

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev Bergeron Ring” SAM Assembly #99

May 13, 2019 | Archived Famulus

May 2019 Meeting

President Mike Matson called the meeting to order. We had two guests from England, Peter Baffles and Mel Harvey and guest Cody Clark, who is here in Orlando doing magic at the Orlando fringe Festival. Mike gave a rundown on all the local magic attractions and events.

Bev Bergeron did his “Teach in”. He talked about how things accidentally happen during a magic show, such as lines from a spectator and you can make good use of them. He showed a Chicken Sandwich, which was a comic cloth chicken between two prop slices of bread.

The chicken has shorts on so Bev said it was dressed chicken.

Phil Schwartz presented his Magic History Moment #97. He began by listing the top ten performed tricks from a Genii survey published in February 1950. Number one was The Linking Rings. He then spoke about the inventor of number 38 on that list — Joseph Alexander Chrzanowski. “Jay” as he called himself was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1912. He began doing shows from his Mysto Magic set and started a performing career. He also had his own make shop in Springfield, Massachusetts where he built and sold his own inventions. In 1943, he introduced his most famous effect - The Zombie. By then, he had changed his name to Joe Karson. Zombie was number 38 in 1950 but very likely in the top ten today. Karson died in 1980 but his magic lives on.

Mike Matson invited Cody Clark up for a fascinating talk about Cody’s life as an autistic magician. He showed several effects with clever patter and explained how being autistic has helped him see the world in a different way. He talked about the challenges to overcoming the sensory overload that is a symptom of autism.

The first performed for our monthly show was funny man Mel Harvey who did a hilarious Cards Across. Mike Flannigan did a frightening and suspenseful Spiker Trick and avoided impaling his hand. Brian Sullivan had three unknown cards selected by a spectator and was able to deal cards from the rest of the deck that matched with the unknown cards. Ravelli, always energetic, made coins appear and disappear and a selected card appears in his deck.



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

June 2019

“Magic is not done, it’s not performed. Like any performance art, it withers away to nothing if it’s not presented in the grand style.

Moving your feet around is not dancing, reading the lyrics is not singing, and pulling a rabbit out of a hat is not magic.”

– John Cassidy & Michael Stroud

Last Specialty Magic Store In New England Disappears as more “Brick and Mortar Shops” vanish



(L to R): Magicians Alan Wassilak, John Bach, David Cressey and Jim Rainho enjoy lunch at Diamond's Magic

Craig LeMoult/ WGBH TV

Diamond's Magic Shop : Vince DeAngelis, the owner, loved it all. But despite all those people coming in, the shop just wasn't profitable.

"At the time, I was married. Been divorced since. Probably not due to the shop, I like to think," he said with a laugh. "So my needs are not that great. And I wasn't looking for a lavish lifestyle. I saw myself doing this until — not to retirement, because I didn't plan on retiring — until I died."

He started paying into the business from his own savings to keep it afloat. But it wasn't enough to keep up with the rent and the loans he took out to buy the shop.

On Tuesday, April 30, 2019, he officially closed Diamond's Magic. It marked the end of an era for the region's magic community. What's believed to be the last specialty magic store in New England closed its doors.

"It's like a public library," DeAngelis said. "But with the characters in the books being there to explain them to you. I just came up with that analogy. I don't know whether that's accurate or not, but it feels like that."

"We are the last, to my counting, the last magic shop in all of New England," DeAngelis said.

It's not that magic is dying. Because of shows like America's Got Talent, DeAngelis said there's been a resurgence of interest. The death of magic stores, he said, is partly the Internet's fault.

"It seems to me that the younger kids, who are very much still into magic, don't care about the live experience, don't care about meeting somebody, shaking their hand, getting their autograph," he said. "They're happy to buy an autographed deck of cards from online or watch a downloaded lecture."

Now, the mystery is where Massachusetts' magicians will go to swap old stories, learn some new ones, and share the secrets of the tricks behind the tricks.

