

SPECIAL PANDEMIC EDITION # 16

December 26, 2020 | Archived Famulus



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

-Orlando and nation on partial lockdown-

No Ring/ Assembly face to face meetings until future notice

Virtual on-line sessions happening on the regular monthly meeting night, the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30PM

Our December Meeting and Holiday party was done on Zoom on December 16th. President Mike Matson and Webmaster Craig Schwarz arranged for a warm evening of reminiscences of this troubling year and a celebration of the magical life of the late Bev Bergeron, our namesake. Sadly, Bev left us earlier this month. Our group is a result of his years of work promoting the magic brotherhood and sisterhood. We will miss him and always honor his memory as a talented performer, inventor, author and mentor.

Secretary, Dennis Phillips went over the historically pivotal year of 2020 on our Central Florida group and the local and national magicians we lost, as well as the effects of the pandemic on local live entertainment. There were high points with appearances, by our local magical performers on national TV shows.

Our incoming officers for 2021 were elected. The current slate of officers will continue for another year. Michael Matson as President, Craig Fennessy as Vice President, Thom Parkin as Treasurer, Dennis Phillips as Secretary and Craig Schwarz as Webmaster. Sargent at Arms, Chris Dunn and Director at Large, David Freeman. Pasquale Palazzolo was added to the board as Communications Coordinator and though not on the board, member Phil Schwartz is recognized and continues as our Magic Historian Emeritus.

Following the business meeting our fun and games featured a rib-tickling performance by ventriloquist Jacki Manna with Quackers the Duck and Mathilda the lovable old lady. Ryan Stiner then portrayed Santa's Elf and Joe Zimmer was Santa and proved that, “He knows if you've been bad or good” with many personal observations about members.

We had a word search contest relating to our Ring Blog and a Trivia Contest. It was a fun evening and we are all hoping for a better 2021.

Dennis Phillips.

Bev Bergeron, was a renowned magician, consummate clown - in the best & truest sense of the word, and our beloved organization's namesake has passed.

Bev inspired countless magicians throughout the decades with his inimitable style, performed at some of the world's greatest venues & entertainment destinations, helped to create and pioneer magic on TV, and contributed to the art of illusion in ways few others have... or ever will.

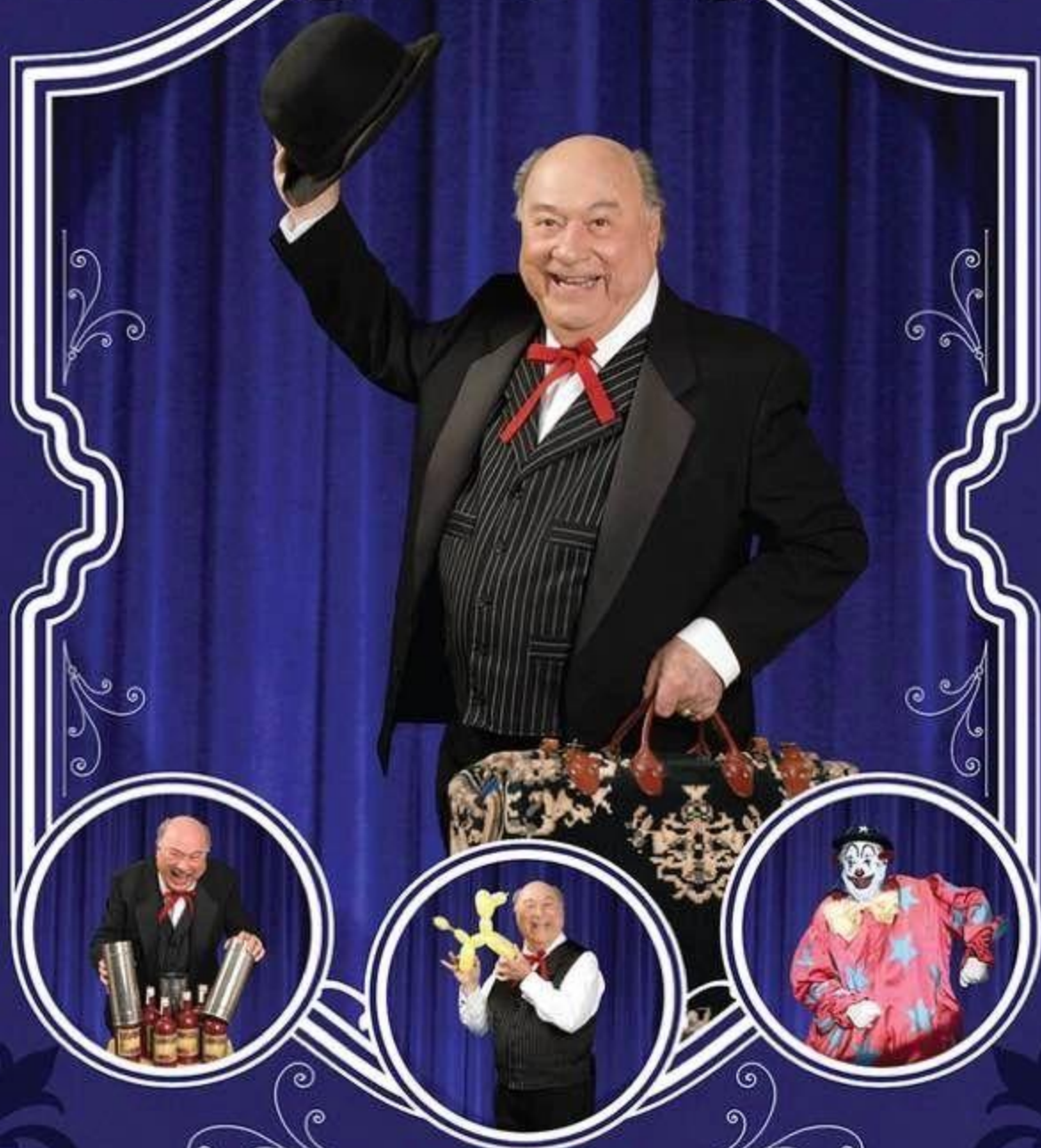
Although he will be greatly missed by all within the community & beyond, his magic will live on in our memories & hearts.

