

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

March 2, 2023 | Archived Famulus



February 2023

President Ryan Stiner called the meeting to order. Twenty-eight attended and we had three guests. The guests were Conner Kaplan from the Florida Space Coast, Mark Austin, an American who works in France and Gregory Vargas.

Ryan announced the current magic events and attractions here in the Orlando and Central Florida tourist area.

Guest Mark Austin brought a suitcase of hilarious sight gags that he invented, and hand made. Most of us recall the late comedian Gallagher and the still working, Carrot Top. Mark's creations are of the same comedy value and high quality. His crafting ability is amazing, and each gag had its own novelty case and back story. He concluded with a clever adaptation of a Gaetan Bloom effect.

Dr. Ken Schreibman, MD, demonstrated a Mobius strip effect made from a giant zipper. It seems to deny logic in the way one loop can become either separate or linked or double sized. His variation of the classic effect, Afghan Bands, and is based on math topology, proves that classic magic from an earlier time is still amazing. To continue that idea, he did Al Baker's Cut and Restored Ribbon. The ribbon's bow pops off from the middle and the ribbon is back together.

Dan Stapleton, who spent many years as a cruise director, performed another one of his classic effects. Four spectators divided the deck into four parts, and each chose a random card, and returned the cards to their decks. Standing together, they sprung all

four piles at Dan, as he held up a chair, as if to protect himself ,and each card was impaled on the bottom of each leg of the chair.

Jacki Manna showed us her new children's routine. She is adding it to her act. It was interactive and multiphase. A sad clown picture on a silk cloth turns colorful and happy and popcorn appears along with other bits of business. It had all the things that children love.

The final act was Dennis Phillips, who did a timed Siberian Chain Escape after his wrists were chained by a spectator. His giant timer kept falling apart and one of his tightly chained hands would comedically come out unchained from under the cloth covering , to fix it and return chained again. It is an entertaining classic effect.

Dennis, Secretary

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”

Near the beginning of each new year, I try to refresh your memory about who we are and who I am, as your editor.

Ring profile for Ring #170

Ring 170 was started in Orlando, Florida by Don Masters, a local magic shop owner, on June 5, 1962, and was active for 3 years.

The Ring was dormant for the next 10 years.

Bevely Bergeron reactivated the club in 1974. Bev had relocated to Orlando from Los Angeles to work in the Diamond Horseshoe Review stage show at the new Walt Disney World. Bev, was nationally known as “Rebo the Clown”, from his work with Mark Wilson on The Magic Land of Allakazam and The Magic Circus

The revitalized Orlando Ring was called F.A.M.E. , which stood for the Florida Associations of Magical Entertainers.

During his 45 years with the Ring, Bev served in offices many times and edited the newsletters. Wife, Alouise, served as treasurer and other helping roles . They both attended the meetings and events and were always at conventions together as an inseparable team.

Bev died at age 89 on December 3, 2020. His wife, Alouise died the following month on January 16, 2021.