<https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2019/04/30/last-specialty-magic-store-in-new-england-disappears>

David Berglas, England's Magic Legend

He made his ACAAN (Any Card At Any Number) ,the Holy Grail of Card Magic.



Magician David Berglas, known as the International Man of Mystery, has been awarded the first ever MBE for a contribution to magic, at the age of 92. David has performed since the 1950s.

More Exposures on the Internet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Loqc7Re87BQ>



Photo : <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/astagnaro/why-don-bosco-is-the-patron-saint-of-magicians>

St. John Bosco, the Roman Catholic patron saint of *magicians*.

Don Bosco was a priest, and amateur conjurer, who was ordained a saint in 1934 by Pope Pious 11th. Every January 31, Don Bosco's feast day on the Catholic liturgical calendar, magicians celebrate by performing free benefit shows for children. Performing for kids is immensely gratifying. It's not hard to see why Don Bosco chose to spread his passion for God to them with his use of magic and illusion.

In January 2002, a raucous, carnival-like atmosphere swept Vatican City. On this day, hundreds of glitzy, costumed magicians, ventriloquist's, fire eaters, and jugglers, from around the globe, gathered to present a petition to his Holiness, Pope John Paul 2nd. Leading the crusade was Salesian Father Silvano Mantelli. He and his army of entertainers called upon the Pope to declare, St. John Bosco, as the patron saint of magicians.

For twenty-five years, Fr. Mantelli, has been the principal organizer of the Mass Of The Conjurers, a celebration held every January 15, in St. Boscos hometown of Becchi. Magicians from around the world are invited to attend the special Magicians Mass and perform for the congregation. He also stays active in the Italian magic community as president and founder of his non-profit organization, The Mago Sales Foundation. This charitable institution travels to third world countries to perform magic for planets poorest children.

Fr. Mantelli handed the eighty-one-year-old Pope a very special gift. A crystal box containing a polished teak wood wand from India. It was a symbolic gesture to encourage Pope John Paul 2nd to continue performing the great magic that the world needs. Vatican officials said it was the first time any Pope had received a magic wand. It was a present from a young boy whose father had been an itinerant street magician. The child had been raised in one of, Mother Teresa's, Missionaries Of Charity orphanages. He stoically offered this cherished memento to, Fr. Mantelli, to give to His Holiness on this special occasion. The Pope responded to the gift by announcing to the gathered crowd, "We'll need a lot of magic wands to change our world; let's start with this one." Was this the Catholic Churches unspoken, yet long-delayed, public apology to the many conjurers who were condemned to death centuries ago?

Sigmund Freud characterized hostile humor as disguised aggressiveness. He argued that antagonistic wisecracking releases psychological tension and stifles homicidal impulses. The vocabulary of stand-up comedy is notorious for using violent sounding words to describe success at making an audience roar with laughter: "I murdered them!" or "I killed!"

In Elizabethan times, being accused of being a magician was no laughing matter. The victimized found it about as funny as dying of the Black Plague. Words like murder and kill, directed towards them, took on more sinister meanings. The Catholic Church of yesteryear was known for many things. Having a sense of humor about heresy isn't one of them.

Morton Smiths 1978 book, *Jesus The Magician; Son Of God Or Charlatan*, laid down the theory that Jesus was a wandering sleight of hand magician. Smith claims the miracles he performed were nothing but basic conjuring tricks. Early Christian artists of 3rd and 4th centuries A.D., regularly depicted Jesus Christ performing miracles while holding a wand in his hand.

During the first ten centuries of its existence, the fledgling religion was weak and few in numbers. By the eleventh century, the Church had become more powerful. Not seeing the irony of the situation, they launched a brutal campaign of terror against the practice of magic. The Ten Commandments were loose guidelines the clergy were expected to follow. What the Bible had to say about magicians and their ilk, wasn't up for interpretation. Take, for example, this passage from the King James Bible:

Revelation 21:8-But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death

The Papacy had a list of reasons to justify this persecution. Magicians denied the existence of God. They blasphemed. They committed incest, murder, and bestiality. They worshipped Satan and called him by name. They used their own children as human sacrifices to the devil. In their eyes, magicians were mindless, hedonistic slaves to Beelzebub's sexy and sinful ways.

