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THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS

JANUARY 2015



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Performers will appreciate **DALEY REVISITED**, featuring new dual enhanced convincing displays, and a solid psychological sell. As a bonus, Steve adds his Triumph-based lead-in, with an insane cutting sequence in the middle.

We've included a vintage TV documentary piece called *Magic is my Business* in which Steve does magic and talks magic. Also incorporated are more interviews, in which Steve discusses the lessons he learned from Dai Vernon and Larry Jennings. And since this wouldn't be the Works without an abundance of extra features, we've included Steve's refinements on the *Erdnase color change*, the *Zarrow shuffle* and additional surprises.

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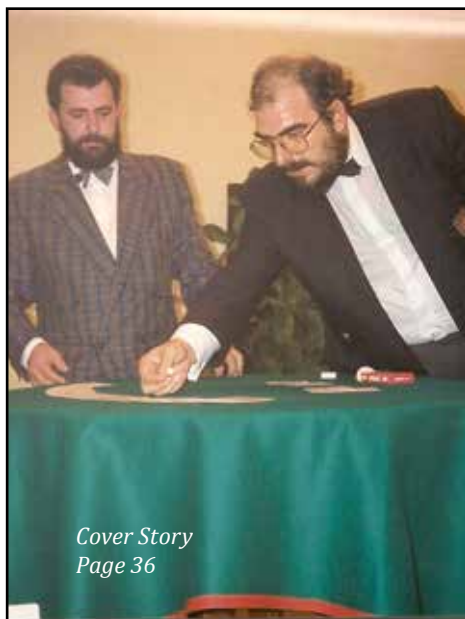
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Editor's Desk Michael Close

I met Dr. Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Fernandez at the combined I.B.M./S.A.M. convention in St. Louis last summer. Dr. Rodríguez is a life member of The Society of American Magicians and also serves as the international deputy for Spain. He has had a long and successful career as a psychiatrist and has published several books in that field. But along with his medical career, Dr. Rodríguez has also established himself as one of the premiere comedy magicians in Spain. For fifty years his alter ego, "Conde Ropherman," has performed in cabarets, theaters, and other venues throughout Spain.

At the convention, it was suggested to me that Dr. Rodríguez would make a good cover story subject, especially since few compeers know of the members who represent the society in countries outside the United States. I heartily agreed; you'll find the story on page 36.

With the start of a new year, it's time to introduce some new columns in *M-U-M*. I'm delighted to welcome our new writers and to say welcome back to some old friends.

First off, I'm very happy that the great Harry Anderson has returned to *M-U-M*. Harry's column, Fast and Loose, was one of my favorites under John Moehring's editorship. Harry's unique take on the world of magic and magicians, combined with material from Jon Racherbaumer, should provide you with stimulating reading throughout the year. Welcome back, Harry and Jon.

Christian Painter, whose Mental Breakdown column was a favorite with *M-U-M* readers, is back with a new column focusing on the challenges of performing magic as a living. Those of you who are thinking of taking the plunge into the world of full-time magician will want to study Christian's column. His observations may well save you a lot of time, effort, and heartache. Future columns will cover such topics as finding a magic mentor, finding a business mentor, working the college market, working the trade show market, putting together a professional show, marketing and magic, and much more.

If you've ever considered making a living from magic, it's probably because you seen and admired the performance of someone who is a successful magician. Have you ever wondered what inspired them or what advice they might have for up-and-coming magicians? You'll find out in Scott Alexander's new column, Ten Questions. Scott will be presenting his questions to some of top pros working today. This month Kevin James is featured. The terrific caricature that accompanies the article is by James Carroll.

During the three decades from 1900 to 1930, some wonderful magicians performed on the summer Chautauqua circuits or the Lyceum stage circuit. David Haversat is a past president of the New England Magic Collectors Association, was co-owner of the S.S. Adams Novelty Company, and currently owns the Petrie & Lewis line of magic. He has published historical books on magicians through his company 1878 Press. Every month in his new column, Chautauqua Conjurers and Lyceum Legerde-main, David will present one of the performers from this great era of variety entertainment. In addition to the images presented

here in the magazine, you'll be able to find additional graphics at www.magicsam.com.

(Speaking of online content, you can also find a video of Tony Cabral performing his Pub Shuffle – from his column this month – on the S.A.M. website. This shuffle looks great, but it's easier to understand if you can see how it looks. Just remember that Tony is left-handed; if you're right-handed, when you watch the video, imagine you're looking into a mirror.)

The Ebook Nook continues for its third year. I want to thank L&L Publishing for allowing *M-U-M* to excerpt content from their line of ebooks for the past two years. This year we'll be looking at ebooks from lybrary.com, including some classic texts that you should have in your library. My thanks to Chris Wasshuber for allowing these excerpts to appear.

Finally, we're resuming a column that appeared a few years ago, the Convention Spotlight. In this column, we'll feature some of the performers who will be attending the Philadelphia convention. This month, we showcase the magic of Woody Aragón. He offers a simple card trick that will puzzle anyone, magician or layman.

To wrap things up, there was an error in the Assembly Reports last month: a photo was inadvertently duplicated. This was corrected in the online edition, but I also wanted to print the photo here. This is Victor La'Yon of Assembly 38. ❖



Victor La'Yon

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President's Desk Kenrick "ICE" McDonald

S.A.M. RED: Many of you have heard me use the term "S.A.M. RED." Each time I said it, I referred to the passion of being an S.A.M. member and of being not just an organization, but a family. These past six months I have witnessed The Society of American Magicians stepping up to help and care for one another like no other time in my memory. We are family, and family sticks together, family takes care of their own.

We are in the middle of the gravesite restoration project of PNP Harry Houdini. We have helped, and are still helping, numerous members get through tragedies. I and a few other magicians, including Eugene Burger and International Brotherhood of Magicians International President Shawn Farquhar, gathered together for a benefit show for our S.A.M. brother, Tevell Rose, who is in need of a kidney transplant. The campaign is titled "Magic to Make Tevell Well." I ask that we, as a family, donate to this cause.

The Society of American Magicians has wonderful treasures; one of them is the S.A.M. Magic Center. I am asking that members donate \$5, \$10, \$20 to the Magic Center. The Magic Center operates mostly on donations.

I AM S.A.M. NEXT: Recently, I had the opportunity to travel and visit a few colleges and universities. I spoke to college magic clubs and youth leaders. I also have consulted with young adults who are S.A.M. members and perform professionally. I asked them about the future of magic and the future of the Society. The answers that I received were astounding, yet I had a hunch that I would receive the answer that was given.

Everyone knows of my concern in regards to connecting with the younger generation. I have been expressing those concerns ever since becoming a Regional Vice President. Well, based on observation, consultation, and (frankly) a dose of reality, I have started a new committee that will address our current issues regarding the next generation of Society members. The title of this committee is "I AM SAM NEXT," a young adult advisory committee (with members eighteen to thirty years old) headed by Kayla Drescher and her team of young adults. This team will report directly to the president. As I spoke to (and listened to) the young adults, one of the issues that was discussed was, what is the benefit of belonging to S.A.M. and what does the S.A.M. offer the younger generation? We as a society have to go where the young adults live: the Internet and social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.). With this new team, we will go there; we will also develop new benefits and new attractions that will serve the younger members of the Society and attract new members. What makes this attempt to reach the younger generation different than before? The difference is that I have received commitments from the next three presidents to continue this committee, giving it the opportunity to work.

THE PRESIDENT'S GOOD WILL PERFORMER OF THE MONTH

This month's Good Will Performer goes out to every member who donated money to Jason's Memorial Observation Park Bench. This past year, one of our S.A.M. families, PNP Mark and Anne Weidhaas, lost their son Jason. the S.A.M. wanted to do something special for our family members, so, without hesitation, members sent money and donated their time to this memorial park bench, located in one



of Jason's favorite places, a park in Colorado. The Society of American Magicians has a plaque on the bench. It reads: "JASON WOJTKOWIAK 'My favorite sound in the world is Colorado.' Listen in comfort. From Jason's Friends of the Society of American Magicians."

THE PRESIDENT'S YOUNG MAGICAL ARTIST OF THE MONTH: ALEXANDER BOYCE



Alexander Boyce's performances have been called "classy," "fun," and "astounding." At only eighteen, his performances are in demand at performing arts centers, banquets, colleges, corporations, and everywhere in between. He has worked his magic for top theaters and conferences all over the east coast including Boston, Manhattan, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Washington D.C. Alexander

hails from Endicott, New York; he now lives in Manhattan. He is currently a freshman at the NYU Tisch School of the Arts, where he studies acting.

Alexander uses his experience in over fifty live theatre plays and musicals to enhance the magic he performs. He uses his work as a theatrical set builder and painter to create special custom magical effects. Highly trained in acting, dancing, juggling, voice, and improvisation, these extra skills shine in his performance, separating him from other performers.

At Tannen's Magic Camp and the Magicians Alliance of Eastern States Annual Convention, Alexander has won various awards. In 2013, Alexander was honored to be part of the S.A.M.'s *Stars of Tomorrow* show in Arlington, Virginia, where he presented his unique '60s Rat Pack version of a traditional dove act. His major influences in magic are David Oliver, Kostya Kimlat, Michael Carbonaro, Johnny Thompson, Garrett Thomas, and Vito Lupo. David Oliver says, "Alexander is one of those few performers I've mentored who is a well-rounded student of magic; he definitely has the 'IT' factor." Known for his work ethic, he plans on pursuing a career in the arts and entertainment. ❖

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THE DEAN'S DIARY BY GEORGE SCHINDLER

A GREAT FRIDAY IN 1968

Way back when, there were no Notebooks, iPhones, pods, pads, or texting; people actually talked to one another face to face and magic happened at the magic clubs without YouTube. In New York, Fridays were magic days. One Friday, in January of 1968, I waited outside of a magic meeting room until summoned by the admissions committee for an interview. I was asked to perform, after which five well-known magicians did the interview and asked a few questions. The regular meeting followed, during which time the committee made its recommendations. The chairman invited me to attend the official meeting where the membership had already voted and accepted me as a member. I was duly sworn in and was presented with a membership pin, a copy of the bylaws, and a wand. The entire body stood up and in unison chanted, "We all bear witness to his oath." It was very moving, and from that day forward my life with magic changed.

There was a meeting on the first Friday of each month, and on every third Friday there was an informal get-together called the Open House – no formal business, just members doing magic for one another. This workshop format also held auctions, had an occasional lecture, and provided loads of laughs and fun. For a few years prior to my membership, I had been working in show business, very rarely meeting or associating with other magicians. I met comics, singers, and dancers, but not other magicians. I looked forward to the local *Spellbinder* newsletter and the *M-U-M* magazine. The annual conventions were the high spots of each year.

When we arrived at our meeting, we signed in and got name badges to identify us. The monthly after-meeting events were fun. After the short business meetings, the producers (a different member each time) would set up special themes, such as a New Members night, Old Timers night, Honor nights, Close-up evenings, Cabaret shows, Roasts, Auctions, or a Kids' night

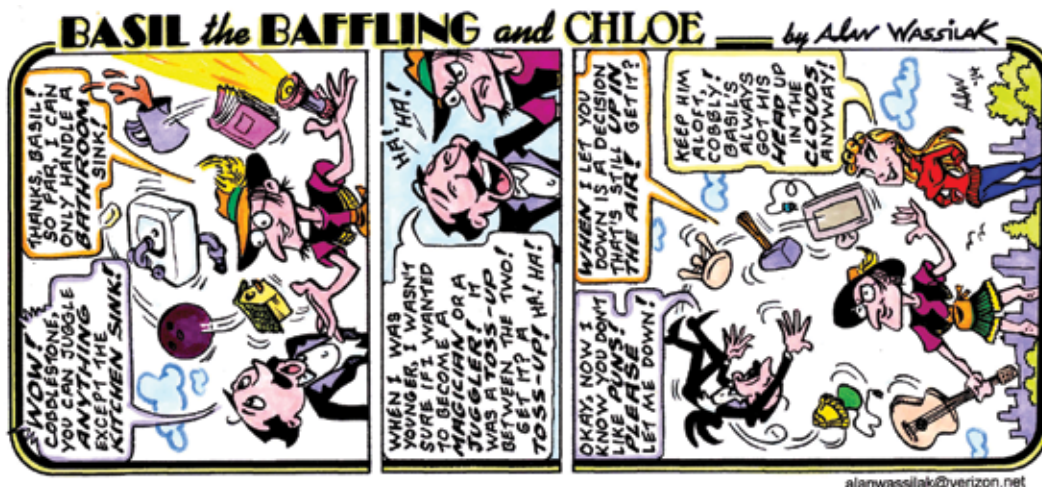
featuring the IMPS (S.A.M.-mentored young performers – this was before the S.Y.M.). There were holiday shows, and Halloween and April Fool's Day events. We always had fun at the Exchange Nights (other assemblies performed for us and we did likewise for them). We usually scheduled at least three members-only lectures. At other times the after-meeting events were open and guests were allowed in.

The season's opening meeting usually had a paid professional show. For the rest of the year the performers were member volunteers. Wives, family members, and others waited outside the meeting room while the official meeting was held; they had a chance to meet one another and socialize. Many long-lasting friendships were born during those waiting times. The second vice president had the task of arranging and booking the annual banquet. It was great training for his next term, when as first vice president he would produce the annual show (later renamed the *Salute to Magic*). Our volunteer entertainment committee performed for charity groups and publicly took their bows during Magic Week.

We met informally on weekdays in the city for lunch at the Magic Table. During the week, except for Wednesday matinee days, the various restaurants allowed us to hang out after dining. Visiting magicians and guests were always welcome. Over the years we have had a variety of meeting places in hotels, at a church, and the YMCA. Costs have gone up, and we are now lucky to have a member at Mt. Sinai Hospital who arranged free meeting space. We still pay for the storage of our archives and administrative fees for phone, bank, accounting, etc.

The assembly experience is a great benefit of our membership and I encourage you to seek out the one closest to your home and plan a visit. The bottom of our website has an Assembly Locator. I realize that there may be some readers who are too far away, so I recommend you find other magicians in your area and consider meeting with them and forming a local group. Your RVP may be able to help with this.

Working together in harmony, our assemblies fulfill the needs of both professional and part-time performers and amateur hobbyists, who look to promote the art of magic while having fun. ❖





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3

REDISCOVERING AL LEECH

CHICAGO, IL— Our October Meeting brought a new-but-old topic to the assembly's attention. Al Leech, author of dozens of booklets for Magic Inc., recently had his work compiled into a single volume, published by Magic Inc., and edited by young Danny Rudnick.

Danny, a science teacher by day, tackled the multi-year project of compiling Leech's work on cards, close-up, and psychology with gusto. He presented an abbreviated version of his lecture at Magic Inc.'s 50th Anniversary Celebration this past summer, but tonight was his first opportunity to present his full lecture.

A few of our more mature members had actually gotten the opportunity to meet Al Leech, who passed away in 1974. Rudnick gave us an outstanding overview into Leech's thinking on misdirection and close-up magic.



Author Danny Rudnick and his new book, "The Complete Al Leech"

In addition to his research on Al Leech, Danny presented a few of his own creations, the most memorable of which was his Selec-Trick Deck. Using a hand-modified Electric Deck gag, Danny has created a bona fide mind-reading miracle requiring no sleight-of-hand.

Danny's lecture is highly recommended for any club interested in close-up magic,

psychology, and history. His website is www.misterdanny.com. —John Sturk

Assembly 3 meets at the Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake St, Oak Park IL. Contact John Sturk at sam3chicago@gmail.com (773) 633-9219. www.magicalchicago.com for more details.

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FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET

BALTIMORE, MD— Our November meeting zipped through business in under a minute and then immediately on to magic. Guest Art Pekarsky kicked things off with a spectator's selected card found trapped between two Jokers. A three-phase routine, each phase more mysterious than the last (Dan Harlan's R & B Special). Dennis Hasson did a fine Coins Across, followed by some Okito box moves.

Guest Les Albert performed his three-coin Copper Silver Brass and his McDonald's Aces in which the Aces disappear altogether. Guest Dr. Ken Carle did a two-coin Copper/Silver followed by some more coin magic. Joe Harsanyi, whose background is electrical engineering, had three coins jumping from hand to hand "at the speed of light." Justin Simpson mystified us with three little green balls, ending with them changing to a big yellow ball. Astronomer Mark Wolfire ("nobody ever believes an astronomer") did a fine torn corner effect.

After touting the book *Fooling Houdini*, Eric Hoffman had a spec merely name a card and the entire rest of the deck turned blank (Dean Dill's Blizzard). Andy London performed and taught an interesting Do As I Do (Eric Ross's Election 2, from *Reel Magic Vol. 32*). Our two Johns Hopkins University guests were next on stage. Salomon Vainstein did a classic McDonald's Aces followed by a card revelation. And Ronann Carrero did his first ever Chop Cup routine, based on Paul Daniels's routine. Howard Katz

performed a quick two-color, two-card match. Jarod Raitsky did a weird torn corner effect, a Jay Sankey freebie just released that day (Insane Torn Corner).

Kenny Caplan, our answer to Henny Youngman, had a deck shuffled, thanked the spec for shuffling, then pocketed the deck to do a cut and restored string, the restoration taking place in his mouth. For some reason no one wanted to examine the restored string. Joe Bruno performed and taught (using a corner short card) Larry Jennings' Impossible! Jeff Eline borrowed a dollar bill, folded it, and then had a spec shuffle three piles of cards face up into face down, Triumph style. The face-up cards turned out to exactly match the bill's serial number, and there was a further kicker in the card box. Les Albert came back to close the show with an Invisible Deck effect utilizing his Himer wallet. —Eric Hoffman

The Kellar/Thurston Assembly 6 meets every first Thursday at 8:00 pm at the Magic Warehouse, 11419 Cronridge Drive suite #10 in Owings Mills, Maryland. 410-561-0777. Contact Andy London alondon@comcast.net www.balTIMOREsam.com for more details.

7

SHOOT OGAWA LECTURE

OMAHA, NE— Our meeting started with the election of new officers into our club. Election results are as followed: President - Jerry Golmanavich, Vice President - Larry Brodahl, Secretary - Tom Neddo, Treasurer - Walter Graham, Sergeant at Arms - Bob Gehringer. We then inducted the following for lifetime membership: Ann Rourke, Ron Gerard, Bob Pitlor, and Letha Pitlor.

Once business was taken care of, we were privileged to watch Shoot Ogawa mesmerize us with his precision sleight of hand and flawless performance. Shoot showed us no less than eighteen different effects and continued to baffle and amaze us with his modern presentation of classic



Shoot Ogawa performing a rope trick with club President Jerry Golmanavich

effects. He started with a Flipstick routine full of surprises and stressed that the way to make an effect look faster was by moving slower and using "off" timing. Shoot presented a series of Matrix effects throughout the evening and ended on a Reverse Matrix that caught us all off guard.

He sparked interest with a key-card mentalism routine that can be used with any deck of cards and the presentation of an Eight-card Brainwave trick with a surprise ending. His rope routine was not only astounding, but allowed him to re-introduce us to the feeling of magic that so many of us have forgotten.

He explained how to take a classic Three Card Monte (flap variation) and create a version that produces the same effect, but leaves you completely clean. Enhancements to the French Drop, thimbles, more card tricks – this night just couldn't get any better. But Shoot did make it better by his artistic performance of the Chinese Linking Rings. He explained what to look for in a good set of linking rings and reviewed three principles that he has learned over the past twenty-four years of his experience with this effect. Shoots lecture was fun, magical, full of information, and contained something for everyone. We had a great turnout for the event and truly enjoyed the evening we had with this extremely talented and entertaining magician. It's no wonder why he is recognized as one of the best performers of our day. —Tom Neddo

Southwest Church of Christ near 124th and West Center Road, right across from McAlister's Deli. Contact Tom Neddo doowittagen@hotmail.com (402) 213-7812 www.omahamagicalsociety.com for more details.

8

HOLY SHOOT

ST. LOUIS, MO— November 13, 2014, was a Back to Basics evening. After the meeting we watched DMC's Aces, Wild Card, and the Thumb Tie! Columbus Smith walked us through basic Cups and Balls and explained his own techniques. George Van Dyke reads *M-U-M* as well as many other publications and treats us to those gems that he finds. Each meeting he shares what he has found in plain sight, if you look.



Holy Shoot

Visitor Derrick Daniels, the card wizard, was beyond the basics. Color Monte moves came in handy for Steve Barcellona as he explained the basics and more with his jumbo tree card routine. Dan (the Great) Todd searches for the perfect Substitute Rabbit, which is a fun routine! Paul Rygelski produces a lit Christmas tree from an empty tube! Joseph Lortz aced his magical effects and we were D'lited!

November 20 was the Shoot Ogawa lecture. Shoot brought many magical moments to our assembly. Each effect has been perfected to baffle and amaze us, as he did with coins, cards, thimbles, ropes, and Ninja Rings. We all had a blast. As always visit Assembly8.com for photos. —Dan Todd

Assembly 8 meets at Mount Tabor United Church of Christ located at 6520 Arsenal in Saint Louis, Missouri 63139. Contact Dick Blowers rmblowers@aol.com (213) 846-8468 <http://Assembly8.com> for more details.

16

TWO THUMBS UP

WORCESTER, MA— What a great meeting! Assembly 16 has successfully returned to the Magic Barn and some new programs. This month Peter Lennis followed

up the very successful IT teach-in with thumb tip magic. It was not only informative; it was a lot of fun. Peter went into detail on a bill switch with a tip and several other uses including a vanish and reappearance of sugar poured into his closed fist and vanishing a silk using a bill. There were contributions from many of the members, including a torn and restored Sweet 'n Low packet from Scott Martell.

After the learning session, we went downstairs for dinner and our history lesson presented by Scott Martell. This month it was Irv Weiner, aka Mr. Fingers. An interesting fact about Irv's nom de plume is that it referred to his signing ability; both his parents were deaf mutes. Mr. Fingers was born in Boston; as with many of his generation, after serving in WWII he used the GI bill to attend the Chavez College. Irv was a co-founder of I.B.M. Ring 122 in Watertown, Mass. Scott demonstrated and explained some of Irv's affects assisted by our own JoeJoe and Ken.

Following our history lesson we were entertained with some Halloween magic. JoeJoe started with a great prediction effect. Peter Lennis presented the voodoo doll with great affect. He also shocked JoeJoe with a collapsing spooky house. Peter also wowed us all with his nut and bolt telekinesis in which a nut screwed onto a bolt is placed under a wooden cup; on command it unscrews itself. Peter also performed his version of Bank Night, great magic. A wonderful time was had by all. Great evening, great magic, great people, and great programs. —Joseph Beman

Assembly 16 meets the first Monday of the month at the Magic Barn 179R Main St Ashland, MA Contact Joseph Berman jberman@alumni.usc.edu (661) 433-8456 Under development for more details.

17

TRICKS WE'RE THANKFUL FOR

SPRINGFIELD, MA— Our November meeting was about magic you're thankful for, and we had plenty of performers to share their thoughts! Tom Gentile led us off with a comedy card trick in which two selected cards were found, though Tom cheated; they ended up being the only two jumbo cards in a normal pack!

Rich Pinsonnault shared a new trick in the shop called Mist by Peter Eggink. You have to see this one to appreciate it. He followed it up with some beautiful Cups and Balls sequences that had everyone

cheering!

Rich Gilbert performed two foolers: Shock Twist, a Twisting the Aces routine with a killer kicker ending, and followed this up with Cinema Verite, a squeaky clean mind reading piece using movie posters.

Jeff Pyzocha was next with the Chop Cup routine he's been working on for a while now, using a drumstick as a wand and a percussive tapping as the magic moment. This is a nice example of using interests outside of magic within your magic; well done Jeff! Dylan performed a second dealing demonstration that sent some waves through the group! He's quietly becoming one of the best card men we have, and we can't wait to see where he takes us next!

Peter Lennis performed a nice collection of effects. First, he had to get rid of his gum, so he took it from his mouth, changed it into an un-chewed piece, and magically made the wrapper appear back on the gum. He then performed a Bank Night routine with scratch tickets in four envelopes, and a \$100 bill in the one left for him. Always a treat when he gets up!