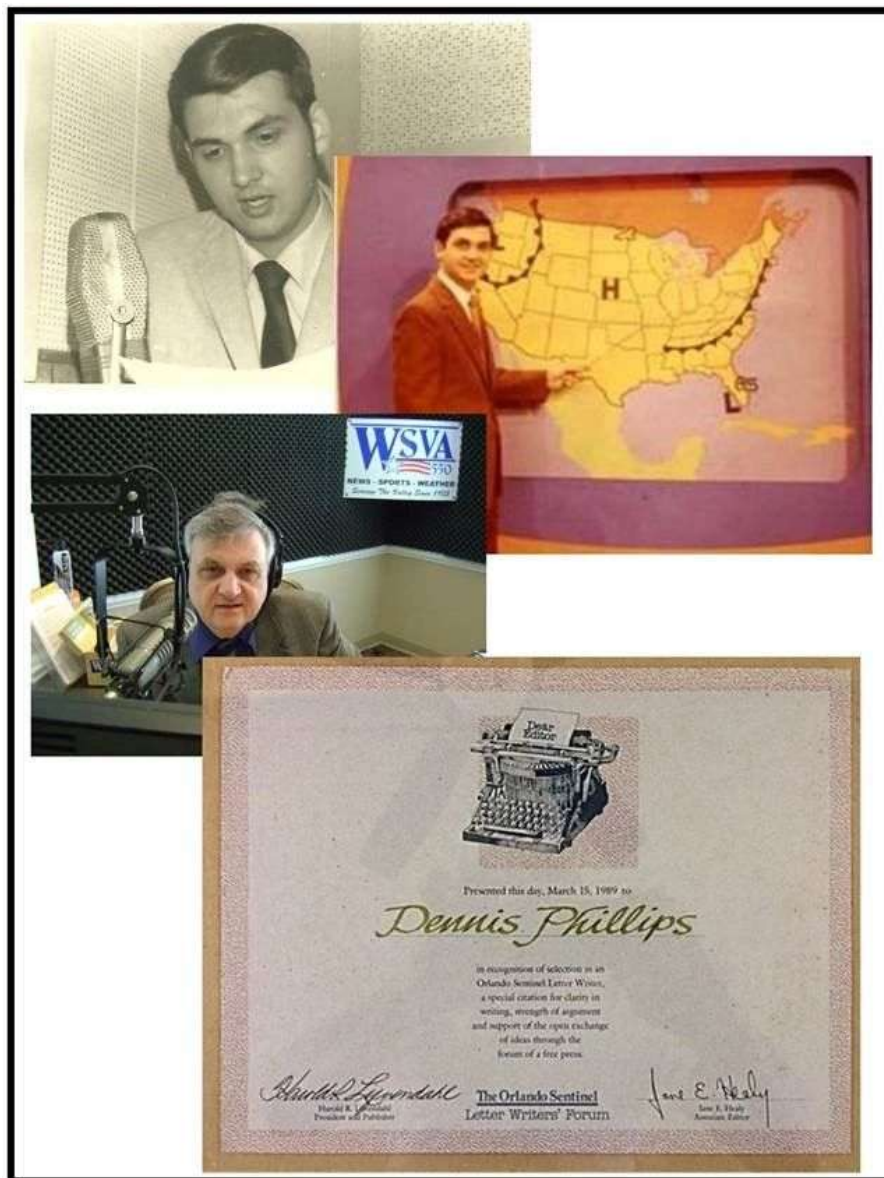
The Ring board quickly voted to honor their contributions and memories by renaming IBM Ring #170 , “The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”.



Newsletter Editor and Ring/Assembly Secretary , Dennis Phillips: Bio

Dennis Phillips (b. 1948) came from a Navy family and grew up in Norfolk, Virginia and Washington, D.C. with a few brief childhood years in Jacksonville, Florida, and rural Pennsylvania.

Writing and journalism (both print and broadcast) has always been a part of his career. He has worked both full time and part time. He has won awards from UPI and AP for reporting.



His magic interest was sparked , at a young age, by the magicians he would see doing Gospel Magic in church. In the mid-1950s he discovered Earl Edwards' Norfolk magic shop and become the eager student to many magicians who performed in the Tidewater area: Bob McAllister, Dick Oslund, Charles Windley, Joe Smiley, Frank Scalzo and others.

In rural Pennsylvania, during a short attempt at retirement by his father, Dennis met Duke Stern. Stern was working in a men's clothing store (The OPO) in Cumberland, Maryland. Stern introduced Dennis to the Abbott's Magic family and the Mecca of Colon, Michigan and its yearly pilgrimage.

Phillips' father came out of retirement to spend the rest of his working years as a NASA field engineer in suburban Washington, D.C. Dennis always says, "I am not a rocket scientist, but my Dad was!"

College studies were in electrical engineering, math , biochemistry, and religious history. He was always on the Dean's List but could not decide what he wanted to be when he grew up. His Bachelors was finally in education. Twenty years later he got a master's degree from Rollins College. All through college, Dennis worked in radio and television broadcasting as both an announcer and newscaster. Based in Maryland's capital city of Annapolis he provided many news stories for the major networks. Being near Washington, D.C., he was friends with Willard Scott of NBC and was a classmate of Connie Chung and spent a lot of time around Al Cohen's magic shop and Phil Thomas' Baltimore Yogi Magic Mart.

In the meantime, Phillips had lots of hobbies and side jobs such as flying. He soloed in 1971 and worked on aircraft radios and did some A&P tin banging . He has also been a long time licensed amateur radio operator as well as a licensed broadcast and radar engineer. His hobby of recreational math led to a friendship with the late Martin Gardner. Of course, he was always performing and building magic. It was about this time that he met people like Paul Osborne and Doug Henning before they were famous.

Dennis met his wife Cindy, an elementary school teacher, in 1972 while he was working in broadcasting in Roanoke (WDBJ-TV). Cindy is the shy and quiet half of the couple, but she is an excellent puppet builder, crafter and artist. They were married and spent 3 years in Charlotte, N.C. (WBTV Radio and TV) and the remaining time in Orlando, Florida. They have three grown children, a boy and two girls.



Dennis and Cindy founded and managed a theatrical supply business and Dennis was , with a grad degree, on the adjunct faculty of The University of Central Florida and Valencia College teaching theater technology.

