

April 2015 Ring Report

Posted on [April 29, 2015](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

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

April 2014 Meeting

Once again, Wallace Murphy did our preshow lecture on card magic. President Craig Schwarz gaveled the meeting to order. He said the Flea Market and silent auction was a success. Bev Bergeron still has a few of his posters to sell with the proceeds going to the club. Many of our members are performing professionally in the Orlando area.

This month's show was opened by Richard Hewitt, a past president of the club. He read some magic quotes and asked anyone to guess who said them. Finally someone guessed the quotes were made by Bev Bergeron. Richard found the quotes in a very old Genii magazine. Richard then did an exchange with an English penny and half dollar. Coins disappeared from his hands and reappeared in his change purse. Finally he did an interesting effect with half jumbo cards where two spectators randomly select a card and they both match. Like many card effects, the spectator has to listen carefully to the instructions. Often magicians are trying so hard to watch everything, that they neglect to carefully listen. After some laughs and assistance from Dan Stapleton, Richard had a real miracle.

Bev Bergeron's Teach-in was what he called the “Jay Ose card turnover move”. It was an Elmsley Count but the spectator was baffled that one card in his hand always kept turning over.

Phil Schwartz, our resident magic historian, presented Magic History Moment #65. The topic was Carter the Great. Charles Carter did seven world tours from 1907 to his death in 1936, while on tour, in Bombay India, at age 61. He was born in 1874 in New Castle, Pennsylvania. His training was as a lawyer and a journalist and he later became an illusionist. In 1912, his props would not fit on the ship on which he planned to return from England to the United States. He had to take a later ship. This bit of luck saved him from traveling on the ill-fated Titanic. Highlights of his life included owning the Martinka Magic Shop and playing two weeks on Broadway. He also owned the Otis Lithograph Company. He used Floyd Thayer made equipment such as the Sawing a Lady in Half and Cheating the Gallows. Carter is buried in a family plot in Queens, New York.

Brian Foshee, from HappiAmp demonstrated his popular product along with a music controller. He talked about the importance of sound in any variety show.

Dan Stapleton had a spectator's card reverse itself in a deck. Mark Fitzgerald had silver dollars penetrate a table using a shot glass and followed with some card magic and Dennis Phillips showed a clever small box, from an old pirate ship, containing a glass of liquid “grog” which could be tipped and turned upside down and the grog did not spill.

Dennis Phillips, Secretary

Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170
“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

May 2015

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

-Charles Dickens in A Tale of Two Cities (1859)-

If anything is apparent in the second decade of the 21st Century it is that this time is an age of extreme contrasts. Most competent magicians are barely squeaking out a living while a very few are performing and living like Industrial barons from an earlier age. Never before has such lousy trash been passed off a “magic” at the same time undoubtedly history’s most incredible effects are being produced and performed. Brick and mortar shops are being annihilated while internet fulfillment shops are expanding and prospering. Never before has so much information been available to so many and so little understanding and knowledge actually possessed by a few.

We are on the cusp of great changes in how the magic arts will evolve and those changes will be driven by demographic trends, economic considerations and cultural factors as well as future sparkling talent.

My magician friend, Larry Thornton in Calgary Canada says:

“Magic is now in the hands of the technologists. The times never stand still. The 21st century is now entering a magical age the likes of which has never been seen before. We are in the midst of seeing constantly advancing CGI (you ain’t seen nothing yet!), virtual reality 2.0 and beyond, augmented reality, super-realistic 3D, fully fleshed-out artificial intelligence, perfected holograms, eye-glasses and even contact lenses that can bring in the Internet, audio and tactile simulations, and last but not least, being jacked directly into “cyberspace” with chip implants in the brain that will over-shadow The Matrix movie for shocking impact. There are even predictions that soon mutual friends may be able to plug into the very private thoughts of each other, anywhere in the world. And there are powerful new technologies emerging from labs that may enable anyone to create various “ESP”-like effects that will be indistinguishable from the “real thing”. (Of course we know with regards to paranormal phenomena, that there never was a “real thing”, but that’s beside the point!)

All of these astounding developments, taken together, will represent either the greatest positive revolution in the history of the human species, or else they will usher in a frightening and horrific nightmare world that no modern-day Edgar Allen Poe, Stephen King, or H.P. Lovecraft could ever conceive of.

*The result of all of this, is that the majority of the greatest conjuring deceits of the last hundred and fifty years or so, up to and including the most sophisticated illusions of our Copperfields and David Blaines and their ilk, will **shrivel and die** in*

the face of such massive and highly disruptive technological paradigms. It's inevitable and unstoppable. And to put it rather simply and bluntly, there's absolutely nothing a dying magic community can do about it."

I believe that Larry has a good point but I am not ready to abandon all magical entertainment. Certainly, what we have known for the last 10 years will fade away as viable popular entertainment just as Rag-pictures, Trouble-Wit, Chalk-drawings and Shadow Art faded away. Today they are amusing oddities found in rare performing situations. More than likely, destination resorts will still occasionally feature a spectacular illusion show. There will probably always be a small place for psychic entertainment. I am also optimistic about children's magic.

