

July 26, 2019|Archived Famulus



July 2019 Meeting

President Michael Matson called our July meeting to order. He reviewed all the current magic attractions in our tourist oriented city and all the upcoming local events for magicians.

Bev Bergeron presented his "Teach In" which featured a unique Die Box. He decorated the die to look like an ABC block. At the end of the effect, the back doors of the box were opened and you could see through it. He got the box years ago and it was made by Dell O'Dell's husband.

Phil Schwartz presented his Magic History Moment #98. He began by showing a postage stamp with Bev Bergeron's "Rebo the Clown" photograph on it. Bev is our club's namesake. The stamp was issued by the Federated States of Micronesia, in the Pacific with a postage value of 80 cents.

The topic of this Magic History Moment was engraving, etching and other early printing methods used to reproduce magic images. He called it, "Come Over and See My Etchings." Phil showed the use of woodcuts and described the creation of metal printing plates where images were etched by artists on wax-covered plates exposing the bare metal. After immersion in acid, the plates could be inked and used to transfer or print the image on paper.

Phil showed many examples of original magic broadsides, programs, catalogs, books and music sheets dating from 1739 to about 1900.

Finally, he noted that the following day, July 18th marked 145 years since the birth of magician, inventor, publisher, magic maker and magic dealer, Floyd Thayer.

Dan Stapleton opened up the show by counting off cards at random numbers given by the audience. Magically, all the cards arrived at were four aces. Dan called this "The Computer Card Trick" and said that it was on one of his teaching DVDs.

Thom Parkin had an audience member merely think and reveal any card in the deck. He also had audience members call out random numbers and he called the number on his personal cell phone. After some cute by-play the unknown person on the other end revealed the thought of card.

David Freeman did the classic wooden block and cord with two volunteer assistants and a story about how to make a marriage work. The block, just like disagreements, did not come between the two. Ryan Stiner had 2 sets of 5 cards which had photos of famous magicians. A spectator called out random

shuffling instructions and incredibly the two sets matched. Kent Gunn concluded with a comic effect with a small chomping set of false teeth with legs. A card was selected and mixed with a dozen random cards which were turned face down. The chomping teeth marched over to the correct chosen card.

Dennis Phillips



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

August 2019

"The universal aptitude for ineptitude makes any human accomplishment an incredible miracle."



-Stapp's Law-

Bob Dorian dead: Actor, magician who introduced classic films on AMC was 85



Bob Dorian:

[Actor, Magician](#)

Bob Dorian, an actor, magician and avuncular movie buff who presented more than 10,000 classic films, B-movie serials and pre-Code Hollywood gems as the first prime-time host of American Movie Classics, died June 15. He was 85, although he often said he preferred to give his age by way of film history, declaring that he was "born between 'Flying Down to Rio' and 'Top Hat.' "

His daughter Melissa Dorian confirmed the death but did not say precisely where or how he died, noting that the family prepared only a two-line obituary in keeping with his desire for privacy.

Dorian performed on the stage, radio, television and occasionally on film, appearing in two movies by one of his favorite contemporary directors, Woody Allen, and lending his voice to Sam Raimi's 1981 horror classic "The Evil Dead," as an archaeologist whose tape-recorded readings from an ancient text summon demonic spirits to a cabin in the woods.

Bespectacled and bushy-browed, he began acting at 14; dabbled in stand-up comedy and trapeze-catching at the circus; played the bass in a New York jazz group, the Four Dimensions; and performed mind-reading tricks and other illusions as the Amazing Dorian, sometimes incorporating his wife and three daughters into his act.

"Women, cars - you name it and I've floated it," he told The Washington Post in 1991, describing his powers of levitation. A magic performance he once gave in Saudi Arabia, he added, drove his audience from the room because "they thought I was doing the devil's art."

Dorian appeared in a 1976 television special alongside magicians David Copperfield and Carl Ballantine, but became far better known as the principal host of American Movie Classics, later shortened to AMC. The network launched in 1984 as a premium-cable showcase for old films, presenting movies without cuts or commercials a decade before the creation of Turner Classic Movies, the channel's main competitor.

He recalled that he got the AMC hosting job in large part through chance, when he met a producer in the early 1980s after being cast as Dracula in a television ad for a video game. "It was a very long two-day shoot, with most of my time spent in a tight coffin filled with way too much smoke," he told GoFatherhood, a parenting blog. "Lunchtime usually lapsed into long conversations about all those great old movies the producer and I enjoyed when we were growing up."