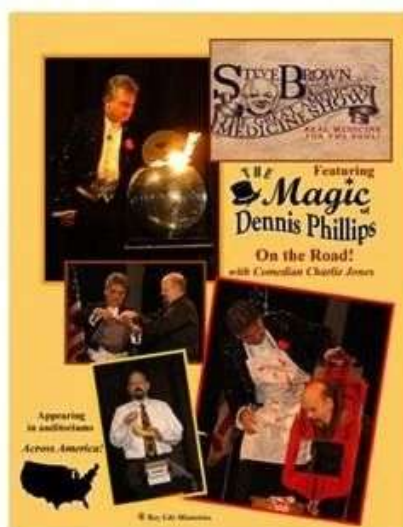
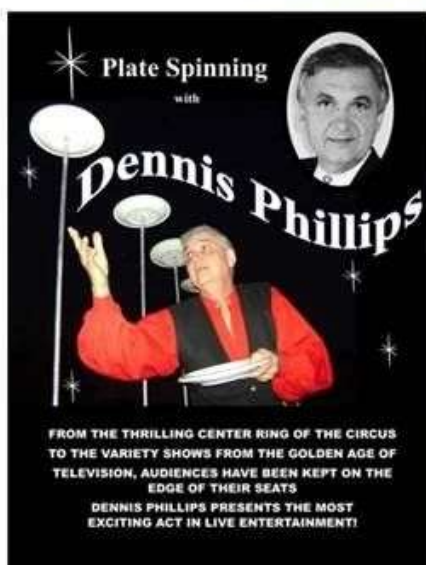
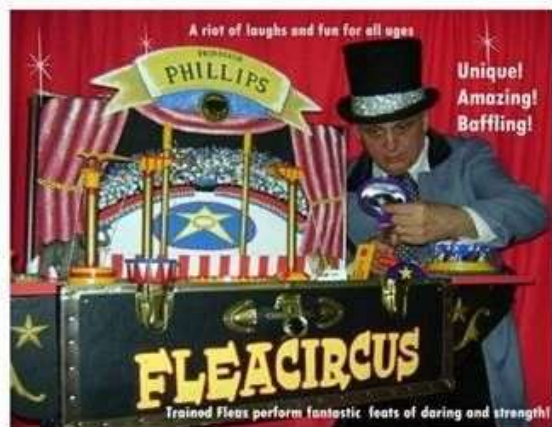
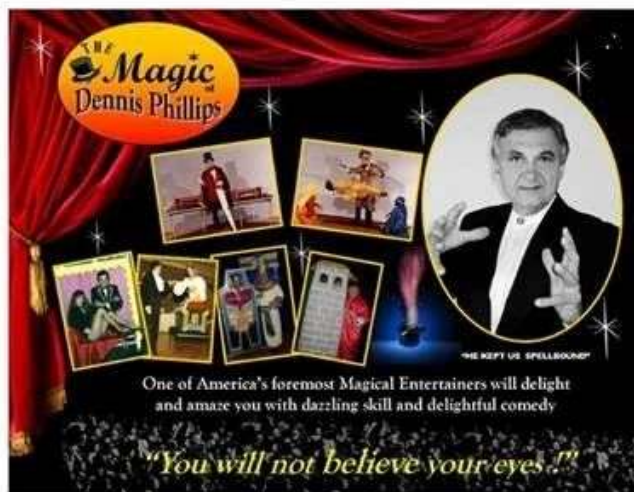
Dennis and Cindy moved to Harrisonburg, Virginia in 2009 for 5 years. Much of the reason was so Cindy could be near her extended family as well as try a change in climate. In Virginia he worked as the weekend news anchor at WSVB radio and when

not on the radio he was worked at Blue Ridge Community College and as a public-school substitute teacher. In 2014 they returned to Orlando.

Magic and illusions have also been a big part of his life since he was a youngster. He was a local TV children's show host on an award-winning show that he produced and starred, in the early 1970s, for Jefferson-Pilot Broadcasting. The show, Whistle Stop, aired both on WBTV in Charlotte and WWBT in

Richmond. <http://www.btmemoies.com/articles/programs/whistlestop/whistlestop.html>

In addition to broadcast work, he has extensively toured with his large illusion show. The full-evening show features magic illusions woven into classic fairy tales along with novelty acts such as plate spinning and Punch and Judy. Dennis also does ventriloquism and a flea circus, and he and his wife, Cindy taught Ballroom Dance.



