

Plans for Day of Magic Announced at February Ring Meeting

Posted on [February 27, 2018](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

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

February 2018 Meeting

Incoming Ring President Mike Matson brought the meeting to order. He brought up the discussion from the board meeting before the meeting and asked for approval of the board’s decisions. Our Day of Magic will be this May, with the date to be determined. It will include lectures and a flea market.

It was good to see some working full-time professionals back with us for a visit: Nathan Coe Marsh and Scott Pepper, who is now based in San Antonio, Texas. Guest Brandon Jackson from Goldsboro, North Carolina and Greg Solomon’s son, Eric.

Bev Bergeron’s Teach-In recalled the problems with carrying a “Color Changing Pocket Knife” on an airliner and the correct way to do The Gypsy Thread effect. Bev said the original is the best, using wool yarn.

Phil Schwartz presented Magic History Moment #90, the strange history of The Swastika Magic Company. He began by presenting an ABC Block routine with Chinese blocks. The red block vanished between two other colored blocks in a stack and reappeared in a box. Phil mentioned that the original characters on the blocks were swastikas. In the last 7 decades of the 20th Century the Swastika Symbol became stigmatized from its use as an icon of the German Nazi Party. It had been a 5,000 year old sacred symbol in many religions and in the Western world a symbol of good luck. Used that way, it could be found in the pre-Nazi era on magic props. Sometime before 1904 John Petrie, the son of a clipper ship cabin boy turned factor owner, renamed his metal working magic company, the Swastika Magic Company. He operated it from a shed behind his Connecticut home. Several years later, in 1909 Petrie teamed with A.C. Gilbert to form the Mysto Magic Company and dropped the Swastika name. The Mysto name was suggested by Petrie’s wife by combining the words mysterious and presto. In 1917 Petrie met banker Tom Lewis and formed the P & L magic company. Phil mentioned in the 1920s there was a mentalist names Swastika and an Allentown, Pennsylvania Swastika Magic Society. During World War Two, the Abbott Magic

company sold a paper tear where a Swastika and Rising Sun were torn and transformed into a U.S. Defense Bond Poster.

Mike Matson opened up the monthly show with a Valentine themed Ring and String routine using a heart shaped ring and red string. He followed up with a torn corner of a selected card appearing inside what appeared to be a wrongly predicted card.

Dan Stapleton presented the classic O'Henry Card trick where he makes a prediction of a card that was selected. Brandon Jackson named a card selected and it was the only one of a different color.

Nathan Coe Marsh tried out a new routine he was working on. He took a Mike Close effect and made it staged sized. He invited a female assistant to "do-as-I-do" with IKEA signs. The humor was that it is difficult to follow IKEA directions. Of course, Nathan always got the signs in the right order but the assistant hilariously could not.

Dennis Phillips



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

"The Bev Bergeron Ring"

March 2018

“He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster.

And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee.”

– Nietzsche



All we baby boomer magicians know that Kellogg 's, was the original sponsor of Mark Wilson's "Magic Land of Allakazam". Because a large consumer base for breakfast cereals have been kids, the cereal companies became tied in with magicians and magic.

What boy Baby Boomer did not get a few magic tricks off the back of cereal products or find tricks inside?

Few know that mass marketed manufactured Breakfast cereals are a unique American invention. It all started in the late 1800s at a 7th Day Adventist affiliated sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan run by John Harvey Kellogg an MD. He was looking for a meatless breakfast for theological reasons. Dr. Kellogg was a deeply religious doctor who believed that cereal would both improve Americans' health and keep them from masturbating and desiring sex. (Only half of his message made it into their later ads.) John Harvey wanted to return to the Garden of Eden and that meant living in innocent nakedness, so he favored nudity but used a bathrobe for modesty.

A perennial assumption among vegetarians is that vegetarianism increases longevity. Somehow this meshed with American religion and personal holiness. In the last century, Grahamites—devotees of the Christian "hygienic" philosophy of Sylvester Graham (1794-1851)—taught that adherence to the Garden of Eden lifestyle would eventuate in humankind's reclamation of the potential for super longevity, such as that ascribed to Adam (930 years) or Methuselah (969 years). By the way, Graham's messages inspired the creation of today's Graham Cracker. He would have been quite upset that Nabisco added sugar to the cracker and would he detest using them as a melted chocolate and marshmallow campfire treat. Sylvester Graham was no relation to the late evangelist, Billy Graham.

