

No WOW!

I've been thinking a little more about the convention I just attended and it occurs to me that there was not a single *WOW* moment in three days. I saw some nice variations and some clever adaptations, but nothing that made me really sit up and take notice.

Is it me, or is everything becoming a tired rehash? I think I saw 5 Silk Fountains – a nice interlude, but FIVE?!

Who's doing the thinking in magic now? Anyone?

Drivel & Drool

Mine's Bigger Than Yours.....

I'm not going to recount the whole Whit Haydn / Whackster thing, except to say I'm really sorry to see this kind of thing happen. Aren't bloggers just insignificant piss ants, unworthy of anyone's attention? Yet Whit, or whoever is posing as him, makes the following statement:

*I am a performer, manufacturer and retailer of magic whose reputation for honesty and fairness is being impugned by this blog. It does **incredible long term monetary damage** to me.*

Aw, c'mon. Is this type of legal hyperbole really necessary? *Incredible monetary damage*? No way. I seriously doubt that what Judge Whackster has to say about Whit would ever cost him a dime. Personally, I would never buy his stuff unless there was NO alternative, as I find him a pompous, overbearing bore ass. Judge Whackster's comments, good or bad, would make no difference to me. I would assume I'm not alone here.

I would think much more of him if he just threatened to use those Roy Rogers boots and kick his ass. Instead we're going to play **My Lawyer Is Bigger Than**

Your Lawyer..... Too bad!

Some Things Never Change - Thankfully!

George Daily (*Magicana for Collectors*) has been selling magic books since.... well, since there were books. How do I know - I was there.

I collect very little anymore, but I've had a hole in my small collection for some time that I just couldn't seem to fill and I saw it on his most recent list. George's operation isn't particularly high tech - just email request and confirmation.

What a pleasure - properly described book, accurately graded, well packed and timely shipped.

.....and this may not matter to many people, but he's a nice guy. I like to business with nice people, but it's getting harder and harder to find.

Controlling Your Music

Just wanted to make sure everyone saw this.

Tim Ellis, in his excellent blog *Magic Unlimited* With Ellis and Webster points out a very interesting approach for those that are serious about their music - and you should be:

The New iCue

The Cafe' Drops The Hammer - Again!

[This post originally appeared before the crash. I thought it should be preserved. It says a LOT about the cafe]

As I mentioned a couple of days ago, two new Cogitations posts were started on the Cafe' and I wondered how long it would last. Surprisingly, one is still there, but it is benign and primarily blows more sunshine up Stephen F. Youell's butt. The other was a well written and thoughtful post from a long time user. It, however, questioned some practices at Berlin West and, of course, didn't last until noon. For posterity, here it is:

I'm not really sure what the problem is here, but every time a post goes up regarding Cogitations, its either quickly removed or blocked so no one else can have a say. Why is this? If someone offers a product, and promises to go with it, and it doesn't perform, then is it not only fair to put it up for discussion? (Okay, this is Steve's 'front room' and maybe he doesn't like the flavour of the discussion involving someone close to him - that's fair enough.) If someone leaves themselves 'wide-open' for criticism with rude and vicious emails and posts, then is it not only fair that they accept what is coming their way? If someone offers an amazing deal (only \$20 lets not forget) then surely they are due a good deal of praise. It works both ways doesn't it?

Welcome to the Inner Circle of the Cafe' mate!

In my opinion it's all about "choices". He had a nice product, the product was widely praised, and then he apparently chose to make a quick exit from the art altogether. With regards to the removal and locking of relevant topics, I guess that "VIP's" are not allowed to be questioned/criticized. It's quite puzzling to me

too, but in the end the magic community will survive.

Pitiful, just pitiful. This needs no comment as it speaks volumes about all involved.

[Please note that I have been asked by the National Dufus Foundation to longer refer the Founder & Owner of the Magic Cafe' as a *dufus*. By definition a dufus is: *an incompetent and stupid, though well-meaning, person; also called doofus*. I can understand their position, as there is nothing well meaning about that clown.]

Drivel & Drool

I consider the bully the lowest form of life. The guy at the gas station close to me succumbed to heat exhaustion this morning from running up and down the ladder raising the price of gasoline. I'm not blaming him, he's just a pawn like the rest of us, being pushed around by the corporations and power brokers. As far as I'm concerned there is no pit in hell deep enough or hot enough for the profiteers taking advantage of the disaster in the Southeast to pad their profits. Just watch, they'll sing the same tired song of *it's not us, it's the market* - oh, by the way, we had record profits AGAIN.

Never fear though, our President, George F. Bush, put down his bow long enough to go on TV and say how optimistic he was and what a tragedy we have here blah, blah, blah and he's having the Attorney General look into things. Homeland Security had a new name for this and, I assume, a new color. What a joke! Now back to the war.