Rumors were good enough to prove a charge of heresy. The tiniest bit of gossip whispered into a blabbermouths ear, could set off a tragic chain of events. Even if the accusation was proved to be false, witch hunters dished out a suitable punishment regardless. Guilty or not guilty were differences without a distinction. This was done as a friendly reminder to stay on the path of God.

Among the innocents caught up in the deluge were a number of persons practicing the ancient art of sleight of hand. It was presumed that their entertaining deceptions were aided by evil spirits. Those who dared ply their trade were hunted down and persecuted with extreme prejudice.

The making of a saint dates back to the time of Charlemagne, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The first public churches were built over the graves of Christian martyrs. Supply couldn't keep up with demand. Soon, Christians began dedicating churches to other holy men and women. Having been crucified or beheaded, in the name of Jesus, wasn't necessary anymore.

At first, becoming named a saint was a simple process (the equivalent of a high school popularity contest.) Things got out of hand fast. Overzealous parishioners started making up fictional exploits, even fictional martyrs, to get their guy or gal elected to sainthood. Church officials decided to intervene. Soon it became like The Academy Awards. The nomination process was taken out of the hands of the commoners. This left the voting procedure to members of an official governing body.

In 1983, Pope John Paul 2nd made radical changes to the canonization process. Local bishops would begin an investigation into the life of the nominated saint. In order to gain a historical perspective, this sometimes took years after their death. If they lived up to their holy virtues, these findings were brought before a panel of Vatican sponsored theologians. This group then gave the yes or no as to whether the beatification process could move forward. To the secular, beatification sounds like the title of a Jack Kerouac novel. To Vatican officials, it's a term that means, Blessed. To be beatified, the planned saint needs to perform one miracle after their death. If they pass this crucial test, then they can officially be put on a pedestal by their devotees.

Performing one miracle is a rarity. Performing two is a miracle in itself. In order to be canonized a saint, the venerated must have two miracles under their belt. Once this is accomplished, the Pope can give the official thumbs up. The proposed saint is then awarded membership into the club. Being bestowed this honor tells us that person is in Heaven for leading a holy life. This highest honor is to be recognized by the Universal Church.

John Bosco (Italian: Giovanni Melchiorre Bosco; 16, August 1815-31 January 1888) was born in the hillside village of Becchi. It's a quaint and picturesque hamlet in northwest Italy, bordered by France and

Switzerland. His father, Francesco Bosco, was a poor tenant farmer. He died two years after his youngest sons birth. His mother, Margerhita, was left to raise him and his two brothers-illiterate, unskilled, and alone.

Ninety days before giving birth to the future saint, French General Napoleon Bonaparte's army was defeated at Waterloo. For three years prior, the Italian peasantry of the Piedmont region, which Becchi was a part of, had fought boldly against the French. Their resistance finally crumbled after Bonaparte had taken command of the invading forces. He ordered his regiment to lay siege to the rustic countryside village. They left little standing. The aftermath was dreadful. Hunger, drought and organized crime became un-welcomed parts of daily life.

In order to survive, young John Bosco found work as a shepherd, tending farm animals, picking fruit, and any other employment that a young boy could find. His mother may have been illiterate, but she made sure that the same handicap wouldn't befall her youngest son. He was sent to the local parish for basic instruction in the four R's: reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion.

Despite the hardships, life growing up wasn't complete misery for John Bosco. In-between work and study, on market days, he would go to town with his mother. Live entertainment was a frequent attraction in the bustling marketplaces. Young John became enamored of the magicians, fire-eaters, acrobats, and jugglers who performed for the jostling crowds. He especially leaned towards the magicians. With a keen eye, he studiously observed their performances. Gradually he figured out how these seemingly impossible feats were carried out. What tricks he couldn't figure out on his own, he begged and pleaded for the traveling showmen to teach him. Through sheer dedication, he was able to cobble together enough sleight of hand moves, plus juggling and acrobatic stunts, to put together a small act.