Dennis wears the 25 year "Merlin" pin from the International Brotherhood of Magicians and holds the "Lee Noble Award", from The Bev Bergeron Ring for professionalism and is a Lifetime Member of Ring #170. The award was presented to him in 2007 ,by the late Aldo Columbini at a Ring 170 Banquet. Dennis is also a member of The Society of American Magicians. He has been a cover story writer for Magic Magazine and frequent collaborator with the late Paul Osborne on Paul's illusion plan columns in Genii and Paul's books. Dennis also co-authored, with Charlotte's Phil Morris, the biggest selling book on making a Haunted House attraction which has been in print for 35 years. ("How to Make a Financially Successful Haunted House")

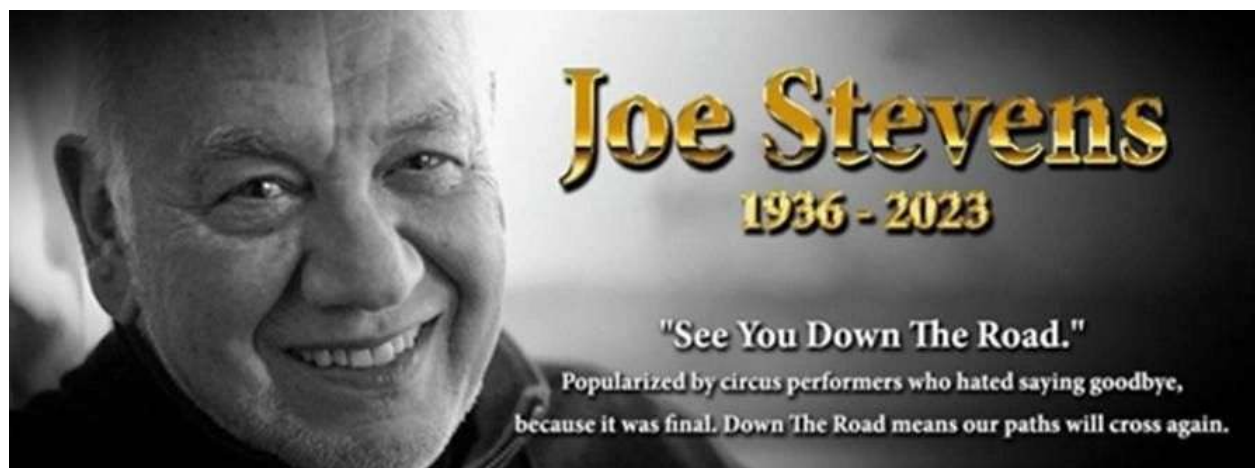
His illusion creations have been seen in Las Vegas illusion shows (by Vince Carmen) and on "America's Got Talent" , by illusionist Drew Thomas, but his personal performing style is comedy family magic with lots of audience interaction.

Dennis is now semi- retired but still performs magic, does ventriloquism, writes, and entertains.

It is so sad to lose Joe Stevens, the Wichita legendary Magic Shop owner.

I knew Joe from the 1970s when his business also handled Halloween Costumes. He found his niche is quality magic and promoting magic events. He was also early into creating VHS Magic Videos and his Greater Magic Video Series has preserved many of the magic greats. He made arrangements with local TV station KAKE and their staff announcer Gene Rump (also a magic fan) to professionally video most of the series in their local TV studios.

Through the years, if you wanted quality magic and the rare, you bought from Joe. He was a friend, and I will miss him.



Joseph Stevens passed away this week at the age of 86, about a year and a half after his wife Martha who passed away in June of 2021.

From the early 70's on Joe was the ultimate magic businessman in our world of magic. Starting out as a collector, he and Martha opened what became a magic shop called the Stevens Magic Emporium in Wichita Kansas in 1973. The business grew due to Joe's sales ability and a magic catalogue that was epic, but Joe was always on the lookout for the next new thing and another mountain to climb. An outgoing, people loving optimist Joe was a trailblazer in the magic world, a world that he filled with big ideas. But the difference between Joe and many other magicians was that Joe did not just talk about big ideas, he turned those ideas into realities. And then once they became a reality, he fine-tuned them with input from a team of trusted advisors looking for ways to make them even better. From innovative magic conventions to the GeMiNi Magic Network to his groundbreaking video series The Greater Magic Library, Joe took risks and essentially charted the future of magic with each new production. As I watched him in action behind his dealer table at a magic convention I often thought: "Joe Stevens could sell anything, I'm glad he chose magic!" And our small world of magic is better off because he did... but I'll get to that later.

While Joe Stevens will be remembered as a friend by many, most in the greater magic community will remember him for producing some of the most memorable magic conventions that always promised to hold more than a few surprises. The first Joe Stevens produced event was the 1978 Slydini Desert Magic Seminar. Joe had booked Slydini as the headline act and Dai Vernon also attended that year. Joe wanted to also have two young up and coming magicians on the bill to show the future of magic alongside the two grandmasters. So, Joe invited me and Darwin Ortiz to also be on the bill.