Bev was born in Baytown, Texas: 29 Dec 1930- He was inspired to do magic after seeing Harry Willard when he was 10 years old. In 1948 he was assisting Willard. Bev was featured as "Rebo the Magic Clown" in Mark Wilson's weekly national TV series "The Magic Land of AllaKazam" 1960-65 as well as the previous local Dallas TV series "Magic Circus" 1958 & then Wilson's syndicated Pillsbury Magic Circus. Bev worked Florida's Disney World "Diamond Horseshoe Review" as "Pecos Bill" 1971-86. Later he worked as a street entertainer at Sea World. He was the International Brotherhood of Magicians President 1996-97.

Aside from his professional activities, Bev was also a family man and his wife Alouise and big family of children and grandchildren will also miss him. Our condolences and love to them and thanks, to them, for allowing him to share his life with us for all these years. For many decades Bev published a Christmas Newsletter called "The Bergeron Bee" and those of us who enjoyed the yearly edition were able to keep up with his growing family of grandchildren.

Bev wrote Willard the Wizard (1978, 154pp) as well as Tony Marks *Aristocrat of Deception* (2002)

BEV BERGERON







Bev meant the world to me. He had a favorite line he would always use to get me involved in a discussion. He would get my attention in a group and say to me, "Come here, I know you'll get this". Then he would explain some method, principle ,prop or TV camera technique to the few standing around. Bev was the ideal mentor-teacher who respected his students. He was always complimentary to my thinking, editing and writing in our Ring Famulus Newsletter which he turned over to me to edit over 20 years ago. Our friendship began when I moved to Florida in 1975 and the memories will last forever.

And with Harry Blackstone Jr.



<https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/26/media/disney-layoffs/index.html>

Walt Disney Co. is planning to shed 32,000 employees by the end of March as the coronavirus pandemic continues to hammer its [parks and resorts](#) business.

The layoffs were disclosed in a filing to the US Securities and Exchange Commission on Wednesday. Disney employs around 223,000 people, according to its most recent annual report. It had already announced plans to cut about [28,000 jobs](#).

The media and entertainment giant warned that it may also be forced to scrap its dividend in the future, and reduce or not make contributions to pension and retirement medical plans. It said it could slash investment in television and film productions, and furlough or terminate even more employees.

"Some of these measures may have an adverse impact on our businesses," Disney ([DIS](#)) said in the filing.