The Adventists (who are now big in the hospital business, especially locally here in Florida!) still follow a movement called Restoration Theology from the American Second Great Awakening. It basically believed that people should get back to a meatless "Garden of Eden" type lifestyle (along with not burning with lust -1 Corinthians 7:9) because the world is ending soon and God will save and restore only those who choose to live that way. Near the end of the 1800s, health and healing, were big religious, as well as secular movements.

John Harvey Kellogg created some tasteless and bland cereals because he preached to avoid the 5 White deaths: White Flour, White Sugar, White Salt, White Lard and White alcohol... See! Dr. Oz is nothing new!

One of his patients at Battle Creek was a mentally unbalanced promoter/salesman named C.W. Post (later became very rich but committed suicide) who copied the foods but added lots of sugar and salt and created Postum, the breakfast drink (overly roasted barley grain), Grape-Nuts and Post Toasties.

Not to be topped, John Harvey Kellogg's brother, W.K. was not as religious, so he started sugaring up his brother's "health food" so he could compete with C.W. Post! It worked. It made WK rich. This all began while John Harvey was on a mission trip to Europe.

WK breaking John Harvey's rules led to them becoming estranged until shortly before their deaths. WK was making a whole lot of money. The Battle Creek Sanitarium burned down in 1902. It was partly rebuilt but economically suffered in the Great Depression and became outdated due to modern antibiotics, psychiatric drugs and medical care techniques and was eventually sold to the Army as a Hospital in World War Two.

But this was not the only quasi-religious and cultic nutritional approach!

Webster Edgerly, under the name Everett *Ralston*, published a 1900 edition of *The Book of General Membership of the Ralston Health Club*. The name RALSTON came from **R**egime, **A**ctivity, **L**ight, **S**trength, **T**emperation, **O**xygen and **N**ature. Edgerly was also a racist. He promoted a superior race, based on Caucasians, and free from "impurities". He advocated the castration of all "anti-racial" (non-Caucasian) males at birth. Watermelons were supposed to be poisonous to Caucasians. I am only telling you the historical facts. You will never feed your dog Puppy Chow again, will you?

Edgerly joined forces with William Danforth, of Purina Food Company, to take the name *Ralston Purina Company*. It made whole-wheat cereal that Ralstonites were to consume. Thus, the food company Edgerly founded evolved into what is now called Ralston Purina (Ralcorp) and was the original owner of the cereal brands Chex.

I will bet you never knew the connection of magic and breakfast cereals. With advertising and the consumer economy, much of this history has been lost!

I have to hand it to Dan Stapleton. He has the unique ability to dig into old books and recover what had been old chestnuts from bygone days and revive them and make them the foolers they used to be. At the last meeting he performed the O'Henry Card Trick. It is a self-working stunner. I could kick myself for dropping it out of my arsenal 40 years ago. What always made the trick so great was that what you think you saw is so much greater than what really happened and your mind is incapable of reverse engineering the procedure.

Let me help you out. Here is a link to a free site where the O'Henry Trick is explained, as well as dozens of others. Bookmark it and look there. There is magic gold buried on those free webpages!

<http://umclidet.com/pdf/Cardtrick.Central.-.Best.of.Cards.pdf>



Tommy Trent

The caption says: *To Dennis! A refreshing young magician. You're great!!*

Always your friend.

Tommy Trent

12-24-77

The Tommy Trent “*Punch and Judy*” Routine

I met Tommy Trent during the Christmas Holidays in 1977. I was hired to work with him doing family-children's shows for the employees at the Harris Company in Palm Bay, Florida. My agent was Burton Van Dusen, an old vaudeville agent who was semi-retired and lived in Lake County. Tommy had done the shows for years for the Harris Christmas Party but they had gone through a series of other acts and magicians and had not been pleased with them until Tommy and I became their team for the next 4 years. When variety shows faded in the early 1960s Tommy became a draftsman. He would come up from Miami Beach for the show day. We did six performances on the Saturday before Christmas.

