

SPECIAL PANDEMIC EDITION # 12

August 25, 2020 | Archived Famulus



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

-Orlando and nation on lockdown-

No Ring/ Assembly face to face meetings until future notice

Virtual on-line sessions happening on the regular monthly meeting night

The Ring had its second virtual meeting on Zoom , with 18 participants on the evening of August 19th ,.

Craig Schwarz conducted the meeting. As expected, much of the discussion consisted on how to market, set up and execute virtual magic shows.

There was also some discussion on hosting virtual lectures for the Ring.

Nathan Coe Marsh joined the Zoom meeting from his own home set and gave us tips on virtual shows. The consensus was that few are making any profits from this new technology and that the methods and marketing is emerging.

Dennis Phillips concluded the meeting by demonstrating a prop that he built during the lock down. It was a stage size, Card Spider. The web was 24 inches across with a large yellow spider in the middle. A quick spin and as the wheel is spinning, a jumbo card slowly became visible, in the blur, between the spider’s front legs. It was as if the spider was spinning the card.

Until it is possible, we will continue these virtual meetings.

Dennis Phillips

"I don't know if the audience side really understands how dire the situation is for millions of hard-working professionals.

Broadway is closed until 2021. Cirque du Soleil is filing for bankruptcy, and cut 3500+ jobs. Feld Entertainment laid off 90% of its workforce permanently. Live Nation had to lay off a significant amount of employees. Cruise ship entertainers are out of work. Theme park productions have no idea when they will be recalled. There are no concerts, festivals or touring productions scheduled until 2021 and if they don't happen next year, they may never happen again. No Jazz Fest, no Coachella, no Bonnaroo, no EDC, no ROLLING STONES FINAL TOUR(S), and no SYMPHONIES....all gone. It's being predicted that 90% of independent music venues may close, the longer this continues. No more Whiskey-a-gogo, no more Tipitina's, no more Red Rocks, all gone. Entertainment Management, Publicity, Live events coordinator, Performing arts organizations of all kinds- choirs, theatres, orchestras, dance companies- all are trying to figure out on a daily basis how to keep going and employ anyone they can in the field.

More than 12,000,000 people work entertainment production in the US and produce revenue in the multi billions of dollars, we are not insignificant and this industry cannot reopen until mass gatherings can happen again. This doesn't include the additional layoff of venue management and bar staff, security and thousands of vendors. Also, we can't forget about the hundreds of thousands of performers and entertainers that make our careers possible, without them, there is no show.

So when you see your entertainment friends begging you to wear masks and stay home, understand that we are helplessly watching our industry crumble before our eyes because the country is doing so poorly at reducing the spread. This IS personal for us, our entire livelihood is dependent on social gathering and we will not accept being labeled "nonessential".

Music and art are critical to a cheerful, balanced society.

Everyone's career and the whole industry is indefinitely on hold. PLEASE wear your mask (over your mouth AND your nose) and wash your hands.

#SaveOurStages

Thanks

Lou Vito

<https://nypost.com/2020/08/04/radio-city-christmas-spectacular-canceled-for-first-time-ever/>

Radio City 'Christmas Spectacular' canceled, MSG parent to lay off 350 people

By Alexandra Steigrad

August 4, 2020 | 8:45am | Updated



Steven Ferdman/Getty Images

Sign up for our [special edition newsletter](#) to get a daily update on the coronavirus pandemic.

MORE ON: CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

Meet the twin sister
Rockettes living out their
dream

Camel gets up close and
personal with Cardinal
Dolan

This year's "Christmas Spectacular," starring leggy dance troupe the [Radio City Rockettes](#), is being canceled for the first time since the show was introduced in 1933.

MSG Entertainment, which owns the glamorous Radio City Music Hall where the Rockettes perform, made the decision to close the curtain on the popular show amid ongoing uncertainty tied to the coronavirus pandemic. This year's performance,

Las Vegas entertainers fear dire straits as weeks of unemployment turn to months



By Robert Kuznia

Updated 1:03 PM ET, Thu August 13, 2020



(CNN) — In those long-ago days of early 2020, business was cranking for Adam Flowers, a former street magician with an enterprising mind.

The owner of a Las Vegas tour business that includes ghost and mob tours, Flowers had just teamed up with 81-year-old Frank Cullotta, an admitted former hitman for the mob. They parlayed Cullotta's violent crimes of the past -- which Cullotta says included murder -- into a schtick, creating a YouTube channel called "Coffee with Cullotta." It racked up thousands of views, which in turn drove visitors to the physical tour.