Leonard Nadeau did some wonderful work with rope. A series of knots were tied in the rope, and the handle of a coffee mug was slipped onto the rope as well. With a pull, all the knots dissolved except one, which was now on the cup handle! Finally, Pj Pinsonnault spoke about The Trick That Cannot be Explained; he discussed how he uses this with his card magic. He then performed a routine in which a thought-of Ace vanished from beneath his hand and was found reversed in the deck. Great meeting, 17! —Pj Pinsonnault

Assembly 17 meets at RP Magic, 69 East Street Ludlow, MA 01056. 413-547-6500 Contact Rich Gilbert rgilbertmagic@yahoo.com for more details.

19

HOUSTON'S FALL SEASON OF MAGIC ARRIVES

HOUSTON, TX— Our fall magic auction was a huge success once again. Doug Kornegay, Scott Wells, and David Hinken were key players for us here. We are now looking forward to the Charles Gauci lecture coming up on November 18. Holiday magic is right around the corner in Houston.

Dick Olson's Linking Rings routine focused on his first experience with magic as a youngster. His patter reflected on how far he had come from that first experience and his desire to

pass it on to others. Nice routine by Dick.

Jaime Salinas had America Bustos assist him in a mentalism routine whereby one of three objects chosen by America was correctly predicted by Jamie. Nice work by Jamie, as always. Bob Smith performed a ring and rope effect and also cut and restored the rope with America Bustos as his assistant.

Shane Wilson demonstrated the Phoenix rising effect using a paper napkin to form the Phoenix. Visibly burned, the Phoenix rose again with no visible burn marks. Rick Hebert performed a nice rope routine that was followed up by passing a ring through an imaginary hole in the rope.

Roger Johnson gave a short lecture on "Thinking Magically." His impromptu bits were well received. It was a delightful reminder that magic can happen anytime, anywhere. Frank Price magically moved pips on a couple of dice around as America helped out. He ended with a nice prediction of the values of the dice held in her hands. Rick Hebert quickly unscrambled a Rubik's cube to everyone's amazement.

Roger Johnson returned as America Bustos assisted with his atomic rope effect. A rope was pulled through his "Atomic Slicer"; when the atoms in the rope were aligned just right, the rope was split and then restored.

Alison Williams showed us that America's chosen card could not have been, for it had been previously laid out on the table as a prediction card since the beginning of the effect. David Rengal's nice Chop Cup routine had us all guessing as to where the ball would be next. His finale production of a lime and a tomato put a finishing touch to a very entertaining routine.

Frank Price placed a prediction card on the table and had Alison Williams then select one as well as the deck was dealt down. Of course, the card Alice chose was the mate to Frank's prediction card. —Miles Root

Assembly 19 meets the first Monday of every month at the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 51 Meeting Hall, 3030 North Freeway, Houston, TX. A teaching lecture begins at 7:30 pm with the meeting beginning at 8:00 pm Contact Miles Root milesroot@aol.com (832) 607-6678 www.houstonmagic.com for more details.

22

AL LAMPKIN LECTURES IN LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES, CA— The November 17 meeting of the Southern California Assembly was again prefaced with a pre-meeting video showing of magic's great performances from the Golden Age of Magic. The meeting itself opened with second readings for Robert Carroll and John Clougherty, who were then unanimously elected into Assembly 22 membership. Congratulations and welcome, Robert and John. Assembly Secretary Ed Thomas, P.N.P. gave a convincing presentation to encourage attendance at the 2015 S.A.M. convention in Philadelphia and a review of the Magic Summit held in Las Vegas on November 14 and 15. The Magic Summit was a conference focusing on leadership to strengthen magic clubs.

President Michael Perovich then took a few minutes to respond to the interest and many questions about the book he recently authored, *The Vernon Companion*. Mike was a frequent visitor to the Magic Castle and familiar with all of the great magicians who made the Castle their gathering place. From detailed notes garnered from conversations with Dai Vernon and other Magic Castle icons, Mike has crafted a most interesting and entertaining chronicle about the Dai Vernon era at the Magic Castle. This quality hardbound book will be released by Hermetic Press in early December.

It was then on to the feature of the night: a great lecture by Al Lampkin, who has lived a lifetime presenting magic as a career. Al formerly lived in Los Angeles, but relocated to Salt Lake City some years ago. Al is a very busy lecturer and performer throughout the western states. Al began his lecture with an interesting biographical sketch of his life in magic and continued to provide anecdotes about magic and magicians throughout the lecture. The lecture was almost entirely stand-up magic using small, typically commonplace objects as props. A very practical magic square presentation, a multi-phase rope routine and a simple Cards Across were a few of the highlights. All the magic in the lecture is doable by anyone attending the lecture, given a reasonable amount of practice. During the lecture, Al briefly referred to an article he authored for the 2014 issue of *Linking Ring* titled "How to Build Your Business."

After the lecture, Al had a number of his publications and effects available for purchase. His lecture notes and a booklet titled *Magician at Large* were

particularly interesting. Both are quality printings with photos and nicely bound. Al was a most friendly and personable lecturer and provided another evening of great magic for Assembly 22. — Steven L. Jennings

Southern California Assembly 22 meets the third Monday each month at 8:00 PM, St. Thomas More Parish Hall, 2510 South Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, California. Contact Ed Thomas magicmred@earthlink.net (213) 382-8504 for more details.

25

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

ELWOOD PARK, NJ— Sam 25 welcomes Carl Morano, a possible future member who brought along some magical artifacts for review by the members.

Phil Schwartz, our illustrious past president, demonstrated an older elastic pull from his collection. We all wish to thank Phil for his past contributions as president.

All the effects were well received, starting with talented new president, Bob Delaney, who presented a very deceptive no-gimmick ring and string routine that also incorporated a nice finale from Magick Balay's Ring Escape.

George Silverman presented several advanced card effects facilitated by Garrett Thomas's Speedreader marked deck. One effect is a version of the Trick That Cannot Be Explained and also Simon Aronson's Double-Ment, from his new book *Art Decko* in which two cards are mentally selected by a spectator, the magician looks for the cards, places two cards on the table, spectator's reveal their choices, which match.

Mark Karavolos, newly appointed secretary, presented Martin Lewis's Sidewalk Shuffle, in which three jumbo blank cards and an Ace transpose in the finale to three Aces and one blank card. Mark was very thankful the cards were displayed and oriented properly this time unlike in so many prior disasters. Mark also demonstrated the Garrett Thomas's finger ring routine he learned at the IBM 106/SAM 25 lecture and Banded DVD by Garrett last month.

Phil Germain presented a nice quickie mental effect, Mark Oberon's 37; a nice card to envelope effect; and also Richard Sander's Tagged, in which a selected card ends up mysteriously on a dog-tag chain around Phil's neck.

John Henderson smoothly presented some cool currency

tricks: Norman Beck's \$30 Hotel Trick, Larry West's \$8 or More, and also a nice card matrix effect, Ascension Transposition by Randy Wakeman.

Dan Sylvestri, who is interested in mentalism, shared his overall positive experiences at Jeff McBride's Magic & Mystery School, and the MINDVention conference in Las Vegas last October.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

—Mark Karavolos

Assembly 25 meets the 3rd Friday of every month at VFW Hall, Veterans Place, Elmwood Park, NJ, meeting time: 8:00pm. If you can come early, join us for dinner at 6:00 at the Elmwood Park Diner. The address is 375 Market Street, Elmwood Park, NJ. It's at the intersection of Market and Boulevard. Contact Bob Delaney delaneyschicks@aol.com (973) 900-0100 <http://www.livemagicguide.com/sam25> for more details.

26

SKILL AND SPOOKY

PROVIDENCE, RI— Richard Turner visited the club recently, to demonstrate his amazing skill with cards. To quote club President Jeff Smith, "Never have I witnessed such card control." With assistance from siblings Tasha and Jazz Sussman Moss, Richard entertained the club with an amazing display of magic and dexterity. Despite having performed for decades, Richard still executes everything with joy and passion, having a great time with everyone in attendance. Dave Hill is on-the-mark with his comment that Richard "is one of the last living legends, and it was incredible."



Richard Turner performs

Jim Dyer stopped by the October meeting and shared the stories of his grandfather, C.M. Eddy, a friend and confidant of Houdini. Jim was kind enough to also share letters and other Houdini memorabilia that his family owns. Six of the club's members then performed their scariest "tricks," with Tasha Sussman Moss taking home the prize of a Haunted Deck DVD. It's great to see young

folks like Jazz and Tasha getting involved, and bringing their youthful enthusiasm into the club.

A huge thanks to both Richard Turner and Jim Dyer for taking the time to visit, and to share their magic and stories. —Chris Natale and Jeff Smith

Assembly 26 meets first Tuesday each month from September to June at 7 pm. American Legion Auburn Post 20, 7 Legion Way, Cranston RI. Contact Jeff Smith for more details.

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MARTIN BARATZ ON KRESKIN

ATLANTA, GA— Martin Baratz began our entertainment portion of the meeting with a Professional Development presentation on the mentalist Kreskin. Martin showed a short video presentation on the artist and demonstrated some of the techniques used by Kreskin during his performances. Martin had various games and books on Kreskin available for members to peruse.

Our performances, emceed by Debbie Leifer, began with John Gretch, who predicted a chosen card via a text message sent prior to his performance. A stack of cards were taken and the person remembered how many were taken. All of the cards were spread on the table and the card at the number selected was remembered. The card had a different color of back and matched the texted prediction.

Scott Edwards asked for a number from 1-1000 selected and the selected number was predicted in his wallet. Dan Garrett gave his rendition of Three Card Monte. Merritt Ambrose used a cell phone as a timer as he proceeded to separate out the cards in piles with suits separated by touch. Rick Hinze performed an alien card trick, as in Roswell aliens.

Mal Simpson did an Ed Marlo effect with mentalism. The Aces were separated in the deck and a number from ten to twenty was thought of by an audience member. The integers of the number were added together to find an Ace, which was repeated three more times.

West Evans gave us an entertaining rendition of a two coin effect with a gold dollar and a penny that kept jumping back from his pocket. Matt Baker implored us to use numeric passwords. He had someone select a password and read the person's mind by using bots (little roach-like creatures running a maze) to divine the numbers. Jim Mangham ended the evening with

a two-deck presentation. A card was chosen and when the deck was spread, the chosen card was found with the opposite colored back. —Carol Garrett

Assembly 30 meets the second Tuesday at Picadilly Cafeteria, I-85 at North Druid Hills Rd, Atlanta. Please contact carolmswiz@aol.com, 678-643-0250 for more details.

32

THANKFUL FOR MAGIC

LYNCHBURG, VA— There was no theme for November's meeting at the Hersy Basham Assembly, but there was some business and then an open forum for those in attendance to perform anything to their liking. The business included election of assembly officers for 2015. Incoming officers will be: Bob Wallin, President; Bob Staton, Vice President/Program Chairman; John Jennings, Secretary/Treasurer; and Sergeant-At-Arms: Carl Hoegerl.

Then it was on to a magical evening as President Patrick Hubble called the meeting to order. We welcomed a guest (already an S.A.M. member, but new to Assembly 32) Doug Atkinson. Doug maintains a website devoted to magic-related resources that proved quite interesting and showed Doug had put an extensive amount of work into the project. He accessed the site on his laptop and gave those attending a review of material available.

Performing first was John Jennings who started by reminding the audience that everyone has probably heard of a magician somewhere who pulls a coin from behind the ear of a child. Well, not tonight; John proceeded to pull an ear of a child from behind a coin. It was different.

Bob Staton performed a routine with people choosing first colors and then places, writing their mental selections on small cards and mixing the cards before being handed to Bob. He was still able to identify which person wrote what on the individual cards. Mike Kinnaird then entertained the group with two sets of ESP cards and even after the cards were mixed, Mike's set match the spectator's set in order.

Dr. John Risher also attended this meeting. He may have pulled off the greatest trick of all – considering that he is still going strong at an age of 104. We suspect that he is the world's oldest living magician and we are pleased he has kept an interest in our assembly for many years.

A couple of members (Bob Wallin and John Jennings) made the trip over to Ring 320 the previous day to attend the David London lecture. A brief review was given.

—John Jennings

The Hersy Basham Assembly 32 usually meets the third Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at Tharp Funeral Home, 220 Breezewood Drive, Lynchburg, VA. Contacting us ahead is suggested. Contact John Jennings investigatefire@aol.com (434) 851-6240 for more details.

35

LECTURE GETS ASSEMBLY PUMPED UP

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY— Our November meeting began with a discussion about the many things we enjoy about our assembly. The topic was started by our fearless leader, President Joel Zaritsky, who was preparing for the upcoming S.A.M. meeting in Las Vegas. One frequently mentioned quality was sharing, which is what Ed Fitchett and Joe Que did with an assortment of items from recently departed compeer George Post.

Another member also shared with us in the form of a lecture—member Darryl Bielski. It's not often you can say a lecturer "blows" and not receive a raised eyebrow, but when you're lecturing on balloons, it should be expected. Darryl didn't leave anything out of his lecture, we learned all sorts of twists, turns, bends, and advice on how to explore the amazing world of balloons. He gave us so many interesting ideas that would have taken us years to uncover on our own.

Throughout the evening we saw a variety of flowers, a spider, an octopus, and a number of other items that would seem out of the realm of possibility, but Darryl made the impossible possible. I had a lot more to write as I'm a huge fan of the double entendre, but our secretary, Frank Monaco, won't allow me to submit the half dozen quotes I heard during the lecture. Unfortunately my late '40s body houses the brain of an adolescent boy. Thank you Darryl for an evening filled with a lot of fun. Of course our unending thanks go to Santino who continues to generously provide us with space at his restaurant every month. —Craig Kunaschk

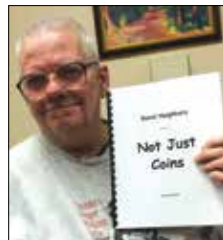
Al Baker Assembly No. 35 (usually) meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month at the Milanese Italian Restaurant, 115 Main Street, Poughkeepsie, NY. Contact www.compumagic.com/sam35 for more details.

37

NO CARDS NO COINS NOVEMBER

DENVER, CO— No cards no coins November was a good, old-fashioned magic meeting very befitting the end of a year like 2014 and the end of a decade that yours truly will be writing the Mile High Magicians updates. It certainly has been a pleasure. Vice President/President-elect Andrew Bates was host to a lineup that included new members with a few of my favorite pros thrown in. President Bates's mission for the upcoming year is to make the club more welcoming to beginners just learning their craft.

First up on this magic evening was card worker Gene Gordon, who showed he didn't really need cards to succeed. He summoned help from Dennis to choose a word in a newspaper article that magically appeared in a pre-written envelope. That moved him into telling about his successful invention called "ring on a rope" that segued brilliantly into a dental floss routine. Member Lewis Peacock wanted to show his initial practice work on a pantomime routine he is working on. He had a bit of a mishap with a can of Coke changing into milk, but that's how you learn.



Master Coin Manipulator David Neighbors shows his new book

Young junior member Aiden Darnell performed for the first time ever. It is always enjoyable to witness a new performer's maiden voyage. He was just great by choosing to perform a mind reading effect using nouns and little toy trinkets to match, including a mini Eiffel Tower and a trolley. Master coin manipulator and author Dave Neighbors was up before no-snack break. He performed a delightful ball and vase routine just before plugging his new book, *Not Just Coins*. It fit the night perfectly.

Engaging visitation took place as President-elect Bates called the meeting back to order. He wanted our close-knit twenty to hear the story of the day he learned magic while in the Navy. He offered member Elliot an examination

of the one hundred feet of Navy rope that was used to save him when he mysteriously fell off the boat. Steve Davis had been working on a unique presentation of Professor's Nightmare and it really showed that practice pays off. It delighted everyone. Past President and devote member Chad Darnell performed a red disk into giant Chinese coins, but then remembered it was no coins, no cards night, so he hysterically tried to sell them to the group. Comedy closed the night as the clubs most loved couple Jeff and Karen Wake came out in their Hula attire. Coconut bras firmly in place they performed a delightful danced-through routine complete with a catchy video game theme. —Connie Elstun

Assembly 37 meets Riverpointe Senior center in Littleton Colorado Contact Connie Elstun connie@comedymagicbunny.com (303) 594-2555 www.milehighmagicians.com for more details.

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A SKETCHY REPORT

KANSAS CITY, MO— The November meeting of Kansas City Assembly 38 was opened by Vice President Jason Moore, who conducted a first-class meeting. He announced upcoming lectures and our December holiday party/election of 2015 Officers night.

The meeting was turned over to RVP Shaun Rivera, who reported on the just-past Magic Summit, which was both educational and enjoyable. He has returned with a plethora of ideas for strengthening the assembly, as well as for creative new approaches to our evening performances. (When was the last time you performed your act blindfolded? That's literally, not figuratively which we've all done a few times.) More to come on all of that.

Magic performers for the evening were most of the card enthusiasts: Korso, John Hicks, Shaun Rivera, and Josh and Nicholas Theno, all of whom presented their usual brand of quality magic.

Dennis Burks mystified everyone with a (sort of) Die Box just large enough for the die, which involved the die doing magical things and finally transforming into a ball.

Dr. Phil King read minds as did Duane Roberts, and Israel Rivera put the finishing touches on the evening's performances.

More mind reading and magic followed at our Not Quite Five-Star Bar and Grill. Everyone left already looking forward to our December holiday meeting.

(Sorry, members, for the sketchy report. Your scribe was absent

and all good-hearted efforts at second-hand accounts proved, well, sketchy. We'll return to our old form next time.)—Don Becker
Assembly 38 meets at the Westport Improv Theater, 4010 Pennsylvania Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri Contact Don Becker joydonbeck@comcast.net (816) 886-6780 for more details.

47

DAN WELCH CARD DECK LECTURE!

ROCHESTER, NY— Well, it is snow time again. But not as bad as our compeers in Buffalo got it! We have had to make a few changes this year to our meeting dates. In the months of December, March 2015, and April 2015, we will have to meet on the third Wednesday, not the third Tuesday. Even though we did this at our November meeting, we still had nine members and two guests and we normally average about thirteen members.

Our club is lucky to have some really good talent in its midst. A long-time member and recently happily retired Dan Welch performed a fantastic lecture on collecting Bicycle decks of playing cards.

About the entire meeting was devoted to this lecture. I am going to describe it in as much detail as I can, but I suggest that if you have an assembly near Rochester, NY, contact Dan to see if he would be willing to lecture at your club. (magicdan@aol.com)

Dan owns over two hundred different styles of Bicycle brand playing cards, as well as numerous uncut sheets of cards. One is of a printing of only one hundred, making it very rare indeed!

Playing cards originated in China at about 800 AD, but only consisted of one through ten. It wasn't until 1400 AD when the French added the court cards, giving us our present deck layout.

Around 1847, four men got together and started making playing cards in the USA and in 1867 the U.S. Playing Card Company was born. The company was once based in Cincinnati, Ohio, but is now headquartered in the Cincinnati suburb of Erlanger, Kentucky.

One of the key points is the "air cushion finish," which allows good spreading ability when the deck is opened. Also, did you know the card box is called a tuck case? The USPC also makes Bee, Hoyle, Kem, and custom cards, too.

Dan is a member of the "Club 808," making him an avid collector. He also supports Kickstarter, a company that allows small businesses to get off the ground. Dan makes custom frames

to display your collectible decks.

The meeting had very little time left for actual magic, but the members were treated to a great lecture and afterwards, many of us headed to Dunkin' Donuts for a beverage and of course, a donut! —Mike Ihrig

Contact Joel Greenwich for details below as weekday fluctuates this season. Contact Joel Greenwich joelgreenwich@yahoo.com (870) 210-1303 www.sam47.com for more details.

51

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY IN PEORIA!

PEORIA, IL— The November meeting began with feedback on the Houdini tribute show in October. We all agreed that it was a very good show, but that we need to work on different ways to promote the shows that we do.

Next we held our election of officers for 2015. The slate nominated last month was unanimously approved and voted in. The new officers will be: President – Rodney Nordstrom, Vice President – Kyle Bassett, Treasurer – Jay Zentko, and Secretary – Michael Baker. The new officers will be sworn in at the annual banquet in January.

Our theme was Christmas Magic. Matthew Gardner performed a nice Monte routine with three jingle bells, only one of which would jingle. In spite of us watching closely, it was impossible to pick the correct bell. I don't know if Matthew cooked this one up by himself, but it was a clever take on the classic Monte theme. Matthew's sister, Mallory Gardner performed a variation of a trick with loops on her fingers. This also appeared to have a bit of creative brainstorming involved. It's great to have these two young people involved with our club. There is hope for the future of magic!

Char Gott began her set with the sudden appearance of a Harbin-style table, and then used a couple children (Matthew and Ethan) to assist as she stuffed various color scarves into a paper tube only to have them blend into a very long rainbow streamer (Duke's Dye-version). Upon opening the paper tube, it was seen empty, other than a nice Christmas message written inside. It was a nice colorful routine and some fun by-play with the kids.

Michael Baker performed Three Mouse Monte, a small gift box with three wiggling mice, only one of which squeaked. Michael shook the box to mix up the mice a few times; it was impossible to guess

the correct mouse. Unfortunately, Michael shook the box a bit too hard and the mice were found in a crumpled heap in the bottom of the box. Oh, well...He finished with his routine he calls The Mystery Box; this revolves around a story of a magical box he received as a Christmas gift.

Finally, Jerry Tupper performed the color-changing shoelaces, using Christmas colors, and then he performed a prediction effect using several glasses with colored silks inside. Only one contained a prize and this just happened to be the one picked by someone from the audience. —Michael Baker
Assembly 51 meets the third Monday of each month at Schnucks Grocery, 4800 N. University in Peoria, beginning at 7:00pm. Contact Michael Baker themagiccompany@aol.com (205) 612-3696 <http://peoriamagicians.com/> for more details.

52

HEAT AND SMOKE

SAN ANTONIO, TX— November 5, 2014, Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 held its monthly meeting at LaMadeleine Restaurant. President Ray Adams called the meeting to order. Congratulations to Matthew Orta for winning a \$50,000 robotics scholarship at St. Mary's University. What an awesome accomplishment. We are all very proud of you, Matthew! Ray presented Matthew with his S.A.M. pin and packet from the national organization, so he is now an official member of Assembly 52. Many thanks to James Dusek who volunteered to become the new S.Y.M. leader and John Murphy who will be assisting James. Michael Tallon reviewed an article in the October 2014 *M-U-M* on Houdini and spoke of a few highlights from that article. He also spoke of Bruce Kalver, who had a great tip on remembering names of volunteers during a show.

Starting off the open performances was Ray Adams, who performed a bottle and glass routine with a burning candle. Don Moravits did a prediction effect called the Blackpool Effect by Jay Sanky. John Murphy did some great rope magic that involved knots, and Michael Tallon performed Tenyo's Soft Coins. Joe Libby entertained with Devin Knight's Auto Spell Deck, Ed Solomon shared an original effect that he called Horse-Frog, and Paul Amerson did The Red Carpet by Jason Palter. Doug Gorman closed with an effect he called the Lightning Box.

Sal Manfredo was our featured performer for the evening. He did some excellent balloon work, including a balloon restoration, a balloon through glass, and a unique take on the needle through balloon, in which he first inserted and blew up a small balloon inside of an already inflated larger balloon. He then forced a needle through the larger balloon, popped the smaller balloon within, and then forced the needle on out through the other side of the larger balloon. He closed with a Silk Cabby routine that combined the standard effect with a 20th Century Silk climax. Thanks, Sal, for a very entertaining and original performance.

Door prize winners were Ray Adams, Don Moravits, and Michael Tallon. Ray won the book *Jennings 67*, Don won an Invisible Deck, and Michael won an original Ed Solomon effect.

Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month at La Madeleine Restaurant, located at 722 N.W. Loop 410. The restaurant is inside Loop 410 on the access road between Blanco Rd. and San Pedro. For more information, contact douggorman@att.net.

59

S.Y.M. THANKSGIVING SHOW

PORTLAND, OR— It was an exciting night at our meeting. The night was kicked off by President Mel Anderson. It was a packed house on this Thanksgiving eve. Mentor Tom Waldrop gave a background of the two S.Y.M. clubs, stating that this was the nineteenth year of this annual show. There was a buzz in the air and the crowd was ready to be amazed and baffled by our S.Y.M. Clubs.

