

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring” SAM #99

December 31, 2022 | Archived Famulus



December 2022 Meeting

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The December meeting was our Holiday Party. The only order of business was our annual election for board members, and the membership voted to reelect the sitting incumbents. For 2023 our officer will again be: Ryan Stiner as President, Craig Fennessy, Vice President. Dennis Phillips, Secretary. Thom Parkin Treasurer. Sgt. at Arms, Ryan Steiner, and Director at Large, David Freeman. In the non-board voting leadership, our club historian is Phil Schwartz and Webmaster is Craig Schwarz.

We had one visitor, Shawn King, from Atlanta. There was a generously filled table full of refreshments. The holiday party and entertainment began, and Jacki Manna was the master of Ceremonies and presented her great ventriloquist act. “Matilda” was her cute senior lady friend, with hilarious geriatric lines. Jackie followed up with her funny and shy turtle friend, “Speedy” who “came out of his shell”.

Following Jacki’s act was followed by a trivia contest with prizes. It was led by club historian, Phil Schwartz with a series of Magic Trivia and “guess the magic history” questions. Some were easy and some were difficult.

Three volunteers accepted the challenge to take a bucket of odd items and create a magic show using all the items. All three volunteers, David Freeman, Adrian, produced excellent routines and Michael Matson was the winner with a combination of clever adaptations and a touch of the late Carl Ballentine.

We then concluded with the annual gift exchange. Gifts included wrapped presents of books, DVDs, small props and packet card tricks and this year, a bottle of rare whiskey, evidently for someone wanting to do the Hoffman “Think-a-Drink” act. Each person got to select from the stack of gifts or “steal” someone else’s gift. The chaos went on until all the gifts were in their final hands. The expensive whiskey did end in the hands of Jaffo, who hilariously bribed the last gift picker to take Jaffo’s box of packet tricks so Jaffo could “steal” the whiskey.

Thanks to all in our group who contributed food, their time, and efforts to make the Holiday party a success.

Dennis Phillips

Photos courtesy of Craig Fennessy





Meeting policy:

Face masks, if you wear one, will not be ridiculed. We are respectful that some people may be immunocompromised.

Because of the low levels of Influenza these past two pandemic years, this Flu season is expected to be more severe this winter season.

Also in circulation is RSV, a respiratory infection, and new variants of COVID 19.

Stay prepared, healthy, and informed about current Public Health issues and contagious outbreaks.



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170, Assembly #99

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

With the holiday season, you will enjoy this Christmas skit by Dan Stapleton and his wife Farylín aboard the cruise ship MS Boheme, 1984.

It is excellent classic comedy entertainment.

I still like the old slow paced dove acts...

They gave you time to absorb the mystery.

We moved from the deeply mysterious and mystical Channing Pollock through the quicker and flashier Joseph Gabriel (with his audience flyover with cockatoos)

to Greg Frewin whose act was like lightening in a bottle. Along the way we had Dan Sperry, the bizarre walking zombie.

All the acts work and fool and entertain. I think we need to recap our past approaches to dove magic, which is now about extinct.

Here is Lillo Traina

I found a good finale for Dan Stapleton’s chain penetration,

if he can find the 2 assistants who can do these acrobatic flips.

I just must get on to the inevitable task of cleaning out my warehouse of illusions.

Maybe this year?



Do touring illusion show performers live like tourists? No. Being “on the road” is a tough life and a lot of work..

Jay Owenhouse, Montana -based illusionist had a converted motor coach, later used in a Lance Burton TV special. David Copperfield used a custom motor coach. Stan Kramien drove is late model Cadillac and bragged that bought a new one every year from just his Mouse Pitch sales profits!

“The real money is in the concessions”

Most magicians do not tour in such luxury. They may have a motor home or 5th wheel. Most travel by passenger van and if it is a smaller show, with a cargo trailer towed on the back and if it is

a bigger show, they may have a separate semi or box truck. Harry Blackstone Jr. had a converted moving van for his props for his big show. On smaller shows, that were sporadic and not routed, he flew the airlines.

Shows , like Ken Griffin and Phil Morris, tried to plan their routes with only 100 miles between venues, the so-called, “Hundred Miler”.