Me, however, I'm satisfied, I got just what I wanted and expected and at least he tried. Sheesh!!

Postscript: Unfortunately, I lost a comment from a reader when this was originally posted. He was singing the *supply disruption* song that emanates from the halls of the American Petroleum Institute. I know it's difficult to accept that our institutions have failed and fallen into the hands of thieves of the first order. I recall one of the partners at Arthur Andersen saying *people are just commodities that you buy and sell as needed*....and he was considered a humanitarian.

For a perspective of the power and greed of big oil, I commend to you an article

by Derrick Z Jackson in today's Boston Globe. Its concluding paragraph is the bottom line:

Stay fixated, if you wish, on the thieves and desperate families who are so much easier to catch on camera than comptrollers electronically stealing your cash. It is not pleasant to see anyone loot a store. But ExxonMobil and big oil are looting the nation, and no one declaring martial law on them.

scary, but true.

Help One of Magic's Good Guys

From everything I know and read, Doug Conn is one of the nice guys in magic.

He was one of several well known magicians displaced by Katrina. Here is the message from his web site:

I'm a katrina-magi-evacuee from New Orleans. For the time being I've relocated the family (wife and 3 children) to Lake Charles, LA (a small town that has little need for my finger flinging skills.) To make a long story short: For the duration of our stay, I've reduced the price of my Connjuring ebook to only \$10.

While I'm usually not a big fan of ebooks, I've owned this for a while and found it to be a bargain. Here's the Link to Doug site, if you're so inclined. I know he would appreciate it.

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Fond Convention Memories

If gas stays below double digits I'm going to try to get to a small, local convention this weekend. I've looked over the list of talent and only one name is remotely familiar. That's OK, though, as I've found out that the quality of a convention and the amount of fun you have seldom is related to the reputation of the talent.

Actually, I've never been to a lot of conventions, but there are some nice memories:

- Del Ray - There's no earthly explanation
- Paul Harris - Someone that lived up to the hype. Then having the pleasure of attending his private teach-in (\$25 then)
- Winter Cavalcade in Gatlinburg, TN - just plain fun
- Paul Diamond bellowing across the dealer room at the Florida conventions
- Duke Stern - Just because he was Duke
- 300 Pound Mike Caldwell opening the show with his thunderous flip and landing flat on his back. I was working backstage on was that ever impressive. It was a running gag
- Jay Marshall - we're gonna miss him
- David Roth - this was as he was bringing coin magic into the 20th century. I can still see him perform the Portable Hole and Hanging Coins
- Darwin Ortiz - wasn't even a headliner a real surprise at that time.

That's enough! Good memories and this doesn't include the late night sessions with some great people.

When you read these blogs, this one included, you sometimes think everybody in magic is an absolute Richard. This isn't true, there are a lot of good guys. I don't, however apologize for spending time on this minority, as they can spread like a serious virus, infecting all who come in contact. Think of these blogs as an antidote.

Drivel & Drool

[This section is intensely personal and contains things of interest to me. There is

no theme or agenda. There will be times I talk about the Cafe. I may give a computer tip. I may virtually visit other blogs. Please be warned that this area may be a little coarse and the blogs we visit, less than elegant.]

I'm sorry for another Cogitations post, but it just won't die. That rancid stench is still around and just as I hate to see the corporate thieves walk with only minor censure, I hate to see the Cogitations perpetrators rewrite a very sordid story.

I've seen 3 instances recently where virtually the same story was spewed and they all said the same things. Sounds like the Bush people that keep their entire agenda on a 3 1/2 x 5 card. Here's an example from MagiCentric. Actually, I kind of like him most of the time and I commend his article on Whit Haydn and the 3 Shell manuscript to you. He does, however, suffer from recurring dickosis and this is one of those times. To partially quote:.....There was certainly more praise than critics, so I hope that he didn't let the bastards get him down.....What has been interesting to read on both The Cafe & Genii Forums is that 99.9% of the members were satisfied with both the value they received.....There are still a few critics, but those people aren't worth considering because they weren't members.

OK! Where do you get those numbers? Could it be that Mein Brooks always deletes the negative posts about Cogitations and locks threads as the detractors begin to surface. You think that's possible?

As to the those people aren't worth considering because they weren't members quip - Again, what sort of omniscient powers gives you this insight? I guess I'm not as insightful, but I know a LOT of dissatisfied subscribers that paid their money.

99.9% of the people reading his post think it is pure BS.

The other posts were similar and gave the same statistics. Although Richard Kaufman seems to be terminally grouchy these days, his post on the Cogitations issue sums things up rather nicely:

Mr. Youell's behavior has been unstable for a long time...

Nuff said - at least for the moment. See you after the holiday.

Postscript: I understand the perpetrators have made their site available for members to download the content that was there when it suddenly collapsed. That was the right thing to do.