

February 2016 Meeting

Posted on [March 6, 2016](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

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

February 2015 Meeting

President Craig Schwarz called the February meeting to order. We had 30 present. It was good to see former Ring President Carl and Barbara Fowler again for a visit. Chris Smith visited with his camcorder to make a recording of the entire meeting for his Dad, Chuck Smith, who was hospitalized with a stroke last year and is recovering.

The meeting was preceded by a Board Meeting and it was decided to postpone our yearly Spring Flea Market until next year. It will be reformatted next year as the “Orlando Magicians Day” with flea market tables and a focus on lectures. To raise funds for this year, it was decided to sell some of our Ring stage-production equipment.

Bev Bergeron presented his monthly teach-in and he discussed the famous theater director, Stanislavsky, and adding the “why” to magic performances. He used the proper handling of the cut and restored rope as an example.

Phil Schwartz present Magic History Moment #73 as a suspense history. He mentioned a magical performer who was married seven times, was a tax evader, extortionist, swindler, bootlegger and corrupter of public officials. He may have also been a murderer. At 17 he ran away from a Minnesota boarding school and made his way to Skagway, Alaska, a booming gold rush town. After travels to California, Arkansas and Mexico he arrived in Hollywood and provided ideas and effects for Floyd Thayer and Carl Owen. He wrote a book called “The Dr. Q Mysteries” and had a successful mind reading act. He had a falling out with Thayer by including blueprints to several Thayer tricks in the Dr. Q book. He amassed a fortune of \$48 million dollars (in today’s money). He was imprisoned for bootlegging liquor and sent to prison but faked that he was dying of cancer and was released. He lived another 25 years and died in 1954. His name was Claude Conlin, better known as Alexander!

The Ring show featured Dennis Phillips with some homemade mental effects, John Daniel with a clever card reveal where the card is a folded animated frog. Dan Stapleton presented his original and clever version of Bank Night which fooled everyone. And Bev did the popular self-working “Card trick that can’t be explained”.

Dennis Phillips

Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

March 2016

“I know a rich man who has nothing but friends, and a poor man who has nothing but money.” — Rene Lavand

One of the pains of growing old is watching your friends pass on. We all just lost Irene Larson. At my age I remember when she was Illusionist John Daniel’s better looking

half. She was in the box the first time I saw the Thin Type sawing a lady. She later became Bill Larsen Jr.'s wife and the queen of the Magic Castle.

Now we hear that Paul Daniels has a terminal brain tumor and his life is ebbing away. I met Paul and Debbie at the Abbott's Magic Get Together in Colon, Michigan in 1989. I think Greg mentioned to him that I had worked in television. Paul was like a long lost friend talking about his career.

I remember him bringing the house down in the Colon High School auditorium with his Bill in Walnut, Chop Cup and Electric Chair routine. The chairs are not gimmicked. It is a routine of sheer showmanship, cueing and brilliant timing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgRCOLwIJAQ>

I have learned so much from the senior generation, with friends like Bev Bergeron, Charles Windley, Philip Morris, Vince Carmen, Dick Oslund, Al Cohen and those who have passed on, Joseph Smiley, Duke Stern, Frank Scalzo, Bob McAllister, Ken Griffin, Jerry Conklin and others.

Being born in 1948, I have always been a child of television, with its canned laughter and applause.

Back in the 70s, for my illusion show, I used a stereo reel to reel tape recorder and on one track was the show sound track with mixed in canned applause and whistles. Why not?

Track two was the cue track which I wired to the spotlight operator explaining where to point the light and kill the light. I also ran a wire to the backstage crew with a time countdown and instructions for the curtains and stage lights and I even ran a wire into the dressing room with show time cues!

I had leader on the tape and everything was timed out. I used an untrained spotlight operator but all the cues were called and in just a few minutes they learned what to do.

During the finale, I sent the two backstage tech crew people out into the auditorium (on each side about halfway) to squat down and then stand up, clap and cheer. They always led to a standing ovation.

One show, an illusionist friend, came to see the show. After about 2 scenes I could see him moving around in the audience.

After the show he came to the backstage door and when I came over, he said, "You rotten cheat! You have your own applause on tape! And your own cheerleaders!"

I was preparing a defensive answer and he said, "I am stealing that idea!" He did.

I guess that I am from a quieter and more respectful time. I have expressed many times that I respect Penn and Teller and they have mellowed a bit in recent years but they have been rude, brash, arrogant and crude. Criss Angel has pushed the limits on occasion. Maybe it is a sign of our Post-Post Modern Era.

I am like everyone else and enjoy clowns, buffoons, stand-up comedy and a good sideshow but the business of electing the executive Branch of this country is far too important to be wasting time on tossing around Don Rickles lines, playing the Three Stooges and staging a Burlesque Show. I simply cannot recall a time in either magic or politics when there was so much vileness and crudeness (using slang for a woman's sexual organ) stump speeches describing urination, menstruation ,defecation and accusing other candidates of having their cranium in their rectum. I wish we all would get together and get serious and propose some constructive solutions to the dilemmas that we face in the 21st Century. Like a magic show, in the long run, a joyful, positive and respectful approach gains fans and respect. I wish we would get back to that type of magic also. Maybe I am just old fashioned and my day has passed.

Dennis Phillips