The pandemic has slammed Disney's parks business, which has more than 100,000 employees in the United States. The company has also been forced to suspend cruise ship sailings and delay [major film releases](#), such as "Black Widow," which was expected to be one of the year's biggest blockbusters.

All 12 of Disney's parks in North America, Asia and Europe were closed between March and May. While Disney has since reopened theme parks in Shanghai and Florida, its flagship park in California will remain shut at least until the end of 2020. Disneyland Paris was [forced to close](#) again late last month when France imposed a second nationwide lockdown.

One bright spot has been its streaming service, Disney+, which now has some [74 million subscribers](#) and has become the focus of the business following an overhaul of its [media and entertainment](#) division.

Chapek [said](#) in an earnings statement last week that its direct-to-consumer business is "key" to the company's future.

Disney swung to a loss of \$2.8 billion for the year to September 30, marking a sharp reversal from the previous year, when the company posted a \$10.4 billion profit.

Carnival cancels all remaining cruises through February 2021

Allen Kim, Devon M. Sayers and Tina Burnside, CNN • Published 3rd December 2020



(CNN) — Carnival Cruise Line [announced](#) Thursday that it has canceled its remaining cruises through February 2021, as [Covid-19 cases](#) continue to rise nationwide.

"We apologize to our guests but we must continue to take a thoughtful, deliberate and measured approach as we map out our return to operations in 2021," Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line, said in a statement.

"Our commitment to the health and safety of our guests, crew and the communities we visit is at the forefront of our decisions and operations."

Carnival said it is canceling cruise operations in February 2021 from Miami, Port Canveral and Galveston. The cruise line is also moving the inaugural sailing of its Mardi Gras ship to



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

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

December 2020

“I try to tell people, it’s not that I do anything even remotely better, it is that I think I have an understanding of how to make sure the full impact of the trick hits the spectator.”

- John Mendoza

In 1606, Shakespeare's theatre
was forced to close because of
the plague.

So he wrote King Lear,
Macbeth, Antony And
Cleopatra.

Wash your hands.
Be grateful.
Get better at what you do.

I was sorry to hear of the passing of, my longtime friend and mentor, Al Cohen “The Master Magic Demonstrator”! Al owned a magic shop in Washington DC for decades and peddled his magical wares at magic conventions all over.

I first meet Al in 1966 while living in Washington, DC. Al’s Magic Shop was a couple of counters and shelves in his Dad’s National Gift Shop on Pennsylvania Avenue.

I spent a lot of time hanging around the shop and kept in contact even when I moved.

He performed a very funny magic comedy act, acting as bumbling magician, “Pernell Zorch”. He wore an ill-fitting tux and when he turned around several pulls could be seen hanging out of the back of the coat. Al always had great stories about his famous customers

Al was also an accountant, but magic kept him very busy. For more than a half-century, Al was the source for magic in the Washington, DC area.