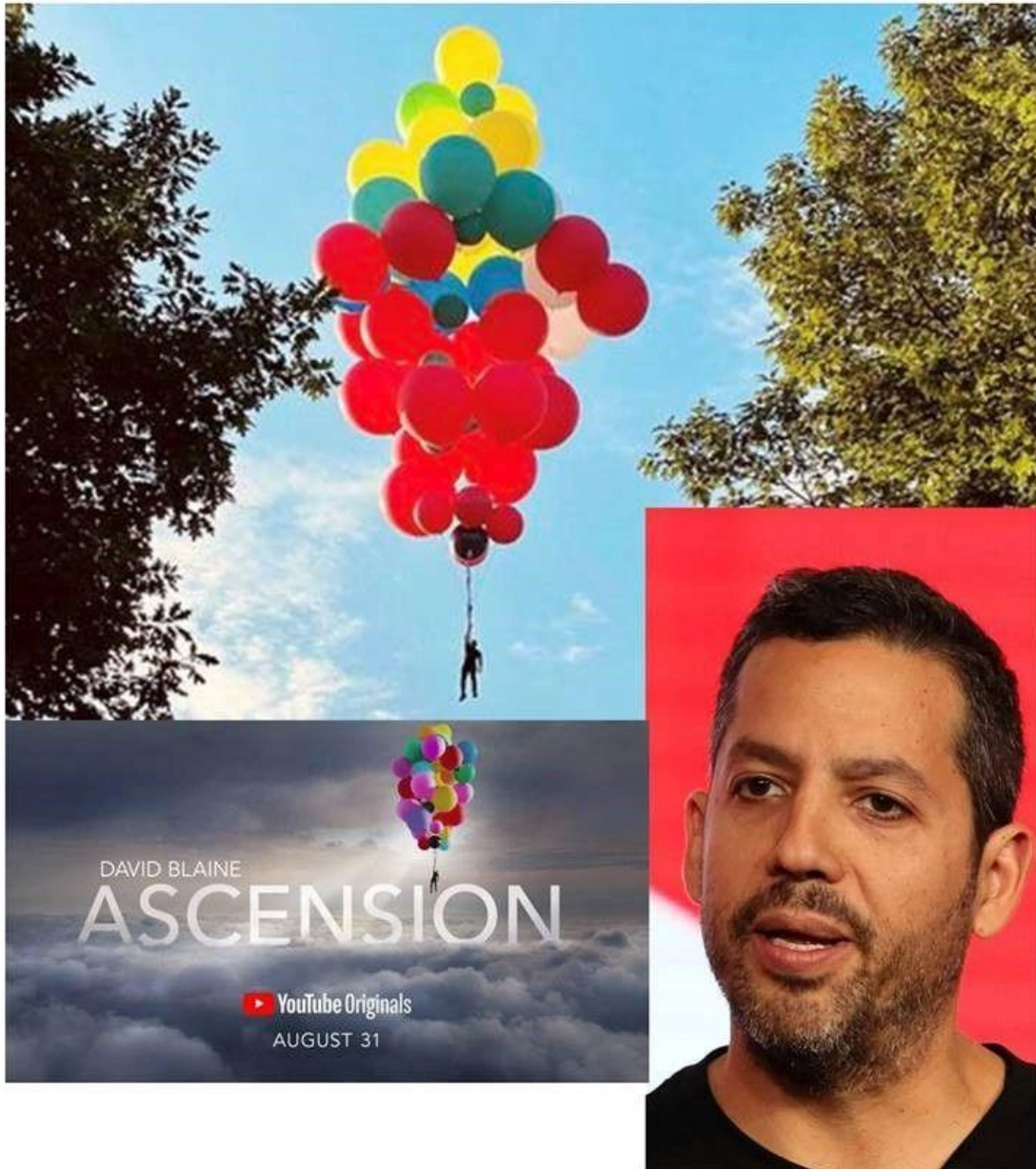
Things were going well at home, too. Flowers, 43, had moved his retired parents to Las Vegas from Chicago the prior year. His wife worked as a technical director at Caesars Entertainment.