Because of Joe's connections, (he seemed to know everyone) you could hang out with everyone from Mike Skinner, Larry Jennings, Roger Klause, Johnny Paul, Daniel Cros, Jimmy Grippo, and even a very young David Copperfield at that convention. The fact that Joe was willing to take a chance and invite a few young unknown magicians and give us visibility by putting them on a national stage was very special indeed. When Joe saw a young magician that had a passion for magic, he went out of his way to make sure they also had an opportunity. Joe was a master at bringing magicians together. Along with his gracious wife Martha they became like Bill and Irene Larsen from the Magic Castle, the ultimate magic society power couples when I was coming of age in the magic community. Joe and Martha were always so encouraging and supportive of young magicians and would do anything for anyone... all you had to do was ask. If you needed a favor, or an introduction to someone you just had to ask Joe. And Joe was not afraid to wear his heart on his sleeve. He became emotional on more than one occasion when he was simply watching a magician like Hans

Moretti or Siegfried & Roy onstage or when simply telling people how good they were on stage.

In 1983 Joe decided to go even bigger so he rounded up a brain trust that included the likes of Jay Marshall, Roger Crabtree, Bill Wells, Pete Biro, Siegfried, Roy, Lynette Chappell, Domenico Dante and Irene Larsen and dubbed them the Desert Magic Seminar Board of Directors. Together they decided to hold a Las Vegas Desert Seminar and add a Close-Up Contest with a \$10,000 prize along with some choice bookings and a trip to Japan to appear on a TV show for the winner. It was a crazy idea, not something anyone had ever done before. The result was an amazing Close-Up Magic Competition that attracted a who's who of close-up magic at the time. Everyone pretty much just said... \$10,000 prize? Why not? Top name magicians put their ego aside and agreed to go along for the ride. And when the competitors stepped from behind the curtain, they were greeted by 300 cheering magicians and sitting in the center of the very first row were three living legends, Siegfried & Roy with Dai Vernon sitting right between them. Just to add a little more glamor to the event, Joe also invited Muhammad Ali, who had an interest in magic to hang at the convention and hang he did. Joe was never afraid to ask, he used to say: "The worst thing that can happen... is they say no." He even convinced Siegfried & Roy to hold a tea party for all the spouses at the convention at their private estate. A few years later he convinced Siegfried & Roy to invite the entire convention of probably 500 people over to their house... and once again they agreed, creating magical memories that every attendee will never forget.

Magicians around the world should all raise a glass to our brother Joe Stevens because if you have attended a magic convention in the past 10-20 years, I believe that convention was influenced by Joe. I don't think there would have been a MagicLive in Las Vegas if a young Stan Allen had not attended the early Stevens conventions, probably with a notebook in his back pocket. If you attended the recent MagiFest in Columbus, Ohio, that convention would not have been possible if young Joshua Jay and Andi Gladwin had not read about Joe Stevens' conventions and perhaps, they attended an early MagicLive produced by Stan Allen again probably with a notebook in hand. From the very start Joe was doing ground-breaking, innovative work as a "Producer" and single handedly changed the look of magic conventions from the standard convention format of a lecture, a close-up show and a stage show in the evening.

And chances are if not for the motivation of Joe's signature \$10,000 Desert Magic Seminar with the impressive Siegfried & Roy Gold Lion Award as a trophy, Michael Weber's Ship (bottlecap) in the Bottle might never have been invented. John Kennedy might never have floated a cigarette to his lips. Sawa may not have added some new sequences to his amazing seashell routine. You may never have heard the story of how a young Tim Conover

changed a close-up pad into a live ferret. And there definitely would not be a trick called The Finger Ring on the Hourglass. Joe Stevens' big ideas motivated magicians to "Produce" and to push themselves and their magic to the next level while at the same time inspiring young future "Producers" as well. There is more amazing magic in this world today because Joe Stevens walked among us.

He may have stepped off the stage but his memory, his impact and his big ideas will continue to live on, and we are all the better for it. For that Joe, we all thank you. Our condolences to Mark and Amy for the loss of your amazing parents. Joe you and your dear Martha sure lived a great one. Rest In Peace my friend.

George Kimery, the founder of CHALET MAGIC in Limestone, TN has passed.

George "Eddie" Kimery age 77 of the Community of Limestone, passed away Friday, February 10, 2023, at Johnson City Medical Center after a brief illness.

He was a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He was a Magic Illusion Builder.

