

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

May 27, 2023 | Archived Famulus



May 2023

President Ryan Stiner brought the meeting to order. He announced the current and upcoming magic events in the Central Florida area. Benny Kirshner was welcomed as a first-time visitor.

Ryan presented 6 mystery boxes, each containing a different beginner's magic trick, during the first half of the meeting. Club members were invited to select a box and share their unique handling or reimagining of the trick.

Jafo Fields presented the Stoplight Cards, Jackie Manna blended ventriloquism with the Genii Bottle, Conner demonstrated a Svengali Deck, Benny combined a Chop Cup routine with the Ball and Vase, Greg performed the Magic Mummy Mystery, and Ryan concluded with a story about the Coin Base. The audience voted for their favorite performance and Conner was named the winner.

During the second half of the meeting, four members shared some routines they have been working on. Jackie Manna performed a gospel routine about a turtle looking for salvation, Conner shared his Chop Cup show opener, Ken Schreibman demonstrated Mister Danger and Vox, Greg Solomon performed two original routines with a Hot wheel's car and a custom designed View Master, and Steve Nelson concluded the meeting with his original routine called Sin City Synthesis. Members were able to purchase their own Sin City Synthesis deck as the end of the meeting.

Secretary Dennis Phillips is doing well but was absent due to still testing positive for COVID following an Alaskan Cruise.

Many thanks to President Ryan Stiner , who provided his report and photos of our member's performing.





Meeting policy:

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

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”

"I think cinema and magic have always been closely associated. The very earliest people who made films were magicians." -Francis Ford Coppola

"For centuries, magicians have taken advantage of errors in human visual acuity and cognition." - Neil deGrasse Tyson

"Generally, magicians don't know what to say, so they say stupid and redundant things like, 'Here I am holding a red ball.' " - Teller

"Most magicians consider the palm an easy move to make. They are inclined to believe that they are 'getting away with it', when they are in fact fortunate enough to have a polite audience." - Dai Vernon

Does he remind you just a bit of Johnny Thompson, only with a male assistant?

Different and his DeKolts Chair is a jaw dropper! I have never seen that version of it.

You will like this.

Way back in 1996

Galina was featured on World's Greatest Magic.

Her full name was Galina Strutinskaya and she was born in the Ukraine .

She appeared on The World's Greatest Magicians in the 1990's. It was her first and only time appearing on U.S. Television.

Most folks didn't expect that she would rise along with the ball during this act.

Her theme song "Flying" was composed
by a fan and later edited by Ryan Oullette son of
the late Gary, the show's producer.

She married an English Comedian,
Sonny Hayes and together they created an act.
They moved to Australia after her first child was born.
She is now known as Galina Hayes.

If you have never seen her, you are in for a real treat.

The Great Dante with "Sawing a Woman in Half"

The late great John Calvert with his classic version of "The Dancing Hank"

Inner Passage Alaskan Cruise

5/6 to 5/13/2023

Dennis and Cindy Phillips

I am fine.

**I did test positive COVID after the cruise and plane flight. Nothing severe. Just a bit
achy and tired. The doctor put me on Paxlovid. I have had 5 vaccinations, so this is
mild. The vaccines were never made to prevent you from getting COVID 19 but to help
you fight it off and have a mild case or be asymptomatic. So far, my wife Cindy has not
tested positive. I should be fine in 5 to 10 days.**

**Cruise ships and airplanes are giant Petri dishes of communicable diseases. We were
on the Norwegian Bliss, and they did a valiant effort at trying to maintain proper**

hygiene. Hand Sanitizers were everywhere, and they had singing attendants at the entrance to the top deck buffet singing, “Washy Washy Washy” and a few lines of a classic pop tune. Soap and water basins and paper towels were there.



We flew direct on a 737 MAX 9 direct from Orlando to Seattle and picked up the Norwegian Bliss. The cruise was an “Alaskan inner passage” cruise with stops in Sitka, Juneau, Icy Straights, a view of the Dawes glacier and Ketchikan and few hours in Victoria.

The reason for that short stop is because if we did not stop at an international port, in Canada, the cruise would be considered an American port-to-port cruise and they would have to use an American crew and follow American Maritime staffing laws. Instead, the crew was mostly Filipino, Indonesian, Brazilian, Croatian, and Slovenian with a few others and a Swedish Captain. Certainly, needing a low-priced payroll was the issue and what has made cruising possible for the American Middle Class.



We saw the magic couple (“Brent and Sarah”) who did a comedy-magic act on the ship and a funny clean comedian (somewhat like the late humorist Sam Levinson) and The Jersey Boys musical in the theater, history of The Four Seasons.

