sound of “3 of hearts”.

Duck pulls out a blank card... (To audience) “What do you expect, he’s a duck!”

“Listen better, Willie! Don’t be in such a ,huh, fowl mood.” Duck pulls out a Tree of Hearts Card.

“Come on, this should be duck soup! Oh sorry! Try again.”

Hum the Kazoo to the beat of “3 of hearts”.

“Come on ,duck.... ‘duck’! Ha, he just quacks me up!”

“Let’s see. Do I have my ducks in a row?”

“This one is a sitting duck.”

The duck comes up with a three of hearts!

I have drawn a Z-Z-Top type beard on each of the hearts with a Sharpie. I manipulate this card with the “Tree” and the black card to the bottom of the deck before it is put in the holder. Give it to the volunteer as a souvenir.

I am sure you can come up with funnier and better lines... The premise is absurd, and audiences love it.

Bunny dressing room in my magic show



Salute to Joe Karson's "Zombie Ball".

Nov. 8, 1949

J. A. KARSON
ILLUSION APPARATUS
Filed Oct. 4, 1946

2,487,140

Fig. 1.

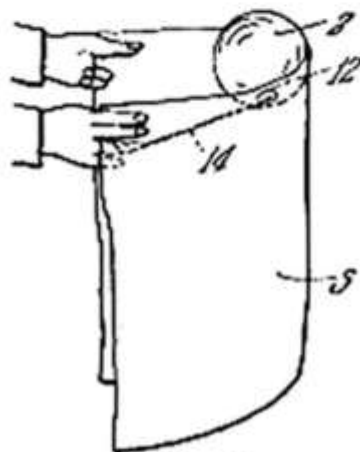
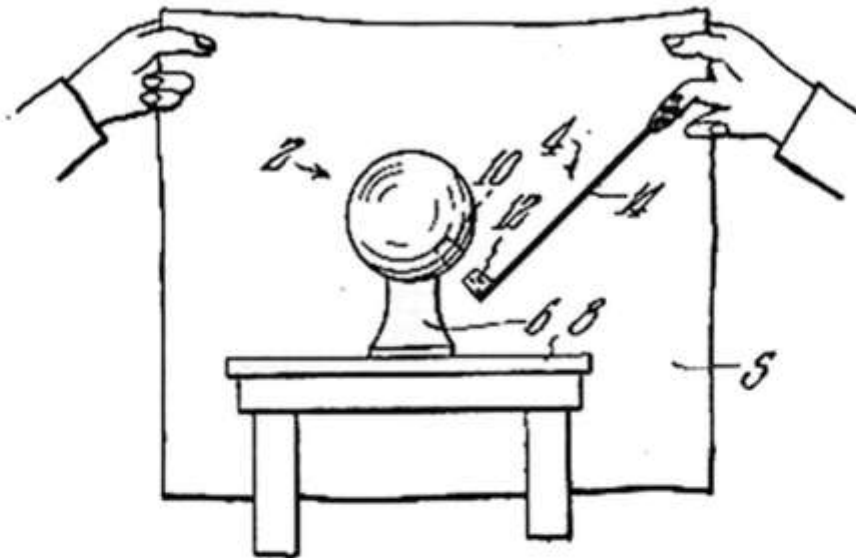


Fig. 2.

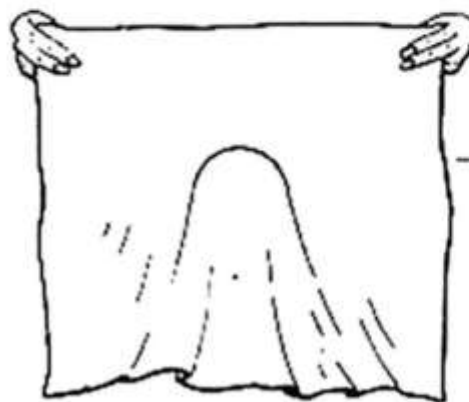


Fig. 3.

INVENTOR
Joseph A. Karson
BY *Walter C. Rose*
Attorney

The less expensive D. Robbins “EZ Magic” Miracle Ball, with white styrofoam ball sold for \$4. Came with a blue taffetta cloth and plastic drinking glass tumbler.

I made my own, in 1961, with a Christmas Tree ornament and a coat hanger.