Then came the coronavirus.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/13/us/las-vegas-tourism-coronavirus-impact-invs/index.html>

From the “Too Weird for Me” Department. “Huh?”

David Blaine
will try to float across the
Hudson River using balloons. Yes, like ‘Up.’





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

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

Long for the Abbott Get together this year? The Pandemic suspended it.

You will enjoy this.

https://www.theverge.com/2014/9/24/6127597/welcome-to-colon-magic-capital-of-the-world?fbclid=IwAR1NQftW521KiW_MvNzROCz5bCanunxKg-cY7HlhgnHk-GPoRlsQNPjJSU

Welcome to Colon, Magic Capital of the World COMMENTS

By Kyle Chayka on September 24, 2014 10:54 am



Marty Bristow, a long time member of our Ring has died of complications of the corona virus.

His wife, Carol, died a few years ago. Marty was active in our leadership and was loved and respected by all.



Okay, I just love Math Magic.

A Doug Henning oldie but goody.

This is a version of the Million Dollar Mystery (Selbit Mirror Tunnel)

With a double exchange using a double for Henning.

The most amazing thing is doing this “live” on TV.



Math Magic

Visible Decapitation.

I made one from a woman’s bust display form from a display company.

You need a small cape and some seamstress work

This is a modern substitution effect.

This comic theme has been used before but Terry’s version is especially well done.

Since the audience bit is more of a pay-on-words, the bit could be done with words on poster board in paper sack. The premise and the lines are very funny.

This is no longer made by Wellington ,Bill Schmeelk , who is not producing magic at this point.

Something, & Nothing, MORE

"I think mine is BIGGER than yours!"



This solid 6 minutes of entertainment is based on the magical production of words, blended into a hilarious routine involving the magician and several members of the audience. You start by showing an unusual looking box to be unmistakably empty – it contains nothing – and that's exactly what you produce from it – NOTHING – well, possibly SOMETHING – but wait there's MORE! In all, seven large words are used in this routine, several of them too large to fit back in the box.

When Terry expressed an interest in sharing his routine, we were delighted to work with him to improve the props and present it in a way that was truly worthy of the Wellington name. After over a year in development, we're thrilled to offer Terry's Play on Words with some clever props which add even more mystery to Terry's great routine.

In one package you have:

- ▶ Great audience participation
- ▶ Lots of Laughs!
- ▶ Entertainment for all ages
- ▶ A Solid 6 minutes of laughs and enjoyment – ready to go with a proven, time tested routine.



The complete outfit includes:

- ▶ Deceptive production box with aluminum finish – mounted on our Ultimate Table Base.
- ▶ Seven special words crafted from 1/2" thick colored plastic – no paint to chip.
- ▶ Through clever design, three of the words when produced, are larger than the box they came out of.
- ▶ Entire outfit packs into an optional ATA case measuring only 16 x 15 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches.
- ▶ Terry's complete routine, including a wealth of tips he's garnered over the

years performing the trick and a DVD of an actual performance.

Introductory Price \$1995.00

Custom ATA Case \$275.00



#learning #education #vsauc2
The Number Illusion You Won't Believe



Doug Henning - Gazebo Illusion

Clearly Arnold Furst was a happy proponent of Ockham's Razor.

"It is vein to do with more which can be done with less"

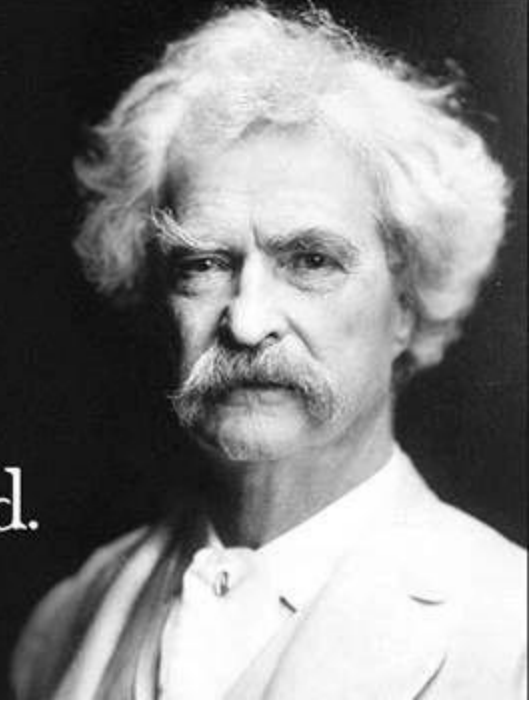
William of Ockham (d 1346) used his philosophical principal in an attempt to limit the use of abstractions in describing reality, which

put him at odds with the prevalent methods of Scholasticism and religion of his time.