This year we had eleven young magicians performing on this magical night. They did not disappoint and delivered an amazing show filled with magic and mystery with lots of humor as well. There were cheers and applause through the evening – a job well done by all the performers.

After some light snacks, our president Mel Anderson called the meeting to order. November is the election of the following year's board. The following were nominated for the following positions: President – Mel Anderson and Randy Stumman; Vice President – Jay Fredricks; Treasurer – Brian Adams; Secretary – Andy Turner; members at large – Tom Cramer and Michael Jaffe. Since no official ballots were available,

the motion was made that all the uncontested positions would be accepted by John Edsall. The motion was seconded by Duane Duvall. All members were in favor. So this issue passed. Next, the presidential race between Mel Anderson and Randy Stumman was voted on. Secret ballots were given to members and the final tally for our new president was Randy Stumman. Congratulations!

Lots happening, so be sure to get plugged in and enjoy all the benefits that come with your S.A.M. membership. Wishing all a happy new year and happy holidays. —Andy Turner

Assembly 59 meets at the Beaverton Elks Club 3500 SW 104th in Beaverton, Oregon Contact Andy Turner mysteriosofmagic@gmail.com (503) 975-6139 sam59portland.org for more details.

77

GARRETT THOMAS: NEED WE SAY MORE?

MASSAPEQUA, NY— During our very brief meeting, we were excited by the numerous awards handed out by N.E. RVP Eric DeCamps to the following members: PP John LePre for his twenty-five years of help, President Mitch Goodkin for hard work, and a mention of our new S.A.M. Pres. Pin, PP Pat Darienzo for twenty years, Bill Gleason for twenty-two years of service and the creation of the Heroes and Patriotism Award. PP Mike Maione also received an award, but wasn't present to take his present.

Mitch Goodkin introduced Garrett Thomas to the stage and upon Mr. Thomas's "signature" opening, we knew that magic wasn't the same old card trick or flip over box. The opening made us turn our heads without having to. His Ring Thing was the closest thing to real magic that I've ever seen. He spilled *all* of the details to make many members buy a ring just for the opening effect.

Then a one-handed demonstration of solving a Rubik's Cube told us that he has skillful hands and



From Left: Pres. Mitch Goodkin, PP John LePre, N.E. RVP Eric DeCamps, William Gleason, PP Pat Darienzo

mind. He then proceeded to solve it with no hands. Henning and Alonzo had their way and so did Thomas. Dream Coins taught us that simplicity is key. After a break to offer his wares to us, the second half started us down a path of improving our acts by using a pad of paper with some drawings that zeroed in on help anyone find the magic in magic. Finally he stayed standing up for his very magical Stand-Up Monte. It made my head swim with delight.

The next meeting on December 8, 2014, the Mystics have snagged a bigger feather than usual in the guise of Dan Sperry: The Anti-Conjuror. Many of us are catching *The Illusionists* on Broadway the week before, and we're primed to hear what he has to say about playing around the world. Until then, see you at the diner. —Lou Johnson

Long Island Mystics Assembly #77 meets at 7:30PM on the second Monday of the month at The Community United Methodist Church. For more information, check www.limystics.org Contact Lou Johnson loucircus@aol.com (516) 978-7735 www.limystics.org for more details.

88

FLEA MARKET AND MONEY MAGIC

ANN ARBOR, MI— Our world famous flea market, v.2014, is now in the books. On October 26, magicians, clowns, and sundry entertainers convened at the Eagle's Club in Belleville, MI, to check out the mysterious wares of twelve vendors from the Michigan/Ohio area. There was a wide selection of props and books from which to choose: gags, to close-up, to stage illusions! Bargaining was lively, with everyone coming away with that special treasure to make them a star. A big thank you goes to all the folks who came out to support our event. Hope to see everyone next year!

Our November meeting kicked off with the introduction of three new members, Scott Mitchell, Molly Larson, and Paul Nielsen. Good friends of the club, Shirley and Jack Markley made the trek from Anderson, Indiana, to join in the fun. They kicked off the meeting by offering some of their original mysterious creations.

This month's theme was "Money Magic," and did the members respond! Eight performers "showed us the money." Magic Joe Fusco opened by tearing a borrowed dollar bill into two whole dollar bills. Randy Smith tore up a dollar and produced from it a very long money streamer which he

proceeded to change into a large wad of bills. Nick Pudar followed with a pen through bill penetration which completely befuddled the audience. Jim Folkl performed the jumbo Chinese color changing coin. Jack Markley presented a multitude of his original creations, which were also offered for sale. Jack had something for everyone.

Our last three performers all presented variations on a theme — The Miser's Dream. President Bill Brang did a great job presenting the classic routine using an Abbott's champagne bucket and coin ladder. Treasurer John Russell performed an original routine to music, employing a



Nick Pudar Money Magic

one of a kind coin pail with a few unseen gimmicks, including a Kellar coin dropper. Our last performer, Dan Jones, caught nickels from thin air, using a coffee cup as their repository. In addition to the fabulous entertainment extravaganza, the performers graciously shared their methods and bits of business with the group. Who said education couldn't be the entertaining? —Jim Folkl

Assembly 88 meets at Denny's restaurant, 39550 Ann Arbor Rd., Plymouth MI 48170 on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm. Contact Jim Folkl retirementman@hotmail.com (248) 8514839 www.aamagic.org for more details.

95

VICTORIAN MAGIC

VANCOUVER, CANADA— The November 2014 meeting was held at the home of Tony Chris. Chef Tony prepared a succulent French meal for all members consisting of: ratatouille, Marcel beef bourguignon and Parisian hunter potatoes. For dessert, members were treated to cream cheese eclairs, coconut drops and creme de Canterbury tortes. Tony never fails to spoil all his guests with a delicious gourmet-themed meal each time he hosts a meeting.

Starting off the evening of Victorian Magic was Dennis

Hewson, who showed a silver tube, two silks and two ropes; he then tied everything together and caused the tube to escape. Ray Roch showed a trick he performed in Victoria, which was the bent and restored spoon. Jens Henriksen did a matrix prediction with Tony's son, Dimitri, who helped make and mark up squares on a piece of paper. This was taken from the November 2014 *M-U-M*. Glen LaBarre did a haunted Victorian skeleton key. The key turned towards the skeleton.

Tony Chris showed a wood



Tony Chris and his Victorian Themed Magic Room

box with two velvet bags. One contained a prediction and the other a deck of Tarot cards. Tony spoke of choice, chance, and destiny, and had Glen LaBarre deal Tarot cards from a mixed-up deck in the shape of a fork in the road. From the velvet bag Tony showed a gold sun that matched the gold sun Tarot card under Glen's hand. The other card was death. Tony has published this routine on his DVD. Henry Tom did a Coins Across routine with Glen and Dimitri. Both started with six coins each; three travelled across from Glen to Dimitri. Anthony Young changed a Nine of Clubs to the Five of Clubs, which matched Dennis's selected card. John Macmillan told the story of Jack the Ripper with two slates and an 1888 coin with Queen Victoria. John gave Glen a chalk and the coin. John then revealed that Jack Chow Insurance had mysteriously written itself on the slate.

Rod Chow showed a Victorian wand from Alivan's with crystal ends that he used in a successful four-card mind reading effect using a deck of cards with random numbers on the back. At the end of the evening, members had the privilege to receive a guided tour of Tony's exquisitely appointed Victorian-themed magic room, which Tony has so ornately designed to the very last accurate Victorian detail. —Rod Chow

The Carl Hemeon Assembly No. 95 meets the first Tuesday of each month at members' homes.

Contact Rod Chow rod@rodchow.com (604) 669-7777 www.sam95.com for more details.

104

104 CLOWNS AROUND BEFORE THE LONG AWAITED CONVENTION

WITCH CITY, SALEM, MA—

On November 5, special guests joined us for our pre-SAMCON meeting. These included S.Y.M. 124 President Derek DuBois and members of the Greater Boston Clown Club, Alley 54. Following Len Lazar's lessons in the School of Magic, the fine points of our thirteenth annual SAMCON were ironed out on a positive note.

Young Derek DuBois began the evening's entertainment with an ambitious array of effects. These were highlighted by his three-ring Linking Ring routine, which only gets better every month. Our additional guests from the Clown Club followed Derek with unlimited glee. Alley 54 President JuJu the Clown demonstrated a variety of props, many of them familiar to us, emphasizing the ways a clown would present them differently than a magician. It was fun, funny, and instructive; even our own Second Vice-President Jon Hubbard – also a member of the clown local – joined in, throwing in a pratfall that amazed this writer. Bruce Lawson offered more good-natured silliness as did Perky the Clown. It was a great night with greater things to follow.

On November 15, it was time for SAMCON at the Double Tree Hotel in Danvers, Massachusetts, come hell or high water. Numerous last minute challenges had been presented to Producer Evan Buso-Jarnis, including the eleventh hour canceling by our sound and lighting people and manipulator Jad being taken out by a hand injury. Happily, so many compeers came through in the end, led by S.Y.M. 124 parent John Savastano, that our convention emerged as a rousing success. The lectures by Oscar Munoz, Christian and Katalina, and Jay Sankey were outstanding.

The evening's performances that followed were filled with entertainment enough to overflow our already full house. Doc Swan handled the emcee duties with welcomed humor in his polished transitions. All of this was preceded by 104 Co-President Bill Jensen presenting much deserved awards to Producer Buso-Jarnis, for his third straight year of tireless SAMCON planning, Compeer Vince DeAngelis, for his endless accommodations to Assembly 104, our convention and



Co-Presidents Jensen and Snider present award to Compeer DeAngelis at SAMCON

our S.Y.M. kids, and S.Y.M. 124 Vice President Michael Ricciardi for outstanding work on the 124 newsletter.

On Sunday, November 16, Vince DeAngelis offered the traditional "Morning After" Open House at Diamond's Magic. This was followed by a private Master Class workshop conducted by Jay Sankey. Those compeers fortunate enough to have signed up enjoyed fantastic personal attention from a disarmingly personable close-up master. —Bob Forrest

Assembly 104 meets on the first Wednesday of each month, September-June, 7 p.m., at the First Baptist Church of Salem, 292 Lafayette Street, Salem, Massachusetts. Contact Bob Forrest captainalbrightsql@comcast.net (339) 227-0797 www.sam104.com for more details.

108

MAGICAL FUN

SOMERSET, PA— Our magic club has been very busy with preparing for and performing various shows as a club and individually. The club had five members perform at a theater in West Virginia in late October. We had a small crowd, but I have to say that we gave a wonderful two-hour performance. All in all, we enjoy performing together.

We have signed on for our fifth summer in a row at a local campground. The manager of the campground has been very happy with the response she has received from our audiences. We easily have 125-150 in attendance at each show. We have been helping the S.Y.M. youth to routine effects they have instead of one they have done. They are now preparing for the Family Christmas Show with a routine. —Dan Miller

The James Swoger Assembly 108 meet the third Monday at Wheeler Bros. at 6:00 pm SYM & 7:00 pm for SAM Contact Dan Miller millermagic@centurylink.net (814) 733-4978 for more details.



Dody-Jane Svetahor and Dan Miller ready the marquee for club show

112

OH, WHAT A NIGHT!

PLEASANT HILL, CA—

There's a song lyric recorded by the Four Seasons that's haunting me as I write this account of our October meeting. "Oh, What a Night!" Although that song clearly has subject matter far from the content of our October workshop, that catch phrase lyric keeps ringing in my ears.

Walt Anthony shared some of the "real work" with us in his workshop, "From Good... to Great!" It was a completely different kind of talk from our usual teach-a-trick session; it focused on a discussion of principles Walt has gathered from a long career as an actor, producer, and teacher of theatre skills.

The workshop ended with an exercise in which four teams of our members and guests had to come up with a story about some experience they had and use the classic Professor's Nightmare rope effect to illustrate the story.

After the break, Bob Holdridge showed a stack of blocks in a round pyramid shape (Mystic Disks). He produced the pyramid stack and demonstrated that no matter which way you turned the tube over, the pyramid always came out in the proper order when the tube was lifted.

Next up was visitor Alan Leeds, who performed a version of McDonald's Aces that incorporated some of the classic Twisting the Aces effect into a



Zappo uses magic slates to celebrate October's big celebration.

mystifying demonstration of card handling.

John Gyllenhaal had his friend Armando the Armadillo assist him in a hysterical bit of magic. That darned Armadillo is one of the better magicians in our assembly. Even though Nate Wilson covered the eyes of Armando, that talented animal was able to determine what card was selected by one of our guests.

Finally, Zappo made an appearance with a couple of blackboard slates that he used as an iPad when he was a kid in school. The spirit world transmitted seemingly random words to Zappo: Help, An, Ape, Yowl, H. . . that he recorded on the slates. When the two slates were placed face to face and the chalk sandwiched inside, the spirits rearranged the letters, and transformed them into the message, Happy Halloween.

The meeting ended late because there was such great interest in Walt Anthony's workshop, and everyone engaged in conversations with him and our fellow members. A few members were able to get a copy of Walt's book, *Tales of Enchantment – The Art of Magic*. Walt graciously autographed those books. Oh, What a Night! —Larry "Zappo" Wright

Diablo Assembly 112 meets on the third Wednesday of every month at the VFW building in Pleasant Hill, California. Contact Larry Wright Zappo@zappothemagician.com (925) 685-5129 <http://sam112.com/> for more details.

118

GRANITE STATE CONJURORS

NASHUA, NH— Tom Gentile, our new Regional VP, joined us for our October meeting. We have several events coming up. The Granite State Conjurors will be performing as part of the Nashua Holiday Stroll on November 29. We are collaborating with the Peterborough Unitarian Church to produce a magic show for our mutual benefit.

Our annual show to benefit the Merrimack Crimeline is already in planning for the spring. For more information about any of these and other future events, contact us at sam.nashua@gmail.com

Assembly 118 meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Black Sword Estate, 126 Perham Corner Rd. Lyndeborough, NH 03082 Our venue rotates, so contact us first. Contact Robert Granville sam.nashua@gmail.com (603) 505 8749 <http://sam118.com> for more details.



**Regional VP Tom Gentile
entertaining the Granite State
Conjurers**

120

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

CHAMPAIGN, IL—In October we met at Manzella's Italian Patio and the food and service were outstanding. Discussion included the VA show. Also discussed were magic on television and how it affects geopolitical boundaries in a world besieged by a violent upsurge in counterfeit corn-dog sales.

Randy Shields opened the magic by sawing our waitress in half with a borrowed butter knife while performing "Oops, I Did It Again." Dave Wernick put the waitress back together and ordered a non-menu entree and, not to be out done, Jeff Harpring demonstrated his new talent by hypnotizing the staff and making them perform selected songs from *Cats* as various historical figures. Ken Barham closed out the evening with the "21 Card Trick." As usual, it was a great meeting and fun was had by all, even if Jeff's helpers don't remember any of it.

Our next VA show is set for Sunday, January 18, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at the VA in Danville, IL. Contact Chris Bontjes for more information. The Central IL Magic Get-Together will be on April 25, 2015, in Peoria.

In our November meeting, Chris Bontjes told us about his trip to the Magic Summit and brought back some great ideas for expanding local magic clubs. Several of the ideas were discussed and we hope to implement them soon.

Mark Carlon opened the magic portion of the evening by showing us his customizable magic vest. It had a lot of options and could be re-arranged for comfort. Andy Dallas showed us a trap table he modified to be used as a magic table with just a few adjustments. Professor Higgins showed several new variations of his floating bill. Chris Bontjes performed his new flash drive routine. Greg Loschen showed us his 442, holdout, and card change. Andy Dallas closed the magic with his version of the torn and restored bill. As usual, everyone had thoughts and ideas

on what they had seen. See ya at the meeting, Ken Barham
**Assembly 120, Andy Dallas
Assembly meets on the 3rd Wed.
7pm, (except Nov. and Dec.) For
location call Jim Percy at 217-
494-2222 or Ken Barham Sec,
2318 Winchester Dr, Champaign,
IL 61821. 217-841-5616 email:
Kebram@aol.com**

131

MAGIC WITH GADGETS

DANBURY, CT— This was new president Bob Abel's first meeting. Our evening's theme was Magic with Gadgets. President Bob and Magic Marty handed out three-fold flyers with an agenda for our evening's business meeting: Treasurer's report, Old News, New News, Health and Welfare, and Magic with Gadgets. We then discussed what themes would entertain us in the months to come.

Walter B gave a surprise drawing to Tony S. Des was out for cataract surgery. President Bob had a fire in his home and has been living in a hotel with wife. No magic was harmed.

Russ demoed a handmade bank that exploded when a coin was dropped in it. What a rush. President Bob performed a homemade coin thru jar. Tony S. reintroduced the Indivisible Deck promising that your selected card will be reversed in the deck. Well performed, Tony S.

Gail Alexander used a calculator to put in three sets of three-digit numbers. She guessed the answer. Your scribe, Magic Marty, gave a short talk on: thread reels, floating a napkin rose or bill, using poker chips as coins (most are magnetic), and having a Sucrets box in your back pant pocket with magnets in it as a coin drop.

Marty also discussed his new smart phone ad for photos to be placed in *M-U-M* and our Danbury Top Hatters Facebook. —Magic Marty Steinberg

**Assembly 141 meets at Methodist
Church #5, Clap Board ridge
Rd Danbury CT Contact Magic
Marty magicmarty@aol.com**



**Tony Spiro receiving drawing
from Walter B.**

(845) 797-8363 for more details.

138

OCT/NOV FORT WORTH MAGICIANS CLUB

FORT WORTH, TX— On October 2, 2014, Michael Stein opened the meeting of FWMC with general announcements and introduced the program "Halloween and Bizarre Magic." He performed his Voodoo Doll effect followed by Richard Rodriguez with a ESP demonstration, and Josh Ayala and his bizarre Knife Roulette routine complete with zany manikin leg table!

Bruce Chadwick provided the main core activity with a photo slideshow from the Ken Klosterman Salon De Magie at the "Gathering of Vultures" Magic Collector's Convention.

The November 6, 2014, meeting of FWMC began with President Michael Stein making announcements about the upcoming Charles Gauci lecture and Fielding West workshop. It was reported that Past President Larry Heil is still fighting health issues. Patsy Wilson, widow of our late club member Doug Wilson, continues her husband's tradition of woodcarving.

Exec-VP and Program Chairman Matthew Martin introduced Sergio Lopez, who performed his qualification demonstration and became our newest club member. Sergio's main interest is building magic effects for his young son Christian, member of the Cook Children's Magic Club. Sergio showed his apparatus, including an aquarium production table, temple screen, ABC blocks, and a substitution trunk.

Dr. Michael Smith talked about the recent Magic and Meaning Conference. Michael showed his copy of Robert Neale's *The Sense of Wonder*, released at the conference. Matthew Martin introduced Impromptu Magic, the activity for the meeting.

Club members were then divided into four groups, each to perform effects using objects from the table. Matthew performed a Hot Rod type effect with pieces of paper and a ruler. Bruce Chadwick performed a "two in the hand and one in the pocket" routine with small tomatoes. John Hatzenbuehler showed various feats, including a makeshift sponge ball type routine with balls of paper, star circle moon paper tear, and perpetual tomatoes from his mouth.

Josh Ayala performed rubber band magic followed by Geoff Grimes's finger ring and handkerchief routine and Jeff

Hallberg's toothpicks and finger rings. Bill Irwin drove a toothpick through his hand and made cheese disappear and reappear into a cup. Al Fox performed a jumping rubber band routine and Michael Stein closed by making a knot disappear from a handkerchief and making a spoon appear. The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 pm. A short executive committee meeting followed.

**Tarrant County College,
Trinity River Campus Contact
cabighorse@gmail.com (817-846-
4062) for more details.**

141

THE RABBIT SLEEPS TONIGHT

COLUMBIA, MD— On November 10, 2014, after a quick business meeting and some pretty bad bunny jokes (and with apologies to the Tokens for mangling their song title), the Columbia Conjurers began their November performances with "The Rabbit Sleeps Tonight: Magic with an Animal Theme." Eric Hoffman started us out with Freddy the Flea, who performed his own rope trick, located a card in his tiny car, and then met an untimely end. Jim Murray amused with a paper guppy that kept stubbornly reappearing after being cut in half multiple times, followed by Rob Niccolini performing a cut and restored effect with a butterfly silk production at the end.

Peter Wood chose to ignore the theme, offering up "the bird" to us as a last-minute substitute, and then did a neat prediction of four cards from a deck mixed up front and back. Wayne Miller used an animal deck and matched them two by two so they could make it onto Noah's Ark, and Kenny Wadrick followed with his own animal deck and drawing predictions (as a bonus, he also transformed a guest into a bunny with the classic kid's wand). Matt Neufeld entertained with a series of rabbit productions from various magic boxes, and Bob Leedom shared a funny trick he invented for his grandkids with animal-shaped rubber bands and a baby wand-in-training named Hector. Finally, Jacques Severe brought us home with several origami rabbits created from dollar bills, and a three blind mice color prediction.

Overall, it was a night to make your hares stand on end!

**Assembly 141, the Columbia
Conjurers, meet on the second
Monday of each month at 8:00
pm in the basement of the Parish
House (on top of the hill) at Christ
Episcopal Church in Columbia,
Maryland. For more information**

or to contact an officer, visit www.sam141.org

148

A (MIKE) WINTER'S TALE

ELMHURST, IL—The members of Assembly 148 assembled on a cold, cold day in November and were rewarded with one of the most practical lectures we've ever seen. Mike Winters is a fulltime pro who generously taught a number of really great items from his working repertoire. Opening with his multi-multi-phase rope routine, Mike had the entire crowd enraptured, entertained, and fooled. Here was a perfect routine, honed and polished by thousands of performances in every type of venue, which was not only explained in detail but offered in a video version free to those who simply emailed Mike asking for it. The lecture could have stopped there and have been worth a year's dues. It didn't stop there! Mike then presented a wonderfully ingenious Magic Square effect on a giant but ultra lightweight placard. The method incorporated a unique use of the Out-To-Lunch principle and proved to be a stunner even for math-challenged magi.

Throughout the evening, we were told how and where to buy everything needed for a couple of dollars from such well-known magic stores as Walmart and Home Depot. When Mike did close-up work, the effects were practical in either intimate surroundings or on a stage for hundreds of spectators. A prime example is his two-deck transposition effect. This was followed by an clever, almost-impromptu version of Zen's Cards and Envelopes in which the cards can be merely thought of or signed (for cautious magicians who dread an audience member's memory lapse). A refreshingly different version of Bank Night followed. The prize is a package of giant M & M's—the spectator wins and the magician is stuck with a \$20 bill and a \$100 bill.

For the second half of the lecture, Mike concentrated on card stuff for the kind of guys who use "session" as a verb—in other words, tricks that fool magicians. In this case, however, they are also mighty effective for paying customers. After the lecture, the table was crowded with eager magicians and Mike wasn't selling anything. They just wanted to chat with this wonderful guy who obviously loves magic in spite of the fact that he makes his entire living with it. —Tony Noice

Assembly 148 meets downstairs in the Lutheran Evangelical Epiphany Church, corner of Vallette and Spring Road in

Elmhurst, Illinois Contact Tony Noice noisea@net.elmhurst.edu (630) 939-3740 WWW.SAM.com for more details.

157

EVENTS AND FUN TO LOOK FORWARD TO

BEAVER, PA—Due to President Doug Ries being in Las Vegas at the Magic Summit, Jim Tate, VP, presided over the Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (157) meeting. Frank Kietzke reported that there is *The Carbonaro Effect* and *Wizard Wars* currently on TV.

Upcoming events: Conference for the Fellowship of Christian Magicians in May, MagiFest in Columbus January 29 thru 31, Battle of Magicians in Canton April 29 to May 2.

The *Masters of Illusions Show* was reported as "great" with one of our members (Dick Recktenwald) and his wife being called onstage to assist Rick Thomas. Jack Greenberg presented the Teach and Learn on the Performer's Emergency Kit, which consists of aspirin, Tums, lozenges, tools, tape, and many more items all fitting into a 8"x4"x2" pencil box. Other members added more ideas.

