

Final Pandemic Edition #24

August 22, 2021 | Archived Famulus



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

-Orlando and nation still on a slowly relaxing pandemic alert with caution advised for continuing variants-

Our August meeting was again live and in person at the Kirkman Road IHOP. Attendance was a bit lower than normal, at 16, and probably it was the usual hot days of August and members on vacation. Also there are still concerns about the rise of cases of the COVID Delta variant and the close proximity of the meeting room.

President Mike Matson was working a magic show this evening and Craig Fennessey, Vice President, filled in as meeting leader. He began by announcing the reopening of magic shows at the local attractions here in Orlando. Craig will again be at the Hard Rock Café.

Dan Stapleton opened the meeting show with a stunt that he read in an old Dunninger book. He sat in a chair and put his right hand, palm open, on top of his head. A strong male spectator stood behind and put his hand on Dan's arm and could not lift Dan's arm off his head. The powerful effect is like “The Georgia Magnet Act”, the small woman back in Vaudeville. Even strong men could not lift her or push her over. Dan then went into an effect where he showed that it was possible to fit 12 magicians in 11 hotel rooms. Playing cards represented the rooms. It is an effect that lovers of Math Magic would know and everyone enjoys.

Jafo closed out the meeting with some fancy coin sleights, a coin roll with dimes and a nice lecture on how he was able to produce a silver dollar right in front of a spectator. Jafo went into every move, the psychology, the Ramsey subtilty, hand positions and great hand acting.

Dennis Phillips

Note from Thom Parkin:

Dennis,

Just today Michael O'Brien posted a review of The Trainer Deck.

He provides a really good description of it.

This is the deck used to rapidly learn the Aronson Deck Stack. Each card has visual cues to help you learn.



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

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

I think it was the late mentalist, Bob Cassidy, who complained about the number of memory experts who can't pronounce the word “mnemonics”.

A blast from the past.

Two who we know, the younger Neil Patrick Harris and Ed Alonzo.

This is the classic Edmund Spreer “mirror periscope” system that he developed for Fu Manchu (David Bamberg -the great South American Illusionist) and his Pendulum Sawing.

The mirror angles require the green robes to hide that the reflection of anyone in the rear is slightly lower.

Alonzo inadvertently exposes the mirror offset at 4:57 in to the clip! Pause it and notice the box is BELOW the mirror angle!

This is still a classic illusion and Doug Henning also used it.



The Magic Solution to people stealing packages off your porch!

OR, how to built a mirror box trick.

Girl without a Middle

A beautiful Egyptian-themed classic masterpiece.

This is the Thayer (for Thurston's Show) adaptation of P.T. Selbit's "Lady without a Middle".
Selbit required a trap door in the stage and Thayer eliminated that need

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The plot is that the girl goes into mummy case. Doors close but legs are visible (in my version). Wide blades divide her below the neck and above the knees.

When the top door is opened, her head can be seen.

When the middle doors are opened, her middle is gone! The side doors are opened, and the back door hinged back, and the magician looks through where her middle should be.



Her legs still move.

My improvements were to add the 4-inch black wood border on the back door and cover the back of that frame with spandex. This masks where the girl's upper body is hiding! The door is thick but not a problem.



If performed against a black backdrop, the masking cannot be seen. The side doors open which adds to restricting the audience view. In performing this, you will never have a problem with most angles to 145 degrees.

The base and the front King Tut face comes off but otherwise it does not fold.

This makes it exceptionally durable for heavy road use. Two golden decorative blade holders add the stage look.

I chose an Ancient Egyptian theme and use an appropriate backdrop and wardrobe.

This is one of those wild “Do it yourself” ideas. My wife fixed us a couple of these “Healthy Choice” dinners and I noticed that with two of them I could make a reasonable version of the Chop Plates.

The Chop Plate effect was that you had two soup plates and dipped one into a big bowl of confetti and covered it with the other plate and when they were separated a dove was inside and the confetti had disappeared.

Mark Wilson did this on his Magic Land of Alakazam TV show.

I covered the insert (steamer basket) with confetti. It nicely fits over its own plate and looks like a plate heaping full of confetti. I used the plate from the other dinner as the cover for plate of confetti with the fake.