Today, much of our lives are lived as a Nominalist.

It's easier to fool
people than to
convince them that
they have been fooled.

~Mark Twain



Mark Twain turned cynical in his final years. He had a lot of tragedy.

What Twain said is true in entertainment but not confrontational politics. In fact, social psychology says you should never “fool” someone.

It is far easier to tell voters they have been fooled, swindled, betrayed, sold-out and cheated and then get them angry.

You start with that and get them so mad that they can't think straight then you fool them (and usually pick their pocket) and they find out that they have been fooled.

Now, take the anger out and tell people you are fooling them for fun, as a magician does. IN that case, fooling-for-fun is easy, and they will refuse to believe they have been fooled ("no way!")

That is why, I dislike any confrontational labels in magic such as calling a show “Fool Us”. Even the word “fool” is loaded with arrogance by the performer and a challenge to a person's dignity and intelligence or pain and self-loathing to the person fooled. (“I was a fool”)

Magicians do not fool people. They entertain them through psychological deception. A magician is, as Peter Reveen used to call himself, a “Deceptionist”. It berates the dignity of

anyone to “fool” them. You do not want any audience to leave thinking to themselves, “I was a sucker!”. I want them to be entertained and say, “I was amazed”.

I need to comment or at least add to your thoughts about Magic “Gig-Jobs”. Call this a “Phil and Henry” (notorious Party Entertainment Gig employer) or Magic “Uber” discussion (Gig-Salad etc.) Most of us, who are entertainers are “Gig Workers”. Increasingly, many Americans are gig-workers.

The fastest-growing category of new jobs in the country. Oops -- I didn't mean to say "jobs", they are called “gigs”, so those who pay for services do not always have to pay for what you really need to make from the job: Enough to survive on without other income, such as two or three other gig-jobs.

Lots of us were led to think that the gig economy is a new idea, because high-tech gurus told us it is. It is like how that WeWork guy convinced us he invented office space or Enron convinced us that all energy could be supplied, and big money made by shuffling paper and agreements around between suppliers. But gig work is as old as this country.

America was built on people — literally on people, who moved from job to job with low pay (or no pay at all). At the very beginning, it was small independent workers like the Private Independent Whiskey Distillers in Western Pennsylvania .President Washington put his old military uniform back on and marched the United States Federal Army into Pittsburgh and put it back under Federal Control and Federal Taxation-They don’t teach that in history class. They also don’t talk about Slave Labor and how it contributed to the pre-Civil War economy). Low pay is as American as Cherry Pie.

The technology in this gig-job industry (of being dispatched by the Internet) may be new, and we may call them gigs instead of jobs, but the work and the way those workers are treated (?) ; that's as old as the railroad, the sharecropper fields and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

The minute this discussion comes up; the philosophical polarization begins. I am sure that you have an opinion. Everyone has an opinion.

Half the people start screaming, “Oh man, wadda ya want? Big Government dictating wages and income? That’s Totalitarian Socialism! It’s Communism and will destroy what we have. It will lead to Collectivism and confiscatory taxation. Everything will cost more. Inflation will soar and I will lose everything I have! Sounds like Venezuela to me! Move to Cuba! I just want to be left alone! Get the government off my back and out of my life.”

The other half scream, “We have to do something. I cannot live this way any longer. I am trapped in an economic free-for-all and have no personal pricing power. I work 60 hours a week and can’t get ahead and I have master’s degree in computer engineering. There is always someone who will come along who will work cheaper than me, like in Bangalore India, so the pay that I can ask for ,keeps falling. I am on a race to the bottom. I want to be able to pay for my health insurance and save enough so that I am not dependent on grudgingly given hand-outs and shrinking charity, but I can’t. I am headed to living like the slum families in Upton Sinclair’s book, “The Jungle”, but I still have a i7 laptop with a 2 terabyte hard drive, that I have no used for other than getting job rejections”.

The country is about evenly divided between these two positions and I exaggerated them a bit for clarity. I realize that there are differences between rural and urban lifestyles and religious and social/political ideas of freedom.