Performances were emceed by Frank Kietzke. Bill Cornelius recalled some Halloween one-liners and presented a trick with the Ace to Four of Spades. Bill had someone think of a card, then he shuffled them, and chose the correct one. Jim Weyand had someone pick a card, then a number. He picked up the number chosen off the deck and the last card was the chosen one. Don Moody placed a face card for two people to sign on the back. Don folded the card in half lengthwise, tore it, folded it in half to show all edges, opened the card, and magically restored it.

Jack Greenberg showed three small matchboxes. He had several people pick up the stack, then only the top one. "Feel anything unusual?" All agreed the top box felt heavier than all three. It was a perceptual illusion. Jim Tate did Got Your Number -10. He had five cards (red and yellow). Helper turned cards any which way while Jim faced other way. He turned around, took the cards, and they added up to 10. —Judy Steed

The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (157) meet the second Thursday of every month at the Towne Square Restaurant in Beaver, PA. Contact Judy Steed heyjude1943@msn.com (330) 525-5389 for more details.

172

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER WITH ASSEMBLY 172

PORT SAINT LUCIE, FL—September could have hardly been any better. After all, what can possibly top a lecture by our own local David Kelly of Vero Beach? David's lecture featured much of the material he performed when we visited him at The Filling Station in Vero a few months ago. Full of information, tips on getting gigs, and pointers on approaching customers, David shared a wealth of knowledge appreciated by all.

Our own compeers jumped in after David's lecture and a short respite, led off by Danny Eisen with a two-card revelation in which the participant actually chose the two cards' locations.

Matt Musgrave performed an Oil and Water card effect, followed by Paul Hilko and a potentially gory Finger Guillotine, in which, fortunately, no phalanges were harmed. James Offenharte performed a very clean coin effect using a spectator's pocket change, and Harley Salas closed out the evening with a card production.

October started off with a road trip up the coast to visit our friends at the Space Coast Magic Club in Melbourne, the nest stop on Wayne Houchin's "No Blessings" tour. Worth the trip, because three of the five compeers who made the trip signed on with the Melbourne Assembly before the evening was over.

Our regular October magical session started off with a workshop featuring coins, cards, and rubber bands by our own Jay Rene. Dean Devitt (yours truly) followed Jay with a *Man in the Iron Mask* themed effect involving three brand new genuine antique keys and a prediction, once again leaving the Man in the Iron Mask unidentified. Dean then did a voodoo card revelation in which a selected card was returned to the deck, slowly roasted over an open flame, and revealed as the only card with a hole burnt through it. Did I mention the ashes on the volunteer's palm?

James followed with a short, but very nice, change bag routine and a variation on the Professor's Nightmare. Matt Musgrave reprised his spirit reading of the name of a recently deceased person with fire, ashes, and the name of the decedent written in ashes on his arm. Nice Job, Matt!

So, we move on now to November at the Saint Lucie Lanes for another chapter in the life of Port Saint Lucie's Donald E. Lea Assembly. —Dean F. Devitt
Assembly 172 meets on the 4th

Tuesday of every month except December at the Saint Lucie Lanes on S. US 1 in port Saint Lucie at 7:00pm Contact Dean F. Devitt quindar46@yahoo.com (772) 332-8412 for more details.

181

COINS AND CARDS SLEIGHTS

HIGHTSTOWN, NJ—Keith Warner was performing magic for children in a stage show and puppet act back in the 1980s. His performing time was soon to be taken up by his thirty-four-year career in the restaurant business. Lately, he has been able to return to magic, dedicating his practice time to coins and cards sleights and effects that use no gaffs. At our November meeting, Keith was able to share some of the sleights that he has found most useful in building routines.

Keith started his workshop with a bottom palm for a color changing deck routine. Many of his sleights come from *Expert Card Technique*, an indispensable resource for card workers, but Keith adds his own methods, which he showed for example, in his "pass with a point."

Sleights are difficult for everyone. Keith has taken on the challenge of working with coins and cards sleights as a therapy; older gentlemen please take note: he says it helps for arthritis. Where is all this practice leading, Keith would like to do a close-up act someday, and from what I saw, he is well on his way to making that a reality.

Our open performance part of the evening started with Reba doing "the only coin trick I know." Jeff Carson followed by doing an Annemann effect with an expanded set of Zener card symbols and a large Post-it board.

Matt Schick, who joined our assembly as a teenager, took time off his busy schedule to attend and tell us what he has



Keith Warner

been working on. Matt is part of the magic consulting team for Michael Carbonaro's new show on truTV, *The Carbonaro Effect*. Coco did a one-coin routine and

The Amazing Randy finished the performances with his Five Senses routine.

At our second meeting in November, we had the pleasure of watching a lecture on comedy magic by Harry Allen of Daytona Magic. Harry has been on tour recently with a new lecture that he has presented at the Magic Castle; it was a delight to see and hear him. *Sleight of Mouth*, the name of Harry's book, is the best way to describe his performances.

Two meetings, one month; that is how we roll at Assembly 181.

—David Zboray

Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets the first Thursday of every month, September thru June at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Contact Stephan Sloan lands10@optonline.net (732) 757-5337 <http://www.magicsam181.com> for more details.

200 PRETTY CLOSE

SEATTLE, WA— Our club culture offers a safe, supportive environment where members can try out new presentations and get positive feedback on how to make them better. Our November meeting found many members trying out new effects, which revealed our unplanned theme of the month, "Pretty Close."

Bill Murray started the evening with a new psychic effect where he divined three chosen cards. Well, he got two out of three. Pretty close. John Cameron unveiled a new effect he created using geometry and playing cards. It was a fun effect, but John only got two out of three cards correct. Pretty close.

Michael Jacobs wrote randomly selected numbers on a balloon that were calculated to arrive at the number nine, which matched the prediction he had placed in the balloon. Fortunately, Michael put a line under the nine in the prediction, otherwise it could have been seen as a six which would have been pretty close. Larry Dimmit hypnotized a half dollar that stood up and spun around on its own. Both Michael and Larry were right on.

Ralph Huntzinger shared some books by Tobias Beckworth and Max Howard to keep us thinking creatively. Roger Sylwester offered some magic VHS tapes that were grabbed up by the group. He also showed us some beautiful wooden wands.

Hugh Castell shared a story about his grandfather's ring, which visually changed into

a quarter and then back into a ring. Ben Eskenazi showed us some mentalism by divining a word freely selected from a book. Chuck Kleiner showed a genie bottle and a flying carpet; the genie left the bottle and magically returned when the bottle was placed on the flying carpet.

Reymarx Gereda divided a deck in half, keeping one and giving the other to a spectator. After numerous shuffles and cuts, each half was dealt into four piles. All of the cards on top of Reymarx's piles were Kings. All of the cards on the spectator's piles were supposed to be Aces, but only two were. Pretty close. Mark Paulson had three spectators each choose a page from a book. He divined two and missed the third one by five pages. However, he had a prediction that said he would miss one by five, so it turned out he was both pretty close and right on.

It's great being able to try out new magic and get positive feedback from peers. If you're ever in Seattle, bring your magic and play with us. —Chuck Kleiner

The Emerald City Wizards Meet the First Thursday at 7:00 PM each month at a branch of the King County Library. Check website for locations: www.emeraldcitywizards.org Contact Chuck Kleiner chuckkleiner@yahoo.com (206) 236-0608 www.emeraldcitywizards.org for more details.

206 AUSTIN MAGICIANS HEAR FROM WIZARD WARRIOR AND MAGIC FILMMAKERS

AUSTIN, TX— Magic on the big screen and the small – these were the themes for the October meeting of Austin's Assembly 206.

Budding star Marcus Eddie, fresh from his winning appearance on Penn & Teller's *Wizard Wars*, was among the evening's star attractions. Also appearing were filmmakers Andrew Lee and Luke Korem, who premiered their new trailer for *Dealt*, a work-in-progress documentary about world-renowned card magician Richard Turner.

The movie-night combination of Eddie, Lee, and Korem were enough to fill nearly all the theater-style seats at the Omni Southpark Hotel conference room, the club's regular meeting space. Assembly 206 even signed up a number of new members.

Some of the newcomers said they were drawn by the budding fame of Eddie, a fixture in the Austin magic community. The thirty-five-year-old magician spoke both about his experience on the *Wizard Wars* pilot and his

experiences during a later episode in which he was teamed with Las Vegas magician Nathan Burton.

The finale for Eddie's and Burton's winning routine was a swing set levitation. Eddie also performed a miracle with a mirror, and unveiled an original creation in which he magically knots a tie.



Austin's Marcus Eddie wins at *Wizard Wars*, on the SyFy Channel.

Another inventive illusion had Eddie disappearing from a makeshift cardboard box just as it was about to be crushed. Eddie then made a miraculous reappearance from behind the studio audience – as one of the network's camera operators.

Assembly 206 members also received a fascinating update about the in-progress Richard Turner documentary from filmmakers Andrew Lee and Luke Korem. *Dealt* is scheduled for release sometime in 2015. The filmmakers aired two trailers during the October meeting and spoke about their continuing efforts to raise money for the project.

"When you learn more about his personal life and how he turned it around and overcame everything, it's such an inspiration," Korem said of Turner, a San Antonio-based magical virtuoso known best for his spectacular card handling.

Turner is completely blind, having lost his sight at an early age. But over those sightless years Turner also gained an incredible touch with cards.

For more information about *Dealt*, check out the film's website at dealtmovie.com —R.A. Dyer
Assembly 206 meets at the Omni South Park Hotel, 4140 Governors Row, Austin, Texas, 78744. Contact Jake Dyer jakedyer@yahoo.com (512) 658-0017 <http://sam206.com/> for more details.

210 MAGICIANS REACH MAGICIANS

BAYAMON, PUERTO RICO— The internationally renowned children's TV entertainer and president of Assembly 210 of Puerto Rico, Mago Emanuel Shabum, set out on a mini excursion

to the west from the east side of the island. However, he didn't go alone. He was accompanied by some of the top magicians on this journey. Why, you may ask. It was an effort to unite the other half of the top magicians of our assembly.

After a three-hour drive they arrived at Playa Los Jobos in Isabella, Puerto Rico. The founder of Assembly 210 and S.A.M. lifetime member #151, our Professor Mago LuLu did his cut and restored dental floss act. Shabum performed the drawing board rising card. Mago Noda performed Triception Coin and Card in Wallet. Mago Karlo performed an excellent card routine. He never lets me down.

Mago Joel Delgado performed the disappearing elephant. Mago Odyn performed an interesting rope routine. Mago Robert Zimmo did a slick coin routine. And to put the icing on the cake, the magician of the night, Mago Nivek, performed a flamboyant, exotic, live animal show. Parakeets turned into ferrets and beautiful birds!

I wish to thank the vice-president of Assembly 210, Mago Reynold Alexander, for his presence at all our meetings and his motivation to keep us going as a magical family. A special thank you to Mago Carlos Manuel for the invitation to this beautiful beach, Los Jobos, in an effort to keep the "Art of Magic" alive. —Freddie I. Gonzalez



Shabum's Tienda Magica

Assembly 210 meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month at: E.G. 18 Cristobal Real, Levittown Lakes ; Toa Baja, P.R. 00949 Contact Emanuel Shabum shabum@shabum.com (787) 645-2989 for more details.

215 ROBERT ESCHER CLOSE-UP CONTEST

LOUISVILLE, KY— The November 11, 2014, meeting of the Louisville Magic Club began with recognition of President Jim Harris for having received the Bob Escher Excellence in Magic Award at the recent UnConventional Convention at the Cumberland Falls State Park in Kentucky, November 7-8. Cody Clark announced that he will be

performing his show, *A Different Way of Thinking*, at the Slant Culture Theatre Festival on Nov. 15, 19, and 22. Steve Spence, the S.A.M. territorial vice president from Indianapolis, was a welcome visitor again.

Officers elected for next year were the following: Mike Raymer – 1st V.P.; Ray Adams, Jr. – 2nd V.P.; Barb Harris – Treasurer; John Butler – Sergeant at Arms; and Roger Omanson – Secretary.

The remainder of the evening consisted of our annual Dr. Robert Escher Close-up and Parlor Competition, organized again this year by Ken Abbott, who also served as emcee. (Bob was president of the LMC for twenty years, as well as president of the I.B.M. in 2001-2002.) Each contestant was limited to ten minutes. Club members Pete Miller, Dennis Alm, and Roger Omanson served as judges. Prizes for the winners were provided by Penguin Magic, and door prizes were awarded by drawings throughout the evening. Attendance was lower than usual on this rainy night, but those of us who attended had an enjoyable evening.

In the senior category division, there were three contestants: Mike Raymer (1st place), Jim Harris (2nd place), and Arym Olden. In the junior category, there were also three contestants: Graham Maupin (1st place), Edward Streeter (2nd place), and Sidney Hagerthy. There was a three-way tie for the People's Choice Award: Graham Maupin, Edward Streeter, and Arym Olden. —Roger L. Omanson

The LMC, Assembly 215, usually meets at the Kosair Community Center on Eastern Parkway. Contact Roger L. Omanson rlomanson@gmail.com (502) 296-6577 www.lmcmagic.com for more details.

252 IN YOUR POCKET

FAIRFAX, VA— Bob Ellis, a middle school science teacher in real life, began the November meeting by telling about his new after-school activity for seventh and eighth graders that he calls the “Magic of Science.” He teaches kids simple magic tricks combined with scientific experiments and invited Assembly 252 members to participate. Ben Guy continued the discussion with info on his new project: a gathering of all the published Okito box routines that he hopes to produce as a compilation.

Richie Klein kicked off the magic (and the evening’s “In Your Pocket” theme) with a three-penny, two in the hand and one in

the pocket effect that ended with a giant penny. He also showed a new style deck of marked cards. Chris Nicholson continued the theme with a demonstration of his new “fire” wallet.

Bob Malinchock showed his memory skills by memorizing an entire deck of cards and found the selected card by noting its absence. He also showed a neat trick using mailbox letters that spelled out “knot,” and then produced a knot that indicated which letters a spectator had re-arranged. Next, he showed a box of vintage candy bars and predicted the audience’s favorite. Bob finished with a combination lock trick that used random numbers to figure out how to open the lock, while standing by with a large set of bolt cutters in



Bob Malinchock’s bolt cutter backup

case the magic did not work.

Greg Clements showed a clever color-changing sponge ball routine; he then concluded the evening with an updated version of the six-card repeat routine that he had used to end last month’s meeting. —Alan Wheeler

Assembly 252 meets the third Thursday of each month at the Knights of Columbus Hall behind St. Leo’s Catholic Church, 3700 Old Lee Highway in the City of Fairfax, Virginia. Contact Tom Bohacek bohacek@gmail.com (703) 754-2005 for more details.

291 LESSONS WITH SHOOT OGAWA

LOS ANGELES, CA— The night started with our secretary talking about the upcoming elections for officers and our big end-of-the-year potluck dinner. President Bill talked about what is new in the world of magic and the Internet side of magic.

On with the guest lecturer – Mr. Makota “Shoot” Ogawa! Per Shoot’s biography, in Japanese, “Shoot” (Mr. Ogawa’s stage name) means “people gather together.” This is what he did for us, he gathered us together to dazzle us with his signature and beautiful magic. He started the night fascinating, astonishing, amazing

and then explaining his vanishing wand. Then, he went on to further amaze us with the Double Hand Matrix, coin routines, his muscle pass, rope tricks, his signature Ninja Rings, some card tricks, and his thimbles. During his presentation, he thoroughly gave us explanations for all of his effects.



Shoot Ogawa with his Ninja Rings

Now, a little more about Shoot Ogawa: He is a disciple of Masahiro Yanagida. In March 2003, he was featured in *MAGIC* magazine. Shoot has also starred as a character in *Magic Master*, a popular Japanese teenager comic book. His website is www.holyshoot.com.

I would definitely recommend hosting Shoot so he can dazzle you with his magic. Last, we would like to do say a farewell to an amazing lecturer, performer, and friend of Assembly 291, Woody Pittman. Woody passed on October 24, 2014. Before he left the magic world, he shared an evening with us and took us on his thrilling magic adventure. That was a privilege. We will miss him. —William Dow Jr.

Assembly 291 meets the second Tuesday of every month at OPICA Adult Day Care Facility, 11759 Missouri Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025. *This is subject to change.* Contact Les Cooper Cooperl@ucla.edu (310) 473-1820 www.westsidewizards.org for more details.

292 PLAYING WITH FOOD

GREELEY, CO— We tried out a new venue for our November meeting. Jim Pope led a business meeting over lunch in a private room of Pellegrini Ristorante Italiano. The room proved to be suitable and the quality of the food was excellent. (Pellegrini’s will become our back-up meeting place when Kenny’s Steakhouse is not available.) We elected officers for 2015: President – James Lopez; Vice President – Dr. Ron Dutton; Secretary – Lew Wymisner; and Treasurer – Paul Noffsinger.

Show Reports included James Lopez doing a show based on math, handling a balloon animals

event, and performing two church shows. Lew Wymisner used magic to spark up two lectures to help young people succeed at work, and he has a show booked in early December.

Show time! The theme was “Fruits, Gourds, and Vegetables.” (Both Alex Acosta and James Lopez had performed earlier.) Dr. Lloyd (Worley the Wizard) Worley opened, displaying a set of Crazy Liquid Glasses (Liquid Penetration by Father Blantz). Lew (The Great Loudini) Wymisner performed an entertaining and humorous routine. Marilyn Dutton picked a card and kept a corner. Since his lighter did not work, Lew said to imagine that he had burned up the card in his dove pan. In a really bad pun, the dove pan then yielded a food-theme production of a pair of men’s undershorts by Fruit of the Loom. Lew then gave Marilyn a can of peas and a can opener, and Card in Can held a restored card that was missing the matching corner. For a double climax, Lew produced, from the undershorts, a card silk showing the same card.

Dr. Ron Dutton did an original Vanishing Fish effect by making the salmon vanish from his blue and pumpkin striped shirt. He then recounted a hilarious Blackstone Sr. story Ron heard from a friend who was an assistant on the Blackstone show. Lew Wymisner appeared for a second time producing a pile of Al Goshman’s



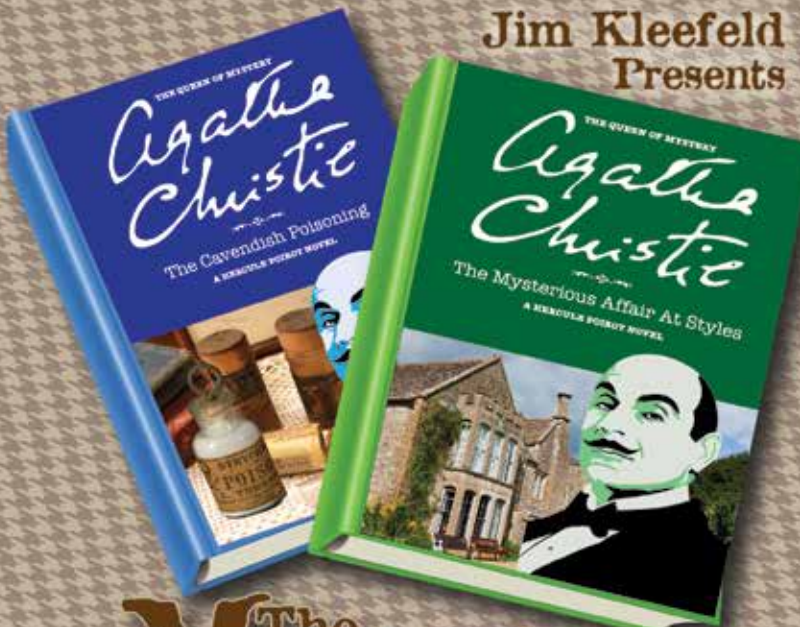
Enjoying our new venue

foam eggs from a Dice Tray.

The Amazing James closed with a colorful production effect based on Jack Chanin’s TV Surprise (*Tarbell Course Volume 7* by Harry Lorayne). It was a large production from a black foulard, starting with small candy boxes, then to increasingly larger fruits and vegetables, and for a climax, a big pineapple. Well done, and a fine way to close a convivial and enjoyable meeting. —Ron Dutton

The Dr. Ronald P. Dutton Assembly 292 usually meets at Kenny’s Steak House, 3502 West 10th Street (corner of 35th Avenue) at 11:00 A.M. (lunch optional), on the second Saturday of the month. Contact R. James Lopez r.jameslopez@gmail.com (970) 301-3804 www.SAM292.org for more details. ❖

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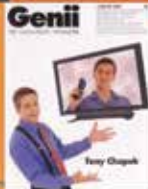
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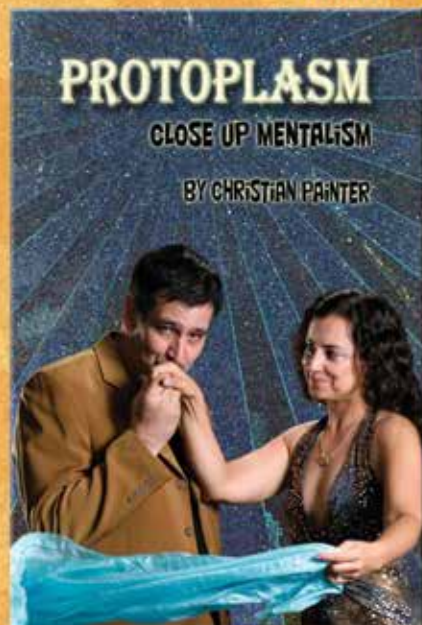
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The Nielsen Gallery

Kio - Doves and Top Hat

Dimensions: ½ sheet – 23” x 36” • Lithographer: Russian Lithographer

Date: Circa late 1950s • Nielsen Rating: Rare

THE KIO DYNASTY OF MAGICIANS

There are few family dynasties in magic. We have the Herrmanns, Bambergs, Sorcars, Willards, and a few others. This first column of the New Year will touch on the Kio family, Russia's very own dynasty of magicians.

The first member of this dynasty is Emil Teodorovich Kio, whose real name was Emil Teodorovich Hirschfeld-Renard. According to magic historian Milbourne Christopher, Kio was, “the most innovative circus illusionist in history.” No other circus performer offering illusions anywhere else in the world equaled his sensational staging. He was born on April 11, 1894, and like his sons Igor and Emil Jr. who followed, was an illusionist who held the coveted title, “People's Artist” of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. He plied his trade very successfully in Russia's most famous circuses.

Emil Sr. deserves great credit for overcoming a number of obstacles associated with performing surrounded in a circus ring. First, he was able to assemble a show comprised of illusions, sufficiently spectacular enough to appeal to such a large audience. Second, he assembled an outstanding collection of productions, vanishes, and transpositions that precluded any sort of monotony. And finally, he managed to do all this while deftly handling and managing upwards of thirty assistants.

His most spectacular illusion was a cremation-in-the-round. Christopher wrote, “A girl stood on top of a small white table while a circular cloth canopy was lowered to cover her. Assistants rushed into the ring with lighted torches and set fire to the cloth. Forty-foot-high flames leapt up. Spectators in the arena could feel the intensity of the heat. Soon only a heap of ashes remained. Later the girl emergency unharmed from inside a suspended cage.”

In the summer of 1959, he appeared with the Moscow Circus at the Empire Pool building at Wembley in England. Of course, Magic Circle members attended, feted him, and made him an honorary member with the Silver Wand. The world mourned the loss of a great magician when he passed away six years later on December 19, 1965.

His second son, Igor, was born on March 13, 1944, and being a member of a family of circus performers, began appearing in front of audiences at the age of five. By the time he was fifteen, he was working professionally as a magician with the Russian Circus Association. He was a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and won numerous awards, including People's Artist of the Russian Federation and an Oscar from Belgium.

In October 1967, he made a rare appearance in the U.S. with the Moscow Circus; during his appearance in New York, the Parent Assembly obtained a block of two hundred seats at Madison Square Garden. An article on his appearance in the December 1967 issue of *M-U-M* with many photographs gave this overview:

“Igor Kio, who reminds one of Dick Gustafson in looks and movement, is the successor of his father who performed under the same name, and apparently inherited a masterful presentation in the Old World tradition. His act concentrated on transpositions of

humans, particularly attractive young ladies, with such illusions as the transposition of a spectator-marked girl from one ceiling-suspended cage to a remote suspended cage, the change of a girl in a wheeled-on cage to a lion, and the reappearance of a man and lady in a horse-drawn buggy. He produced five large ducks from a water-filled tub on stage, and drew dozens of doves from a small box previously shown empty, filling the ring with ducks and doves.” And, he, too, carried on the tradition by presenting his father's spectacular Bride of the Flames.