It worked perfect. I suppose that you could transform a plate of confetti into a plate of small toys or wrapped candy, in you do not want to use live animals.

Try it.

Healthy
Choice.

simply
steamers

Chicken & Vegetable Stir Fry

Chicken Breast, Broccoli, Edamame,
Carrots, Red Bell Peppers & Onions in a
Sesame Soy Sauce

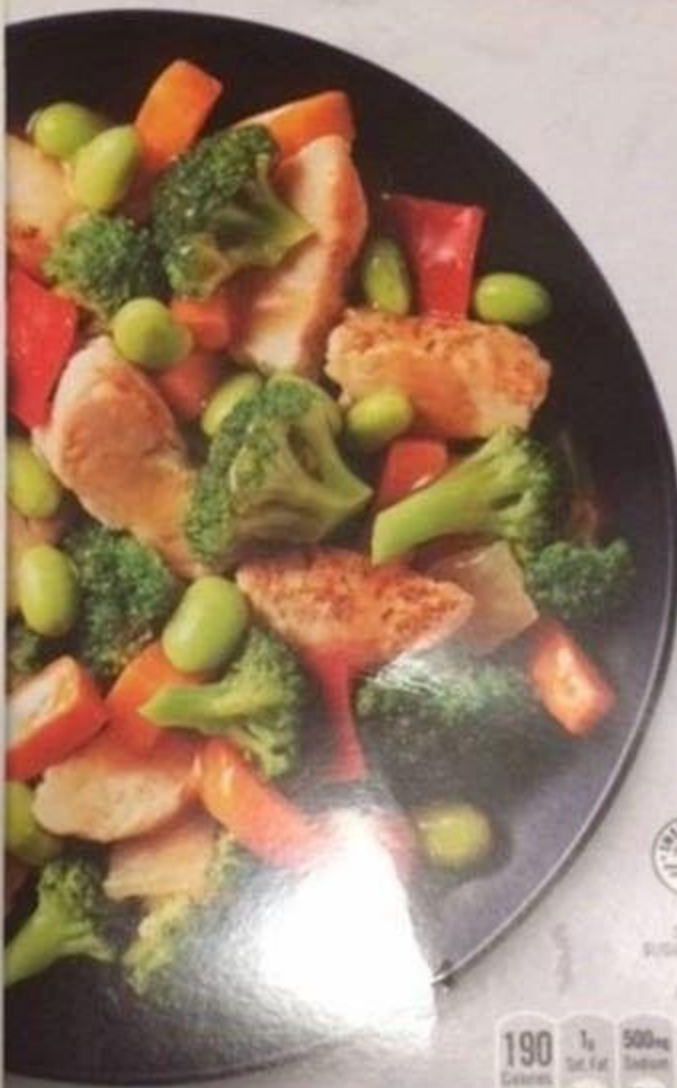


NOTHING ARTIFICIAL

MADE WITH 100% NATURAL* CHICKEN

NET WT 8.25 OZ (234g)

KEEP FROZEN. MUST BE COOKED THOROUGHLY.



SERVING
SUGGESTION

PER MEAL

190
Calories

1g
Tot. Fat
2% DV

500mg
Sodium
22% DV

8g
Total
Sugars



Gaëtan Bloom ,Magician in 1983. I am not sure that I liked the exposure of Abbott's "Hole in one" , but Bloom has been a creative magician and using unusual methods has been his signature.

I was going through some of Bev Bergeron's old VHS tapes and I found two and a half hours of "The Wonderful World of Magic", a mid-1970s syndicated TV show, which was hosted by Bill Bixby. Apparently the story behind that show is that all of the footage was from the 1973 Paris FISM Convention.

Pete Biro said the original producers went bankrupt and sold the footage to Four Star Productions who hired Bill Bixby to be the host and they uses the Magic Castle as a setting for the introductions. Valerie Swaddling's Act was also on the show.

On one tape, I found a short bit with Bob Swadling doing what at first seemed like a dancing cane and then he walked away from it! I am sure that was unexpected for magicians. I

grabbed a screen capture of Bob performing off it of my TV with my cell phone. Its not a good photo but you can get the idea.