The producer, Norm Blumenthal, later helped start AMC, and asked Dorian if he would be interested in serving as an announcer. Executives were considering "two Broadway actors, a well-known TV film critic and a few others who were more involved in writing as a profession," Dorian said.

After Dorian was suggested as half of a Siskel-and-Ebert-style duo, one executive purportedly had a breakthrough. "Wait a minute," Dorian recalled his saying. "The critic might not be too crazy about some of the films we've brought in. This guy Dorian likes everything!"

Indeed, he favored classics such as "Citizen Kane" and "King Kong" as well B-movie serials such as "Zombies of the Stratosphere," encouraging viewers to give the 1952 science-fiction film a try - if only because it featured Leonard Nimoy, who later played the pointy-eared Spock, in a supporting role as a Martian.

Dorian was born in Brooklyn in April 1934, two months after the release of "It Happened One Night." He rarely discussed his upbringing, aside from recounting the Saturdays he spent evading matrons at local movie theaters, where he watched three or more films for the price of a dime.

He later worked as a theater usher, a job that enabled him to catch 86 screenings of the swashbuckling 1950 film "Cyrano de Bergerac," and appeared in television shows such as "Suspense" and "Studio One," according to one Washington Post report.

Dorian performed in the Allen movies "The Curse of the Jade Scorpion" (2001) and "Hollywood Ending" (2002), along with an independent Civil War film, "The Last Confederate" (2005). He was also a mainstay of regional theater productions - including at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey - before retiring to Florida in recent years.

Survivors include his wife of 65 years, Jane Dorian; three daughters, Melissa Dorian, Robin Dorian and Jane Dorian; and two grandchildren.

I found this spread about Bob in my files.

MONEY GROWS\$ LIKE MAGIC

Bob Dorian, one of the top professional magicians in the New York area, has recently completed a series of commercials for the Dime Savings Bank of New York. The six different TV spots utilize Bob's expertise in everything from the "Zig-Zag" and Levitations to the (naturally) "Nickels to Dimes!"

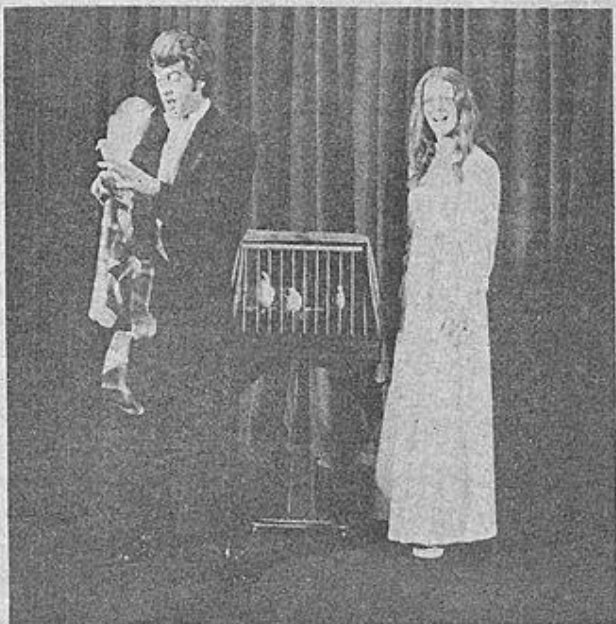
Bob's performances are as slick and polished as always, and in addition to attracting viewer attention to the bank, he's attracting a lot of attention to magic. Frankly, we couldn't ask for a better representative.



Bob Dorian, assisted by his pretty daughter Robin, perform the famous Zig-Zag Lady.



Carefully, slowly, Bob Dorian passes a solid hoop over Robin's body as she floats, levitated, above the bench.



While Robin looks on amazed, Bob Dorian produces a series of doves from silks. The doves are placed in the cage which is then vanished.

Money GROW\$ Like Magic

Science explains how some magic effects fool your senses. This from the PBS “NOVA” science program.



[PBS The Science Behind The Slight of Hand](#)

Chinese Government may soon be cracking down on those who reveal magic secrets!

(Governmental Authoritarianism is sometimes embraced if it helps you individually?)

The traditional Chinese magicians calling for greater censorship of their ancient tricks

By Eduardo Baptista, CNN

Updated 10:03 PM ET, Thu July 11, 2019



Chinese magician Tian Xueming, 55, performs onstage. Tian refuses to explain his magic, citing the "unbreakable magician's code."

