

## **“Day of Magic” 2017 a Success**

Posted on [September 30, 2017](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

### **Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev Bergeron Ring” SAM Assembly #99 September 2017 Meeting**

President Craig Schwarz called the meeting to order. We had on guest, Ryan Steiner and 26 members present. We were all excited about our Hurricane delayed “Day of Magic”. It did happen on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and was a great success with a giant flea-market and lectures.

Craig reviewed all the magic that can be seen around the Orlando area.

Phil Schwartz presented Magic History Moment #88, “And Now, For My Final Illusion”, which was a sad list of 17 performers who died, by accident while performing or working on magic. Some notable tragic accidents included the 1930 death of Charles Rowan, (stage name “Karr the Magician”), in Springfontein, South Africa. He was killed when he failed to escape a strait jacket chained to the ground and was run over by a speeding car. On Halloween 1990, there was the sad death of escape artist Joe Burrus at Blackbeard’s Fun Center in Fresno, California when he was trying to honor Houdini and was bound in chains and locked in a glass and plastic coffin and lowered into a 7-foot hole. Seven tons of dirt and wet cement were poured on top and he was crushed to death as the coffin collapsed. Phil continued with stories of magicians who were accidentally shot to death in the classic Bullet Catch, the most famous being on March 23, 1918 when Chung Ling Soo, American William Robinson was shot to death on stage in England. The sad list also includes magicians killed in theater fires. One local event was the February 17, 1948 death of Walter Price and his wife. They both died in their Winter Park, Florida home when a batch of homemade flash paper and chemicals exploded. Our ring show was again emceed by Phil Schwartz . Bev Bergeron led off with the Classic Three Frog Monty using two audience assistants. They never could find the toy frog that squeaked. Dan Stapleton did one of his classic card effects that he used on cruise ships called “Mirror Image” where he makes a prediction with two unseen cards and the spectator’s freely selected cards match the prediction. Mark Fitzgerald has an excellent Linking Ring routine using small rings. And Greg Solomon presented the Sure Shot die box and asked for routine suggestions. Ari Novak had a deck of cards with half the deck fun things to do and the other half, not so fun. The spectator freely selected cards for a date night and they were all fun things. Thom Parkin revealed a card by spelling down in the deck and JC Hyatt revived his Three Pigs went-to-market trick and an effect with cards. Dennis Phillips finished the show with a psychometry demonstration and then showed his antique Abbotts Chinese Head Chopper.

Dennis Phillips, Secretary Ring 170



**Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170**  
**“The Bev Bergeron Ring”**  
**October 2017**



**Philip Morris, Businessman and Entertainer**

Philip Morris (born Philip Morris Smith) died Sunday September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, in Charlotte, North Carolina after a long illness. He is survived by wife Amy, son Scott and daughters Terri and Sandie and grandchildren. Morris was influential and encouraging to countless magicians and performers, as well as one of the creators of modern Halloween business.

Phil was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1935. He became interested in magic and ventriloquism as a boy and performed with his dummy “Smitty” on radio. Soon he moved to magic and with his young girlfriend, Amy, began doing larger magic illusions and “Ghost Shows”, which were popular in the 1950s. They would fill the seats in a downtown movie theater and use spooky magic tricks to set the mood and then shut off all the lights. By using theatrical scare tactics, they would frighten the crowd into seeing ghosts and goblins.

Soon local circus promoters and booking agents invited Philip and now wife, Amy, to join them. That led them to travel all over the country and eventually they were brought to Charlotte by his agent where his ghost show was popular with Southern rural audiences and the circus and carnival outdoor business had a longer playing season.

Morris returned to broadcasting part time and worked at WBTV doing a live and local Saturday Night Horror show based on his “Dr. Evil” stage character. On Saturday Morning TV, he was “Captain Phil” on Bozo’s Circus. When I moved to Charlotte in 1972, I filled the TV slot that Phil had once done.

In addition to providing circuses with costume spectaculars, Phil also was a frequent ringmaster for the Royal Hannaford Circus. Lacking a source for gorilla suits, he began manufacturing them and one was secretly bought and used in the infamous Bigfoot film.