My Canadian magic friend, Larry Thornton, told me about this book:

In *“How to Fly a Horse” - The Secret of Creation, Invention, and Discovery*, author Kevin Ashton makes the case that creative genius is a myth. He argues that flashes of inspiration are never the work of just one person, even if one person gets all the credit.

Creative geniuses from Thomas Edison to Albert Einstein have all said, more or less, that Creativity is 1% Inspiration and 99% Perspiration.

Einstein borrowed many of his ideas to develop his General and Special Theories of Relativity. His theories did not spring onto his mind fully formed. It took the math of Riemann, Minkowski, Poincare. Ricci’s Tensor Calculus and others, along with his wife, as well as classmate Marcel Grossman’s insights into Differential Geometry along with the numerical ability of David Hilbert to arrive at what we call “Relativity”. Einstein never won a Nobel Prize for Relativity. He only won the Nobel for his explanation of “The Photoelectric Effect”.

In magic illusions, we can see the progression, failures and success of acclaimed creators such as Servais Leroy, P.T. Selbit, Robert Harbin and Jim Steinmeyer. Harbin struggles for

years with various ideas until he arrived at his “Zig Zag Girl” and Jim Steinmeyer has documented his earlier versions of his version of the Zig Zag, “Modern Art”. I worked with Paul Osborne and some creations went through many square feet of cardboard mockups and even then, a lot of wasted plywood, until a workable prop was made.

Call it a “flash of inspiration” or a “spark of genius”, but whatever you call the act of creation, it’s often portrayed in our culture as something like mysticism. The word “Music” came from the Ancient Greek idea that mystical spirits, Muses, put the melodies in your head.

We’ve become used to the idea that only certain savants, geniuses, or brainiac whizzes are blessed with an ability to see in their mind’s eyes what we ‘mortals’ could never imagine, and that allows them to bring awesome creations into being. But that’s a popular idea that is deeply flawed — and even dangerous.

Two short excerpts will suffice to illustrate the author’s premise. (He has many more.) The first concerns the creativity of Amadeus Mozart. In 1815, Germany’s General Music Journal published a letter in which Mozart described his creative process:

“When I am, as it were, completely by myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer; say travelling in a carriage or walking after a good meal, or during a night when I cannot sleep; it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. All this fires my soul, and provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost finished and complete in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successfully, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. When I proceed to write down ideas the committing to paper is done quickly enough, for everything is, as I said before, already finished; and it rarely differs on paper from what it was in my imagination.”

In other words, Mozart’s greatest symphonies, concertos, and operas came to him complete when he was alone and in a good mood. He needed no tools [i.e. musical instruments] to compose them. Once he had finished imagining his masterpieces, all he had to do was write them down. Or so we’re meant to believe.

Mozart’s letter has been used to explain creation many times. Parts of it appear in *The Mathematician’s Mind*, written by Jacques Hadamard in 1945, in *Creativity: Selected Readings*, in 1976, in physicist Roger Penrose’s award-winning book, *The Emperor’s New Mind*, and it is alluded to in Jonah Lehrer’s 2012 bestseller, *Imagine*. It influenced the poets Pushkin and Goethe and the playwright Peter Schaffer. And directly and indirectly, it helped shape common beliefs about creating.

But there is a problem. Mozart did not write this letter. It is a forgery. This was first shown in 1856 by Mozart's biographer Otto Jahn and has been confirmed by other scholars since.

Mozart's real letters — to his father, his sister, and to others — reveal his true creative process. He was exceptionally talented, but he did not write music by magic. He sketched his compositions, revised them, and sometimes got stuck. He could not work without a piano or harpsichord. He would set work aside and return to it later. He considered theory and craft while writing, and he thought a lot about rhythm, melody, and harmony. Even though his talent and a lifetime of practice made him fast and fluent, his work was exactly that: work. Masterpieces did not come to him complete in uninterrupted streams of imagination, nor without an instrument, nor did he write them down whole and unchanged. The letter is not only forged, it is false.