Most of us older performer know the story of the Buddy Holley plane crash, “The Day the Music Died”. His band, The Crickets, and his fellow music acts had very long “jumps” in the middle of the winter of 1959. The heater on the old bus broke and

his drummer got frost bite in his toes and The Big Bopper got the flu. The 3 stars of the tour chartered a small plane to avoid the long jump and the unqualified young pilot flew into adverse weather conditions. “Bye Bye, Miss American Pie”.



This bus was owned by Willie Nelson. Most touring bands lease their buses at a cost of \$50,000 to \$75,000 a month which includes a professional driver.

Aside from working, the main traveling difference between performing stars and tourists is that performers travel (called “jumps”) during the night and rarely see the sights from the bus window. The show crew travels by bus, staying in hotels on nights that’s feasible and live out of a suitcase - although more often than not it’s a small backpack, duffel bag or gym bag. When they don’t stay in a hotel, they sleep in a small bunk area on the bus. The star performers usually have a separate suite on the bus and wardrobe cases for more clothing. Some tours use one bus for the star and one bus for the crew.

Most theater venues have showers, otherwise they shower at truck stops. Laundry is usually coordinated by the tour logistics coordinator and can happen on a day off.





The sleeping quarters on most tour buses contain twelve bunks. On today's buses each bunk section contains a slide out which can be rolled out when the bus is parked, allowing two more feet of space in the bunk area.

The contract with the venue says that it provides the catered evening meal which is restaurant quality. Like tourists, the other two meals are hotel breakfast buffets or food bought at truck stops, fast food places or microwaveable meals heated up on the bus. They often can shower at truck stops.

Basically, when touring one-nighters they spend 14 hours a day bored out of their minds as they travel or sleep and spend only about four hours performing, doing sound checks and interviews. The other time is set-up and tear-down time for gear. The perk of the job is the opportunity to perform five to seven nights a week.

One of the downsides was the risk of falling off a 14-foot ladder rigging

Abbott's Spectacular Finale. I was so much younger then. We traveled by passenger van and towed a cargo trailer and stayed in motels.

This photo was made on stage at the performing arts center at Central Florida Community College in Lecanto, Florida in 1989

These photos below were made at Gainesville High School in December of 1989.

They show the set to my touring show and the finale patriotic scene and

Abbotts Spectacular Finale in the process of opening.



Follow along in Vanish Magazine with the career history of Dan Stapleton

Click and enjoy: <https://joom.ag/jC5d>



Christopher James has a laugh line a minute...

It's the Branson Crowd and he can get away these lines in a kids show.

Here is a fun documentary on Leon Mandrake, the famous Canadian American Magician

Back when magic was different from today.

Frances Willard helping her dad, Willard the Wizard in Texas in 1958 when she was 18
(Born 12/12/1940- Happy Birthday!)

Yes, she is now 82, alive and well and appeared a couple of years ago at our Florida Magic History Convention.

The daughter of magician Harry Willard (1896–1970), who performed as "Willard the Wizard", she began her career at age six as an assistant to her father.

After her divorce from Texas newspaper editor, Glenn Tucker, with whom she had three children (including Margo), she married magician Glenn Falkenstein.

Their signature trick was the "spirit cabinet" illusion, a variation of which Willard had performed as a solo act.

They received the Dunninger Award, the Milbourne Christopher Award of Excellence, and were inducted into the Society of American Magicians' Hall of Fame.

Falkenstein died on July 4, 2010, of Alzheimer's disease.

Frances Willard is the mother-in-law of magician Michael Ammar.





Frances Willard



<https://www.magicana.com/video/glenn-falkenstein-and-frances-willard>



Registration opens
October 1st, 2022

Florida Magic Collector's Conference III

February 3rd - 5th 2023
Orlando, Florida

For more information, visit us at www.magic-palooza.com
or our Facebook page @ Magicpalooza



It's
FLORIDA
Make it a
VACATION!

The year 2022 is almost gone.

Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?

Does anybody really care?





This is a clever idea. Like the “biting off a piece of the quarter”, made famous by David Blaine, this uses a Bit Coin.

It's a conversation starter! Ask your friends this...

"Do you know why it's called Bitcoin?"

You then pull this coin out of your pocket and take a BITE right out of the solid coin, then

miraculously spit it back - instantly!

The only problem is you buy the Bit Coin today, in a month, you could buy it cheaper. But then again, the volatility

might be that it will be worth 100 times as much in six months.
I will stick with quarters.



Best Holiday wishes to all!

Dennis