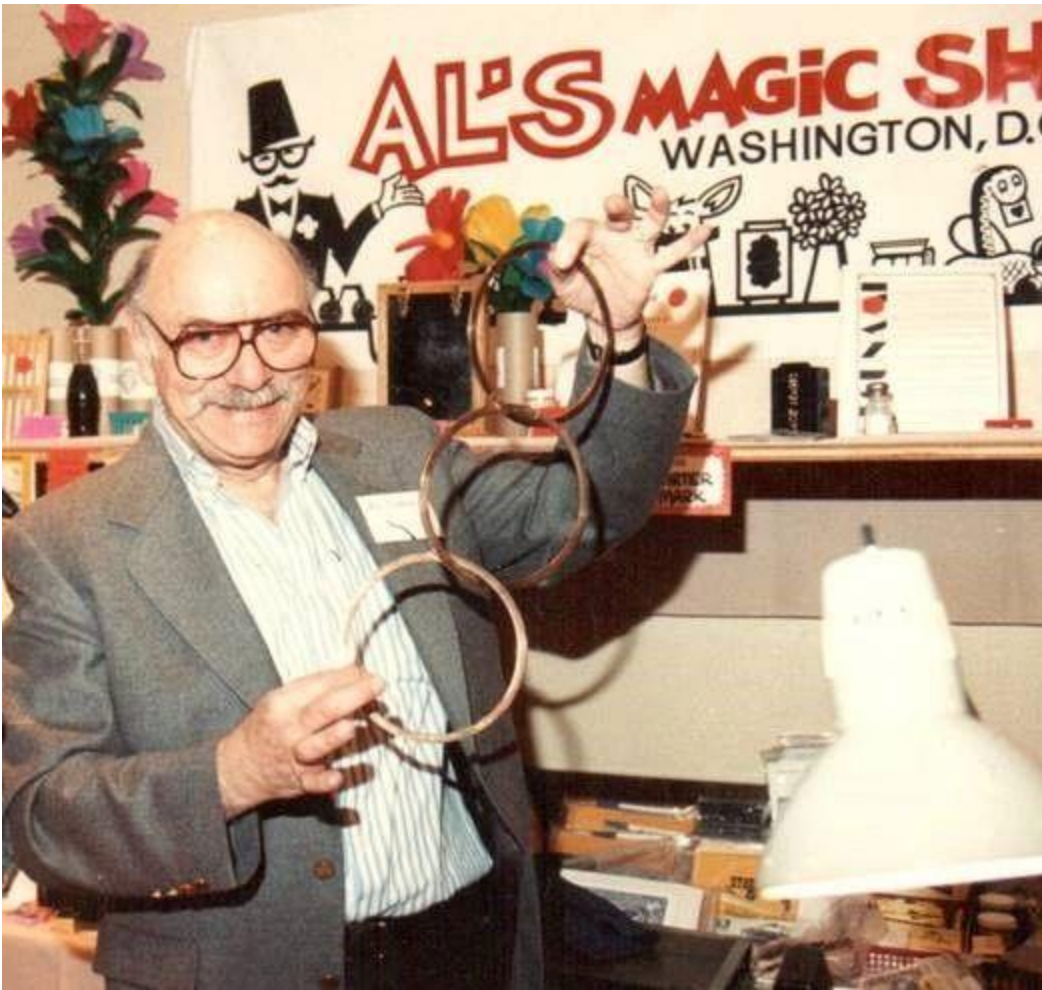
Both the famous and obscure, would go out of their way to visit Washington and stop in to see Al.

The list is so long and distinguished, you wouldn't believe it. When someone questioned it, Al would just smile and point at the ceiling, covered with playing cards signed by great magicians. Doug Henning, David Copperfield, Blackstone (Sr. and Jr.), Fred Kaps, Dai Vernon, Eddie Fields, Lou Tannen, Carl Ballantine, Eugene Burger, Okito, Cardini, J.B. Bobo, Mark Wilson, Bob Fitch, Slydini, Jay and Francis Marshall, Ali Bongo, Don Alan and many more all made the pilgrimage.

The list of celebrities who made a point of visiting Al's Magic Shop reads like a Who's Who from the last half of the 20th Century: Presidents Harry Truman & George H.W. Bush, DC Mayors Walter Washington and Marion Barry, GEN Norman Schwarzkopf, Mohammed Ali, Jay Leno, Joel Grey, Joan Rivers, Avery Brooks, Willard Scott, Steve Martin, Henny Youngman and Ted Koppel...and the list goes on.

While being in the Nation's Capital undoubtedly helped, I know of no other magic shop that can boast of this kind of patronage. When Al retired and sold the shop in 2001, the magic world went into mourning. In 2003, Al Cohen won magic's equivalent of a Lifetime Oscar, the [Academy of Magical Arts'](#) Lifetime Achievement Award.

One of the best reminiscences and understanding of Al is expressed in this article by Jamy Ian Swiss https://jamyianswiss.com/blog/the-end-of-an-era?fbclid=IwAR3vpe6mJHx3bDWaRFq6GPmUbtzg-L-vgft8dlx_P7KKPs-eHJLqL6n0Fgg



Steve Fearson is a magical genius and known for many magic principles, especially self-levitation and self-cutting effects.

The cut-in-half illusion only works when you watch the performer from the front. From the side, you can see that from the knee to the waist it's actually a plastic mannequin. Baggy clothes and body posture create the perfect illusion of a man holding his own legs.



5 THINGS MAGICIANS ALWAYS HEAR

"Can you make _____ disappear?": The mother-in-law, the check, the extra 15 pounds, the boss, the wife, and so forth.

"You should be on TV!": Whether it be America's Got Talent, Ellen, or even The Tonight Show, people often suggest going on these shows.