First, Brent and Sarah: They are a cutesy couple from Toronto and their basic interaction is similar to Sonny and Cher. Sarah always tops Brett and he is the butt of their jokes. Maybe a bit like Tommy Smothers, for those of us who lived in the 1960s. Their act worked and Sarah was clearly the star. Brett was the fall guy.

<https://www.brentandsarah.com/>

Their first night’s material was appropriately the “B” show but still clever and good.

I will just hit the highlights. Sarah produced a Fantasio candle from a white silk streamer and vanished a Nielson champagne bottle in a paper sack.

They did a dual Egg Bag routine with both having an egg bag and the bag going from her bag to his bag and back. She then did the Silk in Egg classic and cracked the egg.

They followed with a dual Linking Ring Routine, but Brent could not find his Rings backstage and came out with metal coat hangers (Think Mike Caveney). She does an elegant 3 Ring routine while he struggles with the coat hangers, finally succeeding in linking them.

They followed with an unusual version of the Swallowing Needles, but Sarah used fishhooks as Brent told a story from her past about her grandpa being a fisherman.

The finale of this first night version was a 3-part Prediction with 3 volunteers.

Three popular song titles were forced using a 3-part clear forcing bag and Brent played a few lines on his Ukulele. He apparently failed on the last one but had the final volunteer write down the song on a small market board. He then said that he had made a prediction before the show began and removed the vinyl cover from the top of his attaché case, which had been in full view all the time and on the large, folded paper was not only all the song titles there but also the names of the randomly selected volunteers.

Of course, like Copperfield's Graffiti Wall and Dream Vision, the "final paper" was prepared as the data was revealed by the volunteers and it was brought out on the back of the marker board, in a false vinyl top and it was placed on top of Brent's attaché case where it is magnetically stuck until he peeled it away and showed that the top was actually a pouch with a large white question mark. He pulled out the paper and showed the prediction. The audience loved their act.

The second night was two performances of the different "A" material show.

They did a "Six Bill Repeat" using non-descript graphic cards which he put in a "Tom Horton" donut box. Canada's version of Dunkin Donuts. It was followed by Sarah seeming producing a dozen "donut holes" (brown sponge balls) out of her mouth. They and the cards all vanished from the box.

Sarah followed with a "2 cards across" effect using hockey cards. She has two male spectators. She counted out 10 cards and they were told to put the cards in their pockets. She stood behind one with her arms around his waist, holding a, 18-inch red cloth in front of his fly. It had a Zombie gimmick in the cloth, and she raised it up, as if the card was magically floating over to the other side. She did the same with the other volunteer as if the cards were arriving. Of course, the whole bit looked like an erection. It was more funny than sexual.

They then did a dual escape using chain handcuffs. Each was cuffed and two audience volunteers held up the curtain cabinet by looks on each end of top.

In keeping with their act, Sarah did fine but Brent had “problems” and they eventually got tangled up with each other. Brent seemed to fail but spun around completely free of the handcuffs.

Next was a Book Test on steroids. The weakness of any book test is that the performer usually just names the word. Their version was a delightful variation.

3 common books were used: The life of Pi, Harry Potter Romancing the Stone and 50 shades of Gary, which Brett told the kids was a book about a woman who was color blind and saw everything in gray.

Brett was in the audience with the books and Sarah on stage. He forced page 70 in a flipping-through method and had all the people look at page 70 in their books.

Here was the clever way of getting the most out of the reveals. Sarah used the old “no” gag, which she wrote down and giggled and moved on. For the next word she wrote down a word on a sketch pad and miscalls it without showing it and when the volunteer says it was not correct, she crumbles the paper in a wad and tosses it to the floor and moves on.

The next reveal was an animal and Sarah attempted to draw it. It was the Tim Gabrielson giraffe effect called “Stretching the Truth” (based on Martin Lewis’s Card-O-Graphic). The generic animal’s neck stretches to form a giraffe. Correct!

Then she took the word “no” that she wrote and extended the “no” and added a “w” and it became the word “who”. Correct!

Finally, she opened the crumbled paper, and it was the 3rd word. Correct!

They then went into sketch where Brent apparently ran out of power and his head dropped down and his voice trailed down like an old record playing having the plug pulled on it and he went to sleep. She said that she could fix it and pulled what looked like a thick white power cord, with a plug, from out of his back pocket and went offstage and returned with an extension cord. She plugged it in and he immediately came awake and started repeating the opening lines of their act. She then slid the plug and socket across the cord about 6 feet and he vocalized like a speeded-up tape recorded and when she stopped , he repeated a few words of the patter from the middle of the act. She then unplugged the ends of the cords and removed them as a short “power pig tail” leaving Brent directly connected to the cord. This seemed to be a fancy version of Pavel’s Walking Knot with magnets. Very clever.