In the mid-1960s he began producing family fantasy themed magic shows. His first was The Wonderful World of Fantasy which he toured with 6 people. Tickets were sold and theaters filled by an innovative telephone marketing campaign in every town.

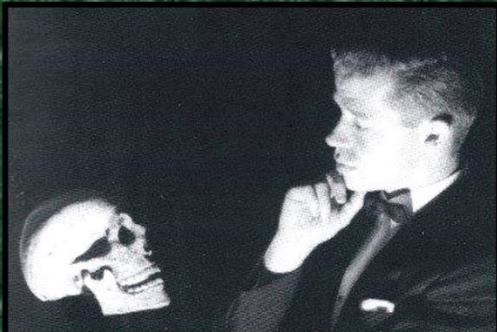
In 1965 Amy was busy raising their children while Phil was on the road. She wondered what else they could do with their basement and attic full of costumes. At Halloween, people who knew them wanted to rent costumes and buy makeup. So, she began a small rental business out of their house. Within a couple of years, they bought an empty building in a business district and Amy added ballet and dancewear as well as theatrical makeup and Morris Costumes was created. That business grew to fill a massive warehouse complex and become one of the world’s largest suppliers of costumes, magician’s supplies and theatrical needs.

In 1979 Philip and I co-wrote a textbook ,which is still in print, on “How to Operate a Financially Successful Haunted House”. It continues to be the reference manual for the Halloween Haunted House industry.

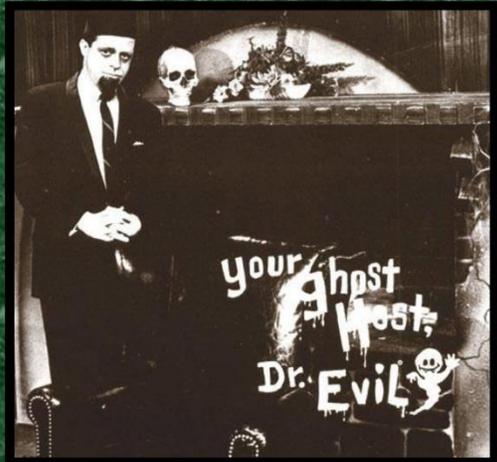
As Phil’s health declined from Alzheimer’s, his wife Amy and son, Scott, and daughter Terri took over the family business.

One of Phil’s legacies is he is known as one of the fathers of the Modern Halloween Holiday as we know it. The well-stocked, one-stop Halloween party store was his creation.





My Mentor Philip Morris High School Photo



your ghost  
West,  
Dr. Evil

SO SCARY—WE DARE YOU TO SIT THROUGH IT ALL! IF YOU DO—YOU WIN  
**FREE 2 FOR 1 PASSES TO A NEAR FUTURE MOVIE**

**3 SUPER SHOCK SHOWS!**  
ON STAGE  
IN PERSON

Mad Monster Impersonator!  
**DR. EVIL AND HIS TERRORS OF THE UNKNOWN**  
FIRST TIME HERE!  
UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE!  
**ALL NEW!**

See! Girls Head Chopped Off Right Before Your Eyes!  
You'll have nightmares for a week!  
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN AND USUALLY DOES!  
Live Snakes Ream Theatre!  
GIRLS! SHOULD NOT COME ALONE. BRING AN ESCORT TO PROTECT YOU WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT!

Living Dead Sit Next To You!  
MONSTERS GRAB GIRLS FROM AUDIENCE!

IT MAY BE YOUR GIRL!

Plus Stage Show No. 2

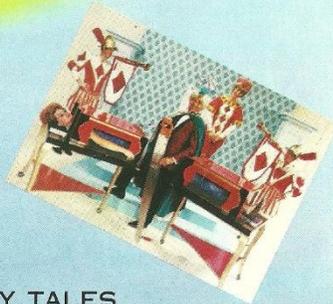
also IN PERSON  
**THE MUMMY-KING KONG**  
Hollywood Gorilla character portrayals  
SEE! WE CAN'T ADVERTISE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MUMMY GRABS SLAVE GIRLS AND LIGHTS GO OUT, BUT WOW!  
SOMETHING YOU NEVER DREAMED YOU'D SEE!  
PLUS 2 HORROR MOVIES

IF YOU ARE BRAVE ENUF—YOU WIN A **DEAD BODY** Free  
we bet you can't take it!