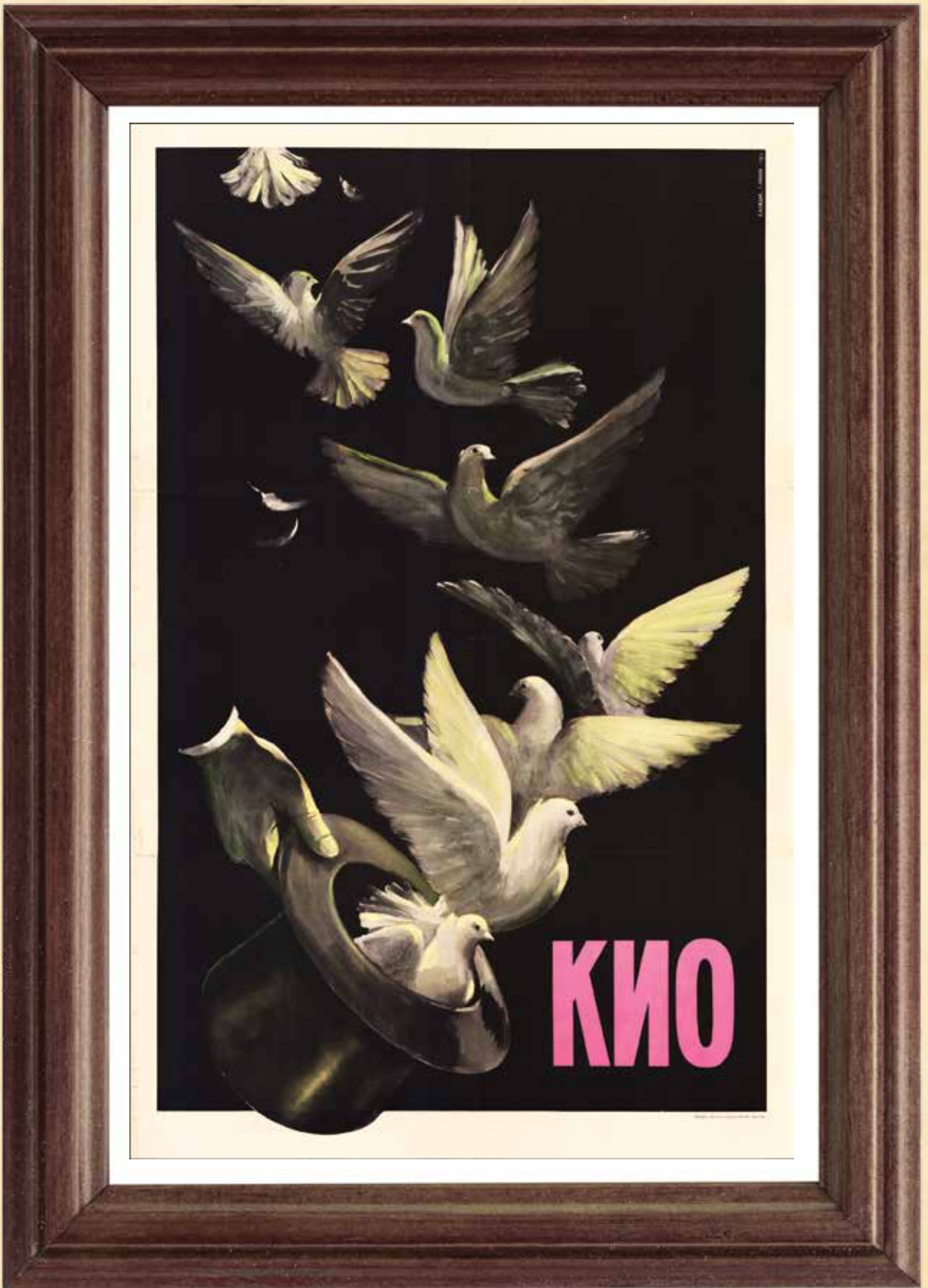
Kio Incineration

Following the show, the magicians met at a nearby restaurant where they were joined by Kio and his interpreter. Milbourne Christopher presented him with a plaque on behalf of the S.A.M.

In a May 1986 issue of *Genii*, columnist Tom Ogden enthused over Igor Kio's show, describing every illusion and all the supporting acts that he witnessed in the Soviet Union. Kio never did anything in a small way and Ogden's description of Kio's final bow is a perfect example: “Alone in the ring, Kio takes his final bows. A little girl is brought into the ring with flowers for Kio, which he accepts. The girl starts to leave the ring, then turns back and gives Kio her teddy bear. As she runs from the ring, Kio tucks the toy into a large drawer box and turns it into a live dancing bear. And why not?”

In addition to the circus, he was also a star of stage and television and hosted an annual New Year's program. He left the state circus in 1989, two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union; he opened his own firm, organizing tours for his and other artistic acts. Interestingly, Kio's first wife, Galina, was the daughter of Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The marriage only lasted nine days. His second lasted eleven years and produced a daughter, who performed in his show as a ballet dancer. His third and final marriage lasted twenty years. Igor Kio died August 30, 2006.

Emil Emilievich Kio, eldest son of the original Kio, became his father's assistant in 1961 and presented his own version of the act in another unit of the Moscow Circus with Eleonora Boleslavovna Prochnizkaya, his wife and a former premiere dancer with the Bolshoi Ballet. ❖





MAKING ASTUTE DECISIONS

I'm going to let you in on a secret that only a few veteran performers come to realize. It's one of those things that some people never learn, and even if you tell them, they don't believe you. It tends to be what separates the guys who do great shows from the guys who wonder why they never get word-of-mouth referrals. Here is the secret: Your customers do not pay you for the \$1,000 worth of equipment that you bring to the show; they pay you for the \$100,000 worth of equipment that you left at home.

Think about the implications of that statement. You don't book shows because of what you bring, you book shows because of what you do not bring. That is because a good performance is mainly about selection. It is your choice of material that makes you and your act worth watching. We all have bought a plethora of magic tricks. From our earliest days of youth, when we discovered that tricks were to be had by buying them one at a time, we have collected props, tricks, routines, gags, bits of business, and more. We all have drawers or closets or entire homes full of magic "stuff." You cannot take it all to a show, so you must decide what to take.

And therein is the crux of a good performer. You can take the newest tricks you bought, or the ones that were the most expensive, or the ones that are your personal favorites, or the ones that get the loudest response, or the ones that are the easiest to carry, or the ones that have a birthday theme, or the ones that are the simplest to re-set, or...well, you get the idea. The point is that you have to make decisions about your working repertoire.

MAKE ASTUTE DECISIONS

An astute person is intelligent, but also sees underlying cause and effect. Being

astute means that you can accurately assess a need or a situation and turn this to your advantage. You can make your show work for you by carefully planning what combination of effects and materials will best marry your performing character with your audience's aspiration to be entertained. Choose material that you are good at, that reflects who you are and how you behave onstage, and that pleases and entertains your audiences.

Several years ago I watched a performer's Dove Pan routine. He showed the pan and had a girl hold it. Then he brought up a gaggle of helpers and passed out small packets of ingredients. The children lined up and each dropped something into the pan: first real flour, then actual milk, then an egg, then water, then sugar, then chocolate chips. He took back the pan, dropped in a lit match, and covered the pan with a lid. He had the kids sing a song while they waited and watched the pan he was holding. Then he lifted the lid and produced a bunch of chocolate chip cookies. He walked into the audience passing them out until they were gone. When kids in the back complained that they hadn't received a cookie, he dug under his table, brought out a bag of Chips Ahoy cookies, opened it, and finished passing out the treats until everyone had gotten one. What kind of decision-making went into this routine, I wondered? Did he think he was clever by using a baking pan to simulate baking? He surely planned on passing out cookies to everyone and even brought an extra bag in case there were more kids than Dove Pan cookies. Did he realize that this would take an inordinate amount of time and bring his magic show to a screeching halt? Did he realize that none of the kids even considered that they had witnessed a magic effect? They saw (even helped) him put ingredients into a pan, add heat, and wait. Of course he got cookies! That's exactly what their mothers do without using any magic.

Here is an example of making an astute decision that can improve your show. Suppose you need to do a trick about a zoo animal. You could bring out the old and worn Monkey Bar trick, in which a tiny plush animal jumps from one rope to another. Or you could do something original and clever that is entertaining to

both the children and their parents. I call this trick No Bars at the Zoo.

First, you will need three pieces of clear plastic printed with (apparently) random black rectangles, as shown in Figure 1. One sheet has solid vertical bars. The second and third sheets show the bars broken and scattered. These three sheets

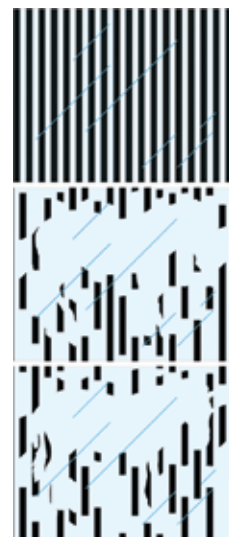


FIGURE 1

will overlap; the black bars can be seen through all three layers as shown in Figure 2. The sheets can be easily printed at home on inkjet transparency film available at any local office supply store. You will also need a deck of alphabet cards and a thin flat box about 9 x 12 to hold the sheets (Figure 3). Parchment and other specialty printed papers often come in tray-like boxes like these when bought in small quantities at office supply stores.

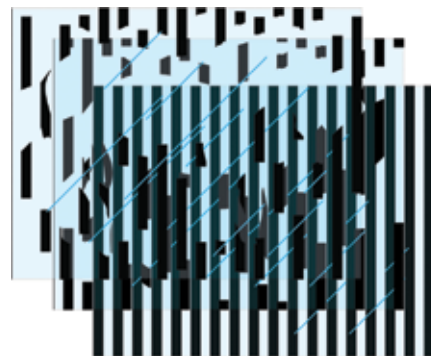


FIGURE 2

At your show, bring out the three plastic sheets, the flat box, and the alphabet deck.



FIGURE 3

"Did you hear what they are doing at the zoo? They are making realistic and life-like habitats for the animals instead of keeping them in cages with bars. The zoo used to have all the animals behind bars like this." Pick up the clear sheet with the solid bars and set it in the box. Hold it up to show the audience. The white background of the box allows the striped design to show clearly. *"But over the past several years, they have been cutting apart the bars and dismantling the cages."* Set the box flat on your table. Hold up the second and third sheets to show the broken bar sections. Drop these in the tray as well, but make sure the three sheets are not perfectly aligned. Since the sheets are 8.5 x 11 and the box is 9 x 12, there is room to allow the sheets to be somewhat disarrayed (Figure 4).

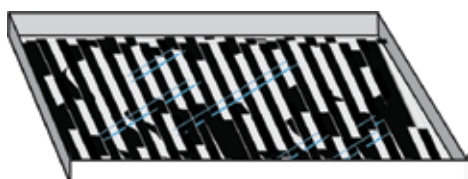


FIGURE 4

"They did have a problem last week, however. One of the animals got out and wandered about the zoo. It took quite a while to get him back into the habitat. Let's see if someone can spot the errant animal." (Yes, it is okay to use a larger vocabulary in a children's show. Your context may help the kids learn something new.) Bring out the alphabet deck and choose a volunteer. *"I'm going to let a helper pick out a letter of the alphabet and think of an animal. We'll see if that's the one that the zoo lost."* (Notice that this is the third time you have mentioned "zoo." This should steer the kids away from thinking about whales or roosters.)

Show the letter cards, shuffle the pack, and have your helper choose one. Force the letter Z. Use your favorite method. I usually start with the Z card on top, jog shuffle twice to move the Z to the bottom

and back to the top, and then use a slip-cut force. *"Make sure you don't show me or say out loud which letter you picked, but think of any animal that begins with that letter. If you picked B, you might think of a bear or a bison or a beaver. If you picked L, then you could think of a lion, or a lemur, or a leopard. Do you have one in mind? Just set your letter face down on the table."* It is important to have the card readily available. If the child gets confused or tries to trick you by naming her favorite animal, you can always pick it up and remind her that her animal has to begin with a Z, the letter she chose.

Pick up the box and remove the top sheet to show it again, displaying the black sections scattered throughout. *"Remember that I said they cut apart all the bars and cages like this? And that one animal got loose? Which animal were you thinking about?"* Since the child picked a Z, she should answer "zebra." Drop the plastic sheet back into the box. Tilt and tap the box slightly so all three sheets slide down and to the right, which will align them against the bottom and right edges of the box. When the three panels align, the black bars will coincide to form the image of a zebra (Figure 5). *"I guess you were thinking of exactly the right animal. Let's give our helper a round of applause."*



FIGURE 5

Notice that the routine has a fun theme; kids love zoo animals. It also presents a magic outcome – that of predicting or revealing a hidden thought. And it makes a magically visible display; the panels sliding together to form an unexpected picture. It plays as well for adults as it does for kids because children love to see the zebra and adults are fascinated with how the clear pieces can technically accomplish the transformation. Plus, nobody knows that you forced a Z on the child. As far as the audience is concerned, she chose a random letter of the alphabet and

thought of any animal in the zoo. Best of all, the trick has a different kind of plot and is entertaining. When you start to choose effects for your show, it helps to pick ones that show something visual, unique, and clever. If you bring out predictable props and do predictable effects, then your show may end up being predictably dull. Instead of choosing ordinary tricks with standard props, think about what tricks will work best for you, and then Make Astute Decisions.

The ability to make astute decisions is not necessarily a skill we are born with. In life you have to make many decisions; slowly you learn which ones turn out to be good and which ones to avoid. But reading and studying child psychology and the psychology of magic are good ways to avoid making poor decisions. If you have to, you can learn from experience, but you might end up burning some bridges behind you along the way. Take several bad tricks to a Cub Scout show and you may never again work for Cub Scouts in your area.

Fortunately, it is often the case that we are more judgmental about our decisions than are others. Ultimately, you are often much better equipped to determine whether an effect or routine was a poor choice than are your clients. To many in the audience, your show might have been just fine. But if you evaluate your own performance, you may realize that the old routine you took out was getting a much better response than the new one you put in. Self-criticism is one way to help make astute decisions. During your show you should be judging responses. How well is each trick going over? What routines need to be trimmed or expanded? Is there any evidence of confusion or misunderstanding?

What you need to consider in evaluating each effect is how well it fits with your style, your persona, and your audience. Your decision to keep, delete, or change a routine or prop should never be about how much you like the trick, or how much you paid for it, or how many other magicians are doing it. Whether you think the method is cool does not enter into it. Neither is it important whether or not anyone else in your local magic club owns one. Make your decision about a routine based on its effect on your audience.

Every show you do should generate some serious thinking on your part about the contents, sequence, and pacing. The drive home is always a good place to

ponder. Did the show really work as well as it could have, or is there something you can improve? If your thoughts wander to the hoard of props in your basement or closet, or some new prop that you just love, or whether you should spend your show profit on buying more new tricks, try to curtail yourself. I made up No Bars at the Zoo after I had thought about using my Acrobatic Silks routine and labeling the colored silks different animals. That might have worked, but this was better.

Like me, you probably have spent your life buying lots of new magic tricks. No problem, we all do it. We love to discover

new things and play with cool toys. But you cannot be a pro by buying ten tricks and putting them all into your show. You have to choose. Often you have to examine and practice with a hundred tricks and props and routines to find the ten that will work for you. Leave those thousands of dollars worth of not-right-for-me tricks at home. Just bring the best ones.

Oh, and about the precocious child who wants to sabotage the above trick in your show, this is nearly impossible if you force a Z. About the only other animal that someone could ever come up is a zebu, which is a species of cattle native to South

Asia. It's highly unlikely any kid will think of that. If you are interested in making up a No Bars at the Zoo effect for yourself, I have the artwork for the three clear sheets in jpeg format, which I can email to anyone who asks. You can print the files on inkjet transparency film, grab a flat box and deck of alphabet cards, and you will be all set. ❖

Email me at Jim@JimKleefeld.com and I'll send you the artwork with my compliments – as long as you promise to continue improving your show by Making Astute Decisions.

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Genis, David
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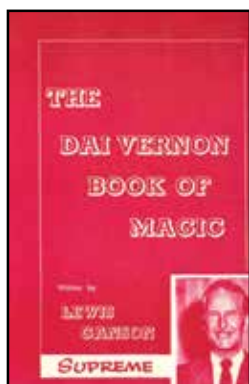
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Excerpt From:

The Dai Vernon Book of Magic

Written By:

Lewis Ganson

Description:

Ebook, pages

Available From:

www.lybrary.com

It is hard to believe that Dai Vernon has been gone for twenty-two years. In the opinion of many (myself included), Vernon was the greatest influence on close-up magic in the twentieth century. Vernon was obsessed with magic. He was the living conduit to the magic of such greats as Nate Leipzig, Max Malini, and Dr. James Elliott. When he lived in New York City, he inspired younger magicians who would themselves achieve legendary status: Herb Zarrow, Ken Krenzel, Howard Schwarzman, Persi Diaconis, and others. In the 1950s, Vernon lectured in the UK and Europe; his approach to magic stunned the European magicians, who had never seen anything like it.

When Vernon moved to Hollywood and became the resident guru at the Magic Castle, he became the focal point for magic in the United States. Many magicians, including Larry Jennings, Bruce Cervon, Michael Skinner, Steve Freeman, John Carney, Ricky Jay, Johnny Thompson, and Michael Perovich, relocated to Southern California just to be able to spend time with Vernon on a regular basis. There had been nothing like Vernon before, and since his passing, there has been nothing like him since (at least in the United States).

When describing Vernon and his approach to magic, a term often used was “The Vernon Touch.” (This was also the title of Vernon’s long-running column in *Genii* magazine, now available as a book.) These “touches” were guided by one overriding dictum: Be natural. At the end of any effect, the spectators should say to themselves, “But he didn’t do anything!” To put this in artistic terms, what Vernon offered was a dramatically different aesthetic approach to magic.

A creative artist answers two questions: 1) What idea or emotion am I going to express? 2) How am I going to express that idea or emotion? The answer to question two is an aesthetic answer. Jackson Pollock’s answer was different than Norman Rockwell’s answer. Rachmaninoff’s answer was different than John Cage’s answer. Vernon’s answer was different from much of what was being offered in magic during the twentieth century. And for the many magicians who moved to be with him (and for those like Harry Riser, Bob White, and others who met with Vernon occasionally), Vernon’s aesthetic approach was the one they wanted to internalize and emulate.

Here’s the problem. I don’t think you can internalize an aesthetic approach without being around someone who exemplifies that approach. It’s really tough to get it from a book. I think that the student absorbs this approach, rather than studies it. You

learn by watching and asking why certain choices were made. You learn by having your own material critiqued. You can understand Vernon’s aesthetic choice by studying his material, but it’s tough. At the time I met Harry Riser in 1972, I was very conversant with *Stars of Magic* and the Lewis Ganson books on Vernon, but within an hour of meeting Harry I realized that I didn’t really understand any of it. I never spent that much time with Vernon, but I spent a lot of time with Riser, and through him I gained an understanding and an appreciation of the Vernon aesthetic (and Charlie Miller’s, too).

There are still some first- and second-generation Vernon students on the planet. Many of them don’t talk very much about what they know. Try to spend time with one if you can. (The best way to begin that conversation is to ask an intelligent question.) In Spain, Juan Tamariz has become the maestro whose aesthetic approach is most appealing. Juan is a student of Vernon’s, and so the legacy continues.

The excerpt for Ebook Nook this month comes from Lewis Ganson’s *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic*, which was the first big book of Vernon’s creations. The secrets revealed in it came as a revelation to magicians around the world. Ganson does his best to explain the Vernon aesthetic, but that information is most easily discerned if you already know what you’re looking for. The routine I’ve chosen, The Three Ball Transposition exemplifies the Vernon approach. In particular (in case you enjoy careful reading), you’ll find at least six examples of how Vernon solves problems. This routine will fool and entertain laymen and magicians. My thanks to Chris Wasshuber and lybrary.com for allowing this excerpt to appear in *M-U-M*. —Michael Close

THREE BALL TRANSPOSITION

Edwin T. Sachs, in his book *Sleight of Hand*, mentions that although performers from the East have the reputation of being able to produce marvelous feats of magic, he personally had been disappointed in the effects that some Chinese conjurers had shown him when they visited England. However, there was one trick that impressed him considerably: a novel and quaint effect with marbles.

For this trick, the performer placed some marbles in his mouth, where he held them temporarily while showing his hands to be empty. He then took the marbles separately from his mouth and held them in his closed fists, from where he caused them to vanish, only to reappear from the tip of his wand, from the table-top, and from his mouth again.

This description intrigued Dai Vernon, who became determined to evolve a routine that, while eliminating the distasteful action of placing marbles in the mouth, would allow him to bring about a mysterious transposition of marbles or balls from one hand to the other. After a considerable amount of experimenting, he produced an original routine that met with instant success and that has remained a feature of his act for many years.

In the Vernon effect, the balls used are about an inch in diameter. The material from which they are made matters little, although he recommends solid rubber. On occasions, he will pick up olives from the dinner table and perform with those. For his

demonstrations in this country, in addition to rubber balls, he used balls turned from wood and also balls that looked like miniature golf balls, made from a plastic material, that he purchased from a toy shop.

Although the audience is aware of the existence of three balls only, he actually has *four* in his jacket pocket on the right-hand side at the commencement of the performance.

When procuring balls for this routine, it will assist the reader if he bears in mind that the diameter required is about the same as an English halfpenny.

Photo 1 shows the performance in progress, and it will be seen that two volunteer assistants from the audience are holding a handkerchief between them into which the balls are dropped at various stages in the routine.



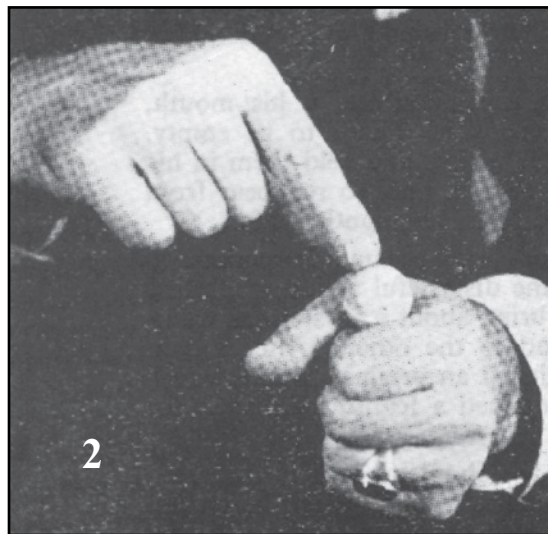
When performing before a large audience, Dai Vernon provides a close-mesh net, which is held by the assistants in place of the handkerchief. The advantage of the net is that the balls can be seen by spectators who may be sitting below the level of the performer. Incidentally, the idea for using a net is Dai Vernon's own. He passed it on to Silent Mora, who had constructed another fine routine, quite independently, on the same lines.

As an important basic sleight is used several times during the routine, this will be described first, because it is essential that it should be mastered before attempting the rest of the moves. The purpose of the basic sleight is to allow the spectators to see two or three balls apparently placed into the left hand, whereas, in reality, the hand eventually contains a single ball only.

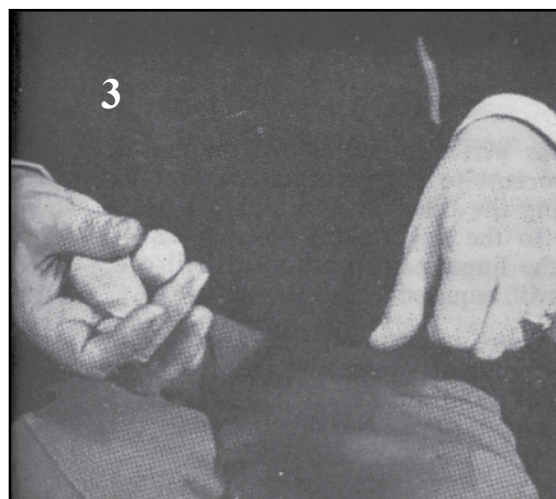
The Basic Sleight: After casually permitting the left hand to be seen empty, close it into a fist and hold it, thumb end upwards, in front of the body just above waist level. With the right hand pick up a ball and place it on top of the left fist, then, after touching it with the tip of the right forefinger (Photo 2), allow it to sink slowly into the fist by opening the left fingers just sufficiently to let the ball sink downwards by its own weight. So far there is no trickery involved, except that the ball does not go far down into the fist, only just out of sight.

