Chris Rawlins Mentalist lecture March 2018

Ring Report Ring #170 "The Bev Bergeron Ring" SAM Assembly #99 March 2018 Meeting

President Mark Matson brought the meeting to order. Forty people were in the seats. Thanks to Craig Schwarz we have a new look to our website: www.ring170.com . Special guest Dan Rodriguez, Executive Director of The Society of Young Magicians too few minutes before the lecture to discuss the history & creation of the S.Y.M. & methods in which we may recruit younger members and pass the magical arts to the next generation.

Our lecture was by English mentalist, Chris Rawlins ,whose mentalism has earned him top accolades by some of magic's greatest names as well as a strong reputation for his clever thinking. He opened up with a classic psychic effect. He was able to predict who would sit in which chair and in which order. His method was simple but very effective. He next did a design duplication, where he draws what a spectator drew in private. The method he used was original with him and involved inexpensive items easily found at an office supply store. He then had an effect which he credited to the late Bob Cassidy. White note cards had movie names and Chris was able to predict who chose what movie. He then had a "one card poker" effect when he always had the higher card. Chris then demonstrated a shuffled and then flash memorized deck, the classic "White Dwarf" effect , which is another design duplication. He concluded with a novel way in which the spectator freely selects a card and then the spectator seems to have psychic powers , that he was unaware of, and eliminates cards one by one and the last one is his card.

Chris is a very likable performer with a rapid fire delivery, in an English accent. It is filled with stream-of-consciousness comments about the source of the effect and alternate presentations. He has some very intriguing and diabolical presentation techniques that all excellent mental magic demands.

Dennis Phillips

Dennis Deliberations … Ring # 170

"The Bev Bergeron Ring"
April 2018
"I was very mature for my age. In fact, I was born with a moustache. My mother was tickled to death"
-Fielding West-

When I was a kid, I always wondered, when I saw the lock-and-keys trick named "Seven Keys to Baldpate" — where the name came from. I suppose now, that when Annemann named it , everyone already knew this:

In 1913, American novelist Earl Derr Biggers (who wrote the Charlie Chan mysteries) penned a comedic mystery novel titled "Seven Keys to Baldpate", that became so famous that it inspired as many as seven film adaptation, and a smash Broadway stage play of the same name. It also inspired Gordon and Ethel Mace to borrow the catchy name, as well as the theme of the story, for their mountain hotel in Estes Park, Colorado.

"Seven Keys to Baldpate" is a story about a writer who attempts to write a novel within 24 hours. Seeking some peace and seclusion, the novelist travels to remote summer mountain resort named Baldpate Inn, in the dead of winter, and locks himself in, believing he has the only key. But all throughout the night, visitors keep barging in through the door—seven times in all. Everyone had a key to the Baldpate Inn.

I do the Lee Earle/Larry Becker version. I use an normal Master lock and 5 similar keys but the real one is steel, the others brass. Most Ace Hardware stores can fix you up. I have a small paper bag and a tiny Nico magnet that sticks through the bottom to the steel key. All five spectators are invited to take a free choice from the bag you are holding with your palm underneath. When the magnet falls into your hand you know that spectator has the key!   The whole impact of the effect is reliant on your skill at story and acting.

My Canadian friend, Larry Thornton suggested a version that he constructed himself . He says that it is likely not original with him. He said that all the shoulders of all of the keys were cut back enough so all keys, if pushed in too far will not work . He gimmicked the keys with a file and vice. A fancy-looking treasure chest had a padlock on it. Each of six people selected a key, and the last (7th) key was left for the magician. The key holders are instructed to push the keys well into the lock before turning. The last key to go in is pulled back a quarter of an inch by the performer. When turned ,it springs open the lock. Presentation is important he adds.

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A magician, unable to find enough employment doing magic, is hired by the circus to walk behind the elephants and shovel their droppings into a pail as they walk in line.

He is seen by a news reporter getting peed on and dumped on many times during the parade. Each time he throws his broom down, kicks the poop pail and cusses.

The reporter follows him to the end of the parade and says, "Hey Buddy, can I ask you a few questions?" The magician snaps back, "Okay ask me!". The reporter says, "I have been watching you in the parade and you have been crapped and peed on. You must love your job?"

The magician answers, "You have to be joking! It's a horrible job. I have to walk behind those huge beasts and shovel up their crap. My arms are exhausted and my shirt, shoes and pants are filthy and every night I shower and I still can't get the stink off of me!"