It lives on because it appeals to romantic prejudices about invention. There is a myth about how something new comes to be. Geniuses are believed to have dramatic moments of insight where great things and insights are born wholeheartedly. Poems are written in dreams. Symphonies are composed complete. Science is accomplished with eureka shrieks. Businesses are built with magic touches. Something is not, then is. We do not see the road from nothing to new, and maybe we don't want to. Artistry must be misty magic, not sweat and grind. But it dulls the luster to think that every elegant equation, beautiful painting, and brilliant machine is born of effort and error, the progeny of false starts and failures, and that each maker is as flawed, and small and mortal as the rest of us. It is seductive to conclude that great innovation is delivered to us by miracle via genius. And so the myth.

Stephen King has published more than eighty books, and most of them fiction. He says he writes two thousand words a day. Between the beginning of 1980 and the end of 1999, he published thirty-nine new books, totaling more than five million words. But writing two thousand words a day for twenty years yields *fourteen* million words: King must erase almost two words for every one he keeps. He says, "That DELETE key is on your machine for a good reason."

So where do Stephen King's deleted words go? They are not all lost in rephrasing. One of King's most popular books is a novel called *The Stand*, published in 1978. The finished manuscript, submitted after he had made all his deletions, was, he says, "twelve hundred pages long and weighed twelve pounds, the same weight as the sort of bowling ball I favor."

His publishers were worried that such a long book would not sell, so King made more deletions: three hundred pages worth. But his most telling revelation is that he might never have travelled that far: around the halfway point in writing, after more than five hundred

single-spaced pages, King got stuck: “If I’d had two or even three hundred pages I would have abandoned *The Stand* and gone on to something else — God knows I had done it before. But five hundred pages was too great an investment, both in time and creative energy.”

King will throw away three hundred single-spaced typewritten pages, about sixty thousand words, which will have taken him more than a month to write, if he feels they are not good enough.

But on book tours, Stephen King is always asked by people incredulous over his prodigious output, “*Where do you get all your IDEAS?*” — as if they all came to him in some kind of “flash of insight”, whole and pristine, like a kind of magic. — Not unlike the work of Mozart and virtually every other successful musician, writer, inventor, scientist, entrepreneur, engineer, and artist — when their prior work “behind the scenes” has been kept invisible to the world at large.

The Amazing Jonathan at the rise of Post Modern magic 1995.

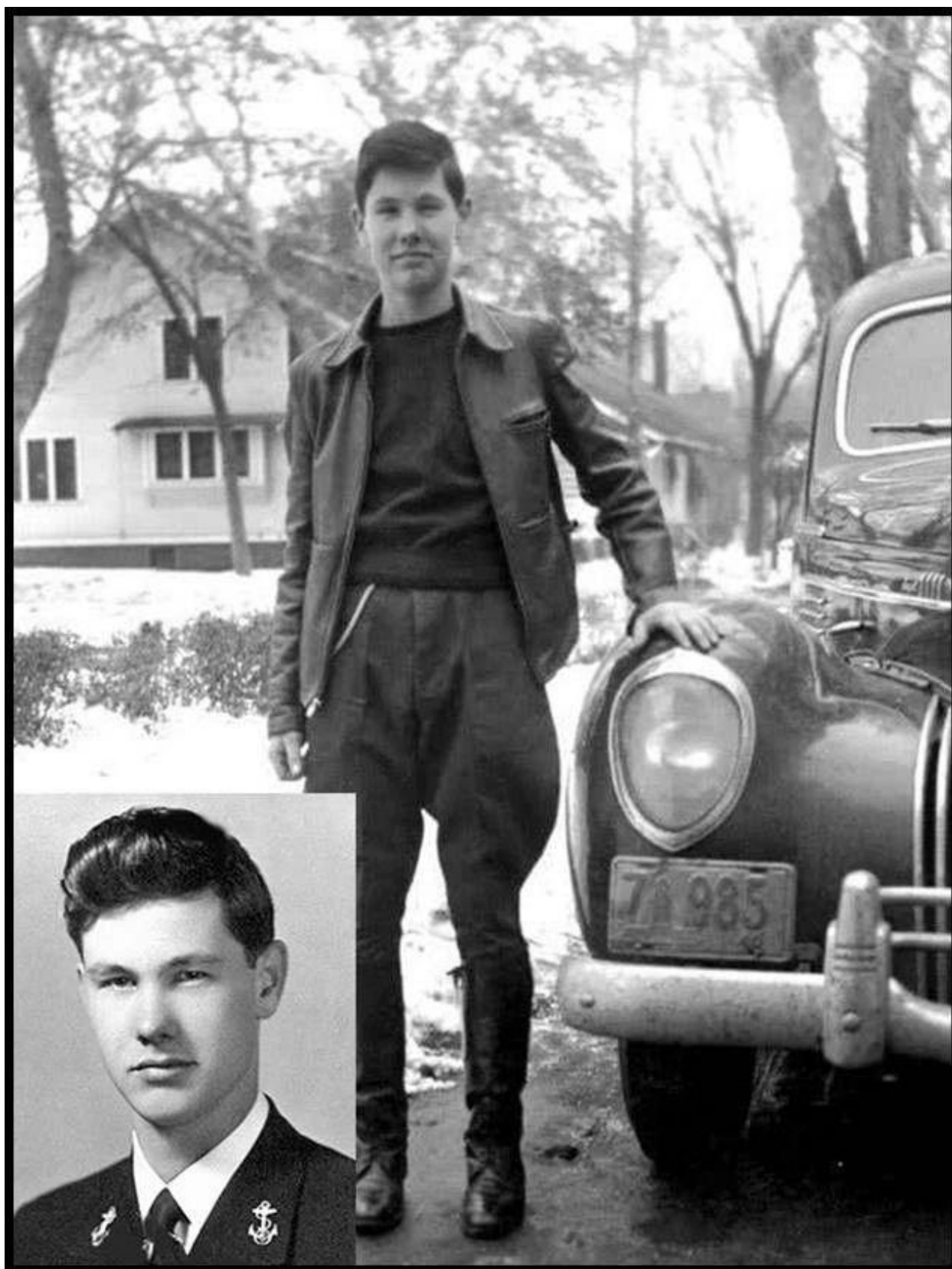
Here is 15 year old Johnny Carson of Norfolk, Nebraska.