For a few weeks in the summer between my 10th and 11th grade (1964) I "ran-away" with a carnival, "Amusements of America". It's a long story but my parents knew where I was and reluctantly approved. I will tell you the details in another writing but , among the many things that I learned, was a Mouse Pitch. Joe, the 10-in-1 manager, use to make up the mice in a rubber mold with gray tinted plaster. We stuck on an invisible thread (made from the then popular pantyhose thread) and pitched them as an item half-way through the show. The blow off was paying to see the girl in the blade box.

For pitching, I used a single strand of copper wire out of a lamp cord. It worked better than the thread for demonstrating. Today, I have silicon molds and use tinted "Rock Hard" wood filler when D. Robbins is out or I cannot get mice cheap enough from them.

*The late Stan Kramien claimed that he bought a brand new Cadillac every year on what he made from his Mouse Pitch when touring his magic illusion show. I was told that the Alberti Flea Circus does very well with the Mouse Pitch at fairs and carnivals. **Here's the mouse pitch the way that I've done it for over 50 years. Words in < > are the actions that you'll be making but not actually saying. Make all actions correspond with your patter, of course. The instructions in the package will show you how to do most everything. Of course, the wire is attached to the wax (which is blackened with soot or a burned match, and, stuck to the mouse) on one end, and, about six inches away, to your lowest shirt button or (as I do) taped to a safety pin hidden under your belt. Tuck the mice into the top of your pants or wear a vest.***

*"I'm going to show you folks my favorite little oddity, but, I'm going to do this a little differently. First, I'm going to show you the trick and then I'm going to show you how it works! The trick is done with a little mouse, but, it's not a real mouse, it's a magic mouse! "If you put him on your hand you can make him go forward **<have him run from hand to hand>**, **back up <hold hand at an angle and move back and forth>**, turn right, and turn left. Would you like to see him roll over? Well, just watch and I'll have him roll over, run across one hand, and jump into the other!" "Now, I'm sure that you're wondering how I made the little mouse do all of that, so, I'll show you. If you look under the chin of the mouse, you'll see a little black dot. That's the magician's secret gimmick. It's normally light tan in color so that you can hide it in the palm of your hand, but, I dyed this one black so that you all could see it a little better. I'll take it off and let you see how it works without the mouse. He's not going to go anywhere without*

it anyway!” **<let them see the wax “move” across your hand>** “I did this a little while ago and a young lady said ‘I know what that is! My dog has them!’ No, it’s not alive, and it’s not a magnet, and it’s not some kind of a motor. Believe it or not, the little gimmick is made out of wax and other things. **<Say nothing about the thread>** “There are lots of other tricks that you can do with the gimmick besides just the mouse. For example, put it on a coin and use that as part of your tip when you go out to eat. Ask the waitress to pick up the coin **<quarter>** before you leave, and, when she goes to reach for it, the money runs back to you! And, the waitress will usually run the other way! Don’t tell her that I told you to do it! “Or, put the coin into a glass **<use a small juice glass>** and the coin will come right out of the glass into your hand! But please don’t put the coin with the gimmick on it into a soda machine or a pay phone...you could get into a lot of trouble! In fact, you could go to jail! I’ve never been to jail myself.....and I don’t want to go back! “The last trick that I’m going to show you is with box of crayons instead. Put the gimmick on the bottom of the crayon and put it back into the pack and let the crayon just rise out of the pack! “Now if you like the mouse and the other tricks that I did with the magician’s gimmick **<make the mouse “run” across your hand one last time before putting it away>**, I do have some available. Well, heck, that’s why I showed it to you! Each package comes with the mouse, the gimmick, and instructions for all the tricks that I just showed you. Now, I don’t charge five or ten dollars for them like you might pay in a magic shop. No, I charge \$39.95! I’m just kidding! Today, they’re just \$3.00 each and everything you need is in each package. Or, if you need more than one, I do have a special. You can get three for \$7.00. That’s like getting one of them for less than half price! And, if you get three of them, I’ll give you a male and two females so that you can raise your own! So, if you want one, or three, or more, just let me know and I’ll be happy to wait on you! They all come with The Good Mousekeeping seal of approval—whatever that is—and it’s so nice to have a mouse around the house!”

<Obviously, you either move your hand or your belly or both to make the mouse, the coin, and the crayon “move”. The instructions tell your customers how to use the thread . Also, you should hold your hands higher than where the thread is attached to you to make it virtually impossible to be seen. I always have two mice hooked up and if I do happen to break the thread, then, I can always put it back, out of sight, next to the other mouse, and, after talking for a few seconds, pull out the mouse that has the thread attached and continue just like nothing happened. Of course, if you break the thread on the second one, just go into the close. >

Dennis