Lying, cheating, and stealing are three necessary skills in the performance of magic. Stage magicians consider themselves to be practitioners in the art of honest deception. Magician, escape artist, and psychic debunker James Randi has referred to the practice as, "Telling lies for fun and profit." Even at such a young age, John Bosco knew that performing magic in a conventional way wouldn't suit him. Instead, the adolescent showman replaced the fibs, hoaxes and tall tales normally associated with conjuring, with something more spiritually nourishing. In his young hands, gaudy tricks became stories and presentations that illustrated something more divine.

Free time for John Bosco was a luxury. What little was available he spent performing his routine. Prayer was the price of admission to his shows. The pious young entertainer began and ended his programs by leading the crowd in worship. His act consisted of magic tricks, juggling balls and plates, walking a tight rope, and other impressive feats of acrobatics. In-between tricks he taught scripture. Any village bullies who heckled him were promptly challenged to a contest of strength. He instantly earned their respect. Week after week, Bosco gave sermons to flocks of curious bystanders who had stopped to watch his feats of conjuring. These audiences were made up of some of the poorest children in his neighborhood. The experience stayed etched into his memory.

Mentalist Max Maven says, "Young boys somewhere between that ages of nine and twelve go through a phase of wanting to learn magic. The phase is usually abandoned just as quickly as it's taken up, and they're off to the next phase of their adolescent arch." Young Bosco was one of those boys, only the

typical phase was no typical phase at all. Magic, along with a love of reading, study, plus his intense religious devotion, stayed with him for the rest of his life. These passions set the tone for his future life as a priest.

The word, Don, in Italian, is a title of respect, meaning Sir or Mister. Italians used this term centuries before actor Marlon Brando portrayed Mafia boss, Don Corleone, in Francis Ford Coppola's epic film, *The Godfather*. After his ordination in 1841, the newly christened, Don Bosco, was just another ordained priest serving parishioners in the capital city of Turin. He had made a commitment to work exclusively with poor children, the kind he had entertained with his magic tricks years prior.

After the devastation of the Napoleonic wars, suffering continued in the form of the industrial revolution. It caused more earthly misfortune than the human progress it claimed to represent. In Bosco's eyes, it brought with it a lack of faith in God. To the poverty-stricken farmers, the mysteries of the Almighty lacked the basic appeal of the almighty dollar that factory jobs produced. Unable to properly support their loved ones, young men left the countryside in droves looking for work in cities. The grass seemed greener on the other side. Sadly, it was all an illusion. There wasn't enough work to go around. Many of those same boys ended up homeless on the streets and took to lives of crime.

As any religiously minded parent knows, getting children interested in the church can be an uphill battle. Offering bribes and bait only seems to cheapen the benefits of attendance. It's like a timeshare salesperson offering an all expenses paid trip; with the full knowledge that you'll have to sit through a hard sell presentation by some conniving hustler. The charity was looked upon with the same suspicion as a member of the Mafia handing out offers you couldn't refuse.

Don Bosco got past the skepticism and began working with these wayward children. He took them off the mean and squalid streets, taught them trades, and in the process, taught them to love God. The Salesian order grew out of these boys. They became dedicated, hardworking, and holy. They reached out to others like themselves. As they grew in numbers, other priests came to join them in their work.

Founded in 1859, The Salesians of Don Bosco, are part of an internationally consecrated religious community comprised of both brothers and priests. Their mission is to educate and spread the word of God to young people who are poor or headed for a life in prison. At the time of his death, the original group of seventeen men had grown to over 1,000, with fifty-seven foundations throughout Europe and South America. It's now the third largest amongst Catholic men's orders. The Salesian sisters, like their male counterparts, follow Don Bosco's norms for education and character formation.

