

Halloween 2018 Ring Meeting and Show

Posted on [October 30, 2018](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

President Mike Matson gaveled the October meeting to order. New Member Joe Fox was welcomed.

Bev Bergeron did his Teach-in with a Seance theme. He made Houdini's signature appear on a card and a pair of handcuff spring open.

Mike Matson did another of his Theory and Thaumaturgy mini-lectures on the importance of theming effects and a show. He used a theme with the Professor's Nightmare.

Dan Stapleton announced the first Magic History and Collector's Conference in the South. September 6-8 in Orlando . Open Registration begins January 1. More details coming.

Nathan Coe Marsh opened the meeting show with a small white handkerchief that disappeared while wedged in a stem glass and covered by a blue handkerchief on top. He followed by producing a shot glass of whiskey from the blue hank.

Dr. Ken Schreibman presented a clever cell phone effect where a selected card appeared for a short time in the eyes of Houdini on everyone's cell phone. Ryan Steiner told a haunted story about a haunted cancer ward in what is now a resort hotel. He knew who had selected a diamond out of several other stones in a bag.

Roger Reid showed a homebuilt themed Square Circle with a Jack O' Lantern as the outer circle and a tube on the inside, Greg Solomon had a clever gag with a rubber ear that he uses when a child asks if he can pull something from his ear. He then showed a three rat monte where spectators could not find the one that squeaked after they were shuffled.

Michael Flanigan presented a math trick and was able to predict the total of several random numbers called out by the audience. Dan Stapleton did a couple of eerie effects where ashes appeared on a spectators hand and a voodoo effect when a spectator burned cigarette hole in a paper hand drawing and it matched the locations of a blister on his hand.

Brian Sullivan did a rubber band effect where two bands melted into one and then a series of coins across with coins ending up in a folded dollar bill.

Dennis Phillips concluded the show with a car key that vanished in his hand and a medical explanation of the disease of porphyria which he said is the historical basis for many vampire stories. He then did the classic MAK Magic Vampire Block release after a wooden stake is driven through the block.

Dennis Phillips



Bev with mysteriously opened handcuffs

Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

November 2018



Two ladies were hanging out together and one was depressed. “What’s wrong?”

The depressed one replied, “I’ve been married four times and every one of my husbands has passed away.

The other lady asked, “What did they used to do?”

The depressed lady replied, “Well, my first husband was a millionaire, the second was a magician, the third was an evangelist, and the fourth was a mortician.”

And the other said, “Oh, one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go.”

Here is a blast from the past. 1983 to be exact. There was a local part time illusionist, J.L. Harding., whose big show that he produced every year was a fund-raiser in Apopka (at a Methodist Church). He got many volunteer acts.

That year Michael Ram and Nadine, Wallace Murphy, Gary Kornfield and I were on the show.



You can see Mike's homebuilt mirror Sword Box and Sub Trunk and his night club table. During the heyday of Malls, Michael ,and his wife Nadine, had a busy route playing Mall shows.

He did a great job with their husband and wife act.



J.L. moved to Atlanta with his wife “Stardust”. His day job was as the warehouse manager for Goodyear here in Orlando. He transferred to Georgia (early 90s) and disposed of his illusions at a one day garage sale. I recall it was more like a “What can you give me so that I do not have to haul the stuff to the landfill”. He did have some nice home built pieces. J.L. had a good heart and his yearly fundraisers were a benefit to the community.

On this show ,J.L. was doing his Illusion act, so he wanted me to be the Escape Artist of the show, so I did my Comedy Siberian Chain Escape and wiggled out of a Strait Jacket.