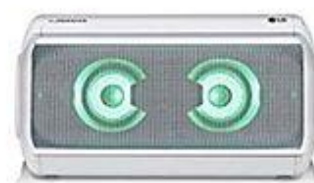
More from CNN



Diplomats express solidarity with UK ambassador's verdict on...



"You're being quite disrespectful and you're patronizing me"....



LG PK7W XBOOM Go Water-Resistant W...

★★★★★ 188

\$229.99 ✓prime

Add to Cart

Advertisement

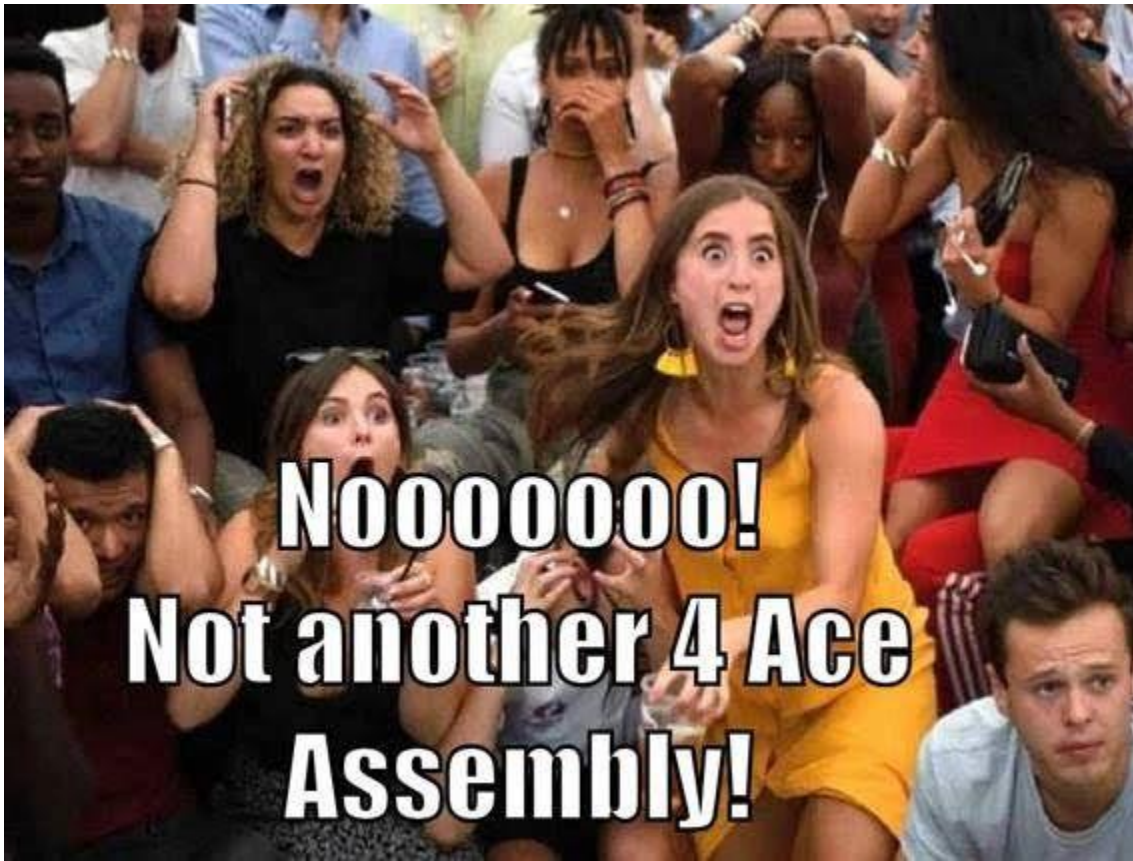
[Chinese Magicians International](#)

Here is a young Chinese magician Li Yunfei, 24, who has over 420,000 fans on Chinese video platform TikTok and claims to make over 1 million yuan (\$145,000) per year from his exposure videos.



Millennial magician Li Yunfei posts in this video how Tian Xueming seemingly makes balls teleport from one clear bowl to another.

Okay...some card tricks just do not entertain me. It is usually not the trick but the presentation.



Not another 4 Ace
Assembly!

So sorry to lose Don Wayne.