Pick up a second ball with the right hand and apparently place it on top of the fist as before, then allow it to sink in, but during these visible actions you perform the following secret move:

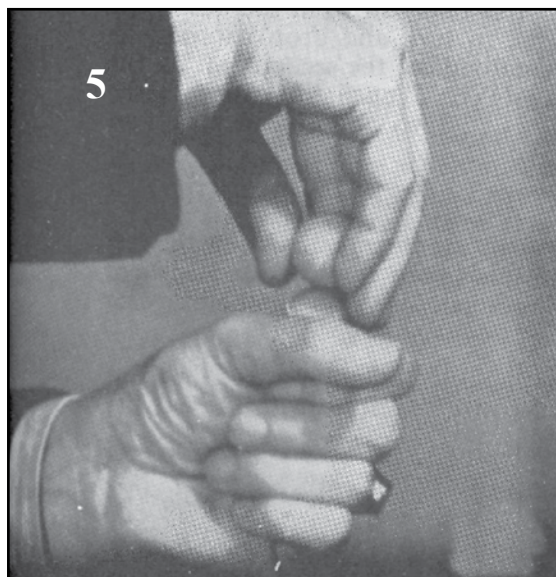
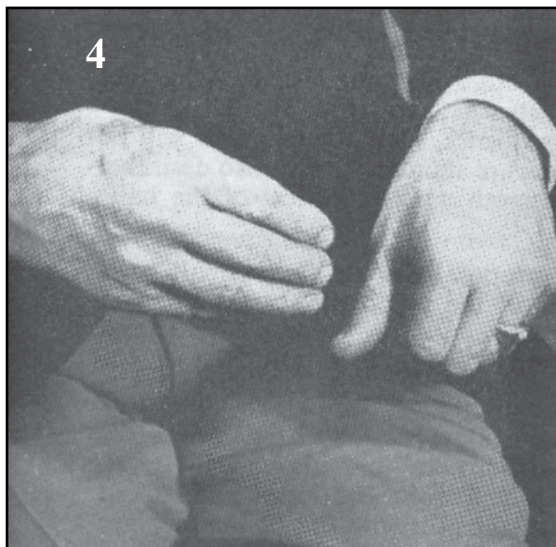
After the first ball is in the left fist, and during the action of reaching forward for the second ball, drop the left hand about



eight inches and turn it so that the thumb end of the fist is to the right. Relax the fingers sufficiently to allow the ball to roll right into the opening at the thumb end of the fist, but at this point the opening should still be covered by the thumb. Notice the position of the left hand in Photo 3. With the right hand pick up the second ball and display it between the pads of the thumb and second finger (Photo 3). Now simultaneous actions take place with *both* hands. Bring them towards each other; the right hand makes a quarter turn to bring the back towards the audience as the first, third, and little fingers come around the ball, obscuring it from view (Photo 4). As the hands are coming together, they *both* begin to turn to the left until, when they actually touch, the right hand is above the left fist. During this turning movement, move the left thumb aside and slightly down so that when the top of the left fist is covered by the right fingers, the left forefinger (assisted by the thumb) can squeeze the ball to the top of the fist.



The foregoing moves appear complicated in print, but if the reader will attempt them while reading the text, they will be easily understood. Refer to Photo 5, which shows a rear view of the final position – the first ball has been squeezed to the top of the left fist, while the right hand (containing the second ball) has apparently placed the ball on the left fist. The photograph shows how the



action is covered – notice how the right fingers cover the second ball on three sides, obscuring it from the view of the spectators in front and the two volunteer assistants on the left and the right of the performer.

When the right hand is removed, what appears to be the second ball is visible on top of the left fist. Actually it is the first ball again. Apparently to draw attention to the ball the right second, third, and little fingers curl into the palm (conveying the second ball automatically to the finger-palm position), and the extended forefinger touches the visible ball (Photo 2), which then sinks down into the fist as before.

The same operation is repeated with the third ball, and at the conclusion the audience will believe that there are three balls in the left fist; actually there is only one; the other two are in the right finger-palm position.

Practice the moves until the movements of both hands can be perfectly synchronized, because it is upon the timing and the naturalness of the actions that the illusion depends.

Although the right forefinger touches the ball before it sinks

into the fist, it is not necessary to push the ball down. Touching the ball looks perfectly natural, as the action draws attention to it, but what is important to the performer is that by extending the right forefinger and curling the other fingers into the palm the second ball is taken automatically to the finger-palm position under cover of a natural movement. From the finger-palm position a ball can be conveyed to the palm-proper position if required.

Once the mechanics of the moves are understood, the reader will find that they are not difficult to perform, but it is essential that they are practiced until they can be made smoothly and automatically – remember that it is the timing and the naturalness of performance that creates the perfect illusion.

Performance: With *four* balls in your jacket pocket on the right-hand side and the handkerchief or net readily available, you are ready to present the effect.

Obtain the services of two volunteer assistants from the audience; position one on your right side and the other on your left, then instruct them to hold the handkerchief or net between them (Photo 1). If the performance is taking place before a large audience, then a better view will be obtained if the performer and his assistants are standing. It is also desirable to use a net on these occasions, because the mesh permits a view of the balls from a low angle.

Stage 1: Tell the audience that it is proposed to use three small balls for this effect, and, after removing three of the four balls from the jacket pocket, let them drop singly from the right hand into the net. Now hold both hands palms upward with fingers curled slightly to permit the audience to see that they are empty.

Say, “*Watch carefully...*” then close the left hand into a fist and hold it, thumb upwards, in front of the body, just above waist level. Pick up a ball from the net between the pads of the right thumb and second finger, and place it on top of the left fist; touch it with the right forefinger (Photo 2) and as you say, “*One ball...*” allow it to sink slowly into the fist by opening the left fingers just sufficiently to let the ball sink down by its own weight.

As you reach forward to pick up a second ball from the net in the same manner as before, allow the left fist to turn and drop naturally in readiness for the **Basic Sleight**. Apparently place the second ball on the left fist, but actually make the **Basic Sleight**. Touch the ball with the right forefinger and say, “*Two balls...*” then allow it to sink into the fist again.

Repeat these actions (**Basic Sleight**) with the third ball.

At this point the audience believes that the three balls are in the left fist, but due to the fact that the basic move has been employed twice, there is only *one* ball in the left fist. *Two* balls are in the right finger-palm position.

Close the right hand into a fist and hold it, thumb upwards, in front of the body and about a foot from the left fist. Gesture with the left fist towards the right fist (without bringing them together), wiggling the fingers in the process, then squeeze a ball to the top of the *right* fist and, by tipping the fist to the left, allow the ball to fall into the net, saying, “*One ball...*”

Repeat these actions, and, as the second ball falls from the right fist into the net, say, “*...two balls.*” Now turn to the assistant on the left and pretend to hear him remark that there is no ball in the left hand, so say, “*No, no, there is still a ball in this hand.*” Open the left hand and show him the ball on the palm. Pick it

up with the right hand and show it to the assistant on the right, then apparently take it back into the left hand, which is then again closed into a fist. Actually, this is a fake transfer, the ball remaining in the right hand, where it is taken into the palm-proper position as the hand drops momentarily while attention is focused on the closed left fist.

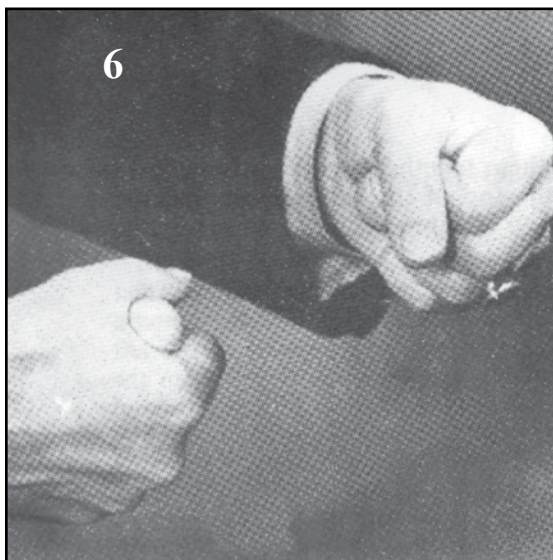
Gesture to the assistant on the right with the right hand. The ball is in the right palm-proper position; the fingers are opened a little and curled slightly, so that the hand is natural in appearance, *not* with fingers spread “starfish” fashion. Say, “*Watch!*” Then close the right hand and hold it in front of the body again. Make a gesture with the left hand towards the right, then squeeze the ball to the top of the right fist and allow it to drop into the net. Show both hands casually, palms upward.

Stage 2: At this stage the effect is repeated, but on this occasion there is a slight variation in the moves.

Saying, “*I’ll do that again,*” pick up a ball from the net with the right hand and place it on the left fist as before.

Actually, the moves are the same up to the point where you begin to squeeze balls from the right hand – that is: (a) the first ball is placed on the left fist and sinks in; (b) the second ball is apparently placed on the left fist and sinks in (**Basic Sleight**); and (c) the third ball is apparently placed on the left fist and sinks in (**Basic Sleight**). This leaves one ball in the left fist and two in the right, although apparently there should be three balls in the left fist. After the previous demonstration, the audience will be watching carefully, so a variation is brought into play.

This time hold the fists closer together in front of the body, and, as the left hand gestures towards the right, the left-hand ball is secretly brought outside the left fingers and gripped by the base of the thumb and the bent third finger; the thumb rolls it to this position under cover of the movement of the left hand as it gestures towards the right. Photo 6 shows an exposed view of this hold. All attention will be on the right hand as it squeezes a ball to the top of the fist and then tilts to the left to make the ball fall into the net. Squeeze the second ball to the top of the right fist, but this time, although the tilting action appears the same as before, the right hand moves *under* the left hand (the left hand is



kept *still*). Allow the ball on the right fist to sink back into the fist and simultaneously *dislodge the ball from the left hand* so that it falls on to the right fist, then into the net. When these movements are correctly timed, it appears as if the ball has been squeezed from the right fist to fall into the net. In Photo 6 the left hand has been lifted to show the position of the ball outside the fingers and the right-hand ball sinking into the fist; in performance the hands would be together momentarily.

Now squeeze the ball to the top of the right fist and allow it to fall into the net as the fist is tilted. Apparently the three balls have passed magically from the left hand to the right hand. Both hands are opened and shown casually, palms upward.

Stage 3: State that the effect will be repeated again. This time really do allow the first two balls to sink into the left fist (no **Basic Sleight** is made). Place the third ball on top of the left fist, then say, “*I’ll place this ball in my pocket.*” Reach over with the right hand as if taking the ball, but as the right fingers come around the ball, allow it to sink into the left fist. The right hand goes to the jacket pocket, palms the fourth ball, and is then removed.

Looking at the assistant on the right, say, “*How many balls in my left hand?*” Whatever he answers, say, “*But you see, I have three balls in my left hand.*” Allow the three balls to fall singly from the left hand into the net.

Remember, at the conclusion of this stage, the fourth ball is palmed in the right hand, unbeknown to the audience.

Stage 4: The moves, with certain variations, are repeated.

Pick up a ball from the net and place it on top of the left fist. Actually, this ball sinks into the fist under cover of the right fingers, and it is the palmed ball (that has been brought to the fingertips) that is seen on top of the left fist as the right hand moves away. Refer to Photo 5, which is an exposed view. It will be seen that the ball that was taken from the pocket and brought to the fingertips rests on top of the first ball, then, when the first ball is allowed to sink into the left fist, the second ball drops on top of the fist just before the right fingers are removed. Let the visible ball sink into the fist as you say, “*One ball.*” Pick up another ball from the net and place it on top of the fist; allow it to sink in as you count, “*Two balls.*” Take the last ball from the net and place it on top of the left fist.

This time, pick up the ball again between the tips of the right first and second fingers (Photo 7), and as you say, “*I’ll place the third ball into my pocket,*” move the right hand to the right, turning it over to show the other side. Notice in Photo 8 how the third and little fingers are closed into the palm and the thumb is extended adjacent to the second finger. In this instance, nothing is concealed in the palm, but the audience is being conditioned for the occasion when it is necessary to conceal balls. By making actions when no trickery is involved, no surprise will be aroused when apparently *identical* moves are made and balls are concealed. Place the right hand in the pocket, palm the ball, and bring the hand out again.

Open the left fingers slowly and allow the three balls to roll singly into the net.

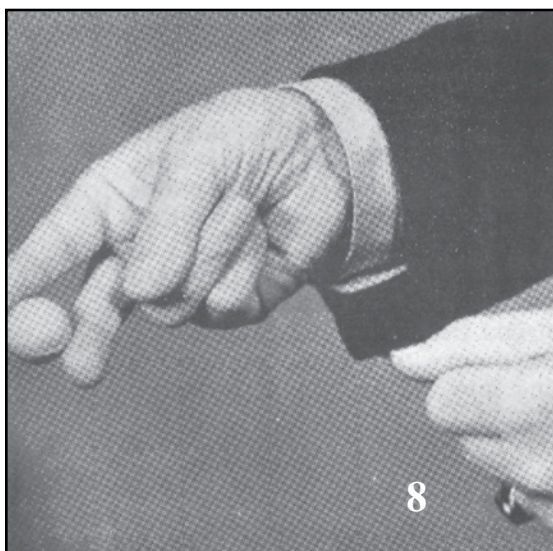
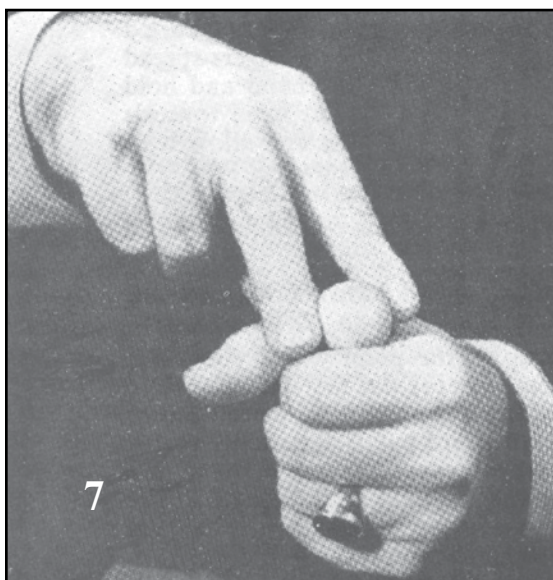
Stage 5: Again you repeat the moves with variations.

Pick up a ball with the right hand, place it on the left fist, and allow it to sink in counting, “*One ball.*” Pick up another ball, place it on the left fist, and allow it to sink in counting, “*Two balls.*”

Turn to the assistant on the left, open the left hand, and show

him the two balls, saying, “Remember, two balls.” Holding one ball back with the left thumb, bring the left hand (back upwards) over the right hand and open the fingers of both hands. One ball only leaves the left hand and joins the palmed ball in the right hand, which you now show to the assistant on the right, saying, “Two balls.” The left hand has closed into a fist.

Place one of the balls from the right hand on top of the left fist and let it sink in, and then do likewise with the second ball. Pick up the last ball from the net, place it on the left fist, and then say, “Once again, I’ll place the third ball into my pocket.” Pick it up in *exactly* the same manner as before (Photo 7), display it (Photo 8), and place the hand in the pocket. Really leave the ball in the pocket this time.



Squeeze the three balls from the left fist, allowing them to fall singly into the net.

Stage 6: This is the concluding stage and all is ready for the climax.

Casually show both hands empty, and then close the left hand into a fist. Pick up the first ball and place it on top of the fist; touch it with the right forefinger, then allow it to sink in, saying, “One ball.” Pick up the second ball and apparently place it on the left fist, but this time make the **Basic Sleight**. Touch the visible ball with the right forefinger, and then allow it to sink into the left fist, counting, “Two balls.” Now pick up the last ball and apparently place it on the fist, but make the **Basic Sleight** again; this time the ball remains on the fist as you count, “Three balls.” At this point, although the audience thinks there are two balls in the left fist and one on top of it, actually there are two balls in the right hand and the visible ball is the only one contained by the left hand. Do not let this one sink into the fist, but as you say, “Again I’ll place the third ball into my pocket,” pick it up between the right first and second fingers in *exactly* the same manner as has been done on previous occasions (Photo 7). As you display it to both the assistant on your left and the assistant on your right, the other two balls in the right hand are concealed by the third and little fingers and thumb, so, this time, keep the hand back upwards. Place the hand in the pocket and leave *all the balls behind*, then remove the hand.

Remember, there are supposed to be two balls in the left fist, and it is *most important* that it appears that there really are balls in the fist; make a point of this, even moving the fingers a little as if adjusting their position. To the audience you are going to repeat the effect of making a ball leave the pocket and join the two in the left fist.

Hold the hands apart then slap them together – all the balls have disappeared! This is a terrific climax; watch the audience reaction.

Dai Vernon tells me that when he is performing several shows in an evening, people will often stay, especially to see this routine performed again, so he likes to have a variation for the climax. For a repeat performance, he has a small lemon in his jacket pocket in addition to the balls. As he reaches the climax, he leaves all the balls in his pocket, but palms out the lemon. When he claps his hands together he allows the lemon to fall from his hands into the net.

The instructions for the performance of this fine routine are somewhat lengthy because all details have been given. It will be appreciated that a small move that is over in a second often takes many paragraphs to describe. When the basic move has been mastered and the moves for the first stage memorized, it is simply a question of remembering the variations. Like all good things in magic, practice is the key to success. Practice until the moves can be performed automatically, and then the presentation can be concentrated upon.

In performance the first two stages should be presented fairly slowly, but as the routine continues the tempo should be quickened until the last stage is performed briskly – but not hurried. ❖

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Dr. Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Fernández – CONDE ROPHERMAN

S.A.M. Life Member and International Deputy for Spain

By Mac Lupén

It is nine o'clock in the evening; Dr. Rodríguez bids farewell to his last Thursday evening patient. He takes off his white coat and leaves it on the back of a chair at the meeting table at one end of his office. While he loosens his characteristic bow tie, he once again looks around. Part of his magic wand collection, which already exceeds a thousand, rests impressively on custom-made wand racks. Display cabinets and bookcases, once filled with books on medicine, now exhibit all types of collectors' items related to magic. Some patients are perplexed as they contemplate the little museum of magic into which the austere psychiatrist office has been transformed over the years. Others do not even notice all that there is behind the display case glass.

Years have passed and the doctor's two personalities have converged into a single one. There was a time when he did not want to mix the life of a magician with that of a psychiatrist. Now it is easy to read interviews in the national press with Doctor Rodríguez speaking on magic or Conde Ropherman speaking on psychiatry. ("Conde" is the Spanish word for the nobility



*"Where there is a gathering
of more than two magicians,
there I'll be..."*

title, "Earl.")

Tonight he has a performance with his flea circus at a venue in downtown Madrid. Apart from his magic show, he has presented for some years a complete flea circus, in which the tiny performers undertake astonishing feats, such as jumping into a tank of water from a diving board, riding a bicycle across a tight rope, shooting a penalty at a soccer goal, or lifting a goose feather, among many others. To the sound of the most authentic circus music, Conde Ropherman's Flea Circus does not allow you to blink an eye, under penalty of missing a single detail of such a refined performance. Dr. Rodríguez changes his physician's clothing for the suit of a circus trainer that lacks no detail; when he puts on the top hat that completes the attire, the person disappears completely to give way to the character, and the show begins.

In spite of the circus's great reception, it is only the tip of the iceberg of an artistic career that now spans fifty years: half a century of cabaret, theaters, venues, and events – half a century of magic.

When Conde was eight years old and living in Cuenca (Castille



la Mancha), a magician who gave a street performance was advertised. The posters specified that people wishing to attend should bring a chair. Conde was the first to arrive; he did not even bring a chair. The performer was calmly preparing his stage. Such was the eagerness that he saw in young Conde he asked him if he wanted to be his assistant. Conde helped the magician put everything in its place before enjoying the show. From that moment, his fascination with magic has never ceased to grow.

His first problem was how to obtain books on magic. He did not delay in locating what were to be his two great suppliers of tricks: The King of Magic (El Rey de la Magia) in Barcelona and the House of Games (Casa de los Juegos) in Madrid. As soon as he managed to save up the money for the next trick, he bought it from the catalog and rehearsed it over and over again. In no time he put together a little act that he began to perform for other children in Cuenca's squares and parks.

He finished high school there and received a diploma in primary education. He worked in this profession for a short time in the province of Cuenca.

Conde moved from Cuenca to Madrid and began to study for the degree of medicine at Complutense University (one of the oldest universities in the world). He discovered that he centered his attention on stages and performing venues more than on books. This being the case, his father decided that he must continue his training as a doctor in Granada, a charming city in the south of Spain, where there would be less performing distractions. By luck or by misfortune, it was not so. He began to perform in Granada; after a few months the seed had been sown, and could not stop flourishing.

Conde did not take long in finding the local enthusiasts; he founded the Granada Magic Circle (Círculo Mágico Granadino), which, forty years later, is still active and continues to grow, taking its magic throughout Spain. In 1972, Conde won the first prize in comic magic at the national convention in San Sebastián; he not only became the Spanish champion, he also established himself as an outstanding national authority in this specialty.

In the '70s, during the final phase of the Franco regime in Spain, when censoring was prevalent, it was not easy to include humor in a performance. Irony and double meaning were the tools of those who wished to do humor. On the one hand, traditional magicians did not look favorably upon the combination of magic and humor; the image that they had in mind was the classic magician with whom everything is elegance and sobriety. It took a major change in the times to reach a point when no one found it difficult to imagine the fusion of magic and humor.

Conde's appearances on Spanish television were more frequent. In the '70s in Spain there were only two television channels. Since there was no competition, everyone watched the same programs. Everyone knew what his neighbor or workmate had seen the night before.

Conde remembers that his father felt no pleasure when someone told him that they had seen his son on TV the previous night. Unlike today, at that time being a performer was not the thing that



Brochures from 1969-70

a father wanted for his son.

The years went by and Conde accumulated awards and recognition from the show business world; he also managed to finish his degree in medicine, almost at the same time that he got married to his fiancée, Mari Paqui, a biologist and native of Cuenca, who has accompanied him ever since; it is unusual to see him anywhere without her.

In his early years as an illusionist, foreign magician role models were scarce. Perhaps the best known European role model was Fred Kaps. American magicians were unknown. Later, performers like Lance Burton or David Copperfield appeared. In any event, Conde

always searched for his own style, and, in fact, created it over the years. If you ask him about his role models, it is not easy to obtain a concrete answer. As a matter of fact, he always says that he has avoided having them.

During the following years, he specialized in psychiatry and became a six-time father. Conde does not hesitate to take along the whole family to the magic conventions that he attends. He



went on to become the president of the Spanish Society of Illusionists (S.E.I.) and to be part of the board of examiners for the various national magic competitions. At the same time, he joined the Corps of Prisons and began to work at the Carabanchel Penitentiary Psychiatric Hospital, where he was appointed medical director.

The years went by and, still at the head of the Carabanchel Penitentiary Psychiatric Hospital, Conde Ropherman teamed up with two Spanish magicians: Pablo Segóbriga and Víctor Arrogante to form *La Compañía Mágica*. Víctor performed classic magic with visual tricks during a musical number. Pablo performed mentalism with paranormal effects in collaboration with the audience; Conde added the comedy magic that he had already been traveling the country with for twenty years. This type of artistic association, later reproduced many times in Spain, received an enthusiastic reception from audiences; this led the three performers to travel the country with their show.