Their finale was the Multiplying Bottles with a few of their personal touches.

Their act was well received, and they sold a DVD with simple tricks to do.

There were two comedians, and both used an interactive approach to the audience. Jim Moody has a great mild version of this and calls himself "The Crowd Teaser". The two Bliss comedians were Jeff Hastings and Jeff Harms.

Hastings was definitely the R Ratings comedian. His bit was that he would call people out for texting or just call people and ask them their names and what they did. He then poked fun. "How many times you been married?" 4 times! Guy says, "and I came out clean every time". "Naw, man you at least lost a car". Guy says, "Nope, I kept the car". He asked, "What kind of car". Guy says, "An Escape". The crowd roared. Hastings seemed to know how to draw the silliest things out of people. For the rest of his routine, he would come back to the funny things that people said, "And you, with the Escape, bet you couldn't get as lucky as she was!" Hastings kept looking at the times on his cell phone and would say, "You won't let me get to my material!" He had a few prepared lines but wanted to leave the impression that the crowd was crazy or putting him on. He would bend down on his knee like he was writing down notes with lines like, "Dude has a wild story that he got divorced for the 3rd time and even kept his car."

My favorite was Jeff Harms. He is a kind of Sam Levinson humorist. He was a schoolteacher in his younger years.

There are several clips of his material on You Tube.

He has a bit of a warm grandfatherly approach and also does a lot of audience interaction without some of the sarcastic attitude of Hastings.

He did know how to play the audience. On of his shows had a "laugher", you know a person who has a loud and hilarious laugh and he said that he wanted her at all his shows. "Free to travel?" She cackled more.

The cruise ship audience is not a tough crowd. They are easily amused and want to have fun. Maybe it is being relaxed on vacation or the slight edge of anticipation. They are not, by and large, very sophisticated.

After two days, I decided to do some old material in the crowded elevators.

"I was trying to get on this elevator yesterday and it was crammed. The door opened and there was a Catholic Priest standing in the doorway. He said, "We are all going down". I told him, "That's not a good sign!"

“Aren’t the cabin stewards great? I opened the door early this morning and my cabin steward was standing there and asked me if he could come in and clean up. I said, “Yes”. He came in and took a shower, brushed his teeth, and combed his hair”.

Maybe the lubricant of alcohol makes people laugh more. The booze did flow. My guess is that some people spent as much on alcohol as they did on cruise tickets.

The main musical was “Jersey Boys”.



Enjoy these clips... I am sure you remember Frankie Valle and The Four Seasons.

My wife and I had a good time seeing the sights and traveling with my daughter and her husband. They also had fun.

Magicians who work ships tend to do much of the same material as other cruise performers. Half-Dyed Hanky, Cards Across and Multiplying Bottles are textbook examples of common cruise ship pieces. They are ideal for use by cruise performers because they pack very small and play big on stage. Prop cases are filled with lightweight material so traveling magicians can fit the whole act in their overhead

luggage on a plane. There is anything wrong with these tricks or the magicians that do these effects. You do that you have to do for a fly-on suitcase act.

The issue is the audience. Cruise ships have a large demographic of frequent cruisers. Guests cruise at least once a year, usually more frequently than that, and they have seen a LOT of magic. Once they've seen Silk to Egg a dozen times there is no impact in your act. It takes a lot of thinking and creativity on the part of the performer to show something new, with an original routine.

The cruise ship crowd is easy to please if you do not do the standard effects with standard patter. Just change up the presentation to be different and you can go out with a Dye Tube, Stiff Rope, Chop Cup and Pom Pom Sticks and do them well and they will love it.

In the modern era, TV magic and technology has lowered the dazzle ability of the old-style stage magic. Even America's Got Talent and Masters of Illusion jazz up the effect with selective camera shots and fancy editing. But all of that is not "LIVE". My feeling is that "comedy" is what sells today and not the old silent manipulation of dove act or cards and coins. Those can never be spectacular enough to equal the dazzle of a modern stage spectacle. But an amusing humorous act with well-presented foolers is what works.

Brent and Sarah presented 2 45-minute acts. I think that they also have material for a 3rd act that they could do. They had a theme and identity.

It is an evolving interesting business that I believe carries over to the state of land-based magic today.

Dennis