Dan Stapleton performing the Zombie in 2022 before a 40-piece orchestra at the Dr. Phillips Performing Arts Center, Orlando.

This was the metal ball version.



Here Dan performs his zombie at Magicpalooza 2023



Sterling Steal (Terry Bos) from Tampa performed a great Linking Ring Act at the last Magicpalooza



Watch his video.

Here is a powerful stage trick that is like the classic Calendar Matrix and equal in impact to a Magic Square.

This effect tends to be more interactive and lend itself to easy “Cold Reading” and convincing the audience that

there are hidden numbers behind the reality of their lives.

This basic working is in Vol 2 “Phantini’s Incredible Mental Secrets”.

The workings of this are simple. The matrix can be shown on something as simple as poster or a white dry-erase marker board. The board can be stage size or smaller.

Have fun!

The "173" Matrix...(based on a Math trick, an idea from Gene Grant and Dennis Phillips)

When only one number from each vertical row of numbers is selected and none of the selected numbers are from the same horizontal row, the sum total will always be "173"!

Many patten possibilities can be used.

I begin by making a prediction on a folded piece of paper that the number written and held by the spectator is their significant number in their life. (It is always 173 with this matrix)

I have all these matrix numbers lightly penciled on my poster board and I try to link them to significant events in the persons life. I ask questions like the age they were married, year of birth and as I write these in with a bold magic marker I comment on how the matrix seems to be coming together to reflect the person's life.

I then tell them that many things in our life are predetermined, that "freewill" does permit us to make choices within the scope of reality. They then select one number from each vertical row and that number must be from a horizontal row that does not have any other numbers selected.

I say, "Of the 5 rows under the ESP signs, which number do you want to use for the circle. Is it the first, second, third, fourth or fifth?" I repeat this for each symbol and do not let them pick any numbers from the same horizontal row. They may change their minds but the matrix rule must be followed. It will always add up to their special number of "173"

○	+	§	□	☆
22	14	35	27	56
27	19	40	32	61
18	10	31	23	52
33	25	46	38	67
29	21	42	34	63

Dr. Ken Schreibman, MD, did a great version of the Afghan Bands in our ring meeting using large zippers.

Here is an old photo of Harry Blackstone Senior doing a different version with stretch bands.

The workings are an example of Math Topology and mysterious.

1947 ORIGINAL PHOTO OF HARRY BLACKSTONE SR DOING THE AFGAN BANDS
PIC TAKEN AT THE MURAT THEATRE IN INDIANAPOLIS IN...1947



Here are great tips from magician Bronson Chadwick for traveling by car on the way to magic events:

The Rural Drive Rule - For every hour of drive time through the countryside, allow at least fifteen minutes of pillow time for tire changes, road closures, detours, getting stuck behind a school bus, etc.

The Urban Drive Rule - For every hour of drive time through urban areas, allow at least forty minutes of pillow time for traffic. If you've ever had the misfortune of driving to a show in New York City gridlock traffic, then you know that distance is deceiving!

Cash - Have enough money in cash (yes paper currency) to get a ride to the nearest city in the event of a breakdown.

Assistance - Have a good roadside assistance plan through your insurance company or a third-party company such as AAA. It's better to pay a nominal fee of \$10 or so each month for up to six tows than to have to fork over \$300 or more for a single tow!

Spare Parts - Keep spare parts on hand! Have a full-size spare tire in the vehicle. A donut tire will help but having a full-size spare will allow you to go full speed and get to work on time. You should also have enough engine oil, coolant/antifreeze, brake fluid, transmission fluid, a funnel, a quality tire jack, jack stands, gloves, headlight lamps, basic tool kit, etc. in the trapdoor of your hatch. It's also worth investing in a battery powered impact wrench and floor jack to expedite a tire change. A small scissor jack will do but it takes much longer to change a tire in this way. You should also keep jumper cables and a small gas can in your vehicle.

Supplies - You should have bottled water, an emergency blanket, a flashlight, paper towels, spare food (energy bars work well), and a first aid kit in your vehicle at all times as well. Hopefully you will never need these items but you never know.

Navigation - Keep a paper map handy and know how to read it! The GPS apps on phones are of course our go-to tool for navigation but technology sometimes fails and it helps to be able to get around the old-fashioned way.

