

August 2018 Meeting- Tips on selling your Magic Collection

Posted on [August 29, 2018](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

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

August 2018 Meeting

President Mike Matson called the meeting to order. We had 4 guests Mike Flannigan, Haran Izary, Clark Orr and Ann Osterhout. We shared a wrap up report on the major magic conventions this summer. Bev Bergeron’s monthly teach each feature two gags. One was a tiny hand in a person’s fist with the premise that the magician is holding a miniature child. The other was a gag with flash paper as a technique to get a free drink. President Matlock did another talk on “Theory and Thaumaturgy”. This time it was on expectations and he used Professor’s Nightmare as an example.

Phil Schwartz, our resident magic historian presented Magic History Moment #95 on “Nuts and Berries — How to Sell Your Magic Collection”. He first explained what psychological motivations causes a person to collect. He quoted psychologist, Carl Jung, who said we all have an ancient archetype left over from our early ancestors to collect nuts and berries. He rejected Sigmund Freud’s view who linked collecting to the development of bowel control. Phil then gave some guidelines to an orderly distribution of your collection. He said to be respectful of magic history, give some away, donate some and sell some. He said that to sell your collection you will need an inventory, photos and descriptions and then meet others collectors, learn the market, develop a selling network and avail yourself to cheap marketing such as a web page. Phil then gave examples on how he had disposed on much of his valuable collection. He owned 800 Thayer pieces and 25 Thayer notebooks filled with ephemera. He wrote the classic text, “The Ultimate Thayer” and has a website, Phil’s Magic Market. He also started a Thayer Magic website. His tips included gathering email address making lists and actively marketing his collection. He advised that someday everyone’s collection would change hands.

Our monthly show began with Dr. Ken Schreibman presenting a clever Poker test. Five jokers changed to a royal flush and the backs changed colors. Greg Solomon showed his

latest edition to his medicine show, an Egyptian decorated Drawer Box. Brian Sullivan had a spectator shuffle a deck and place cards around the inside of a book. One of the cards was selected and it matched a prediction that was in an envelope from the beginning. Tom Parkin did a test of memory, a card selected match one that had been turned over before. James Bailey had a “Dirty Thought Detector” and a Rupert’s Pearl exploded as the test. Michael Flannigan had a deck with famous names and was able to predict that the Houdini card would be reversed. Dan Stapleton did his original card effect “Deck Tracy” where two detective cards capture the chosen card between them and then other evidence, like pairs of other detective cards showed up in sleeves and odd places.

Dennis Phillips closed the show with a Sawing in Half Illusion using a stock and Jig Saw. In addition to the classic jokes and sight gags, he added some additional excitement proving the saw was actually going through the assistant’s body.



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

September 2018

*Children of yesterday, heirs of tomorrow,
What are you weaving? labor and sorrow?
Look to your loom again, faster and faster
Fly the great shuttles prepared by the Master...*

-Mary Artemisia Lathbury- known as the poet laureate of Chautauqua-

Mathematically, all timeline processes can be computed using “time” as the domain (the “x” axis on a Cartesian coordinate system). Time can be a vital part of much of Calculus. When you start talking about going backwards time travel, laws of causality are violated. For example, you cannot hop in a time machine and travel back in time and kill your grandfather when he was a baby. At least not in this universe. Time and Space are linked and we should think of them as inseparable. You can read Hermann Minkowski and Albert Einstein for the details. The problem of changing the past has plagued philosophers and theologians for at least a thousand years.

So can we change the past? St. Thomas Aquinas said “No” and even explained that the question is meaningless and invalid. If we could change the past, then there would be contradictory multiple states of “being”. Example: I could say that I shaved this morning and I could say that I did not shave this morning by changing the past. Aquinas said that contradictory states of “being” (in this case the historical “cause and effect” record) cancel each other into nothingness and since “nothing” implies non-existence then the question is meaningless heresy. It is like asking what is on the 90th floor of your house? You can ask the question but it is meaningless. Aquinas, who wrote “Summa Theologica”, (as a Roman Catholic Church theologian in the 1300s) went on to say that his Catholic Church believed that God was omnipresent and to say, “there can be nothing” would assert that there was a place where God could not be. To his theology, that would be heresy and deny the omnipresence of God.