The World War One Flu Epidemic and the Decline of Vaudeville



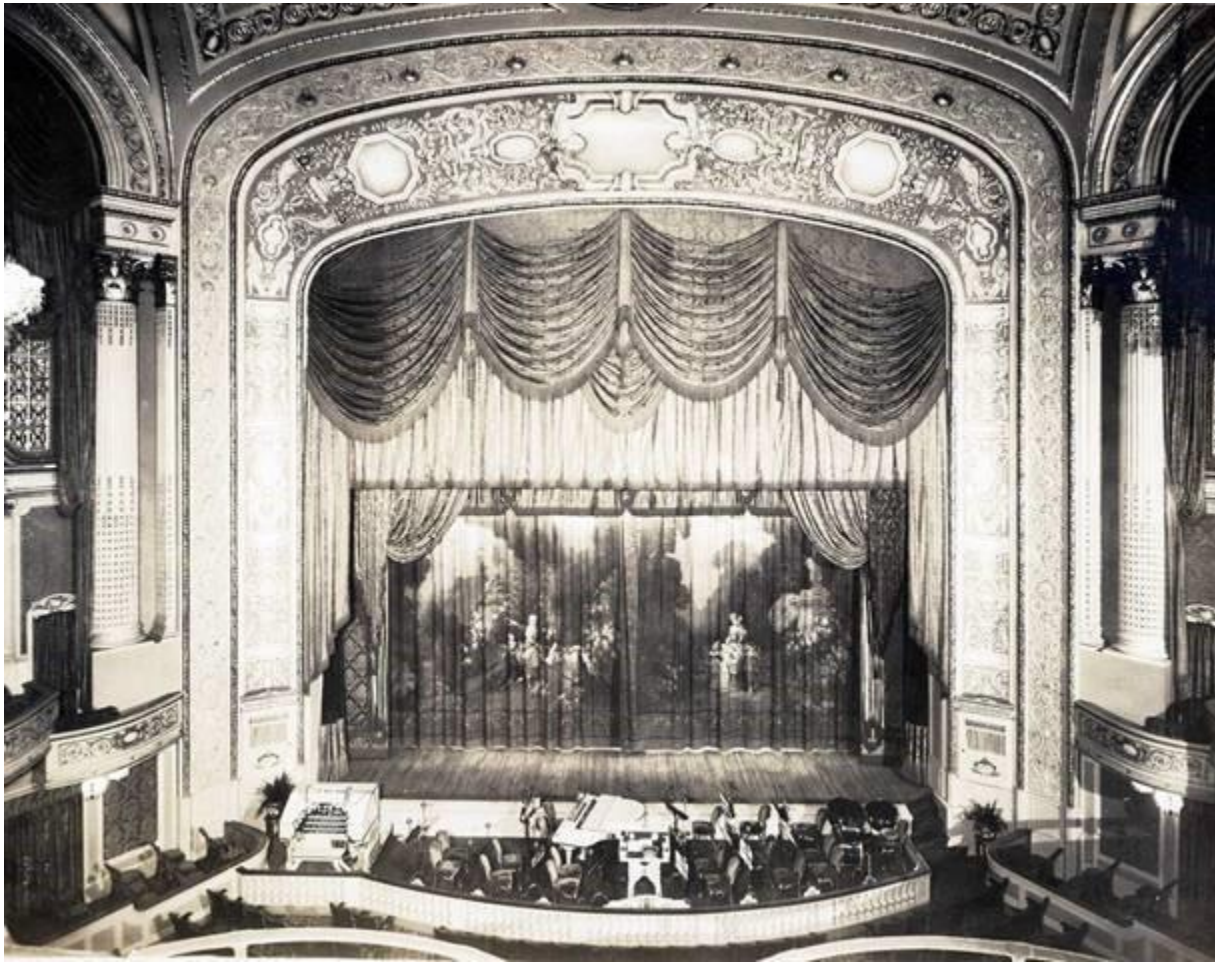
Typically, magicians and illusionists blame the decline of Vaudeville on the rise of radio and talking motion pictures.

I believe that this is only part of the story and possibly not the death-knell of vaudeville.

The continuation of the vaudeville era after the devastating and socially destabilizing years of World War One was problematic and greatly affected by the massive 1918 influenza outbreak, that killed millions worldwide. The forced closing of places of public gatherings and its effects on live theatre are all documented.

Vaudeville never recovered the six month shock because the revenue stream was too marginal to maintain nationwide chains, with touring acts, in both the rural and urban areas. Urban theaters began to become ethnic, as newly arrived small town and rural World War One factory workers formed urban isolated communities. This was all a result of the industrial buildup of World War One. The Harlem Revival ("Cotton Club") and Jazz and Swing resulted. The country began to lose mass culture. Motion pictures were cheaper to show and by 1920 free radio and phonograph records were beginning to occupy the public's time as a cheap alternative. And then talking movies finished off the last of the Vaudeville circuits as the owners converted the theaters to movie houses.