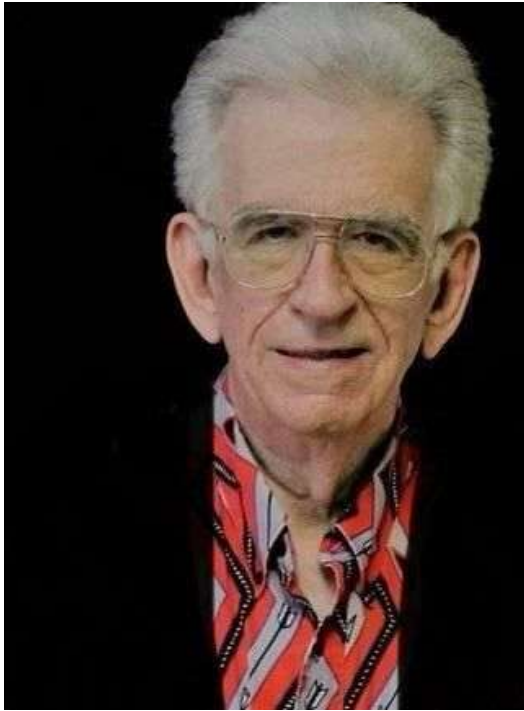
George had a true passion for music and magic. He was an accomplished steel guitar player, playing in many regional bands throughout his entire life. He was also a skilled magician and found his greatest success with the formation of Chalet Magic, where he created and produced some of the most popular illusions the industry has ever seen. From smaller illusions like turning a dove into a rabbit, to larger ones, such as sawing a woman in half, George hand built the contraptions and devices necessary to accomplish these tricks. Literally hundreds of magicians have used George's creations in their acts from the smallest of classrooms to the largest venues in Las Vegas. Many of these contraptions have been featured on national television, such as "Wiz Kote," which was used by world renowned master magician, Lance Burton, in his second television special. George's creations are still used today by magicians all over the world and he is widely regarded as one of the all-time great master craftsmen in the magic community.

Eddie is survived by his special girlfriend of 26 years, Connie Stafford; one brother and sister-in-law, Gary and Kathy Kimery

George was an old friend and when ever we visited, we spent hours sketching illusion ideas and exchanging sources for materials.

Limestone is a small village in East Tennessee, just south of Johnson City. He had a 4-car concrete block garage down by the country road where his workshop and employees created the illusions.

On the hill above, he had a large, log cabin home where he lived. My wife, Cindy, and I enjoyed our visits. George's friendship will be missed, along with his wonderful insights and props.



In a younger photo, you can see George with Steve Hart. George arranged for the rights to build Steve Hart's famous "Burnt Shoe" comedy effect, and both made it a comedy classic.

North Carolina's Eddy Wade, owner of Magic Methods magic dealer <https://magicmethods.com/> with his Chalet Kimery built Temple of Benares





Scott Alexander, at the age of just 52, has passed away after taken ill performing on a cruise ship in the Caribbean.

Scott was a top professional and innovative creator of magic and a business partner with Bob Kohler, with whom he'd collaborated for many years. He also co-created "Message in a Bottle" with Puck.

Condolences to his wife Jenny and their three children.



Scott competed on season 6 of *America's Got Talent*.

Alexander's wife of 24 years, Jenny, announced the tragic news in a post on Instagram Monday, revealing that her husband died after suffering a stroke.

"My kids lost their father. He suffered a stroke while working on a cruise ship in St. Kitts and did not make it home to us," she continued. "We are shattered. Please hold us in your prayers."

Scott, Jenny and their 3 children, Jack, 18, Roxy, 17, and Sawyer, 13.



Alexander first wowed judges Sharon Osbourne, Howie Mandel and Piers Morgan in 2011 when appeared on AGT and made his assistant (wife Jenny) appear out of thin air.

Following his appearance on the show, Alexander went on to perform on Penn & Teller: Fool Us, a magic competition series in which magicians perform in front of illusionists Penn & Teller, as well as The Oprah Winfrey Show.

"He has performed countless shows in theaters and auditoriums....from years of headlining at Caesar's Palace on the Las Vegas strip to Cruise ships sailing across the world,"

"In a tragic turn of events, while working on a Cruise ship, Scott suffered a stroke," Scott's wife, Jenny, wrote. "He was transferred to a nearby hospital in St. Kitts where he was receiving intensive care, but it is with the heaviest of hearts that I share that Scott

Alexander did not make it home to his family. Unexpected, sudden ... Scott's family and friends are struggling to process how this could be real and are purely devastated."

Robert "Bob" Orben

Passed away February 2 at the age of 95.

Magicians, can find his books on one-liners, simply look up - Robert Orben books.



