

Outside of Time

Seen anything interesting you want to tell me about?... Me? I'm working on this project for the science fair about how water is filtered...."

And now comes the really hard part to admit. From time to time, like once every two or three years, I still do it: I talk to my ghost. When I'm alone and in some particularly

memorable situation, I'll look around and say, "Hey, man, how are you? Would you have ever guessed life would come to this? Is it boring out there in eternity?"

I know there are no ghosts, no afterlife. I know this is just my way of revisiting my boyhood. But it never fails to make me happy, because it reminds me of that evening as a kid when I had the foresight to keep myself company forever. —Teller.

When I was a kid of seven, one night I was alone in my room and I thought, "I don't believe in ghosts, but if there were ghosts, I bet they would live outside of time. And I bet they could come, like Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, and visit any moment in time of the life of the person they're a ghost of, so that after my death I'd be a time-wanderer, looking in windows on all the different times of my life. Wow, that would be very lonely, forever visiting scenes I can no longer be part of."



So, just in case, I prepared. I went to my bedroom window and looked out. I imagined my own ghost floating outside the window, watching me. I gave him a big smile and wave and said aloud, "Hi! How are you?... Oh, really?..."

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We're pretending that P&T are ageless. We're not really, but we're pretending. —Penn.



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POET'S SEAT

Years ago, I was home in Greenfield looking at my dad's autograph collection. He had an autograph from the '30s that he got from an author named T. O. Beachcroft. For some reason, it caught my eye and I started looking for a book by him. Finally, all these years later, I got the book I was looking for, *A Young Man in a Hurry*, a book of short stories from 1934.

I rode my bike up to Poet's Seat tower in Greenfield. I was so excited because I had it in my head that T. O. Beachcroft was the poet that "Poet's Seat" is named after and I was going to read him in Greenfield. Well, I got to the tower (man, I had to ride my bike up a mountain) and, well, no mention of T.O. The "poet" is Frederick Goddard Tuckerman. I got home and checked my notes. Tuckerman is the "Poet" and T.O. is a guy that my father has a great autograph of in his collection. So, I read T.O.'s

book of short stories. I know that other people use books to discover stuff they never thought they'd know. So, I discovered this author from the '30s just because my dad has an autograph.

I don't do much exploring with my reading. I don't read that fast, so I'm a little careful about what I pick up. But, this was a real adventure. The part I love about old books is the chance to time travel, but when it's a book that no one you know has ever talked about, it's more amazing. I mean, I guess T. O. was just an okay author of the '30s. His short stories are very different in style than they would be today and they're not classics. But, they're very good. The endings are odd and the point of view is very specific. I really enjoyed it. I'm not sure I loved the writing, but I loved time traveling with this guy. I loved thinking about him working on the book and his career. It was a very Nicholson Baker feeling.

I don't think I'll describe many of the stories, but there's a great one about a doctor staying up all night to watch death in the eyes of a young child, and wanting to see the moment of death. Getting home to his own family, he becomes sure that he's caught the disease and sees it in his own eyes. It takes another doctor to mention the incubation period.

Lots of stories about misplaced blame.

I only turned down one page, because I like the quote: page 134—about knots—"Of course the theory of all of them," he said, 'is this: the harder the strain the tighter the pinch; once you've got that, it's really common sense.'"

And now, I'm looking for a book of poems by Tuckerman. That's my next goal. And I'll read him in Greenfield.

— P e n n .



MOFO KNOWS

Penn & Teller wrote the most,
T. Gene Hatcher chose the ghost.
Glenn Alai added stamps and
labels,
Krasher sifted fact from fables.
Dan Maizner printed awful pretty,
P & T's web page is at Sin City:
<http://www.sincity.com>

Elitism, in the sense of treasuring and nurturing the best, treating the gifted with special care and helping the talented realize fully their potential, is right. But the elite thereby gain not only privilege and power, but the moral obligation to treat the supportive non-elite with exemplary kindness and good manners. Not, mind you, to allow ignorance and stupidity to rule (the non-elite have a corresponding moral obligation to show appropriate respect to the elite), but to treat all parties, even ones who have not understood an explanation, with understanding and patience. —Teller.

REVERBERATIONS

I went to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. They had a special bat show. Bats interest me, so at 8 o'clock I went over.

As far as I could see, all the entrances were locked. I encountered a family: Tony, Sheila, and little Laura. They were looking for the entrance. Sheila had called and found out all about the bat program, and now we couldn't get in. I told them about the great bat show at Carlsbad Caverns.

Finally, I found the handicapped/delivery entrance. A guard was sitting at the desk. I asked him about the bat show. Yes, it was on. Yes, there were about 150 people somewhere in the museum. He asked if I were a member. I said, "No." He was starting to tell me this was a members-only event when Sheila whipped out her museum card and said, "We're members, and members get three guests, right? Come on!" So, we went in.