When I first met him, I had no idea how famous Tommy was. He had been a top headliner at Radio City Music Hall and had appeared in the early 1950s on the Ed Sullivan Show with his “Punch and Judy” act. Later, I was able to see his Sullivan act and Trent had definitely evolved his puppet's personalities and modernized them.

Trent's “Punch” during the 1970s was a mischievous immature child who was playing like an adult. Tommy no longer used a mouth swizzle. Trent's normal voice was naturally nasal and immature and sounded like Charlie McCarthy. Tommy just added a little more juvenile vocal tones for his Punch character. Punch was playful and a big tease for the children. The classic violence was downplayed. The Baby became a baby

doll and the slapstick was called a baseball bat. Punch was not a bully but a tease using ridicule and sarcasm.

Trent's puppet stage was a 3 fold screen that was painted to look like a small house with 2 curtained windows below and a chimney. The puppets could poke their heads out of the 2 windows or come up on the flat roof or come up through the chimney.

Trent ad-libbed a lot when talking to the kids. Every year he would have a different set of puns and topical humor. He would open the Christmas show with a 2 or 3 minute monologue out front and then go behind the stage.

In the early 90s, I called Jay Marshall in Chicago to ask about some magic props and I mentioned the name Tommy Trent. Jay asked, "Did you know Tommy Trent"? I said, "Yes, I worked with him for a few years." Jay said, "Please tell me that you have a tape of his act." I said, "No, but I know it by heart". Jay said, "Please write it down!"

Here now is Tommy's basic routine as I remember it from the late 1970s and as I have performed it.

The Routine:

Punch: (pops up) Oh!

(Looks around- shakes and looks some more as if he can not believe what he is seeing)

Oh! Hello boys and girls.

(Pauses and then says in a loud voice)

I said "HELLO BOYS AND GIRLS"!

(Repeats again slower and louder)

HELLOOOO, BOYS and GIRLS!

That's better! Now... always let me know that you are out there.

We are going to have a lot of fun playing together.

Open up your eyes really wide (rubs fingers on head and then jerks to attention)

Oooba Oooba that's good!

Now open up your ears really big (again rubs fingers on head while shaking and says)

Arrrga Arrrga Arrrga Ahhhh rump! (And jerks to attention)

(Reaches down and grabs his slap stick)

I've got my stick and I am ready to play ball. (Swings stick like a ball player)

Wee. Strike one! (Swings again very overt and wildly swings 4 or 5 times)

(Judy comes up on the left but Punch does not see her. The kids will scream)

Strike two! ! (Swings again very overt and wildly swings 4 or 5 times)

Judy: You're out! (Judy pops up and ducks down)

Punch: Who said that? (Looks at audience)

Did you say that? Did you see someone boys and girls?

Judy pops up but Punch is looking to the right- bits of business with her popping up and the kids screaming at Punch to look at her as she pops down)

Ohhhokay. Back to the game. Wee... whooo.

(Punch swings the stick a couple of times and Judy pops up and grabs the stick and whacks him 5 or 6 times)

Judy: Hee hee hee, Home run! I win!

Punch: Judy! My wife! I love you Judy!

(Punch drops stick and grabs Judy and bends her over side ways kissing her all over with loud smooches- rocking back and forth and ending up pinning her to the stage. She tries to get away but he grabs her back)

Punch: What a heavy kisser!

(Judy finally breaks away and spits several time)

Judy: Tuh Tuh Puft Puft... Yuk! Punch, I have to go shopping and I need you to take care of my doll baby.

Punch: The baby! The stinky little baby! Pee-u!

(Judy brings up the baby and hands it to Punch)

Judy: You be nice to my baby.

Punch: (sarcastically) Oh, I'll take care of the baby.

Judy: Bye bye. Have fun (Judy drops down)

(Punch swings baby wildly from side to side)

Punch: (sings) Rock-a-bye-baby on the tree top.

Go to sleep. Go to sleep, kid.