At the end of the '80s, Conde specialized in clinical hypnosis and began to use this discipline to therapeutic ends in his office



with outstanding results, which led him to offer lectures and specialized initiation courses on hypnosis for health care professionals. He published the book *Hypnosis: A Different Path* as both an introduction to hypnosis and a guide for improving technique. At the same time, and in collaboration with his wife, he published some scientific books on sexology and psychiatry.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, he became involved in the construction of a magic-event hall, Zoa, in downtown Madrid. Located near the Retiro Park in the Spanish capital, Zoa became an example for the entire nation. It had two floors and a large terrace; the lower floor had a pub atmosphere and was decorated with magic effects. Clients could enjoy close-up magic while they drank or ate. The upper floor had a stage and two-tiered seating, where stage magic was performed. At Zoa, the most emblematic Spanish magicians were showcased; it was the key spot for events and business

parties during this period. Unfortunately, nothing lasts forever; the venue was obliged to close some years later, leaving an eternal



With wife Mari Paqui at ZOA



Conde and Mari Paqui with their children and grandchildren

memory of the nights of magic in the hearts of all those who had the opportunity to set foot in it.

Now having entered the twenty-first century, Conde is appointed president of the Club of Professional Illusionists (C.I.P.); he remained the head of this organization for years and began a new era with the magazine *MAGICIP*, which is read throughout the world. Collaborating with him is his eldest son, Mac Lupén, who is also a magician. Mac inherited his father's love of illusions, and since the late '90s has traveled with his own show to stages in Spain and Great Britain.

An entire lifetime collecting everything that has even the least relationship with magic led to Conde's creation of an assemblage of magic objects that was converted into an exhibition that has traveled around Spain. Stamps, figurines, emblems, medals, boxes of magic, antique and modern games, porcelain, pennants, key chains, decks of cards, thimbles, balls, original posters, automatons, books (and more books!), and much more comprise a fabulous collection. The magic wand has the leading role. Conde has brought together a one-of-a-kind collection in which original, handmade, and commissioned wands abound – ebony, silver, crystal wands, in all sizes and shapes imaginable.

The private collection has been displayed at various museums and city halls in Spain as a temporary exhibition; it has been given an enthusiastic reception

by both old and young. With magic currently so present in almost every aspect of life, no one wishes to miss seeing such an astounding collection, which is the fruit of years and years of trips, conventions, auctions, and exchanges.

Nowadays, with seven grandchildren and still at the head of his psychiatry clinic on Francisco Silvela Street in Madrid, Conde

Ropherman participates actively in all national magic conventions. Accompanied by his inseparable companion of forty years, Mari Paqui, he maintains his enthusiasm for the queen of arts and all concerning her. For years he has acted as the inter-

national deputy for Spain of the S.A.M. and has attended the society's annual conventions.

The Flea Circus comes to an end and Conde Ropherman receives the audience's applause with his top hat in hand. After a final curtain call, he goes to his dressing room, where he checks the time on a pocket watch (he is not fond of wrist watches); it is one o'clock in the morning. His assistants enter with the small circus tent and Conde congratulates the fleas by placing a small trough with water in front of their corresponding trailers, where they will all rest following their brilliant performance under the blinding

spotlights. It is another night that could not have turned out better. And back home we go. ❖



Performing the Flea Circus



THE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

When I was just starting out with card magic, one performance that had a huge impact on me was Rene Lavand's appearance on *World's Greatest Magic II*. He performed his classic handling of the Oil & Water effect, It Can't Be Done Any Slower, as well as he's ever done. One of the most powerful moments in that performance for me was when Lavand looked straight into the camera and quoted Arturo de Ascanio:

"There is nothing more overwhelming than the truth."

I've since seen the adjective in the middle translated a few different ways: "nothing more *deceptive* than the truth," or "nothing more *nebulous* than the truth," but the way it was translated on that program is the way the quote has always stuck with me. "There is nothing more overwhelming than the truth." Whenever I'm pondering the way a given trick is put together, or trying to put together a trick of my own, I keep hearing that phrase in my head.

Of course, in any kind of magic, "the truth" is something we actively try to hide and steer our audiences away from. We are, after all, trying to perform impossible things. By definition, those things *can't* be the truth. So we strive to create powerful illusions of impossible things; but again, illusions aren't "the truth." So what's all this business about "the truth," and what does it have to do with magic?

One way I've grown to interpret the quote is based precisely on the fact that we're crafting unbelievable illusions and making outrageous claims. Since what we're claiming to do is the impossible, the audience knows the drill: the magician is going to try to hoodwink, bamboozle, or otherwise fool them into believing something impossible. That's when the mental questions start creeping in. Are his hands really empty? Are there only four coins there? Are those cards really regular

playing cards? Is that still the card he just showed me a moment ago?

If your audience is continually interrupting your performance by asking these questions out loud, something's wrong. It's not the performer's job to acquiesce to every stringent condition that pops out of someone's mouths. A magic trick isn't a science experiment, after all. But you won't be able to create a truly impossible effect unless you address those questions in some fashion or another. Juan Tamariz, in *The Magic Way*, says, "We need to know what goes on in the spectators' minds during the course of the trick and upon its completion, and we must determine what kind of impact is produced in their minds." Addressing those questions is the only path to creating a successful and lasting mystery.

One of the strongest ways to address those questions is to give the audience something they can't question at all. You either get them to agree explicitly with what they're experiencing, or you get them so silently convinced that they don't even think to question what's happening. I mentioned an example in my last column on shuffling. Erdnase said, "Nothing so completely satisfies the average card player as a belief that the deck has been thoroughly shuffled and genuinely cut." And nothing creates that impression better than having someone from the audience thoroughly shuffle and genuinely cut the cards. "There's nothing more overwhelming than the truth."

That may seem self-evident, but consider an example. On my DVD, *The Usual Suspect*, I have a pseudo-demonstration of superhuman memory that starts by having the deck shuffled by an audience member. I take the cards back, and in the process of removing the four Kings for a preliminary effect, I cull a memorized slug of cards. Later, I spread the deck face up and the audience not only sees a genuinely-shuffled deck (because the order of the slug doesn't matter), but they remember that someone else genuinely shuffled them. "There's nothing more overwhelming than the truth."

Another example to consider is Ed Marlo's Miracle Ace Cutting routine (aka Estimation Aces). When I was develop-

ing my handling of this classic routine, I had to ask myself what makes this method any better than using a crimped card, or keeping the Aces on top and doing a bunch of false cuts. The answer is that you actually do what you claim to be doing. The Aces are genuinely shuffled into the middle of the deck, and you're cutting right to them without any breaks or weird edges on the cards. As a result, I designed my handling to emphasize all of those elements. I don't have to work to convince the audience of any of those things; I just have to point them out. They speak for themselves, because "there's nothing more overwhelming than the truth." In fact, one of my favorite versions of this trick comes from my friend Andrew Wilmhurst, in which the spectator is the one who does the cutting. If you want to see an audience overwhelmed by the truth, try that out sometime.

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

You might notice that not everything in the preceding examples is on the level. In the memory routine, the deck doesn't stay completely shuffled; you cull a particular group of cards. In the Ace-cutting routine, the Aces are stacked at certain positions in the deck. Those are the other kind of truths: the ones that actually make the trick work. Those are the elements of a trick we dance around and try hide from the audience. This brings me back to the translation issue I mentioned at the beginning and the word "overwhelming." When you have an element of the trick the audience can't question, it does just that: it overwhelms their thought processes. When you confront the audience with an undeniable fact, particularly one that appears crucial to the proceedings, you box them in. Eventually, the audience ends up on what Whit Hadyn calls magic's horns of a dilemma: what they're seeing is impossible, yet they have no choice but to believe it.

The good news is you can find ways to accentuate those undeniable facts in your presentations. Michael Close, in his essay on Patter in the *Workers* series, cautions that you should never ask a question you may not want to hear the answer to. In my

presentations, I try to ask questions that only have the answer I'm looking for. In the Marlo Ace-cutting routine, I used to do the required faro shuffle and ask "Is that an honest shuffle?" Some people would agree, and some would notice the perfect one-for-one weave and say, "Well..." Now I ask, "Is that a genuine shuffle?" The only answer to that question is "yes."

One of my favorite verbal dodges of this kind is when I'm performing a trick in which a card changes under an audience member's hand or between her palms. I first thought of it in conjunction with Jazz Aces. In my handling, someone puts her hand down on the leader pile for the last transposition. The trickiest part of any effect like this is making sure no one questions the identity of the card under the hand before the magic happens. If, however, I were to ask right before the change, "Is there any way I could change that card while your hand is on it?" the response would come back, "Can I look at it first?" The question I ask instead is, "Is there any way I could get that card out from under your hand without you knowing?" And the only answer to that is, "No!" And that's the overwhelming truth. I can't. Luckily, that's not what I'm actually trying to do. (This is the same concept used in, say, a sponge ball routine when you claim to be able to make the ball in someone's hand vanish. By focusing on whether or not you could get anything out, you avoid the question of whether or not you could sneak something in.)

The key is to know which truths are important in the audience's mind and which aren't. In an Ace assembly, for example, you might think it would be really strong for an audience if you actually placed the Aces down where they're supposed to start out instead of doing some kind of switch-out sequence. Then you might do a bunch of palming or other funky procedures to

physically move the Aces invisibly into one pile. The problem is, the important truth in a trick like that is that you do absolutely nothing to make the Aces transit invisibly. That's the part of the trick where you can't get away with *simulated* nothing; you need the genuine article. (Darwin Ortiz calls this the "critical interval.") On the other hand, if you do Macdonald's Aces, you can have both. The Aces actually do start off in separate piles, and you do nothing to invisibly move them to the leader pile – as long as you don't start worrying about the "truth" of whether all the cards have backs or not.

THE PUB SHUFFLE

Most card workers are familiar with the style of red/black shuffle in which each half of the deck is a quarter of one color and a quarter of the other color; by shuffling the two halves together you end up shuffling reds into reds and blacks into blacks, which maintains the separation. There are a number of variations on this shuffle concept in print, in *The Card Magic of LePaul* (credited to T. Nelson Downs), in *More Inner Secrets of Card Magic* (credited in *The Vernon Chronicles* to Fred Black), and in Arthur Buckley's *Card Control*, to name a few. In *Card College 3*, Roberto Giobbi gives credit for the basic concept to Fred Black.

The following is a divided-deck (or red/black) riffle shuffle handling I devised a number of years back that I'm particularly proud of. What makes this and other shuffles of this style so deceptive is that it is – for the most part – a genuine shuffle.

Begin with a deck separated into reds and blacks. Place the deck in front of you for a riffle shuffle and cut off slightly more than half the deck to the right. Start a Zarrow shuffle leaving a block of about ten or twelve cards on top of the left-hand pile.

Finish the Zarrow but maintain a break under the block on top.

You're now going to do a simple running cut to the table before giving the cards one last riffle shuffle. Lift the deck with both hands; with your left hand cut all cards above the break to the table. Take another packet of ten or twelve from the rest of the deck with your left hand and place them onto the tabled cards, holding a break with the left thumb between those packets. Place the rest of the cards on top and hold another break below them with the right thumb. Then cut the cards above the uppermost break to the right; maintain the other break with your left thumb.

Riffle shuffle the two packets together as follows: the cards below the left thumb break are shuffled into the lower half of the right-hand packet, the right hand continues releasing cards until the midpoint of its packet is reached, and then the rest of the cards are shuffled off normally.

Practice the riffle so that it's as smooth as possible from top to bottom; that is, you're not leaving a big block of cards in the middle where the two halves are separated. With a nice even riffle you can use a Juan Tamariz subtlety from *Sonata* (and recommended in *Card College 3*): Ribbon spread the woven deck and have an audience member finish the shuffle by pushing the two halves together. Taken all together it's a tremendously convincing shuffle sequence.

This shuffle originally appeared in print in extremely brief form in Peter Duffie's *Card Magic USA* ebook. ♦

I welcome any questions or comments. If any *M-U-M* readers want to get in touch, please feel free to contact me at antoni-omcabral@yahoo.com. I look forward to answering your questions and opening a dialogue or two.

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There were nearly one hundred fifty of us, when you count the presenters and those who took part in the Lecture Showcase after the work was done. That is quite amazing, considering we all had to pay for our transportation to Vegas and our own rooms and most meals. And here's why it's amazing: nobody did any magic. What kind of magic conference is that?

Thanks to Stan Allen, Brian South, Brian Brushwood, and Vinny Grosso, under the sponsorship of the S.A.M. and *MAGIC* magazine, we were there to talk among ourselves about magic clubs, our assemblies, rings, independent clubs, and how we might make the club experience something better. Was that important? Well, consider that Stan, Vinny, the two Brians, or any of the presenters collected not one dime for their efforts.

It was for the love of magic and (and this is important) for the average guy who belongs to a local assembly or other magic club. We were all on board to give something back in appreciation for all that magic has done for us.

The Summit team built the conference on three pillars of magic club wisdom, "The Three Fs" of a successful magic club: Friendship, Fun, and inFormation. That's it. Those are what make your magic club a success: building life-long, solid, friendships; having fun every time you attend a meeting; and learning something new about a trick, a move, the history or theory of magic, every time you attend, as well. And so, when we registered Friday night, we immediately became involved. I was among the first to register; that is, fill out my nametag, get my group identification card, and so on. Then, I had to help the next person in line register. Yes, I immediately became a part of the group and made a new friend. Pretty sneaky!

The registration area had a carnival atmosphere, right down to the popcorn and pink lemonade and a half-dozen carnival games we all played individually or with one another. Now, my natural mode is to avoid such activities like the plague, but I had pledged to be a part of it. Surprise! I had a great time! I enjoyed it! I took great delight at winning a carnival game and equal delight at failing at three of them, over and over and over again.

From there we were treated to a keynote address about the value of lasting memories and friendships by Brad Montgomery, one of the country's most successful motivational speakers, with clients like Microsoft and Verizon. I'm sure I was not the only one who was actually motivated by Brad's presentation. It was a great start.

But the "real work" – meaning what really makes the trick a success – came the next day when Michael Mode gave a "Ted Talk" about the first F pillar, "Friendly" (meaning a club should be friendly). This was followed by a table discussion. We had been divided into sixteen tables of seven people each. Four of the other six people at my table were new to me, so right off the

bat we set about meeting each other and talking about the importance of being friendly in our clubs and sharing ideas about how we can make our clubs friendlier. The best ideas from each table were shared with the whole group.

The second Pillar, "Fun," was presented by Jamie D. Grant (a fun guy, I might add). And this led to breakout sessions to discuss "meeting themes." Each large group then brought their top five "themes" back to the whole conference, and we again shared with one another. We are going to use some of these ideas in our local assembly. For example, set tables for four or five throughout your meeting area and have your members go from table to table doing restaurant magic. Good idea? You bet.

After a box lunch (surprise...it was good), David Oliver talked to us about "communication," Ricky Brandon about "finances,"

Rory Johnston about "service," and Jeff McBride about "public relations." We then had the opportunity to explore any two of those four topics at more depth in breakout rooms. This was followed by final remarks and an admonition to carry the spirit of The Magic Summit back to our local clubs and, although unsaid, an admonition to be a champion, each in his or her own club, to make strangers feel welcome, encourage personal growth through friendship, foster the joy of magic among friends, and provide an environment for improvement in magic. A hidden theme for The Summit was revealed

at the end of the regular sessions. We received a big question mark sticker to put on our notebook cover. It represented the fact that the Summit team did not offer answers. Rather, they asked questions and encouraged all of us to go back to our magic clubs and to ask questions. Questions lead to creative answers.

Among the registrants were representatives from forty S.A.M. assemblies; almost all of our national officers were present. I believe we all felt the positive spirit that was present. Our Regional Vice Presidents have a wonderful opportunity to share the messages of The Summit with the assemblies in their region who were not represented and to encourage the ones who were.

Here is the message I took home with me: *I can make a difference.* I can think of no greater satisfaction in magic than doing so. Another message is that we can use every experience from The Summit with our own magic clubs.

Okay, okay, okay. There were magic tricks. Following the formal program and after dinner (which I enjoyed with Kent Cummins, a great friend whom I had not seen in ten years), we were treated to a lecture showcase, hosted by Michael Ammar, in which David Cosaro, Will Fern, Barry Mitchell, John Reid, Losander, and Chris Smith each taught one or two tricks. Great fun, and we then had a chance to peruse their wares at dealer tables in the back of the room.

Well done, Summit team. Thanks! ♦



The Summit Team. Back row, from left: Ricky Brandon, David Oliver, Jamie D. Grant, Michael Mode, Brian Brushwood, and Randy Kalin. Kneeling, from left: Rod Chow, Stan Allen, Jeff McBride, Brian South, Rory Johnston, and Brad Montgomery. Not present: Vinny Grosso.



Thank You

The Society of American Magicians appreciates the work and commitment of everyone that attended The Magic Summit.



We had members from over 40 different Assemblies and we trust that the information you learned will help your group grow.



We look forward to seeing the seeds sown take root in your Assembly or club.



The conversation will continue in Philadelphia.



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without you.*



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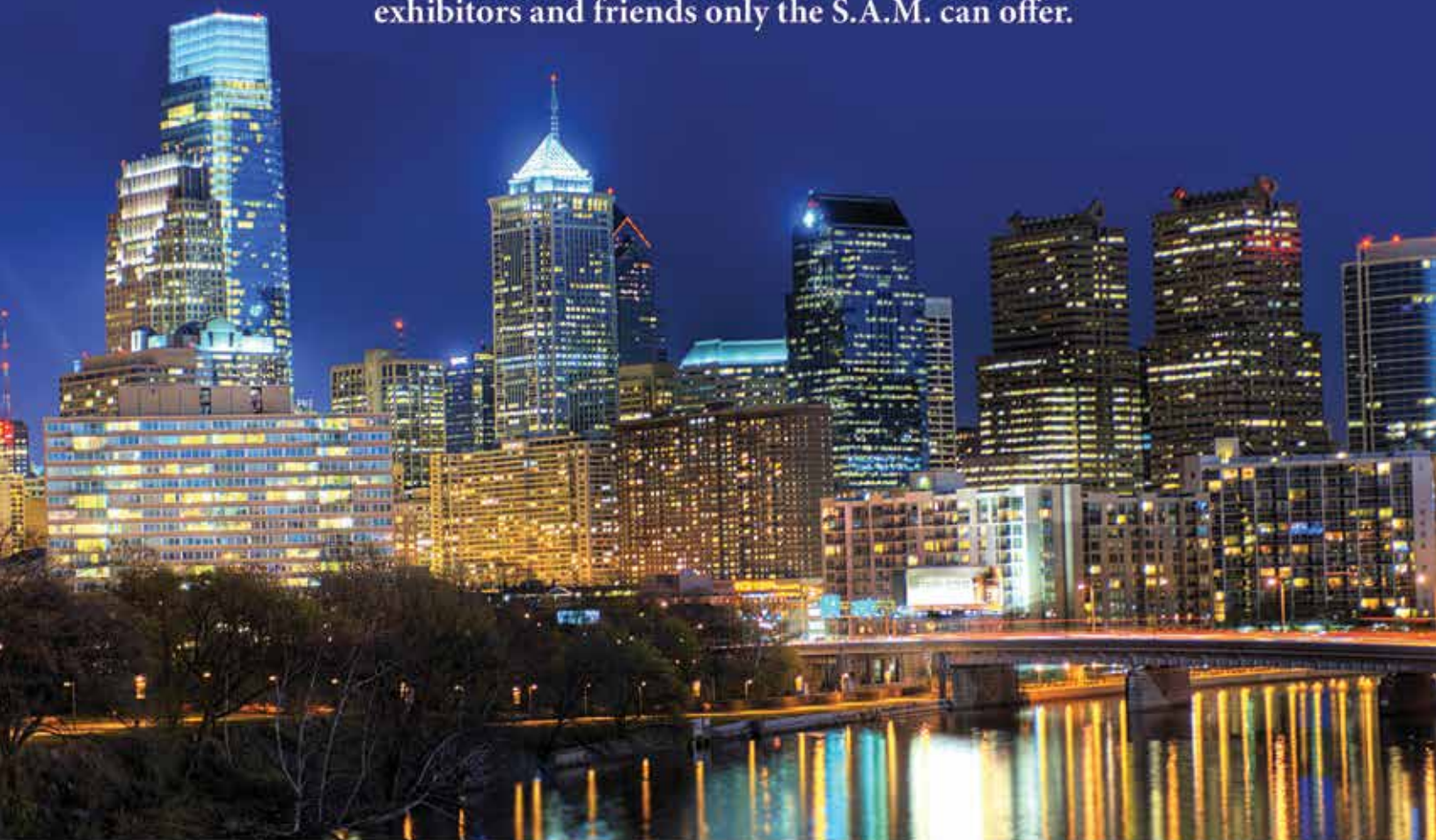
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CONVENTION SPOTLIGHT

WOODY ARAGÓN

Woody Aragón is an outstanding card magician, technical expert, and entertaining performer from Toledo, Spain. As a writer, lecturer, teacher, and performer, Woody has incredible insight and theories about magic. Many of these he has shared in his excellent book, *A Book in English*.

Woody has appeared on television in Spain, Germany, and the United States. He has won numerous awards, including the Champion of Card Magic in 2005 in Spain, the prestigious Ascanio Award as the best magician of the year in 2006, the MacMillan International Magic Convention second place award in London in 2009, the Merit Award from the International Brotherhood of Magicians, the Card Magic award at FISM 2011 North-American, and the People's Choice and Excellence in Close-Up awards by The Society of American Magicians in 2011.

Miguel Puga (Card Magic FISM World Champion 2003) said of Woody, "He manages the concepts of Arturo de Ascanio, the evil ruses of Juan Tamariz, the arguments of Camilo Vasquez, and the conflicts of José Carroll. Woody Aragón is the new heir of the Spanish school."

Tim Trono writes, "Some may be familiar with Woody through his contributions to Steve Beam's *Semi Automatic Card Tricks* series. If you have seen Woody, you will already have an appreciation. If you have never seen Woody, you are in for an amazing surprise. What wonderful magic."

Woody Aragón will be part of the Spanish contingent appearing in Philadelphia at the 2015 S.A.M. national convention. Do not miss this opportunity to spend a little time with one of the modern masters of close-up magic.

THE CHEERLEADER

BY WOODY ARAGÓN

AN EXCERPT FROM *A BOOK IN ENGLISH*

This is one of my many approaches to the spelling effect. This routine combines several effects, joining them into a solid block, with the advantage that everything apparently happens without the magician touching the deck.

Effect: The deck is divided into four piles. A member of the audience chooses one of them, shuffles it, and freely thinks of a card in that pile. He loses the card in the deck himself, and then cuts the deck. The magician asks him to spell his selection, dealing one card on the table for each letter. At the end of the spelling, the selected card appears.

The Set-up: This trick needs a small set-up, but it is very easy to prepare on the fly. Just look through the deck for twelve non-Diamond cards whose values are Four, Five, Nine, Jack, or King (these values spell with four letters). Those go on top of the deck;



right under them, place a card with a normal breather crimp (crimp the card on the face, so that it will be on top when you cut to it).

You should be able to identify the crimped card at a glance. Usually you can easily distinguish a crimped card by looking at its back, but if you're in doubt, you can mark a small pencil dot on the card's back, or un-crimp one of the corners (leaving a very-easy-to-spot crease on the card).

Method: Start by cutting the deck into four piles. First, cut off the twelve-card group (with the aid of the breather crimp) and leave it in the center of the table. Overhand shuffle the rest of the deck, transferring the crimped card to the bottom of the pack. Cut off about a third of the packet, and put it to the left of the first one. Leave the rest of the deck on the right, and then cut a fourth packet, placing it

further to the right. After this, there will be four aligned piles on the table, from your point of view, left to right: Pile A, with indifferent cards; Pile B, with the twelve-card setup; Pile C, with the crimped bottom card (I left it face up in Figure 1, so you can easily see it); and Pile D, with more indifferent cards. Tell your audience that from here on, you will not touch the cards.