The reporter says, "Then you must be paid very well with good benefits and a retirement?"

The magician says, "Are you kidding me? I get paid minimum wage and have to pay kickbacks to even get this job. I never come out ahead. I have debts that you cannot imagine!"

The reporter probes more, "Then you must like the people you work with?" The magician grits his teeth and says, " You aren't serious! They are all back-bitters and thieves and will stab you in the back if they could!"

The reporter is baffled. He finally asks, "Well then why don't you just quit? Find a better and more rewarding job to do? I'm sure you have a skill and talent that can be put to use somewhere else!"

The magician gets a look of horror on his face and blurts back, "WHAT!? And give up Show business!?"

That is a classic funny show-business joke... Originally it was about a clown in the circus...I switch the job role.

It is quite well known and told in Hollywood . Johnny Carson many times on his show but he only told the punch line in response to actors who talked about personal problems. Everyone knew the story behind the joke when they heard the punchline.

Buddy Hackett: It was a tough room to play in the early days. Drunk guys would throw bottles, the dressing rooms were dirty and cold, there were rats backstage.

Carson: Tough job. Every consider quitting?

Hackett: What? And give up show business?

Carson's guests like, Hackett, like Dom DeLuise and Joan Rivers, started out in show business as inexperienced no-talents who wanted desperately to get into show business

in the worst way. And "the worst way" is how all three did it. I read River's autobiography an eternity ago, and she was stealing everybody else's jokes, and she recounts how a very young fat guy did an actual belly-flop off a balcony of a tiny theater, onto the stage. Turns out it was Dom DeLuise, who, as a rank beginner in show business, would do almost *anything* for a laugh. Same with Buddy Hackett. But through incredible persistence and a heck of a lot of hard work, all three talents ended up becoming just that: highly talented in comedy.

Like Milton Berle and Phyllis Diller, Joan Rivers (over the span of her career) built a massive collection of jokes and one-liners that were meticulously filed on index cards in metal file cabinets. Her daughter gave a journalist a tour of River's home, and the collection of material in the rooms was astounding. Rivers kept everything — costumes, awards, photos, you name it.

Another guy who worked very hard at comedy, in a cerebral kind of way, even, was Flip Wilson. I guess the devil made him do it! (One of his famous lines if you are too young to remember) ...And we've lost count of the many dozens of brilliantly funny and successful comedians who, we'll after they'd achieved fame and fortune, then admitted that when they started out, they were terrible.

The difference is that back then, there were "low-expectation" venues to be bad. There were lots of supper clubs, circuits and places to practice and "get it right" and learn, plus a lot of mentors. Those don't exist anymore. Today, if you don't hit the stage with a solid act, you never get on it again.

The Borscht Belt was a place to develop and act and that is why most of the New York comedians, up until the 1960s, mostly learned there and became the foundation of TV variety show comedy and writing. The original Comedy Clubs were created in the 70s to fill that gap. Now, you can tune into top-notch entertainment on your 500 channel TV or download millions of You-Tube comedy videos.

Because of the lack of a farm system today, far too many magicians have the distinction of starting out abysmally also. — And with a lot of persistence and hard work, they stay that way! Probably it is not totally their fault. We need mentors today and lots of places to start out, learn and develop an act.

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Okay, I am a stage guy... I just thought that you would enjoy seeing this twist of The Floating Microphone trick. http://www.penguinmagic.com/p/S19745

If you like the background song, you can find it here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBfE9UPTfg8
I think the magician does a great job on the video demo on the Penguin Magic site.... It combines several principles and is very visual. Sadly, the effect is out of stock at this time.

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A friend asked me:

Dennis

Do you know how to do the bed of nails stunt? Someone asked me if I could do it? How would you make it?

Thoughts?

I responded:

The Nail Bed Carnival stint , it is based on the Physics principle that distributing the weight , lessens the pressure on each nail and the pressure is less than the amount to break the skin and cause you harm.

You would need to buy a ¾ inch sheet of plywood 2 feet by 4 feet and space the nails (large spike nails) no greater than half inch apart. Lots of hole drilling and the bed will be very heavy! (Think of all the steel in it)

https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/arts/circus-arts/bed-of-nails.htm
https://www.popsci.com/scitech/article/2009-05/how-does-bed-nails-really-feel
Regarding the Bed Of Nails engineering.