**"OLD"  
FAVORITES  
of  
CHILDHOOD  
DREAMS**



LIVING FAIRY TALES  
PRESENTED AMIDST  
EYE-STARTLING COSTUMES AND  
BEWILDERING ILLUSIONS.  
BRING CHILDHOOD DREAMS  
TO LIFE.

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THE BOOK THAT TELLS  
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EVERYTHING ON

How to Operate a financially  
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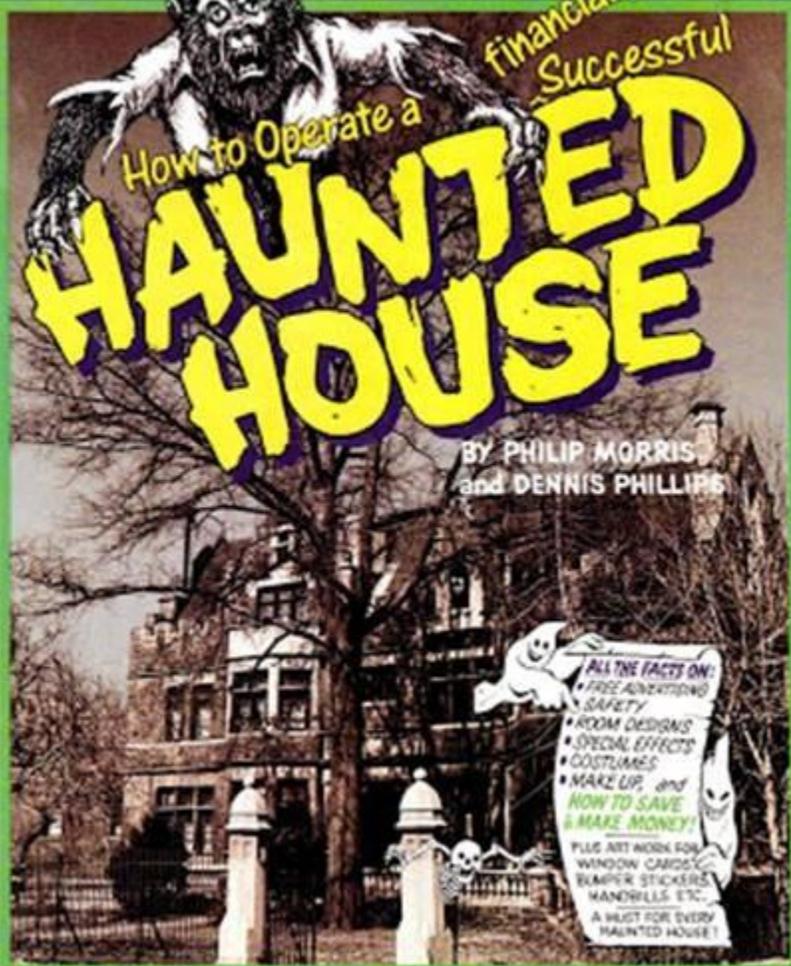
# HAUNTED HOUSE

BY PHILIP MORRIS  
and DENNIS PHILLIPS



ALL THE FACTS ON:  
• FREE ADVERTISING  
• SAFETY  
• ROOM DESIGNS  
• SPECIAL EFFECTS  
• COSTUMES  
• MAKE UP, and  
• HOW TO SAVE  
• MAKE MONEY!

PLUS ART WORK FOR:  
WINDOW CARDS,  
BUMPER STICKERS,  
HANDILLS, ETC.  
A MUST FOR EVERY  
HAUNTED HOUSE!



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I was happy to link up with many old friends at our “Day of Magic” on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Holiday Inn Resort on Kirkman Road here in Orlando. It is the Resort where Dan works as a “land-based” cruise director and he helped arrange the location. Many of the Ring members and Board members did a magnificent job of volunteering and bring the event together. It was a success day with a big flea market along with several lectures.

Dennis Phillips