Today, the concept of “nothingness” is increasingly scientifically and theologically falling out of favor. We have math that shows the interconnectedness of time-space as a single concept. That interconnectedness is what we call “the velocity of light” but that limit has everything to do with the interconnection of the universe and “speed” is a simplistic part of it. In string theory when perfect symmetry of waves can occur, the condition is very unstable like an upside pyramid standing in its inverted tip. “Nothingness” is a special class of “existence”. The popular idea of nothingness as “void and inert” is clearly

wrong. The scientific evidence we have seems to be telling us that what we think of as a void is indeed a bubbling cauldron of random energy fluctuations at max-Entropy. You can research, “The Dirac Sea”. As far as physics is concerned nothing is something!

The question needs to become how did these random energy fluctuations expand and cooled to allow for the entropy-driven Universe that we observe? The answer seems to be that the Universe we observe is one of the degrees of freedom implicit in a timeless random probability field. Indeed nothingness is also a pure symmetric existence, that is if we think of Nothingness as a Perfect Symmetry, devoid of particulars and relationships, which exists as islands within the max-Entropy random field.

But, I keep trying to change the past, rebuilding long gone magic tricks and trying to change the present “now” to connect with a past that never existed.

Here is an example:



This is my re-imaged classic Egyptian Water Box, in a full Pharaoh costume with a backdrop. My water box has masking on the sides of the flaps so it could be done without angle problems.

My goal was the recapture the magic style of the past with its grand stage props and fantasy stories. It is from the past that I want to change.

I always wanted to make the Grant/Menge Water Box to be as impressive as the Nelson Hanne illustration and catalog description that I first saw in the 1950s.

As a kid back then, I realized the weakness of the trick having bad angle problems, plus the spray-paint stencil paint job was cheap looking. It was not something that you would ever perform.

So I went to work, building a prop and a stage set that was as glorious as I thought it should be! Notice the side-masking that allows the effect to be almost done without any angle issues.

The patter is about The Nile River, the life giving river of Egypt, the gift of their gods to them. Every year in the spring it would flood bringing life-giving nutrients and water to the desert land.

In the early 1900s the British built a dam that we now call the low Aswan Dam, but was small and enlarged several times but still limited in function. But it was enough to mostly disrupt the yearly cycle and anger the Egyptian gods who allowed Howard Carter, the British archeologist, to discover King Tut's tomb in 1922. The reason was that inside was the small box containing the sacred Blue Scarab first used by Jannes and Jambres, the ancient High Egyptian Priests, to tell the Pharaoh when the Nile flood would crest. The gods thought the British would understand that the Nile needed to flow freely. But the British and Europeans dismissed it all away as ancient nonsense. Egypt continued into financial and cultural decline. In the 1950s, Cold War rivalry led the Soviets to construct the High Aswan Dam which totally blocked the Nile, flooded many sacred sites and disastrously reshaped the down-river ecology and culture and led to more Egyptian social calamity.

Using translations from The Rosetta Stone, I reenacted the ancient yearly ritual with the symbolic snake coming from the box first (unties by a reel) and the blue scarab talisman is produced from the box. Clear water is poured into the box and poured out, but the second time it turns blue (I used two glasses and food coloring).

All this was done to Egyptian folk music playing under my live narration.

<http://www.vulture.com/2018/08/penn-jillette-in-conversation.html>

Not much to add here. It is amazing to me that Penn Gillette can make overt political, religious and philosophical statements and never face a backlash.

This just goes to show that show business has become intertwined with politics, religion and economic philosophy and the divisions and fractures in American life are regretful.

Looking at America is like looking in a cracked mirror.

I always thought that Stu MacDonald was one of those midwestern journeymen magician who always did a superior job with standard stuff. He always put his own twist in his presentations and patter.

Here is the way I remember Stu and Lori from the early 70s



I saw him at Abbotts with wife Lori doing a stage act in 1969 at Abbotts. Fred Becker says they are still married but I never see her anymore. I somehow got the idea that Stu's day job is producing training videos and their production for Whirlpool in Southwest Michigan.