He was a massive influence on the early Copperfield, who took his “Pranky Hank” and made a masterful vignette from it.

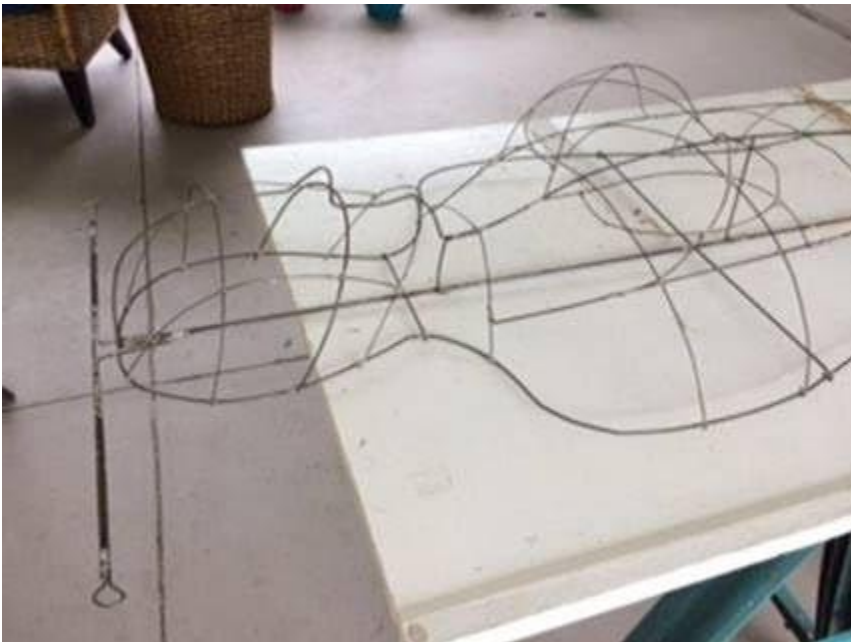
Don Wayne was [David Copperfield](#)'s principal magic creator and illusion director for over 18 years, which included 17 television specials and over 800 weeks of international touring. Don created, designed and/or built some of the most spectacular illusions ever created in the history of magic, including Statue of Liberty Vanish, Walking Thru the Great Wall, Escape from Niagara Falls, Vanish of the Orient Express, Floating Across the Grand Canyon and Escape from Alcatraz.

In conjunction with [Jim Steinmeyer](#) he developed a vanishing jet plane illusion performed by [Mark Kalin and Jinger](#) at the Reno Hilton in February 2001, which was described at the time as the largest stage illusion in the world. Wayne's other clients have included [Michael Jackson](#), [Britney Spears](#), [Cher](#), [Siegfried & Roy](#), [Andre Koe](#), [Criss Angel](#), [Mark Wilson](#), [Curtis Adams](#), [Hans Klok](#), Dirk Arthur, [Rick Thomas](#), [Melinda Saxe](#), [Steve Wyrick](#), [Murray SawChuck](#), [Luis de Matos](#), Jason Byrne, [Florian Zimmer](#) and [Robert Gallup](#).

Wayne was named by [MAGIC Magazine](#) as one of the "most influential people in magic in the past 100 years". He has received a multitude of industry and peer awards, including The Academy of Magical Arts "Creative Fellowship", International Magicians Society "Magic Illusion Designer and Inventor of the Decade", and an Emmy Award for "Outstanding Special Visual Effects".



I just finished up a new Asrah form. I included some breast development. In reality, when a woman is laying down, her breasts flatten out, so they never look like this, but I found that this look more like what they imagine she should look like and is more deceptive!



Owens, John Gaughan, Bill Smith, David Mendoz, Willie Kennedy all get nice money for their Asrah forms.

It takes me around 25 hours and the cost of materials are about \$50 (K&S music wire, propane hand torch bottle refill, Kester's Acid Core Solder) Music wire is getting tough to find in hobby stores.

I have probably made well over 2 dozen of these in the past 40 years. It is now time to hang up my torch...or pass it to the new generation of illusion builders. I will be happy to show anyone how I make them.

The Asrah Levitation, created by Servais Leroy at the turn of the 20th Century is the ideal levitation for effect. The weakest part of any suspension-levitation is the girl floating back down. This eliminates that let down (pardon the pun). She vanishes into thin air.

In the middle of this clip is a segment of me doing it with my portable set that has built-in rigging for flying the form.