Engineering is based on building math models. Since all energy and motion and matter are changing, you need a math to be able to tell rates of change and amounts of change and that is called "Calculus". Otherwise it is expensive "trial and error". Years ago circus prop builders way overbuilt the stability of their props. There is an old joke: An Optimist sees a glass half full. A Pessimist seems it half empty. An engineer looks at it and calculates and says, "That glass is twice as big as it needs to be!"

One of the grand principles behind of math and engineering is Euler's Constant. "e" . (2.71828) This is called the "natural logarithm". You may have seen that button on financial calculators and it can be found anywhere there is a need for calculating uniform changing rates and amounts of change . In finance, we use it for computing the money amounts for mortgage and interest rates.

It has to do with continuously dividing a function curve into smaller and small parts until more dividing gives you less and less return.

In math we say a natural logarithm forms an *asymptote*. (Slowly rises to infinity)
This all was discovered by computing interest rates on money way back when lending money with interest was first allowed by the church! (1600s)

i.e. if I get 10% interest on 100 dollars paid yearly, at the end of the year I have $110. (i = prt) BUT, if I paid the yearly rate every 6 months, then at the end of 6 months you would have $5 deposited to your account, and you would be *then* earning interest on that! So.. at the end of the year you would have a little more than $110!
Obviously if I paid you at the 10% rate every month, you would have even more and if I compounded the interest daily, you would have more still!

This is the power of compound interest!   BUT, the more you cut up the time you pay the additional interest payments, there is a division rate where your return increases very little, and this where Euler's Constant comes in… It gives you that information.

This is what the "e" button means on a calculator that you use for your financial figuring.

The "function curve" on the Bed of Nails (gravity force on your body divided by the distance distribution of the nail heads) is

what you would use to make the prop. Of course, all that has already been worked out. Here is the story behind it:
As you know from Physics, Weight = Mass x g

(g=9.8 m/s^2) So, they worked out the force on the skin, and the elasticity and breaking point of the skin. Unless you plan and slamming your body into the bed, all you need to worry about is the weight because you will have no velocity. It becomes apparent that spacing the nails too close will give you no safety advantage and may make the method obvious.
The "natural logarithm" ("e") is used a lot in calculus and engineering.

This is because it models "rates of change" on curving functions. (the Calculus Derivative dy/dx – slope is defined by "rise over run" and is the rate of change at that point) Everything about material existence has a "rate of change" (Differential Calculus) . "The amount of change" (Integral Calculus) is the area under a designated segment of a curve, called an integral. They are both connected by the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus.

Fourier Analysis (indispensable for sound and video compression engineering) is vital. Recall that all these contain waves.

The Fourier Transform .com

$$\mathscr{F}\{g(t)\} = G(f) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} g(t)e^{-i2\pi ft}\, dt$$

$$\mathscr{F}^{-1}\{G(f)\} = g(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} G(f)e^{i2\pi ft}\, df$$

You can see the integral goes from infinity to infinity. You can see the "e" and the "i" (imaginary number of the phase vector) and the 2 pi. That is math short-hand for a complete wave revolution. (Circumference = *2 pi* times the radius)
Fourier Transforms are wonderful for converting solution methods for differential equations into simply arithmetic, adding -subtracting -dividing and multiplying.

I am sure your audio and video editing programs you have seen terms like Fourier, Nyquist Shannon Sampling rate (44.1)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nyquist%E2%80%93Shannon_sampling_theorem
All of this is important. Every good artist in a technical field like audio-visual production should have a basic understanding of these things.

I was intrigued, as a kid, by all this and the late Math Magician ,Martin Gardner's writings were an inspiration. In his later years, we corresponded.

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Some Reasons Why You Should Join a Magic Club and FAME.

1. To learn from other members who have a good background in magic
2. To meet visiting pros, part-time pros, and skilled amateurs
3. To get the monthly magazines with tricks, reviews, ads, news
4. To get member discounts at conventions and lectures
5. To give back to the art by helping others
Also, you benefit by face-to-face networking with other magicians who you meet through magic clubs–networking that leads to more shows including doing magic for clients and companies. Plus, you learn the way the magic business works, if that is your desire and lay people respect that you are a member of a magic organization.

A lot depends of course on who else is in the magic club. And virtual on-line magic clubs like The Magic Cafe and Facebook groups like this one have stolen some of the thunder that used to belong to local magic clubs. But you should still go to the monthly meetings and do what you can to make them worthwhile. By belonging to and supporting the local magic club you are honoring your mentors and those who helped you become the magician that you are today.

Dennis