Unlike lots of older magicians who keep doing the same stuff, Stu matured real well and has continued to sharpen his skills and create.



He did put on weight and lost his hair but he dresses appropriately and has morphed into a great novelty “sketch act” which took him to FISM for some recognition. He is approaching an “old age legend” status and will probably be a Convention Headliner until he retires.

Here is the one trick that most magicians hate... Linking Rings. I don't think it is because of exposure but because they do not want to put the effort into it. The basic method is logically obvious to anyone with an IQ over 70 but with proper methodology, you can convince an audience that it can't possibly be a split in the ring.

Take a look... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_Snn7zl124

In two cases I confess that I simply did not see “the move”. I am sure that I do not know all the Linking Ring moves but I would swear that *he uses a ring with a magnet in it...* (1:14 from the end) and in another *he must have one ring smaller than the other or bend in the split (:46 from the end)* He may be using a Porper Ring for one move and a slightly larger ring for another.

You can see how deceptive good handling can be.

His FISM Act <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zophHSVDUnc>

<https://shopping-street.shop/collections/todays-hot/products/vehicle-backup-camera-esky-rear-view-camera-waterproof-high-definition-color-wide-viewing-angle-license-plate-car-camera-with-7-infrared-night-vision-led#qv>

Is there some magic applications? \$30...! That is very cheap. Stuff like this is almost \$1,000 on Magic sites.

Hint: Mount a camera and do the color pen trick or any other mental effect where you need hidden information. For example: The Color Pen and Drawing trick. By hiding your cell phone receiving screen in a drawing pad, and having a hidden capturing camera, you can visually see which pen the spectator chooses rather than feeling the buzzer.

Make sure you get a supply of magic postage stamps, available at your local post office. The stamps were released at Magic Live in Las Vegas and I think David Copperfield was there to introduce them.

THE ART OF MAGIC



2011

2011

I heard a lot of mixed reviews about this year's Magic Live and people disappointed with some of the acts. It was said there were too many filler acts, like the guy with the Zebra costume. Attendance was said to be low and if the Asians had not been there, it would have been a decline.

The Orlando National SAM Convention seemed to have low attendance and again, the acts were said to not be not spectacular for most people. Many jugglers on the final night's playbill.

The IBM was in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Abbott's continues on and I still am not sure who owns the company. It was supposed to have been sold. My prediction is that FAB magic in town may just merge operations with Abbotts if Greg Bordner does not have hard feelings about it.

I am sorry to say that I believe American magic is declining and the Asians and Europeans and the rest of the world is picking up the slack. FISM comes to Canada.

Most of you know that I have a journalism background.

There was a time when America was not dominated by just a few big corporations. Business was mostly local. Each town has a local newspaper, radio station, theater and several local magicians, musicians and entertainers.