"What are next week's lottery numbers?": You get this one a lot, and no- you are not able to predict the numbers. If you could, you definitely wouldn't still be in the magic business!

"I've seen this trick before!": When a magician takes out a deck of cards, some people think they've already seen the trick that the magician is about to do. However, the chances of that are very slim as there are literally thousands of card tricks in the world. Sometimes, card tricks have the reputation of being dull,

you definitely should not do a card think they have any chance of having seen before.

"How did you do that?": You will love to hear this! It means you did our job well. But as flattering as this comment is, keep the secret to yourself.

For you do-it-yourself enthusiasts You can make this amazing effect.

This illusion is based off of a Peter Marvey concept.

Masters of Illusions is a hit-or-miss proposition. Sometimes interesting effects but many are poorly executed.

1. **The female assistants don't move or stand correctly. Bad wardrobe, hair, make up and heels.**
2. **The producers cheated with character-generated trickery by wiping out the black dress of the girl behind him! I froze the frame at that point!**

You should see behind him and the girl's black dress, but they blurred it out. Every other clip on YouTube had an assistant in black and if you

freeze frame the clip, you can see the method. You can see the editing blur in this clip shot.

Maybe it looked bad on the studio footage so they sweetened the video in post-production?

The trick is called T-Cut (By Adrian Soler/Kevin James) and you can read the description at the bottom.

Here's the official description...

Light weight, pack small play big, no gimmicks on your body, start clean, finish clean, great angles, no costume limitations, assemble it with out any tools in two minutes, can be performed with a spectator next to the prop, many presentational possibilities... practical strong and easy.

This version of the T-Cut is very light (28 pounds) because it was designed with portability in mind and can fit in to a suitcase that you can take even in a plane as regular checked luggage. It will arrive to you in box of 35 x 22 x 7 inches. This prop is not made for receiving impacts, standing on top of it or other abusive treatment. If taken care of, can give you many years of applause.



This is a colorized version of an old black and white Houdini photograph.

It is haunting.



An amazing illusion based on Math Topology, the “Hyper-card”.

This is one card, a double backed card and just 3 cuts.

I think that I may like this version better than the classic head twister version.

Here are some really unique illusions

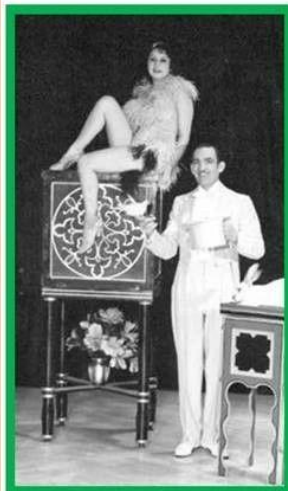
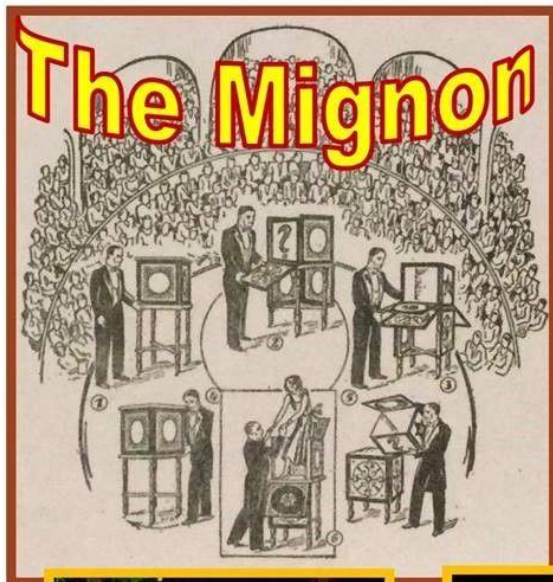
Jayne Loughland, one half of Safire with her then husband Stuart, sadly passed away on July 29th 2016.

Jayne performed magic both as an assistant & magician with Safire Illusionists for over 15 years.

Mignon Illusion - Conradi Horster of Germany 1930

Now resides in Baffling Bill's Illusionarium in Michigan

Among other illusionists who owned this was Jack Gwynne



Always room for one more classic dove act.