(Baby screams)

Wooooo ahhhhh!

Punch: Shaddd-up!

(bangs baby against the stage a few times)

(Baby screams)

Wooooo ahhhhh!

Punch: Shaddd-up!

(bangs baby on the stage a few more times)

(Judy pops back up)

Judy: How dare you mistreat my baby! Give me my baby!

(Punch holds on to the head while Judy pulls on the body- The baby has a stretchable rubber neck made from the rubber tubing on a shark gun)

Judy: Give me my baby!

(Neck stretches out long with rocking and pulling by Judy with the body)

Punch: You want the baby? Do you really want the baby?

Judy: Give—me—my—baby!

Punch: You can have him!

(Punch lets go of the head and the head flies back knocking Judy and the baby down and off the set)

Punch: Ha Ha! Got rid of the stinky little baby!

(you will need to fill a little time while changing your hands in the puppets. Move punch from side to side as if looking for something and talking to the audience at the same time. This is the standard filler)

Punch: Root-ee Toot-ee Toot-eee. Who else do I see? Do you see anyone?

Ghost comes up behind Punch alternating from the left to the right side without Punch seeing him. Ghost hold out hands making a spooky sound)

Ghost: Oooo Oooo Oooo

(Kids scream at Punch)

Punch: What is it? Who? Where?

Ghost: Oooo Oooo Oooo

(Do bits of business with Punch looking one way and ghost going on the other side. Finally the ghost and Punch come face to face)

Punch: Yikes! (Shakes with fear)

Who are you?

Ghost: Ooooo Ooooo

(Punch gets up courage and becomes sassy)

Punch: You don't say much, do you?

(Ghost gets angry and speaks louder)

Ghost: Ooooo Oooooo!

Punch: You lost a lot of weight, Skinny. You need to eat better! You look really pale.

You need a little meat on those bones.

Ghost: Huhh? (Does a double take to the audience then turn in anger to Punch)

(Even louder, holds out hands)

Ghost: OOOOOOOO OOOOOOO!

(Punch looks at the audience, laughs, goes down and returns with slap stick)

Ghost: Oooo Oooo Ooooo Ooooo? (voice gets weaker and with a kind of up inflection as if he is asking the question if Punch is scared)

(Punch beats down Ghost and looks down)

Punch: Go wash your sheets, use lot's of bleach! Ha ha! I took care of him didn't I,

boys and girls? (Looks down and yells) Find somebody else to scare! Ha ha.

Root-ee Toot-ee Toot-eee. Who else do I see? Do you see anyone?

(Devil comes up behind Punch- same bits of business with kids yelling and Punch looking in the wrong direction. Finally they come face to face)

Punch: Oh!

(Devil with deep slow evil voice)

Devil: Mr. Punch, I have come for you!

Punch: You are really red! You have good sunburn!

Devil: No, I have a BAD sunburn!

Punch: Huh? (pause) (Does a double take to the audience) I guess that makes sense.

Devil: Mr. Punch, I have come to take you down, down down

(moves down as he says this)

Punch: I don't wanna go down down down. I wanna go up up up

(For this bit both puppets are moving together up and then down)

Devil: Down Down Down!

Punch: Up Up Up!

Devil: Down Down Down!

Punch: Up Up Up!

(Punch takes slap stick)

Devil: I have come for YOU Mr. Punch!

(Smacks devil down)

Punch: Oh yea! Now you can go for me! Down (smack) Down (smack) Down (smack)

Root-ee Toot-ee Toot-eee. Who else do I see? Do you see anyone?

(Dog, Toby, pops up on side of the stage with Punch on the opposite side and runs , like a dog, in bouncing movements over to Punch while panting and jumps on him and bends him over like Punch did to Judy earlier)

Toby: Arf..Arf...Arf...

(panting and breathing and licking Punch with a very wet slopping licking sound)

Schu-loff Schu-loff

Punch: It's my dog, Toby. Go away dog. Down Boy, Down

(continues licking and pinning down Punch who can not escape much as he did to Judy earlier)

Wow! What a heavy kisser!