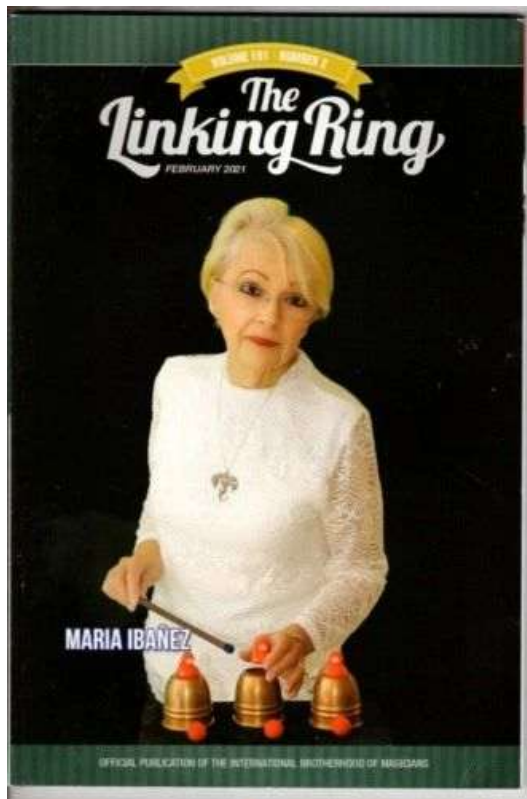
Robert Orben was born on March 4, 1927, in the Bronx to Walter and Marie Orben. His father was in the hardware business. Bob was smitten by magic at an early age, and when he was 12, he and his brother, Walter, performed a mentalist act in the Catskill Mountains, "The Boy With the Radio Mind."

After graduating from high school in 1943, he attended Drake Business School. He also started his short-lived career in magic.

He was hired as a magic demonstrator in a shop in Manhattan, but he found his speciality not in performing magic but in writing about magicians; he was impressed by one magician's onstage comedic patter, which led him to publish a pamphlet, "The Encyclopedia of Patter," in 1946.

Over the next decade he would publish books like "Blue Ribbon Comedy," "The Working Comedian's Gag File," "Tag-Lines," "Bits, Boffs and Banter" and "The Emcee's Handbook." He published dozens of joke collections in his career.

Late Word: Maria Ibanez passes after an extended illness.



Off stage, others know Merlina by another name: Maria Ibanez. The Cuban American is one of the few female magicians in Florida, and one of few Hispanic women that performs full time. There's even less that can perform both in Spanish and English and integrate their own story of immigrating into their act.

Maria was born in Havana Cuba and is the only child of a petroleum engineer and a housewife, she spent her early years in Cuba and escaping the Castro regime.

She was the only woman to serve as President of the Florida Association of Magical entertainers (FAME) and the first female president of the oldest magic society in the world, founded in 1902, the Society of American Magicians, founded in 1902.

She just recently appeared on the cover of the Linking Ring magazine.

Tribute to the late Cindy Williams (August 22, 1947 – January 25, 2023) who was on an early David Copperfield Special

It is difficult to grasp that Bill Bixby's Show, "The Magician" aired on network TV 50 years ago!

Take a walk down memory lane.

Magical humor from Ring member Henry Rydzinski



For all you ventriloquists and puppeteers.



Breakaway Vanishing Box

The Magic Handbook was published by *Science and Mechanics*, in 1961, and sold for 75 cents, causing a storm of protests from magicians for exposing many illusions to the public.

Walter Gibson was responsible for most of the text and Sidney Radner, as one of the collaborators, was expelled from the Society of American Magicians for "exposure".

The book was reprinted as a new edition in 1968, expanding to 125 tricks, included workshop plans for the Dagger Chest, Die Box, Disecto, Crystal Casket, Dove Vanish, and the Square Circle.



The Breakaway Vanishing Box was in this issue.

This Magic Handbook became an important text for the early 1960s do-it-self magic maker.