Vaudeville spanned fifty years of American history and yet few deal with the effects of the Great War and Influenza. The most popular form of entertainment got battered by the encroachment of technology in the form of movies, radio and ultimately television and until medical science began to understand and be able to treat epidemics, there was much fear in public gatherings, especially during the winter Flu season, which was when the shows operated in the days before air-conditioning. In the 1920s , America began the slow shift to an economic and culturally polarized nation.



I noticed a marked decline in the costume rental business beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s with the rise of the HIV epidemic. Many people were fearful of trying on and wearing used costumes even though they were all cleaned and sanitized. The shift in the costume business was to pre-made and packaged sale costumes (made off shore) . This fear , combined with the economic decline of Middle class incomes and political polarization led to a less happy cultural climate. The party atmosphere , that we know as the 70s Disco Era, was ushered in by the end of the Viet Nam War and mature Baby-Boomers and the monetary bubbles created by easy credit and optimism. That faded in the mid to late -80s as a series of periodic credit collapses (S&L late 80s, Dot Com 1990 and the 2008 Financial Great Recession)

Coupled with this is the revival of Tribalism, Nativist Exclusion and the death of Mass Culture. Show Business does not work well without Mass Culture consumption. The Music Business relied of the mass culture of AM Top 40 radio and Broadcast TV on a limited number of channels in the pre-cable world. Technology replaced all those and today we have only Niche markets, few of which generate enough impact to have a Mass Culture.

David Copperfield was the last of the Mass Culture Magicians. He rode in on the late Disco exhilaration and datedness of Doug Henning's look and style with an 80s subdued sophistication. Rainbows and brightly colored props gave way to the black paint and chrome of the David Mendoza, Bill Smith , Willie Kennedy Industrial look for Copperfield. David used the final days of the dominance of network television and yearly specials of vanishing, manipulating and exploding cultural landmarks to develop a mass following that he used to sell tickets to his touring show. His era collapsed in the mid-1990s with the rise of the Internet, many TV channels and cultural cynicism and anger. He was replaced by grunge magic and a more intimate close -up magic.

Vaudeville in a limited form only survives in some places in Europe and destination resorts, like Las Vegas and cruise ships.

Magic is often a lot like this: Art for art sake.





Equivoque is the word that most magicians recognize as “A Magician’s Force”. This is the technique of making the spectator think that they have a free choice by you know what you want them to choose and manipulate them to take what you want. I was recently talking to a couple of professional magicians and we were talking about the technique. I told them that I always explain it to magicians as the same thing as asking someone to choose which current author of mentalism books they prefer, Phil Goldstein or Max Maven. The PATEO Force is usually credited to Roy Baker. It stands for (P)ick (A)ny (T)wo – (E)liminate (O)ne. One of the great examples of this technique was when the deep voice of Eugene Burger combined with a Robert Neal story. Eugene laid many cards face down on the table and said that people were dying in the small Medieval town and people began to accuse others of being responsible for the deaths. Eugene had a spectator pick two cards and he turned over one. It was the Queen of Diamonds, the town’s seamstress. Was she a witch? No soon she died. All the cards had a profession in

the village. It got down to the only card that was not dead and Burger turned it over and it was the one who brought the plague, the ace of spades. I thought that this was a great example of storytelling and the PATEO Force. One suggestion on Equivoque: If you are doing it multiple times, break up the way you ask them to choose so your method is not obvious. Like Max Maven's B-Wave, the application of Equivoque can be simple and yet powerful.

Combining Ballroom Dance with Magic
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ANzuIjx5oE>

Be a part of magic history as Magicpalooza presents the first Magic History and Collector's Conference in the south. September 6-8. Open Registration begins January 1 but you can reserve your room now at the lovely Holiday Inn Resort Orlando-Lake Buena Vista (five minutes from Disney World). Rooms only \$99...mention Code: MHG when booking your room. It's FLORIDA! Make it a vacation! —

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