(Toby breaks it off and stands upright center stage and whines)

Punch: Whatsa matter boy, gotta go outside for a walk?

Toby: (nods yes about 5 or six times and says) Uhh Huh!

Punch: Go do your duty! (Toby goes down behind set)

(the fir-covered leg of the squirt-gun comes up and you squirt it a half dozen times so that water sprays out over the audience!)

Aim for the tree. Be careful where you go! Peee U (The kids will scream!)

(Dog barks and sound gets weaker as Punch looks down)

Root-ee Toot-ee Toot-eee. Who else do I see? Do you see anyone?

(Skunk pops up on left facing Punch- kids will scream)

Punch: Oh, look boys and girls, its pussy cat! (Kids will scream that it is a skunk)

Punch: No boys and girls it's a pussy cat! Nice kitty kitty, nice pussy pussy cat!

(Punch vigorously pets skunk against the fur grain- so much so that it would hurt a real animal)

Punch: Pussycat, you have bad breath!

(Kids will keep screaming as the skunk slowly turns around so the tail is facing Punch. Punch looks right onto his back side)

Punch: Oh Pussy cat! This side doesn't smell good either!

(Punch grabs his slap stick)

Punch: Shall we send him away too?

(Takes practice swings with the stick while counting)

Punch: Uh One...uh Two... uh

(skunk squirts out 3 or 4 puffs of powder from the tail)

Punch: (spits and coughs) Ah choo pst pst yuk! He is a real stinker! Chanel #5.

Root-ee Toot-ee Toot-eee. Who else do I see? Do you see anyone?

(small cute alligator pops up surprising Punch)

Punch: Who are you, Greenie?

Alligator: I want to be your friend.

Punch: You are green and ugly and have a long face.

(The cute alligator slumps on the stage and cries and acts sad)

Alligator: You hurt my feelings. Boo Hoo.

Punch: That's not all I can hurt. (Lowers down to get slap stick)

Alligator: You're a mean man, Mr. Punch.

(Punch beats down the Alligator as it cries)

You are a mean man. I am going to get my big brother on you.

Punch: I am not afraid of your big brother! Go get him. I can take care of him too!

I am not scared of his big brother. I have my stick. See my schtick?

(Just the tip of the nose of the long alligator just peeks up from below and the nostrils look like the eyes of an even smaller Alligator)

Who is this? Ha. This is your big brother?

(Punch grabs slap stick as if to hit the small nose. As he turns away to wind up for the swing, you thrust out the entire large alligator -20 inch mouth!-with the huge mouth open toward the audience. The kids will scream but Punch is looking the other way. You lay the mouth open on the stage and Punch goes right into it looking on that side of the stage while the mouth stays open.)

Punch: I don't see anything. Where did he go? Where is that little brother? I can take care of him!

(Punch then moves to the other side of the stage as the huge mouth snaps closed with Punch avoiding getting bitten. The kids will scream)

Is he over here? Where is he?

(The mouth opens again and Punch goes inside looking off the corner of the stage)

Where is he?

(Keep playing this bit a few times more and the kids will scream. Finally Punch sees the open mouth and plays with it. Going in and going out as it snaps closed and opens)

Punch: Wheee. This is fun!

(Punch finally turns the stick up on its end and wedges the mouth open and dances around the stick through the open mouth.)

Yippeee!

At this point you keep the puppets in this configuration and walk out from behind the set and show them it is just you and the puppets and take a bow.

THE END

Tommy's Punch and Judy set can be seen upstage from my props.



This photo was made in December of 1978 at The Harris Company

in Palm Bay, Florida. Tommy and I was their Christmas entertainment. He did 6 shows to accommodate all the children of the employees. My assistant is Debbie Abraham.

The photo was made by Cecil Stoughton who was John F. Kennedy's White House Photographer. He took the famous photo of Lyndon Johnson being sworn in on Air Force One after the Kennedy assassination in Dallas. He left Washington and was the photographer for the Harris Corporation.

My Punch and Judy set and stage: Puppets made by my wife Cindy Phillips. Cindy was an Elementary School teacher. I made the set. This is a photo of Cindy and me in 1972.