Inquiring minds want to know what happened to the Lear Jet that Copperfield Vanished?
Most of you know that I am an old pilot. The FAA keeps good records and those are all on line.
The jet is still around and he owns it! It is kept in a hanger in las Vegas.
When you are worth around One Billion Dollars in assets you can easily afford toys like this.



| N564CL | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| More free information from AviationDB for aircraft registration number N564CL. Can include other aircraft with the same tail or N number, sales and ownership history, FAA and NTSB accident reports, SDRs, and more. | | | |
| <div>Run Query for N564CL</div> | | | |
| Last Action Date | 2020-10-07 | Expiration Date | 2023-10-31 |
| Airworthiness Date | 2008-06-26 | Model Name | 25 |
| Manufacturer_Name | GATES LEAR JET | Street | 3650 W RUSSELL RD |
| Registrant Name | DAVID COPPERFIELD PROJECT MAGIC FUND | Registrant State | NV |
| Registrant City | LAS VEGAS | Country | UNITED STATES |
| Registrant Zip Code | 891182423 | Registrant Type | Corporation |
| Region | Western-Pacific | Certificate Issue Date | 2020-10-07 |
| Fract Owner | | Aircraft Type | Fixed wing multi engine |
| Status | N-Number Assigned and Registered | Year Mfr | 1976 |
| Serial Number | 25-060 | Builder Certification | Type Certificated |
| Mode S Code | 51633003 | Number Seats | 10 |
| Aircraft Category | Land | Aircraft Cruising Speed | 388 |
| Number Engines | 2 | Approved Operation Codes | Aerial Surveying |
| Aircraft Weight | CLASS 2 | Engine Type | Turbo jet |
| Airworthiness Classification | Restricted | Fuel Consumed | 31.00 |
| Engine Manufacturer | GE | | |
| Engine Model Name | CJ610-8 | | |
| Engine Horsepower/Thrust | 3100 | | |

Now. Copperfield gives you some of the production details of the magic effect!

It was 1976 , the Bicentennial Year and here was the Finale scene for that show.

My wife Cindy is on the left side of the photo in the blue Martha Washington gown. We were both 45 years younger.

(Photo made on stage at Azalea Park Elementary School)



This is a variation of the old Mac Birch Scimitar, later revised by Francis Martineau and Alan Wakeling for Mark Wilson(with giant cards).

I think I like this Murray Hatfield version as well, if not better, than the earlier ones.

I know that magicians were thinking, Murray was going to pull the boxes apart.

That actually happened in one version I recall seeing from Europe. The boxes broke into a set of twos. I don't recall that it added much to the overall effect.

The real shocking effect (with the scimitar) and main purpose was to quickly thrust the blade down and out and then immediately show the girl still intact.

That is why the Birch version had doors and not boxes that flipped up. Hatfield's and Wakeling's do slightly change the effect but it is stronger in other ways.



This trick was originally marketed by Bob Hummer in 1951 as "Mathematical Three-Card Monte". You can read more about the original version in [Martin Gardner's book, *Mathematics, Magic and Mystery*](#)

There are several great things about the routine. First, it's a great example of how even simple logic can be made to appear as a near-impossible feat. Second, because the logic is the method, you can (as noted in the video), apply this principle to any three objects.

Banachek has a version of this called "Ring of Truth". Brian Brushwood has a great version for closeup.

The only difference is that he watches the action , whereas Hummer (and others like Puck) turn around and have you call the moves with your back turned.

You could play this big and use large objects on a stage, if you so desired.

Take a deeper look at this great routine. It's well worth your time.



Over 50 years ago, the late Robert Harbin gave us an illusion masterpiece, “The Zig Zag”. Many of us had one and some still do.

Here is a great and logical design that I found. I am so tempted to use this design.



What do you say when a skeptic looks at you and asks?



Dennis' final 2020 reflection on show business, nuts, medical history, the Holidays and word meanings: (It has been absurd year, so I adapted my writing style to be an absurdist stream-of-consciousness narrative)

It's the holiday season and a big treat is all the nuts to eat.

There is an old circus show business phrase, "I made my nut". This meant that your box office income covered your operating budget and you did not lose money in the town.

I was told that in the old circus horse and wagon, traveling days, the local sheriff would come by the circus lot and unscrew and take all the main nuts off the wagon wheels so the circus could not leave town without paying all their bills. If you "made your nut" that meant you covered your financial obligations.