Their works have expanded to include trade, academic, and agricultural schools; seminaries; recreational centers and youth clubs; summer camps, and parishes in large cities. To this day, both orders help street kids involved in gangs throughout the world. This includes some of the most dangerous cities in the United States, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa.

"Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original. Whereas if you simply try and tell the truth (without caring two-pence how often it's been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without having even noticed it." This quote by C.S. Lewis aptly describes how the juvenile, John Bosco, single-handedly created the underground sub-genre of conjuring known as "Gospel Magic".

At trade shows and conventions in the United States, sales pitches lurk around every corner. Modern corporations employ magicians to perform at company booths. They pay top dollar to capture the hearts and minds of potential clients. The job of these hired magicians is to adapt their tricks to help promote and sell products, ideas, and services. It's not easy work. What Don Bosco was doing with his magic wasn't that much different. Instead of being a skill for some Fortune 500 company, Don Bosco was mesmerizing the crowds by selling the benefits of God.

It isn't what you do, but how you do it. Therein lies the secret of performing magic. The effects used by gospel magicians are exactly the same as effects used by secular magicians. The difference lies in the presentation. Gospel magicians alter and tailor their routines to instruct children and adults on some aspects of Christianity. They demonstrate theological principles by weaving together themes such as God's love and forgiveness, Christ's parables, the immaculate conception, or the Holy Trinity.

The early followers of Christianity had to hide in the shadows, forever fearful of violent oppression. Modern-day gospel magicians have things a bit easier. Hurt feelings at the hands of snickering, humorless atheist's is as bad as it gets. But, they are not alone. There are several groups that offer a community of like-minded Christian and Catholic magicians. The Fellowship Of Christian Magicians and the Catholic Magicians Guild are both popular in North America. According to The Christian Conjuror Magazine, both organizations combined operate in over thirty countries and six continents.

Fr. Mantelli sees Gospel Magic as an antidote to superstition. Others see it as a confusing contradiction. "In Italian, the word for magician-mago is ambiguous," explains Fr. Mantelli, "You can have good magicians and bad ones, just as you have white magic and black magic. We are on the side of white magic, you understand?" Unfortunately, everything old is new again. A small minority of fundamentalist Christians are going on the offensive against author J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series of books. They see the harmless tale of good vs. evil as a type of gateway drug that encourages innocent youth into practicing the occult.

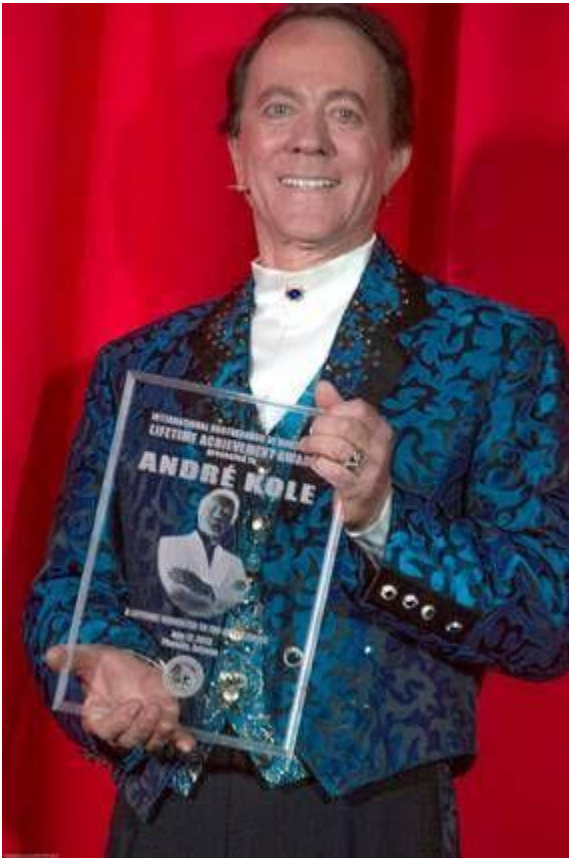
Fortunately, the Catholic Church has mellowed with age and softened its views against magic as entertainment. Now their anger is directed towards frauds like psychic surgeons. These con-artists, who prey on the naive, operate in spiritually devout countries like the Philippines. They make bogus claims of using God's powers to heal terminal diseases like cancer.

