

August 2017 Meeting and Excited about Day of Magic

Posted on [August 28, 2017](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev Bergeron Ring”

SAM Assembly #99

August 2017 Meeting

President Craig Schwarz called the meeting to order and with 25 present. He went over some brief announcements of upcoming ring and local magical events .

Bev Bergeron’s Teach-in featured his story of performing in LA for bank openings with Dai Vernon. Vernon was frustrated by the kids who would grab at his cups when doing the Cups & Balls. He said Bev only had a gag yet it “killed. ”Bev’s gag was something he saw. A clown using an old Lux Soap Bottle and string that looked like you were squirting soap on someone. He showed the method to Frances Marshall in Chicago and before long she put out the same effect with a Mustard Bottle. Today the gag is very common using both a mustard and ketchup plastic squeeze bottle.

Phil Schwartz presented Magic History Moment #87. It was on Magic Exposure over the years. Phil began with Penn & Teller being denied membership in the Magic Circle. Then he presented the history of Exposure Committees in all the major magic organizations where members like Blackstone, Dunninger and Devant were thrown out due to exposing secrets. He told of how Floyd Thayer was falsely accused and exonerated for allegedly exposing illusions to a Hollywood movie production and how Howard Thurston’s book was edited by the Expose Committee of the SAM in the early 1930s.

Phil’s insight into magic history made us aware of how things have changed in the way magicians understand magic exposure.

Phil Schwartz followed by being the comedy Emcee and Bev Bergeron opened the Ring show by turning selected playing cards red as they were revealed and finished with the Devano Rising Cards. Dennis Phillips produced a live rabbit for a 3-d Bunny Box, showed the Marshall Vanishing Alarm Clock and finished by producing a person from a colorful Arabian tent illusion. Bev Bergeron recounted the story in how he was able to produce two people out of the tent using clever misdirection...

Craig Schwarz did an unbelievable card effect where a spectator selected card revealed. Joe Zimmer had a couple of volunteers come up to the table and he did a well-received classic Chop Cop routine. James Bailey the Third then had a helped assist and he did the Keller Rope tie Routine. Jimmy Ichihana and Ed McGowan teamed up for a hilarious “memorized card deck” routine where Ed always knew which card was selected. J.C. Hyatt pulled apart twisted straws and did a color changing pocket knife routine with a vanish at the end.

Tom Parkin did a mind reading card effect where selected cards matched cards with holes and squares cut in them. Dan Stapleton closed with show with some excellent

“play big” card magic that he used when he was a cruise director. He put a card deck back in order after a “slop shuffle” and did the Out of this World Card Trick but rather than any moves he simplified the ending into a powerful finish.

Dennis Phillips



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

The notes I handle no better than many pianists.

But the pauses between the notes-

Ah, that is where the art resides!

-Artur Schnabel

If you think back to amateurish magic performances, you are probably aware that one mark of an amateur is that they speak entirely too much meaningless verbiage. Or they have far too many body movements.

Part of the problem is that we are all used to broadcasting and especially radio where “dead air” is considered the biggest sin next to profanity. When I was in radio, there was the fear that if you had any dead air for more than a second, the audience would change the station.

Most Top 40 programmers wanted to keep up the excitement level, so there were no pauses in the format. If you weren’t playing a records, you were running a station jingle, a commercial, the news, weather, time and temperature.

All the audio was modulated near the maximum all the time. We used audio processors like a Gates “Level Devil” or Orban’s Opti-Mod. Station carrier output was at 125%!

But on stage with the visual element, silence can be golden and needed for emphasis and pacing. Watch a professional actor with the pauses, the deep breaths and sighs.

Watch a dancer where all the choreography is punctuated by pauses and distinct movement to movement. As the late Carl Ballentine would say, “Every move a picture!”.

A relentless and continuous meaningless blur of words and less-than-crisp physical movement distracts and inhibits the full perception of the content.

I hate to point out examples but here is an act that makes me dizzy watching and comes off hilariously silly, even though his basic dove effects are solid. He has far too many leg kicks, wobbles and is constantly bobbing up and down and side to side with no pauses. His music is entirely wrong. A little coaching and directing and more parsimony in movement would look better!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFU4nOoFMmo>

A few months back, I posted some pictures of Joseph Smiley. I heard from another fan of Joe’s , Gary Ponton, who lives in Virginia and he kindly sent some photos of Joe in the 1970s and with Gary’s permission, I would like to post them in the future.

I mentioned the name Frank Scalzo in that story of Joe Smiley and the other Seaside Park acts ,I immediately heard back from our past Ring president M.J. Emigh (now in Texas) who knew Frank and commented what a small world it is.

Dan Stapleton also mentioned seeing Frank.

Scalzo was from Eastern Pennsylvania, in the Easton area and I believe also owned a chain of Dry Cleaners. That gave him a lot of opportunity to work as a semi-professional. He was a frequent customer at Tannen’s and told me he had taken lessons from Slydini.

Frank had a classic 50s night club act. He was also one of the Boardwalk acts at Seaside Park in Virginia Beach where Joe Smiley played. The last time that I saw Frank was at the 1969 Abbotts Get Together where he won the “Jack Gwynne Award for Presentation”.

At that time his act had evolved into all his props being red and white with lots of red velvet. He was one of the few people who used the Super Dooper Floating Balloon and the finale of the trick was that he used it for a “Dove to Balloon”. The effect uses a blower fan that rotates and is hidden in

In the table. The balloon (not helium but blown with breath) is held aloft and in position by the wind stream using the Bernoulli principle (a part of the physics of fluid dynamics) This science video tells you all you need to know

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUyD-NoDQWk>

Of course' Frank also had all sorts of complications with his act from the ocean breeze and its effect on his delicate props and silks from the wind and the salty moist air.

For a few years, I used the floating balloon in my act but found the blower to be noisy and the trick could be ruined by the slightest breeze. One evening the draft was very strong on stage from the air conditioner and I was at a loss as to how to solve the problem. My long time stage assistant, the late Tony Todaro, suggested that I do the trick just like I did the Blackstone floating handkerchief. So I rigged the stage with black thread ,that I always carry to mend my pants and costumes if need be, and simply attached it to the balloon with a small bit of Scotch Tape. Tony manipulated the balloon well. The other end we tied off using some looped rubber bands to the other side of the stage, a Vince Carmen idea. After that, I never chanced using the blower system again. It sits in my warehouse.

Here is the brochure that Frank Scalzo gave to me in 1961. Yes, I believe that Ed Mishell did the artwork.

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