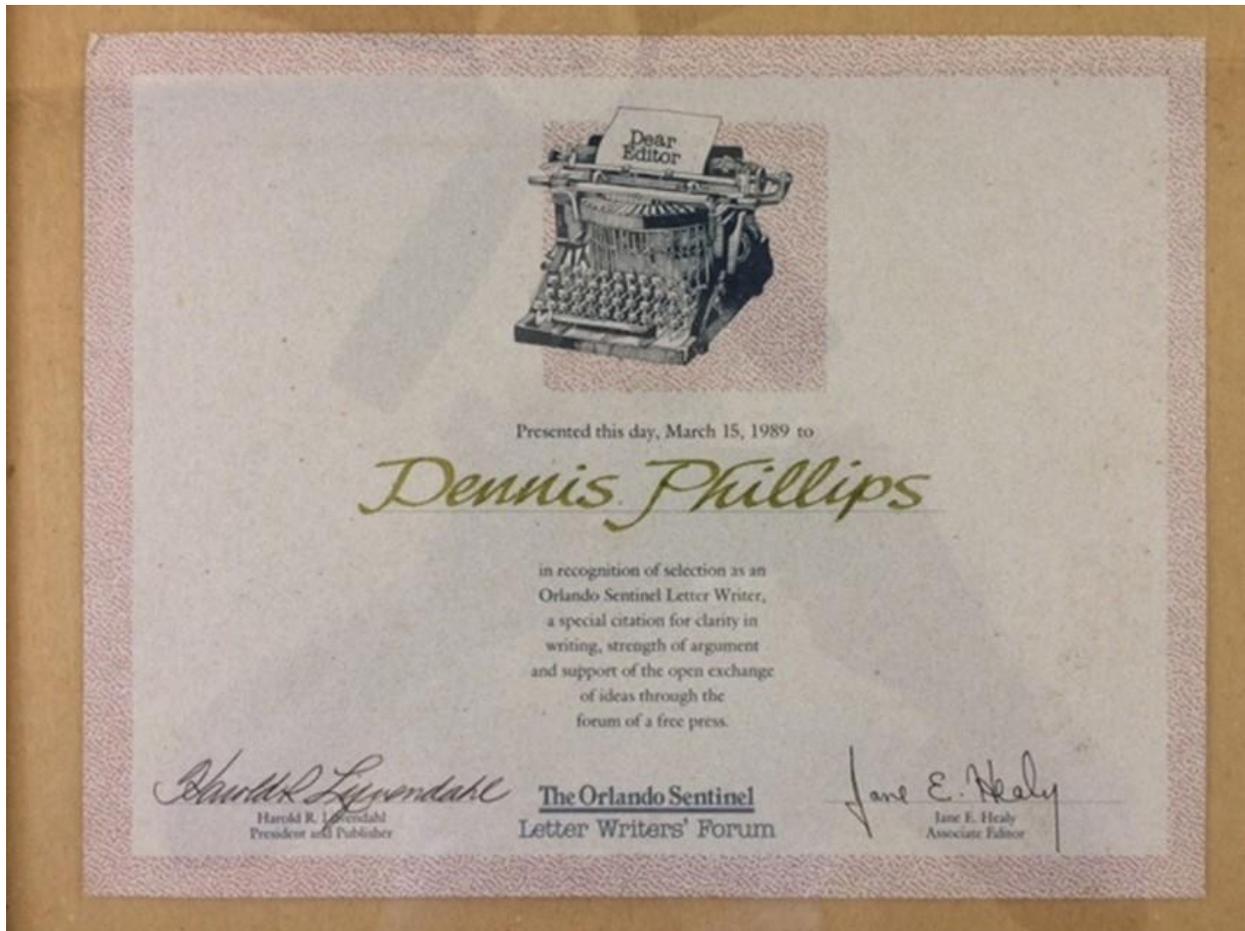
Back then the local newspaper had an important role in the community, and they welcomed local content and comments. Some people called The Orlando Sentinel, "The Orlando Slant-inel". I think that was unfair and was because some people were unhappy with the Sentinel editorials. Their basic news content was balanced then.

They were owned by the Tribune Newspaper out of Chicago. The broadcast part was profitable but the print division declined as the Internet and Broadcasting took over. The popping of the financial debt bubble and The Great Recession of 2008 led to the bankruptcy of Tribune Media, which was the largest bankruptcy in the history of the American media industry.

I suspect the heavy debt load of the Sam Zell acquisition was a factor. Buying on heavy debt was typical then. It was also a factor in the failure of iHeart Radio and Cumulus Radio. Debt is a killer. Today, most newspapers are just a shell of what they once were.

Recently Sinclair Broadcasting, the largest owner of local TV stations in the country, tried to buy the Tribune Broadcast Properties, but Sinclair bungled the deal and the FCC nixed it (by what seemed to be Sinclair trying to maintain a monopoly in many markets by using shell companies they still controlled in the merger).

This certificate, from the Sentinel, was given to me at a 1989 invitation dinner, by the Sentinel staff (At the old downtown Orlando Radisson) for being one of their "Star" Letter writers. There were about one hundred people there.



When the time came, to get the award , at the end of the dinner, syndicated columnist Charlie Reece stood up from the banquet table , at the front, and had me come forward. He read one of my letters that was published.