Magician, juggler, acrobat, tailor, writer, publisher, patron saint of apprentices, editors, publishers, and juvenile delinquents. St. John Bosco became all these things in order to bring children closer to God. He firmly believed, like Father Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town, that there are no bad children. There are only bad environments, bad training, bad example, and bad thinking.

He set out for the rest of his life to prove these convictions. The shepherd boy of Becchi, who performed magic to win souls for God, who became a priest, the founder of missions, the teacher of children, a beloved apostle of youth, and the architect of Gospel Magic, is, now and forever, is St. John Bosco: patron saint of magicians.

<https://magicroadshow.com/posts/> from Christopher M. Reynolds

Speaking of Gospel Magic-



Andre Kole sold his entire illusion show the David Sandy.

For years Andre travelled under the auspice of Campus Crusade for Christ and he often was confronted by extremist Evangelical Fundamentalists, who told he that “magic is of the Devil”.

Andre usually gave them a pamphlet that he wrote. He explained that he was a Christian and his illusions was in no way connected to the “Supernatural”.

Currently there is an explanation that stage magic is not demonic on The Fellowship of Christian Magicians website. <https://fcm.org/should-a-christian-do-magic/>

Sadly, Superstition tends to follow an extremist Fundamentalist-Literalist cultic religious mindset. In terms of fear, hate, rage, exclusion and personal power, there is not a lot of difference in the psychology of the Taliban and events like Jonestown, Waco and Christian Cults.

The surest way to scare off a Jehovah Witness is to meet them at the door and show them a French Drop coin vanish and tell them you are a magician. That works almost as well as telling them that before you listen to anything they have to say, they must join you in the Pledge to the American Flag.

That is totally against their religion.

Here I am at the Fellowship Hall in my church doing a show for the families and visitors. You can recognize many of my props. :



When I was living in rural Virginia, one Episcopal minister got a complaint from a church member who said that I was in league with the devil. The minister was laughing when he later told me about it.

He said, “ This area of the country is so backwards that even some Episcopalians handle snakes!”

So, I put together a humorous example of silliness and hypocrisy .

My point was that optical and sound illusions are all around us, but we should appreciate how they can be of value and not be superstitious and fearful.

I sent the letter the Andre Kole and told him that he could use it. He wrote back that the letter was funny but I seemed to be making fun of fearful people and the letter would do no good. Probably

his reasonable theological approach did not convince anyone either. There really is no way to convince fearful, superstitious people. They will simply throw Bible verses, out of context and with no connection to the issue, back at you.

Here is my letter:

This was heard this from a pulpit one Sunday:

“Friends before we go to prayer this Sunday Morning, I have a few announcements.

We need to compliment the choir or how good they look with their new robes this morning. We bought the ones with vertical pleats that gives the illusion of everyone looking thinner. It will fool the audience and you will feel better about your looks.

Bless you all for contributing to Bucky Adams new artificial eye. It looks so real and he has recovered nicely since the terrible accident with the Sunday School bus.

I talked with the architect about our new sanctuary building plans and we have decided to conceal the Baptistry behind a false wall that opens. You would never know it was there until we use it.

The flowers this morning look great and believe it are not they are made of silk and fake, but they look real and will save us the cost every week that we can use on missions.

For some of you who are wondering where the speakers are. Brother Ripatoe climbed up and cut holes in the front wall and we have hidden them in the wall behind the grilles so they can't be seen. When I heard them, it could have fooled me.