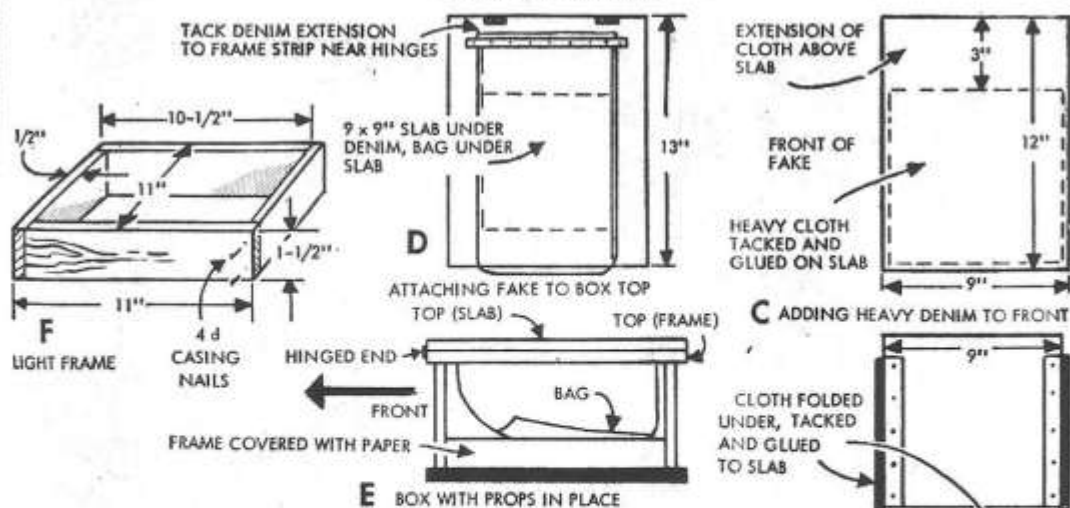
This portion of the magazine text explains how the animal vanishes.

The Breakaway Vanishing Box

- ★ Put a skunk, rabbit, or other small animal in it and he'll do a quick disappearing act while you tear the box apart



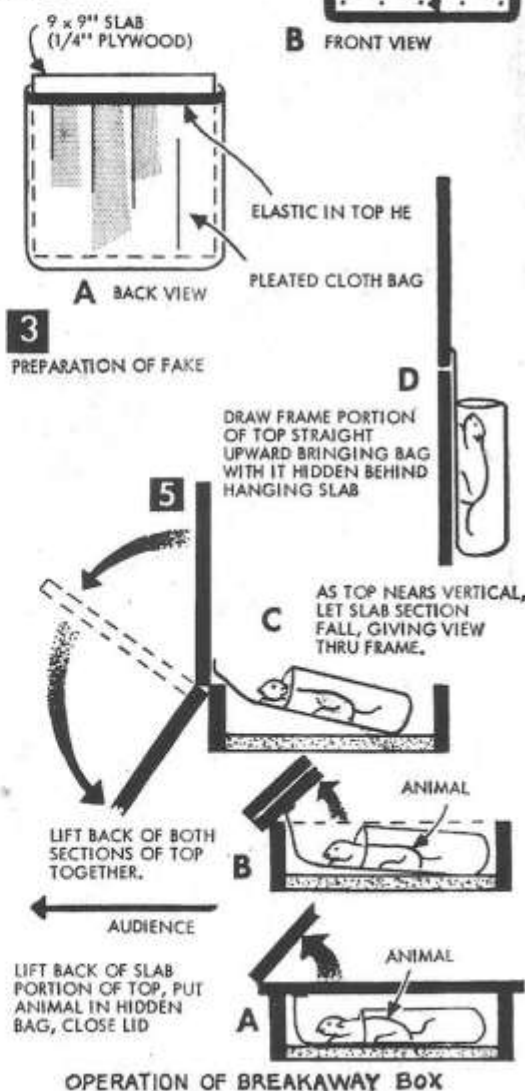
1 And that's the last of the box. But where did the little skunk go?



4 Upper portion of cover in raised position as animal is placed inside the box. Actually it goes right into a bag attached to frame section of the lid.

sides of the frame by tacking on a few sheets of newspaper. Place this frame on the bottom of the box, where it will fit loosely and act as a rest for the bag fake. Put the box on a snack stand or similar folding table and you are ready to confound your audience.

Introduce Your Animal. Though it can





When top frame is lifted, hinged panel is allowed to fall forward, thus hiding the bag from view of audience, which is to the right.



Bag is out of sight below dropped panel held by girl assistant. Magician has picked up box and is handing the loose bottom to the assistant, who will now walk off naturally with the evidence, while the audience is suspicious of false paper bottom in box.

This effect seems to be based on an original Thayer prop and I wanted to change it and add a 3-fold screen, like Thayer's, rather than the cheap looking metal TV dinner tray that the magazine used.

I also wanted to eliminate the paper frame and make the load chamber more rigid for better stability. It was made from piano hinged plywood.

When I first built one in 1961, the bag had a tendency to push the top forward from the weight of the rabbit hanging down on just a flexible piece of cloth. I also wanted to add a sucker bit with a "rabbit foot" falling down on a chain from the 3-fold screen.

These photos were made during a refurbishing and the plain plywood square was later painted black and the frame held down a rubber plucked chicken that formed the “suspicious lump” that the audience believed was the rabbit.







Dennis