Gig workers cannot reliably predict how much they will make, and they can't rely a labor group (union) for bargaining for enough wages to pay to live, like health care, sick leave or paid vacation. And possibly worst of all, many of these workers are expected to count on tips (ad hoc rewards) as a part of their pay.

That may work out for some gig workers, but more and more hard-working people are seeing this as a scam, an urban myth. The whole idea of the gig economy is that it is solving problems, but really, most of the problems that it solves are for the people who use the app, not for the people being used by it and it creates more economic and social problems than it solves.

While we often think of gig workers as young high school or college kids who live with Mommy and just want to earn extra cash, or to supplement another main source of income, like Mommy or Daddy. These "gigs" are more vital to American households than the app commercials would lead you to believe. Today, nearly one-third of app workers said this was their main gig (source of income).

Small time show business has always been almost entirely a gig-job economy.


Twenty years ago, I sat on the Industry Board of Advisors at Valencia College for the Theater Tech Program. I owned a costume manufacturing business and in addition to that, I was an adjunct professor in the program. I recall the IATSE union rep telling me that IATSE feels “we earn our job everyday”. He explained that Florida, and most Southern States had, in his words, a “Right to Starve” Law. He was using those words to ridicule our “Right to Work” laws which forbid the requirement to join the union to work at a job. This greatly weakens any union power in collective bargaining and ability to strike. It really means that workers have little collective power. Places like Disney, who have operations and employees in

other states, do have some local unions and that is why many laid-off Disney workers still have health insurance, today. At least for a while longer.

The IATSE Rep said, “The local entertainment producers use us because they can be sure they are getting skilled, licensed and competent employees and they know that, at the bottom line, we save them money. If we don’t deliver, they do not have to use union help.”

This was not a Republican- Democrat issue in the 1950s. The 1950s were the time that we all long to go back to so we can “Make America Great Again”? Other than a few of the lowest laborers, unions were not rejected by either party in the 50s. Here is a campaign flyer from 1956. You may be surprised at what the Republicans stood for under Ike. The Democrats equally supported Labor.

LABOR DAY 1956



**YOUNG REPUBLICANS
SALUTE LABOR**

America's free working men and women produce more
and consume more than any other nation !

- GREATEST PROSPERITY IN HISTORY WITHOUT WAR
- OVER 66,000,000 EMPLOYED
- HIGHEST TAKE-HOME PAY IN HISTORY
- GREATER JOB SECURITY
- GREATER JOB OPPORTUNITY
- LESS TIME LOST BECAUSE OF STRIKES
- INCREASED UNION MEMBERSHIP
- BEST WORKING CONDITIONS IN HISTORY
- SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANDED

ATTEND YOUR UNION MEETINGS!

REGISTER VOTE REPUBLICAN

YOUNG REPUBLICAN LABOR COMMITTEE
1625 EYE STREET N.W. WASHINGTON, D. C.

I know, this was before a lot of union corruption and Jimmy Hoffa has not yet been put into Alpo Dog Food cans. It was also long before the August 5th, 1981 PATCO strike, when President Reagan fired the air traffic control strikers and destroyed that union (they probably deserved it, because the strike was illegal, and they had incompetent leadership).

If you are around my age you can recall that railroad automation created some insane union situations where the job of fireman (the guys who had been shoveling coal into the steam engines) were replaced by diesel electric locomotives and yet the union contracts said they still had to carry a fireman! That was called “feather bedding” because the un-needed firemen were paid to sleep on the featherbed in the caboose and do nothing else.

We can all use extreme examples but there is no connection between railroad firemen and the issues of how to deal with antiquated technology or robotics replacing workers and a magician, actor, musician, or variety entertainer trying to make a living.

Workers do have AGA, AFTRA and SAG. They have recently joined but they mostly deal with the big broadcasters, movie studios and large showplaces. They don't want to be bothered by your Gig jobs.

The IBM and SAM have offered group rates on healthcare and liability insurance and that is a step in the right direction of working together. It seems to me that some sort of guild or confederation of entertainers should establish general employment and bidding guidelines. They should always monitor the quality and competency of the entertainers and possibly offer legitimate and factual testimonials.

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We all know the jokes, “Ladies and Gentleman, I am proud to say that I have performed before the President of the United States !....uh was elected.” Or “Tonight, I would like to announce that I have just signed a 3-year deal with HBO! Thank you that applause! Yes, it is a great opportunity! For just 10 bucks a month, I can watch first run movies in my own living room every night!”