Finally, today is my 35th Anniversary and my wife Millie looks better than she did when we got married. Sister Rose sells Mary Kay and came over and showed her all the tricks on how to put on make up to make everything look great.

Oh, one more thing. I hate to bring this up. I got a letter last week from a so-called ‘Gospel Magician’ who wanted to come a speak here. His letter said he, “does visual evangelism with inspirational illusions.”

Listen here, as long as I am the pastor of this church, I will not allow demonic illusions, trickery and visual an gimmicks here.

I told him that we cannot participate in the devil's work.

Now, let's go to prayer.....”

It's Not Fiction: Sound Wave Technology Levitates Objects

<https://now.northropgrumman.com/its-not-fiction-sound-wave-technology-levitates-objects/>



And then there was the magic collector that just had too much stuff...

I am sure they will be in Orlando (Fri, Sep 6, 10 AM – Sun, Sep 8, 1 PM) at the upcoming Magicpalooza Magic History Convention, buying more things!



A lecture by Dennis Phillips



THREE WHO I KNEW

*Their beginnings, their talents, their glory and
their legacy!*

**A personal remembrance of their contribution
to the history of the Magic Arts.**



Philip Morris



Paul Osborne



Vince Carmen

See examples of the sets, their magic, their routines and
hear the back story on their business models, methods
and markets, especially the workings of "the spook show"
and the "the phone room" used in the 1950s to 1990s
for touring a magic illusion Show.

Only at the 2019 Florida Magic History Conference

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Paul Lembo
Restoring Vintage Magic

David Charver
Special Guest

Dan Stapleton
In Search of the Great Mystery

Bob Swadling
Evolution of the Magic Tea Kettle

Frances Willard
Guest of Honor

Jim Green
Here the Magician

Phil Schwartz

Dennis Phillips
Three Magic Icons

Mario Carrando
Jester

Sammy Smith
Building "The" Hall

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It's
FLORIDA...
Make it a
VACATION!

Big Laughs...

Stolen from Facebook.

(Recall that Tom Wenk cleverly created the effect “Misled”, which is, pushing a pencil through a dollar bill, used by David Copperfield on a TV special <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voUwBdOoltI>)

 **Timothy Wenk**
21 hrs

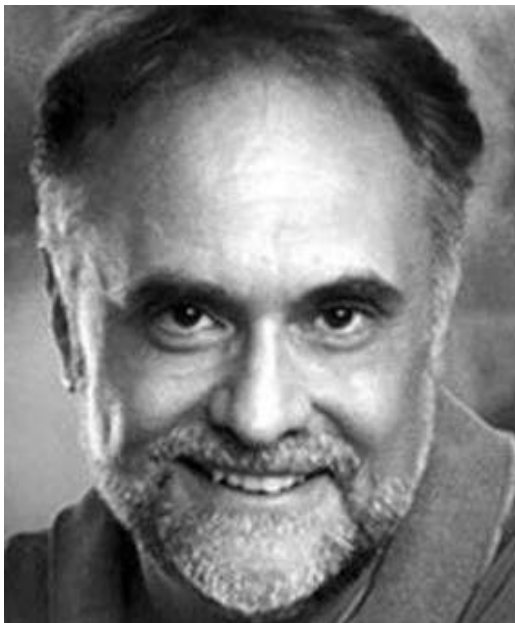
A magic collector,
a mentalist,
and a sleight of hand magician
go into a steakhouse restaurant.
In order, they all order their steaks....
Rare, medium, and well done.

  Rex Todd Alexandre, Graham Rogers and 67 others 11 Comments

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 **Timothy Wenk** The Cardistry guy wasn't there. He was home alone eating ramen.
Like · Reply · 17h  1



Magicians guard an empty safe.

— *Jim Steinmeyer* —

I don't know at what point in time Steinmeyer said this but I suspect it was before the convenience of search engine technology was made readily available to anyone with a smart phone and before anyone could make money

posting secrets on line.

There is no safe anymore...Dennis