Flexibility - Have flexibility in your contract to be able to reschedule shows in the event of an emergency. If you're working without a contract, even for an unpaid performance, you're asking for disaster.

Overnight Rule - When traveling more than six hours to a show happening before 12 PM, consider coming in the night before to allow plenty of travel time to a gig.

Backups - Have a backup transportation plan such as taking an Uber, taxi or public mass transit option in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Act - Keep a miniature, grab-and-go act handy. This briefcase of magic supplies should always be in your vehicle. In the event of a breakdown, grab the small act and don't worry about the larger equipment.

Inside should be your thumb tip, silk hanks, a pack of cards, rope, paper/Torn & Restored magic effects and other pack-flat, stage worthy effects.

Routine Maintenance - Keep your vehicle clean and in good working order.

Change engine oil no less than every 5,000 miles, preferably every 3000 miles. Keep windshield wiper blades fresh, tires inspected and rotated and filled to the correct air pressure level.

Stay Alert - Stay awake on the road! Allow time to stop every couple of hours and walk around for a bit and drink some coffee, especially after a show when we are most tired!

Weather - Beware of seasons changing. When the weather changes quickly from hot to cold weather it's hard on your battery and other electrical components. Get a car battery with a good warranty and change the battery every year as routine maintenance.

Breakdown Rule - If you break down, notify your agent or client immediately if you think you risk being late. This is not the time for ego.

Voicemail Tip - Also, when you break down and have to hoof it, change your voicemail message to reflect the place you broke down, the year/make/model of your car and the direction in which you are headed on foot and what you're wearing so that if the authorities or a tow truck need to locate you on the highway they will know what to look for.

Car breakdowns and low phone batteries tend to come in tandem so be prepared to know what to do if your phone battery is low.

Minor Repairs - Know how to change a tire and make minor repairs safely.

The Receipt Bag - As a working professional it's important to keep track of your expenses on the road. It's easy to lose receipts so I invested in a pencil bag that I Velcro attached to the dashboard. Whenever I fill up on fuel or stop for lunch etc, the receipt goes into this bag. I empty the bag at the end of the week and attach my

receipts to blank paper I'm a binder like photos in a scrapbook, so it speeds up my accounting come tax time.

The Parking Rule - When headed into a large city where you may not be able to park your vehicle close to the venue you may need to find a parking garage. Have three garages pinpointed and listed on your GPS app and once you've driven past the entrance of the venue head to the nearest parking garage. Being stuck in traffic while searching for a parking garage can stress you out so much that you will be unable to offer a good magic performance. Once you've exited your vehicle, take your ticket with you! Also, take a picture of your car in the area where it's parked and of the face of the garage, so you remember exactly where you've parked.

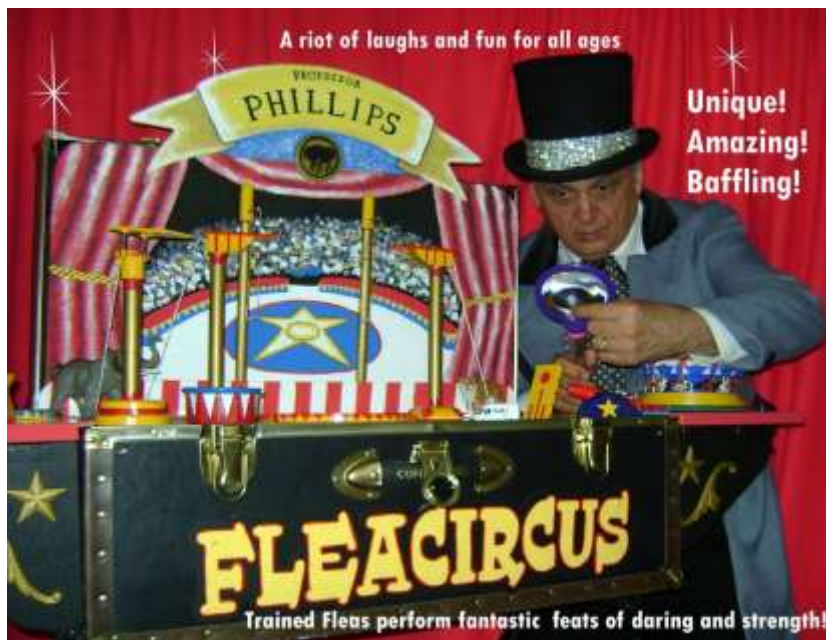
Tollways - Many tollways still accept cash payments. Keep some \$20 in quarters handy for tollways and parking meters. It's worth investing in a tollway pass if you're going to use a certain roadway frequently.