Finally: Dennis Phillips' Editorial Opinion. I welcome responses in agreement or disagreement with the understand that everything written is for the advancement of the art of magic.

Title: "Why I am not paying for or attending any of the activities of this Orlando Genii Convention."

It is my personal expression of disgust at the destructive parts of the career of Penn and Teller on the art of magic. Spare me the old chestnut about "having to break some eggs to make an omelet". In a system where "the end justifies the means", you often never get to the end. All you have is "the means".

I realize that several of our Ring members have been on their show "Fool Us" and found it a rewarding experience. This is not an attack on our members or their accomplishments. This is my opinion of the overall negative aspects of the career of Penn and Teller on magic.

Their disrespect for most other magicians and the whole art, their blatant exposure and total arrogance about their own pseudo-exalted position in the magic business is disgusting. Shame on anyone who empowers them. Shame on magic show business for making them the monsters they are.

The Magic Circle in England was correct in denying them membership. They have set back magic 150 years. They are not, as Genii once said, “The Bad Boys of Magic” any more than Ted Kaczynski was “The Bad Boy of Mathematics”. Thinking magicians should realize that even though Mark Wilson did write a popular book for the general public, “The Mark Wilson Course of Magic”, and it revealed many classic methods of magical effects, Wilson never belittled other magicians and was not obnoxious as he was trying to teach an appreciation for magic methods.

The premise of their show “Fool Us” is a disaster for magic. It creates the idea that the only purpose of magic is to fool you and every trick demands an explanation and is a combative-combative mental challenge. They seem to imply that if you are fooled by a magician, then it is because you are ignorant, stupid or gullible. The entire concept of magic, as a theatrical art, is reduced to winning a con game: “Did I make a fool out of you or not?” It also says that if you can learn all the secrets then you can show the magician that he is merely a worthless malevolent con man. The focus on the show seems to be fooling other magicians. That leads to long convoluted and complicated boring routines (Like Charley Bach’s recent balloon routine) that fall flat for me. Philosophically the use of Occam’s Razor should be used.

They should rename the show “Entertain Us” and just loosely comment on classic methodology. How well was the lay audience entertained? Do we judge that they entertained and cleverly used magic techniques? That is what it means for a show to advance the art of magic.

One of the recent shows, Penn rattled on about how the only magic should be “done live” like they do on their show. The fact is that their show is recorded and edited on video tape! It is not live. The show is preproduced and staged and could not be done “live” like the early days of Doug Henning’s specials.

Penn lacks any balanced literary analysis or cultural understanding. He makes it clear that he is against all religion and in his crusade to destroy all religion, he borders on extremism. Again, balance is needed along with an understanding of constructive human/cultural myth, allegory and metaphor in religion. He picks off all the low-hanging religious fruit, the Fundamentalists (Supernaturalism), and easily counters their claims but he rejects the sociological appreciation of how common shared religious idealism (devoid of Fundamentalist superstition, arrogance, exclusion and its monsters of hate, rage, fear and exploitation and oppression) can be positive. Not every person who appreciates the beauty of religious art, music, liturgy and community is in the Taliban. Seriously, can any educated human being walk under the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and look up and say, “Bullshit!” (Not my word. That was the name of one of their anti-religious television series https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penn_%26_Teller:_Bullshit!) Now, this does not mean that I am promoting pseudo-science and psychological con jobs. I just think that extremism, in expression and technique, leads to more extremism. But I have seen in this “post and post-post modern” approach many aspects of our lives: in not only entertainment but in politics, economics, sociology. The loudest, most arrogant snot-slinging, pulpit pounding, know-it-all, slogan spouting, radical with the most inflammatory rage and biggest lies “appeals to the greater demons of our natures” (to use a reverse paraphrase of what Abraham Lincoln said about the “better angels of our nature”)

Sadly, and I freely admit that to expose this utter nonsense, I am forced to employ the same bombast... I apologize and admit my own forced hypocrisy. My intention is to bring about a change in Penn and Teller and in our current cultural assumptions.

One way I do my duty to fight the toxic extremism of Penn and Teller is to boycott it. I will not pay a penny to attend this Genii Convention due to P&T being "honored". The magic world should grow some virtuous masculine orbs(not meaning "balls" like in The Cups and Balls) and not participate in their nonsense or reward it. I may show up in the lobby for a while, to meet my friends and I may even voice my opinion until Kauffman and/or the Penn and Teller sycophants throw me out.