I always wondered why we call crazy, absurd illogical things, "nuts". There is even the vulgar use of the word to describe a pair of mammalian male reproductive organs.

The most famous use of the phrase "nuts" was around this time of year , in December 1944. Near the end of World War Two, at the Battle of the Bulge.

Brigadier General McAuliffe commanded the division artillery of the 101st Airborne Division.

In December 1944, the German army launched the surprise attack that became the Battle of the Bulge. This desperate campaign was Hitler's last attempt at defeating the Allied Invasion force.

At Bastogne, the 101st was besieged by a far larger force of Germans under the command of General Heinrich Freiherr von Lüttwitz.

When McAuliffe was asked to surrender, his reply was:

"To the German Commander, NUTS!"

The Germans did not understand the American term and had to be told that it meant, “ You are crazy. We will not surrender!” McAuliffe went on to win the battle.

The word *nut* has been in circulation since the very dawn of the English language — the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s earliest sighting of it dates back to around the year 875. And it’s been acquiring meanings other than “shell-encased fruit” all along: the thing a bolt screws into (first spotted in 1611), a question that’s difficult to answer (1545), the part of a musical instrument’s neck that the strings rest on (1698). One can’t know exactly how such language shifts went down, but in the case of *nuts* a relevant stop on the road of language evolution may have been a late-1700s British slang wherein a person who was enthusiastically fond of something (or someone) was said to be “nuts upon” it, just like we’d say “crazy about.”

And in fact at the time Britons were using “crazy for” and (still earlier) “mad for” in roughly this same way, the evident notion being that the subject was so fascinated, infatuated, distracted, etc., that they were effectively insane. Meanwhile, in what may have been an unrelated trend, by the 1850s or so another slang meaning for *nut* was “a person’s head” (no real stretch there), and “off one’s nut” meant “crazy.” With these locutions kicking around, at that time, it’s entirely unsurprising that the first citation for *nuts* meaning “out of one’s mind” in 1846, from a volume titled *The Swell’s Night Guide Through the Metropolis*, a kind of risqué handbook to seamy urban life.

I suppose that a whole collection of crazy compulsions and thoughts and atypical behavior would make one a “nutcase”.

Remember that psychiatry and our whole concept of being mentally ill is a late 1800s concept. (Freud et.al.)

It was with Dr. John Hughlings Jackson (died 1911), that epilepsy was seen as not being demon possession, but as a physiological problem of brain function. This was confirmed about a decade after his death when Dr. Hans Berger invented the electroencephalography (EEG) in 1924, which is a method used for recording the electrical activity of the brain, commonly described in terms of brainwaves, and as the discoverer of the alpha wave rhythm which is a type of brainwave. Alpha waves have been referred to as the "Berger wave." These used to be recorded with a pen on a strip of paper back in the old analog days,

Today, medical imaging such as an MRI uses contrasting agents and a PET scan uses radioactive isotope sugar-like tracers, that are taken up in the energy-hungry brain tissue and reveal brain chemical energy use and function. (Side note: Cancer also uses a lot of sugar energy and that is why cancer tumors light up a PET Scan image and reveal cancer areas)

We should be less willing to call people with mental illness, in all its forms, “nutcases”. Being mentally ill is not a choice.

Because the days are shorter as we get around the Winter Solstice (Dec 21st) there is an increase in seasonal mental depression. It is called “SAD” or Seasonal Affective Disorder. It is in the DSM V manual. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seasonal_affective_disorder Though people can feel bad

,suicide statistics do not support this causing increased rates, because the highest suicides tend to be in the late Spring.

You should continue to enjoy “nuts” (the eating kind) during the holidays, if you do not have an allergy to them. The fat in them is healthy and provides lots of energy. Maybe next year everyone can again hire a live , in-person, magic “nut” magician for your holiday party.

One final seasonal note: Chestnuts depart from the norm for what we think of as a nut, as they have little protein or fat; their calories come chiefly from carbohydrates. Fresh chestnut fruits provide about 800 kJ (190 kcal) of food energy per 100 g of edible parts, which is much lower than walnuts, almonds, other nuts. Chestnuts contain very little fat, mostly unsaturated, and no gluten.

Their carbohydrate content compares with that of wheat and rice, almost like bread.

Roast some chestnuts on an open fire and have a happy holiday! Like the late Harry Anderson, I was always a Mel Torme fan.

Dennis