And that's it! With those twenty tips you can avoid those ugly moments out on the open road.

Travel safe, drive peacefully and kindly and have a great show!

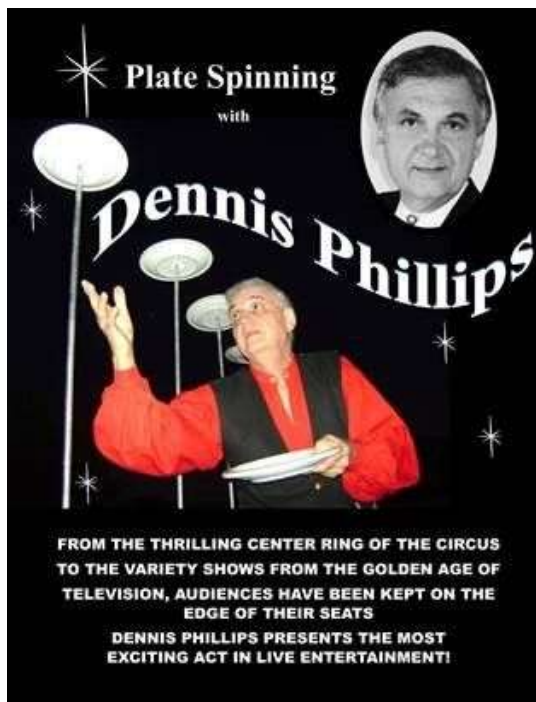
Some old photos of my “Flea Circus” on location.

The Flea Circus is a total “flapdoodle” (nonsense) act, but people love to see it. They laugh at the clever animations and my audacity at me hyping the absurdity.





I have a Plate Spinning Act that I created.



I use a soundtrack.

There is no “secret”, and it takes minimal skill but mostly acting. It is a gaffed (nonsense) act.

The stands, two with 4 poles on each are made like the photo.

2 x 4s with 2 swivel feet and pipe flanges and 1/2-inch EMT pipe connectors.

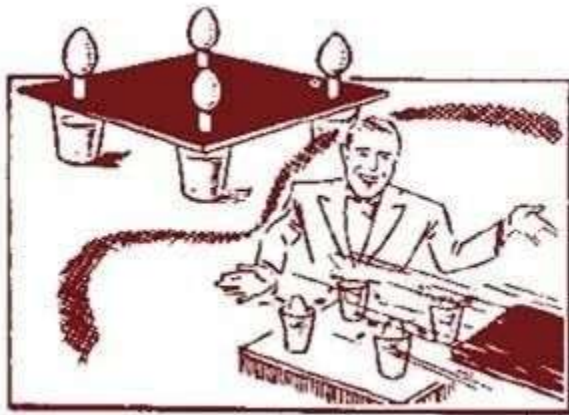
They have dowel rods in them up to 3 inches from the top and then the upper 5-foot dowel rod.

The top has a finishing nail pounded in it and sharpened on a grinder to a point.