In it I said : “Charlie Reece said, in his recent column, that he had no respect for people who made their living by pontificating and running their mouth. He said that he only respected people who made a living by making physical things and doing physical labor. In as much as Charley Reece makes his living solely by pontification and running his mouth and makes nothing physical and does no physical labor, I totally agree with him!” The audience howled with laughter and Charlie handed me the framed certificate, and laughed and shook my hand and said, “Believe me, I had to put a lot of work and sweat into doing this!”

I wish that we could also “Make American Newspapers Great Again”.

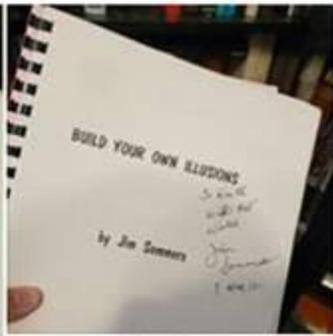
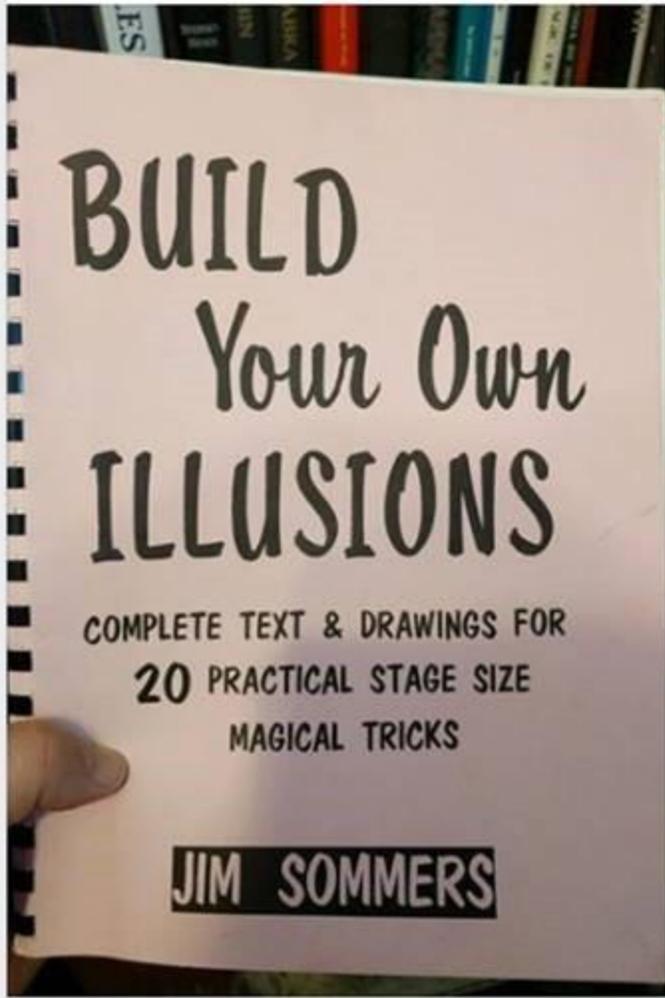
It is a different world today... Copperfield was getting away with some of this in another generation. Times have changed...

Understand your audience and be respectful of them. You will find that in no situation do you have to do humor with innuendo, cruelty and crude aggression.

I am really saddened when a magician feels compelled to use these lines. It gives us all a bad name.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6UEv2YT95I&feature=youtu.be>

On a sad note: Jim Sommers, the well know illusion builder in Chicago has died. Sommers performed school shows across the U.S. in early 1970's. He pulled a trailer (to sleep in) and had a full sized car packed with props.



He got involved in a fire-storm of criticism for building a Robert Harbin Zig Zag, long before the Harbin book gave buyers permission to duplicate it. It effectively destroyed his reputation in mainstream magic.

Jim continued to build fine magic but became ignored , as a performer, by the magic fraternity.



I understand that there are two sides to the story of the Zig Zag and may appear in print someday. I think that the late 60s was a different era in magic in terms of general ethics. Today, you can make a fast buck if you copy anything.

Only the most deep pocketed stars have the legal dollar to fight piracy.

If you read Jim's book about building your own illusions, you will appreciate his clever ideas and uncomplicated ways of creating great props.

Dennis