October 23, 1925 – January 23, 2005

At this time in his life, he was an amateur magician performing as "The Great Carsoni".

He later served during World War Two on my Dad’s Battleship the U.S.S. Pennsylvania, as an officer. My Dad remembered his reputation for card tricks.

Carson’s career after the military is well known by Baby Boomers. His late night talk show often had magician guests.



Mac King in 1989. Here he does his version of a “signed card to wallet” using the Terry Seabrook wallet.

Of course he has lots of his own style and comedy using a “thumb tie” and funny lines with the spectator.

Indian Sword Basket

Ralph Adams’s design

This is the classic illusion that continues to please and mystify and the Ralph Adams model is the clever up-to date method. Adams created it in the 1960s. Versions before then were mostly made from woven wicker. Bill Neff’s was made from Paper Mache, heavy waterproof glue, and shellac.



The plot is that the girl steps into the basket and is covered with a large cloth (It takes 4 yards cut into 2-yard sections with one seam to hold the sections together). You attempt to force her through the narrow opening and suddenly the cloth sags and she is not under it.

You put on the lip and plunge 5 swords into the basket and then withdraw them and lay the cloth over the opening and step inside and sit. You are almost filling the basket. She’s gone!



You step out, replace the lid and withdraw the swords and again throw the cover over and remove the lid and slowly the girl emerges unscathed under the cloth.

The photos show the clever design which adds more room to the load chamber. The table is hollow and adds to the room for the girl.



The basket is made from one-fourth inch Luan plywood with layers of muslin and woodworkers glue making it rock solid. The wicker design was hand painted by me.

My original basket, as seen in the publicity flyer, was made from a theatrical product used for making props, called Celastic[®]. It is a flannel cloth impregnated with soluble plastic and activated with acetone. It dries quickly and rigid, almost like fiberglass.

I made a form from chicken wire and covered it with aluminum foil and laid the wet strips of Celastic[®] over it. After it was dry and rigid, I then pulled out the form. The basket can be painted, or fabric covered.

Abbott's Sword Basket is made from fiberglass. I was told it was a distribution box for a sewage drain field.

Many acts, such as The Pendragons, have made the Indian Sword Basket a feature.



For all you Do-it-Yourselfer magic builders, there are lots of good ideas out there.

Hans Klok with a nice routine.

Now, if I was back in my “Big Cat” Days of performing, it would be a deal!



Dennis