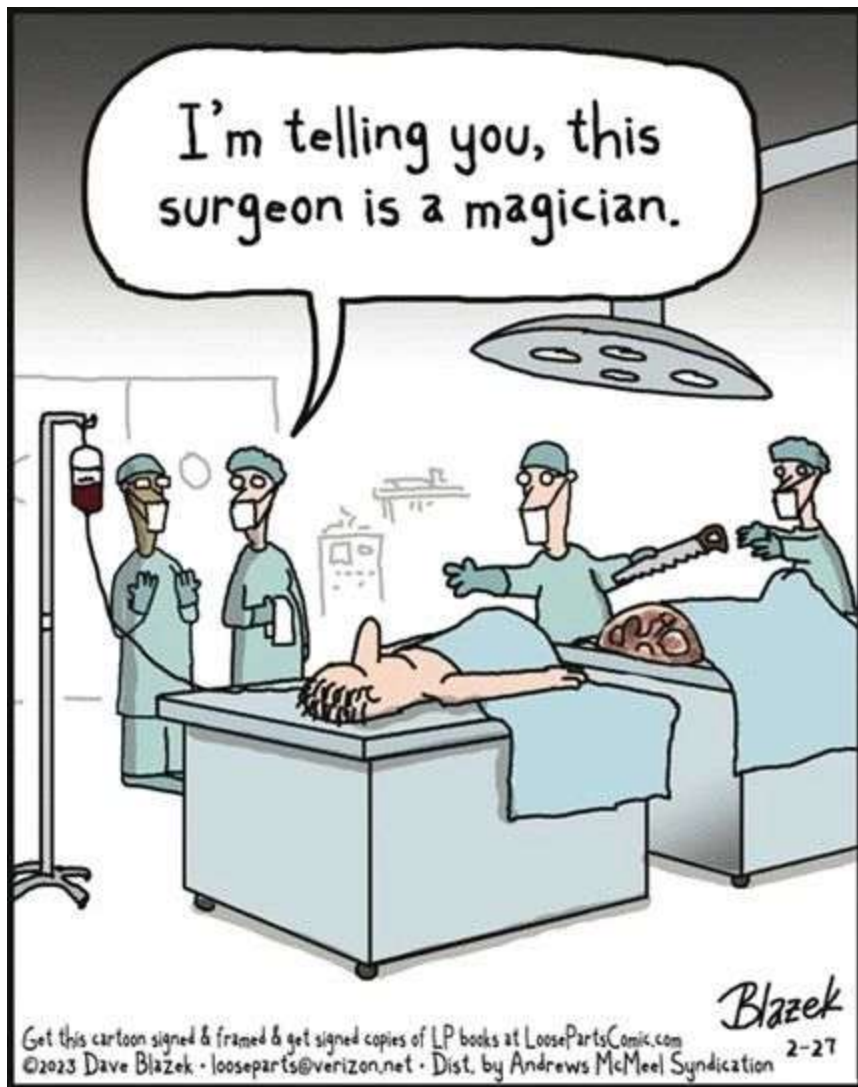
The plates are commercial restaurant grade 10 ounce ceramic plates with a “fender washer” epoxy glued in the center. The inertia of the plate keeps it going when you put it on it and spin it, and it sits in the 1/8th hole in the fender washer. You have to really try to fail at this. It sends you lots of wobbling warning before it would fall.

It is all acting and the music track. I use the attached soundtrack and begin with the comedy table where the legs fall off (those of the crashes and boings on the soundtrack) and then I begin by setting up Abbotts Eggs Tra Ordinary on the table. I use plastic pilsner beer glasses.

To add interest, I keep completing the eggs-on-the-glasses set up as the plate spinning is being performed and then as the finale, after all the plates are back down, I pull the glass out and the eggs fall in the glasses. It gives me a finale.



From former Ring 170 President MJ Emigh. He still gets our newsletter. It is great to hear from him!



Here is an interesting take on mentalism... Bob Gebert is a Hollywood development director.

He did a B'Wave, hydrostatic glass and the Mother of all Book Tests BUT using a stack of movie scripts and at

About 15 minutes in, he did a very clever variation of Mental Epic but used a movie clapstick!

I like that. It followed his Hollywood theme and did not look like a meaningless prop.

Water from India

This “running gag” was a hit in many large-stage 20th Century illusion shows.

Kalanag made it a part of his big show as did many others.



The plot is simple and humorous.

A large metal vase and urn are shown sitting in front of the stage curtain traveler on the side stage apron. The water filling the vase is poured into a large urn or bucket. The magician says, “Water from India!” When the vase is empty, the bottom is tapped several times and the magician says “empty”. The vase

is returned to the table. A while later, between other illusions, the magician returns to the vase and it is again full of water and says, “Water from India!” . Again it is emptied with a couple of taps and the magician says “empty”. This begins the “running gag” with a series of these mysterious fillings of water.

As one of the last effects of the show, the magician does a final pour and then turns over the large urn and it is totally dry.