On the ground floor there was a fun walk-through exhibit where they had a whole room with the

imitation fox bat about the size of a dog. Suddenly a lady came rushing in to find us to take us up to the last performance of the lecture.

In a new lecture hall, a friendly woman in a bat t-shirt did a ten minute slide show, followed by questions and the chance to look closely at a live fruit bat that she carried all around the room for inspection. Then it was time for the Maze. We went into Stern's lecture hall and my head rang like a chime. No, it wasn't bat noises, it was memories. Here was the room I was brought to with school mates thirty or forty times in my childhood; the room where they used to do the liquid nitrogen demo (that inspired my contributions to P & T's liquid nitro TV bit). The room was EXACTLY the same as it had been when I was a kid. And down in front, the lecturer was explaining how echo locating devices designed for blind people work. Then he got some kids and sent them through a maze made of clear plastic sheets stretched on six-foot-high sheet stretchers. The kids used the sound

at the Franklin Institute.

To close the evening, they invited us up to the observatory. "We have Jupiter!" they said. I took the elevator up. There was the observatory floor exhibition. Some of it was brand new; tv monitors with touch screens that answered questions. Some of it was exactly the way it had been when I last saw it: the diorama of Ben Franklin with his kite—you press a button and lightning hits the kite and runs down the string; and the big, black sculptured funnels that you drop a ball-bearing into and it shows you how momentum works in planetary orbits. It made me shiver to see how science that's still right is still on exhibit thirty years later, but where things have gotten better, so has the Franklin Institute.

There was a long line for the telescope, but I waited. I asked the guard if he ever used the 'scope to look into the apartment windows of the big buildings across the way. "I once saw Brillo pads on somebody's refrigerator, and identified a can of Miller beer," he said.



- October 18**
Sangamon Auditorium
University of Illinois
Springfield, IL
- October 19**
College of Du Page Arts Center
Glen Ellyn, IL
- October 23**
State Theatre
Easton, PA
- October 24**
Strand Theatre
York, PA
- October 25**
Performing Arts Center
State University of New York
Purchase, NY
- October 26-27**
Staller Center for the Arts
State University of New York
Stony Brook, NY
- October 29**
Willet Hall
Portsmouth, VA
- October 31**
Eisenhower Hall
U. S. Military Academy
West Point, NY
- November 2**

furniture glued to the ceiling (so you'd see what it was like to be a bat). In another, you could put on giant bat-ears and listen. In another there were big bronze sculptures of bat heads. Elsewhere was a robotic

(and their hands—they cheated) to navigate. I was watching a demo of pretty old technology—the first of these gadgets went on the market 20 years ago—and yet it had not been invented when I was a kid learning

My turn came. I stepped up and looked into the telescope. There it was, white and shining, with three moons visible as clear as could be. Just like the lady promised, I had Jupiter. —Teller.



I did a live radio show for a live studio audience. I did a trick where a card was picked from a new deck with no force and not looking at the front or the back and put in a woman's pocket. I then tried to cut to the four of aces and kept screwing up. The host and I got a phone call from a person claiming to be Teller. "Teller" said that I was screwing up the trick because the card was missing from the deck. I said that didn't matter, and he said it did because the missing card was the ten of diamonds. And it was. The trick went over really really well. —Penn.

Later when the radio show people came to see our show, they thanked me for calling in for the card trick. I denied it. —Teller.



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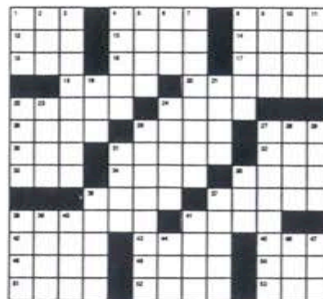
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DOWN

29 Teller's partner in magic

—from the *New York Times*
crossword puzzle for September 3,
1996. Submitted by Rich Shupe.



Mendel Center for Arts and
Technology
Benton Harbor, MI

November 3
Macomb Center for the
Performing Arts
Clinton Township, MI

November 6-9
Lincoln Center
Fort Collins, CO

November 10
Pikes Peak Center
Colorado Springs, CO

November 18-22
Bally's Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

December 28-31
Shubert Theatre
New Haven, CT

January 3-20
Bally's Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

Schedule subject to change.

When Daniel Dorse, a dice dealer at the Excalibur resort in Las Vegas, is "on stick"—on duty—and fours are rolled back-to-back, he refers to the second 4 as "Mofo, the psychic gorilla." Daniel says the reference is "My personal tribute to Penn & Teller. So far, nobody has caught it, but some stick calls you gotta do just for yourself." —submitted by Bill Ebmeyer and Glenn Alai.