In some ways appearing at the Magic Castle or being on “Fool Us” or “America's Got Talent” is one of the current ways of establishing “guild” membership and provides credibility.

I realize that the idea of a guild or union or even private certification, such as “The Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval” or “Underwriters Laboratory” will be met by an argument that it would become a cartel and good-ole-boy's-clique. Others will say that it restricts freedom and the right and liberty for anyone to work in show business. We love our individual freedom, don't we?

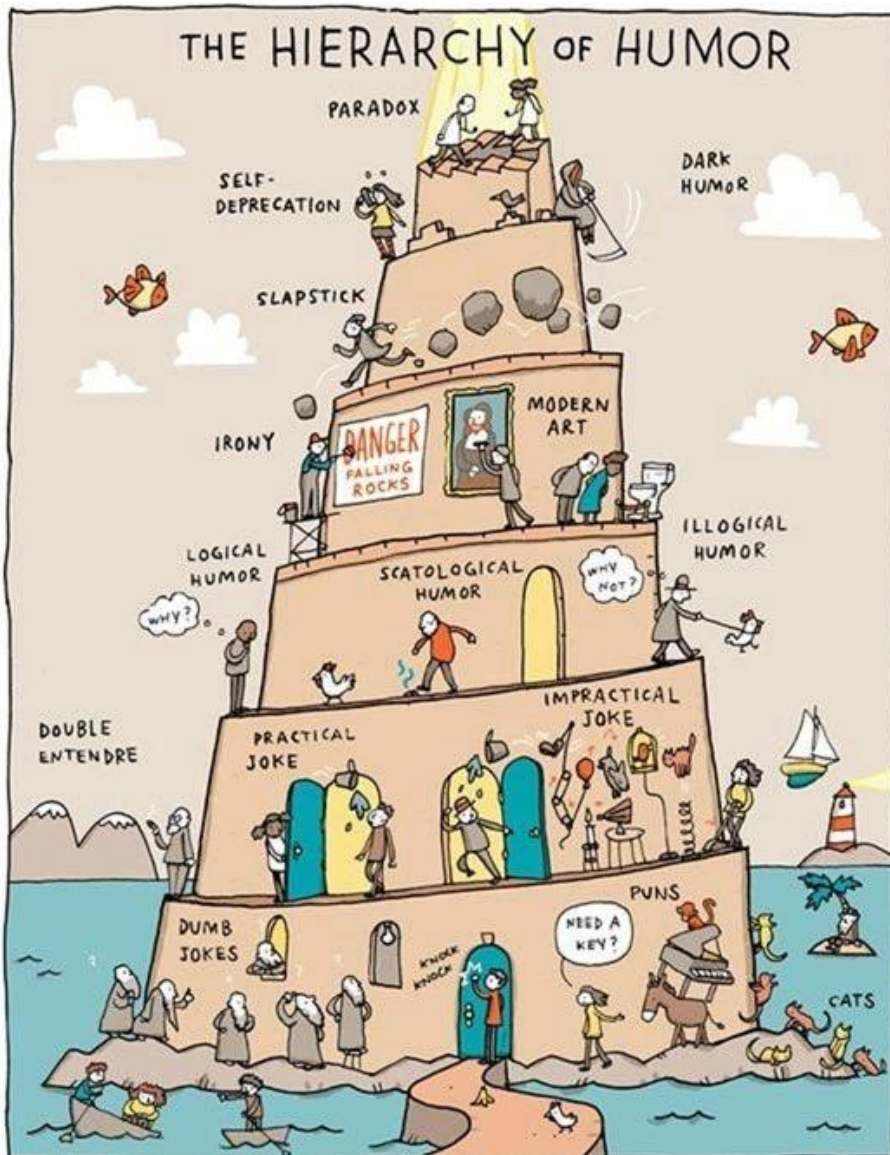
I don't have any answers and I certainly do not want to persuade you of any Utopian solutions.

I just want you to think about how we can help keep the arts alive and help us gig workers to have more tranquility and less stress.

Maybe in the final analysis, we all really do want an economy where it is "everyone for himself".

That would be, of course, in an extreme, the end of Civilization as well as show business.

I am not sure about the arrangement, but some humor is better than other humor





Stay safe, stay healthy

Dennis