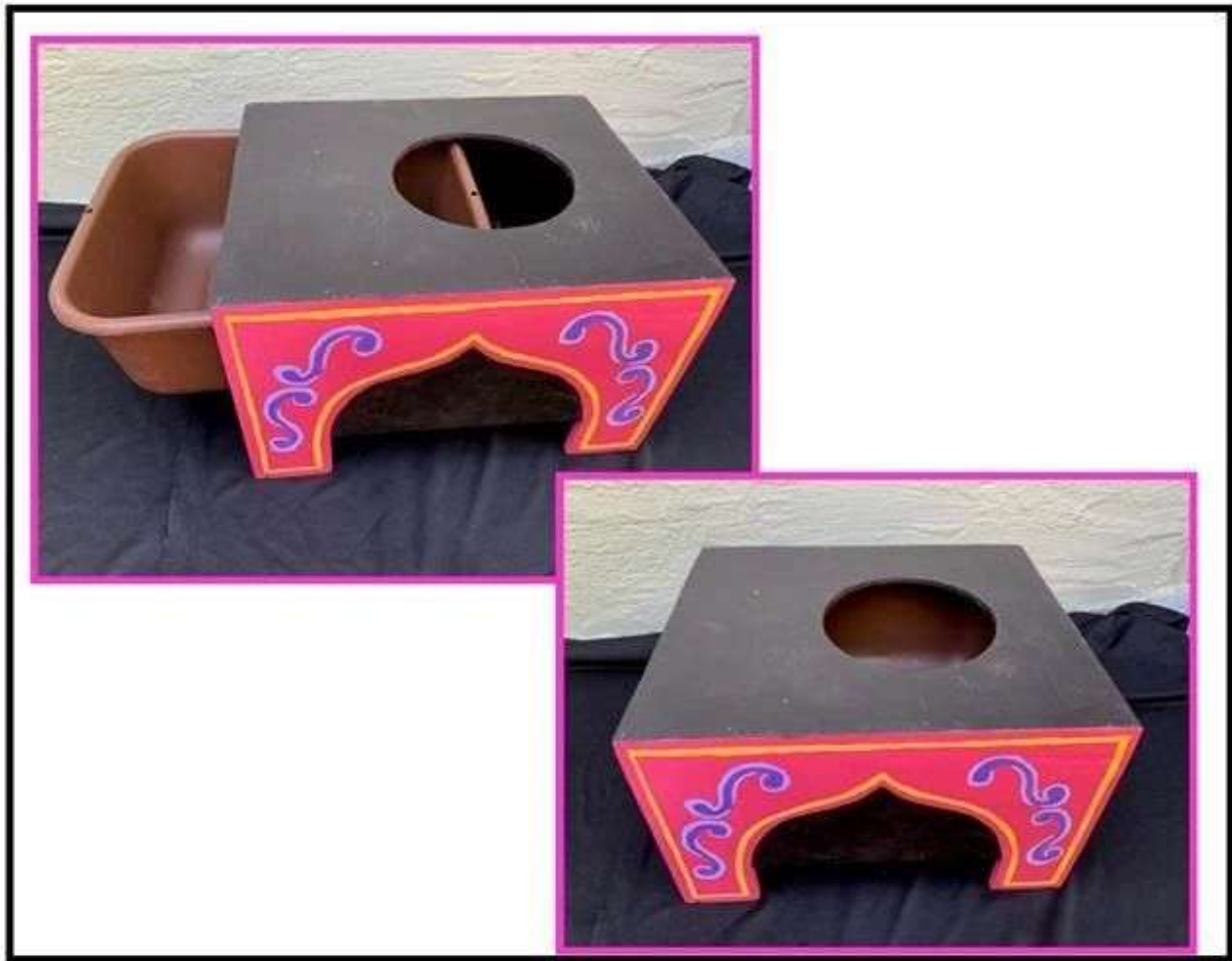


Magical collectors will notice the vase that I use is a Morrissey Giant Lota Bowl.

I decorated a flower table for it to sit on.

I used a standard plastic garden flower urn and drilled a hole in the bottom, so it drains into the Rubbermaid® dish tub inside the decorated stand.

The black paint dot on the vase rim lines up the lotta filling hole inside at the bottom.



The dish tub slides out for easy emptying.



It all fits on one of my signature orange wooden travel cases.



Señor Wences All Baby Boomers remember him from The Ed Sullivan Show.

"Close de door."

"S'aright!, S'aright"

Dennis