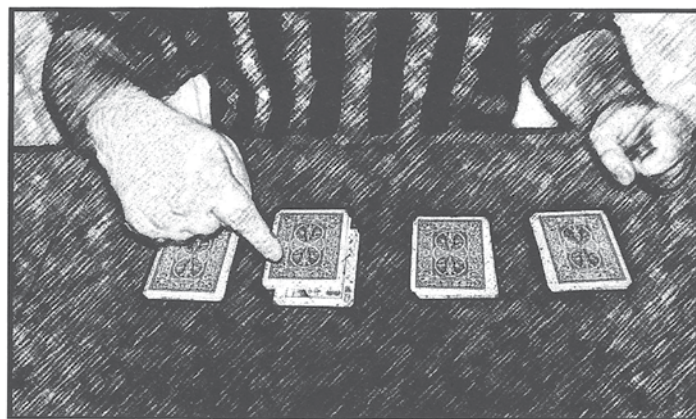


Figure 1

Use magician's choice to force Pile B on a member of the audience, and ask him to thoroughly shuffle it. After that, tell him to spread the cards in a fan in front of him so that he can see all of the cards, and choose any one that he likes. Then he is to put that card on top of any other pile, shuffle the remaining cards in his hand, and put them on top of the selection.

How you proceed depends on which pile the spectator put his selection on, as your goal is to get the Pile C on top of the one on which he just placed his pile. I use a great method, created by the Spanish magician Ramon Riobóo.

If he placed his pile on one of the piles at the sides (A or D), then ask him to reassemble the deck, starting with the furthest pile (the one on the opposite side goes on top of the center pile,

and those two go over the pile in which the selection lies). It will be very clear if you mime the actions for the spectator.

If the cards are placed on top of the center pile (C), tell him to cut and complete the cut. Then discard the other two piles, saying that they have been eliminated.

In any case, regardless of whether you are using the whole deck or only half of it, the crimped card is in the center and the selection lies twelve cards below it.

Ask the spectator to cut the (half) deck. Because of the crimp, there are many opportunities for him to cut right to it. Glimpse the back of the top card and confirm that it is the crimped card. If it isn't, then ask him to cut once again. If the crimped card is still not on top, then give the cards to a second spectator and tell him, "You can cut, too."

If, after all those attempts, you still don't see the crimped card on top, cut it yourself as you say "That's right. Everyone can cut. The important thing is for the card to be completely lost in the deck."

In most cases you won't need to cut, but if this ever happens, the action is so well covered (by all the other cuts) that people will never remember that you touched the cards.

Tell the audience that you learned this trick from a mentalist cheerleader. The spectator must now think of his card just like a cheerleader would: So, if he was thinking of the Queen of Diamonds, he would think, "Give me a Q" "Give me a U", and so on until the final "Give me an S." That is how he must mentally spell the name of his thought-of card. Tell him to take the cards, and get ready to deal them one by one onto the table, following your instructions, as he thinks of the card name's letters.

If the spectator does mentally spell his card, he will feel a greater impact himself (because it is as if you were able to hear his thoughts). If he doesn't, it is not really important, because you are the one who will really spell the card, and the final spelling will prove to everyone else that you could read his thoughts.

Look at the eyes of the spectator as you point to the place on the table where he's supposed to deal the cards one by one. Ask him to deal four cards in a row (this is the value of the card). After the first two cards, the rhythm for the additional cards should be similar to saying "Hit me" when playing blackjack. You hesitate momentarily, and then want him to deal another card. Then point to a second row, and ask him to deal two more cards ("Of"). Finally, ask him to deal a final row of five cards (Figure 2). When he is holding the sixth card, instead of pointing to the table, open your hand and say, "Right there! Stop!"

At this moment, even though the selection has never been named aloud, it really does seem as if you were able to know it, because the spelling is correct. Remind everyone you never touched the cards, and ask the spectator to tell everyone the card he was thinking of.

If it's a Club, for example "Jack of Clubs," quickly spell "Jack" with the four cards on the first row, then "of," then "Clubs" with the five cards on the third row. Finally ask him to turn over the card he's holding.

If it's a Spade or a Heart, then you will do the same, but when you get to the final row point to the card the spectator is holding as the final "s" of the spell, and ask him to turn it over. It will be the selection.

Additional Remarks: The fairness of the choices and the fact that the magician never touches the cards after the selection make it seem impossible for the magician to know the name of the

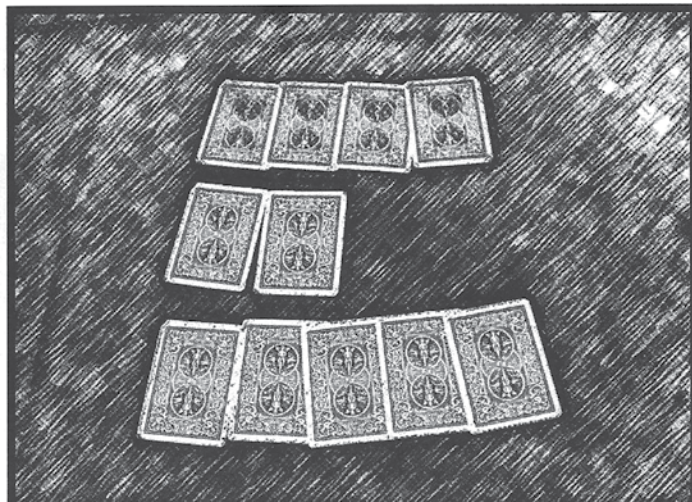


Figure 2

card. But the spelling clearly indicates that you really were able to discern its identity. And what's more important, if you are skillful enough in your presentation, the fact that the card appeared at the end of the spelling sequence will just be a *confirmation* to the audience that you knew the thought-of card. Even though they don't know the real method, and have no clue as to how could you possibly do it without touching the cards, they must conclude that you could not have moved the card to a determined position because you didn't know its identity. The name of the card existed only in the mind of the spectator! ❖

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TC TAHOE



Photo by Peter Gould

TC Tahoe was born and raised in Great Falls, Montana; he got into magic as a way to pass the time during frequent periods of illness. "I was a fairly sickly child and spent an inordinate amount of time in the hospital," TC said. "I used to love to read (and, in fact, I still do). My dad would bring me a new book every week; one week it was a book called *How to Do Tricks with Cards* by Bill Turner."

That first book made him want to learn more; TC continued performing magic throughout his school years. He dropped out of high school two months before graduation (he eventually got his GED) and moved to Southern California because he had been offered a three-week engagement at the Magic Island nightclub and dinner theater in Newport Beach. This three-week engagement turned into several years of work at Magic Island.

His main influences in magic were Slydini, Martin Nash, and Carl Ballantine, which tells you that TC is a serious student of magic and sleight of hand, although he wraps it all in a comedic package.

When asked about his evolution in performing magic TC said, "I did a few kids parties, but learned pretty darn fast that this type of show was not for me. I

worked a lot of restaurants and strolling gigs and a whole lot of comedy clubs." He says that performing at the Magic Castle in Hollywood is still a highlight.

As for the style of magic TC performs, it's difficult to put him in a box. "There's nothing 'usual' about me. I do stand-up comedy magic; I have a mentalism show as well as a bizarre magic show; and I love performing close-up."

Since I have seen some of TC's performances on video I was curious how he went about creating his unique material. He said, "I have different ways, really. It depends on what I am working on, and it also depends on whether it's an effect for me or for someone else. Oftentimes it starts with music. Music always seems to help me create. I like to simplify things. Many magicians want to complicate things – in both method and plot. I look back to the men who inspired me. Slydini's magic was elegant and simple for the audience to follow. With Martin Nash, from the moment he starts, you know what he's about; he's a card cheat, and a charming one. With Carl Ballantine, you know you are in for silly experience, before he even walks on stage, just by his table and sign.

These days TC can be found performing stand-up comedy and magic on cruise ships and doing a new close-up show with Erick Olson (of Wizardz Magic Theater in Kissimmee, Florida) called *Con Games & Cocktails*. TC and Erick have also co-authored a book titled *I'll Betcha*, which includes fifty different bar-bets that anyone can do. It can be purchased through Amazon.com or directly from them after their show.

TC is also working on a sequel to his book, *In the Play of Shadows: The Tarot Effect*.

A VERY GOOD YEAR BY TC TAHOE

(Based on The Four Bit Machine from David Britland's book *Psychomancy*)

What the Audience Sees: The Magician shows a stack of vintage number flash cards. The cards are openly mixed and are dealt out in four rows of four.

Four coins are introduced; the participant is asked to choose one of the flash cards by placing a coin on top of her choice.

This is repeated until four flash cards have been chosen.

The numbers on the flash cards are totaled; they add up to thirty-four. The magician claims the participant had no choice but to choose those particular numbers. To prove it, the magician tells the participant to look at the dates on the coins.

They are all from 1934.

Method: You need sixteen number cards, that are numbered 1 through 16 (Photo 1). You can use any kind of number cards you like. I found some old flash cards, but again you can use nay style number cards. In fact, I have done this with business cards by writing the numbers on the backs in front of the spectators. I had the coins with me, but not the cards. In fact, doing it with business cards might be stronger.



Photo 1

The coins are fairly easy to come by. If you can't find them at a local coin shop for a reasonable price, you will find them on eBay. I bought four online for a total of five bucks (Photo 2).



Photo 2

The number is forced using a matrix force that dates back to 1942. (See Max

Maven's Cinematrix in the October 2014 *M-U-M* for more details.) David Britland gave the force a more random feel in his trick The Four Bit Machine.

Handling and Presentation: The magician places a coin purse and a small stack of cards on the table. *"Choices – we make dozens of choices every day, maybe hundreds. Little choices, like what socks to wear. Big choices: who to vote for on American Idol? As many choices as we make, there are just as many things that influence our choices."*

"This got me thinking; is it even possible to make a truly random choice? Or is there always something influencing us?"

The cards are shown to be children's flash cards. *"These are some old flash cards I found at a garage sale. What made me buy them? I don't really know."* The magician shrugs. *"If you wouldn't mind, please help me with an experiment – an experiment in choices."* The magician mixes the flash cards.

Mixing the Cards: Spread the cards face up between the hands, showing that the cards are in sequential order. Turn the cards face down.

You will now give the packet a reverse faro shuffle. Up-jog every other card, and then strip out the up-jogged cards. You will have eight cards in each hand. It doesn't matter if you start the up-jogging with the top card or the second card. It also doesn't matter which hand holds which packet.

Once you have separated the up-jogged cards, you say to the participant, *"I have separated the cards so they are no longer in numerical order, which packet would you like me to place on top?"* The partici-

pant tells you which packet to place where. *"Now, no two cards are in sequence, but let's mix them further."*

You repeat the reverse faro, up-jogging every other card, separating the two groups, and again letting the participant decide which way to reassemble the packets.

"We can mix the cards again; it's up to you." Let the participant choose whether to mix one more time. Do not give the cards a fourth mix.

After the mixing, the cards are dealt out, face down, in four rows of four cards. Deal from left to right. Once the first four cards are dealt, start your second row, and so on.

"I also have some coins. These belonged to my grandfather. When I was a kid, I loved to play with his bowl of change." Four coins are poured out of the coin purse and the purse is set aside.

"I am going to have you choose a coin and place it on one of the flash cards. Whatever card you choose, I will eliminate the other cards in the row and the column that card is in, so choose carefully." The participant places a coin on a card. The magician turns over the cards in both the horizontal row and the vertical column.

The three remaining coins are pushed towards the participant. *"Good; now please choose another coin and another card."* The elimination procedure is repeated. When it comes time for the last coin, only one card will remain. *"Because of your choices, there is only one card left."* A nod to the coin is all it takes and the participant will place the last coin on the last card.

"So, for whatever reason, you chose

these numbers. Did you feel influenced in any way, or did you make totally random choices? Maybe you focused your mind and made a clear choice of each of these numbers. (Wait a beat.) Then again, maybe you had no choice at all. If you add together the numbers of the cards that you chose, what total do you get?"

The participant does this and lo and behold the total is thirty-four. *"Thirty-four; does that number have any meaning to you?"* If it does, then play that up; most often, it will not. *"One of the things I have come to realize is that most of the time we don't even know we are being influenced. Do me a favor; look at the dates on my grandfather's coins..."*

The participant does this and discovers they all bear the date 1934.

This has been a solid piece of close-up theater for me. Feel free to use my story, but I do encourage you to create your own.

STEVE'S STUFF

This trick is really fun to perform. I've been doing it for friends and in paid shows, since TC sent it to me. When people start checking the dates on the coins, it gets a great reaction! I couldn't find any good number flash cards in Japan (that didn't cost less than \$30) so the ones pictured here were downloaded from www.mrprintables.com/printable-math-flash-cards.html. I printed them out on postcard stock and laminated them; they work great. The coins were purchased from eBay; I just searched on "1934 coin" and lots of stuff came up. All this preparation makes the trick feel really personal to me. ❖

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KEVIN JAMES – INVENTING HIMSELF



Artwork by James Carroll

Magic, like any other industry or art form, has its movers and shakers – the people who have somehow made it to the top of the food chain in their respective disciplines. Some have risen through tenacity and diligence, some by luck and timing, some just by downright hard work, and some by a combination of all three. There are practitioners of pure sleight of hand, mentalists, manipulators, illusionists, inventors, authors, builders, craftsmen, and philosophers. I wanted to get inside the heads of these people to help shed some light on how they got to where they are in their careers and some of the motivation and influences they have had behind the scenes. So, I am asking all of these talented people the same Ten Questions to compare and contrast their answers. Perhaps insights from these creative, tenacious, and talented people can provide you with a roadmap on your journey into the limelight.

I am honored to be able to start off this

series with one of most creative magicians I know, Kevin James. A lot of other people know Kevin too, due to a viral YouTube video: Kevin's *America's Got Talent* presentation of his reboot of the Raja Raboid/Johnny Eck sawing illusion that freaked people out in the 1940s. Kevin took this plot and method and honed it into theatrical perfection; it now has been seen by more people than Houdini performed for in his entire career.

Kevin is one of a rare breed of magicians who is also a creator and inventor. He has an added insight he brings to his inventing process. He comes at it from not only the perspective of hypothetical “on paper” ideas, but real-world experience, because he is also a world-class performer. His magical creations, such as the Bowling Ball from Sketchpad, Floating Rose, and his signature Snowstorm, are examples of magic by a *performer who creates* instead of a clever creator who never performs. This is why these pieces are so pervasive in magic today.

Kevin's magic is everywhere and now it is headed to New York City. Kevin and his band of merry cohorts, called “The Illusionists,” are doing something remarkable. They are performing on Broadway. Not since Doug Henning have we had a full-blown illusion show on “The Great White Way.” This one is spearheaded by the brilliant ad man, Simon Painter, who in this production has aptly dubbed Kevin “The Inventor.” Let's examine, through our Ten Questions, some thoughts on how Kevin has invented his own path to magical fame and notoriety.

1. What is the first magic you remember seeing and what impact did it have on you?

“It was love at first sight. I saw a magician at my school and it really connected. Not long after that Doug Henning appeared on TV and he sealed the deal.”

2. Did you frequent and/or work at any brick-and-mortar magic shops in your formative years? If so, which ones and where were they? How did this

influence your development?

“I lived in a very small village with no magicians anywhere to be seen. It was just me and six library books, until I discovered Abbott's. I remember walking into that building like it was yesterday. It had a delightful musty smell, the creakiest floors ever, fit for a horror film, cool old posters on the ceiling, and a roped-off section of the most beautiful illusions imaginable. I never worked there, but it was great and really old school. Once I moved to California, I got a job right away at Best Magic and Costume in Anaheim. I couldn't believe my luck; I got to read magic books all day and get paid to do it. It was heaven. I loved it.”

3. Give a few examples of effects from your act in its early years. What material did you consider your “go to” stuff? Did any of it make it into what you do now?

“I started with close-up magic because it was all I could afford, so I worked restaurants. That is when I developed Perrier with a Twist. I still use it today, mostly for TV shows.

“I had started to develop some stage material and tried to compete with it. One thing was a costume change. I had retired it for many years; now, many years later, the producer of *The Illusionists* asked me for something quick and visual for the opening of the show. So I dusted it off and reworked it about a year ago. It still works great.”

4. Is your character now anything like your character in your early development? How did you develop your current persona?

“I went through many characters. I tried to be the glam-rock guy and the stand-up comedy magic guy, but none of them really worked for me. I feel that I had to go through those phases and that there are no shortcuts. I created a character for *The Illusionists* called The Inventor. I felt it was a big box to play in and I could grow into it. It was not far from the truth. It is still a work in progress.”

5. What did you consider your biggest break in your career that took you to the next level?

"I think my biggest break was getting booked at the Crazy Horse in Paris. Rudy Coby was trying to get his agent to book me there, but she really didn't care for my act. She wouldn't show the owner of the Crazy Horse my video.

"She also booked a TV show called *Sebastien c'est Fou*. One week someone dropped out of the lineup, she called me and asked if I could be there in a few days. Sure we could. We did well and Sebastien couldn't stop talking about us. I told her to please show Mssr. Bernardin the video from the TV show. She did and he booked us right away. That place had such a great reputation that if you worked 'The Crazy' you didn't have to send a video anymore. We did tons of work in Europe after that."

6. At what point in your life did you

realize you had to be a part of the world of magic?

"I knew right away that it was what I would do the rest of my life. I never wanted to do anything else."

7. What effect that you currently perform gives you the most satisfaction and why?

"I think the Floating Rose gives me the most satisfaction. There is a moment in the routine when the little girl gets to make the paper ball animate. She really thinks she is doing it. There is such a beautiful, honest sense of wonder that comes over her face that it really sends electricity through the audience. That is the same feeling of wonder that I experienced as a kid and what got me into this business."

8. What is the one piece of advice you would give an aspiring performer who wanted to turn pro?

"Study business administration in college. When you turn pro you are running a business. Try to be different. Read everything, lots of magic books, but lots of other things too. Build your library."

9. How do you think the Internet has impacted magic?

"I think the Internet has had many effects on magic, both good and bad. The best part is that it gives you access to everything. The bad part is that it gives you access to everything."

10. If it was possible for Houdini to deliver a message to you from "the great beyond," what you like to like it to say?

"Bess and I see what you are doing and we like it. Good job." ♦

The Society of American Magicians CONTEST OF MAGIC

Philadelphia – July 1-4, 2015

Probably Warm – Probably Crowded – Definitely Exciting!

The Society of American Magicians Contest of Magic is open to all members of the S.A.M.; it will be a featured event of the 2015 convention. As performers from all over the world who have shared their skill and art with us will attest, the S.A.M. Contests of Magic are unique, fair, independent, welcoming, and hot – sort of like Philadelphia itself and what got started there: The USA!

There are two contests: The Dr. Paul Critelli Close-Up Magic Contest and The Father Cyprian Murray Stage Magic Contest. You may apply for either or both.

If you would like to be considered for this event, your first step is to obtain an application packet. To do this, email me at: MagicPaul@aol.com with "S.A.M. – Contest" in the subject line. Please make sure to include your email address, your full name, regular postal address, and your phone number. If you do not have access to email, send your request to:

Paul Critelli, 858 Iroquois SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

All application packets will be made available electronically or sent out on or after **December 31, 2014**.

Do not put any act on line or send it to me in any form before you read, complete, and submit the application form.

All requests for an application packet must be in my possession by or sent on or before **May 15, 2015**.

All applications and all videos must be on line as instructed in the application packet by **June 5, 2015**. (These videos must be sent so that **only I, Paul Critelli**, can view them on YouTube or some other video service. More details will be given in the application packet.)

Thank you and good luck!

Paul Critelli,
Chairperson,
Contest of Magic The Society of American Magicians



CHAUTAUQUA CONJURORS AND LYCEUM LEGERDEMAIN BY DAVID HAVERSAT

Allow me to introduce myself. I have been interested in magic history and collecting for many years. I served two terms as president of the New England Magic Collectors Association, was co-owner of the S.S. Adams Novelty Company, currently own the Petrie & Lewis line of magic, and publish historical books on magicians through my company 1878 Press. When Michael Close approached me about writing a historical column I jumped at the opportunity.

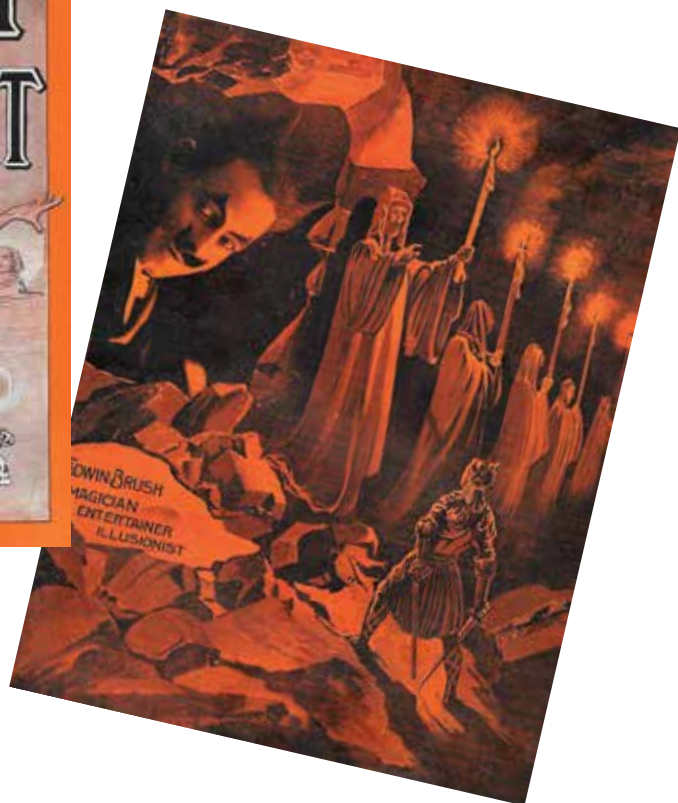
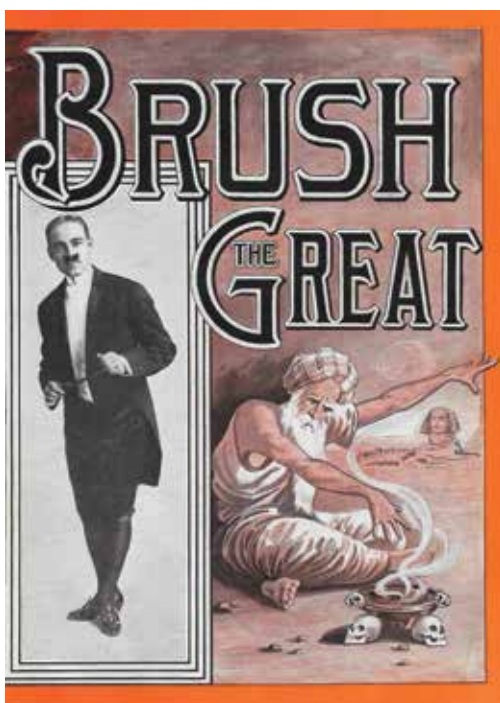
After some consideration, I proposed a monthly feature on magicians who appeared either on the summer Chautauqua circuits or the Lyceum stage covering roughly the three decades from 1900 to 1930. The stars of these two venues are well known. Luminaries such as Germaine, Birch, Tarbell, Laurant, S.S. Henry, Reno, and many others worked for decades before enthusiastic audiences in small- and medium-size towns across our nation.

And so, that's what I'll do – with a twist. Because we only have two pages to cover the colorful lives of these performers, each column will provide interesting anecdotes and experiences of these magicians accompanied by a few illustrations from their promotional brochures that offer a snapshot in time. However, if you're interested in learning more about the performer and enjoying additional examples of their memorabilia, visit *M-U-M* online (www.magicsam.com/chautauqua), where you'll find their complete brochure, examples of items they gave away, photographs, even film footage if it exists. And, if you have a favorite performer, contact me and perhaps I'll feature that person in an upcoming column.

Let's start with the great entertainer Edwin Brush. He began his Lyceum work in 1902 but he is more widely recognized as the first magician who appeared on the tented Chautauqua circuit that went out in 1904 under Keith Vawter's Standard Chautau-

qua Bureau. It began in Marshalltown, Iowa (home of T. Nelson Downs the "King of Coins"), on July 4 and ended August 16.

Brush was born March 21, 1873, in Garden Prairie, Illinois, and decided to become a wand wielder after seeing Alexander Herrmann. His first job was in a clothing store; he used small magic tricks as ice-breakers with customers. He became so popular with this that he decided to take up magic full-time. Over the next 20+ years he played all the leading Chautauqua and Lyceum bureaus and was considered a headliner. His second wife Ada Mary Porter assisted him on stage doing illusions, her own



act of crystal gazing, and singing.

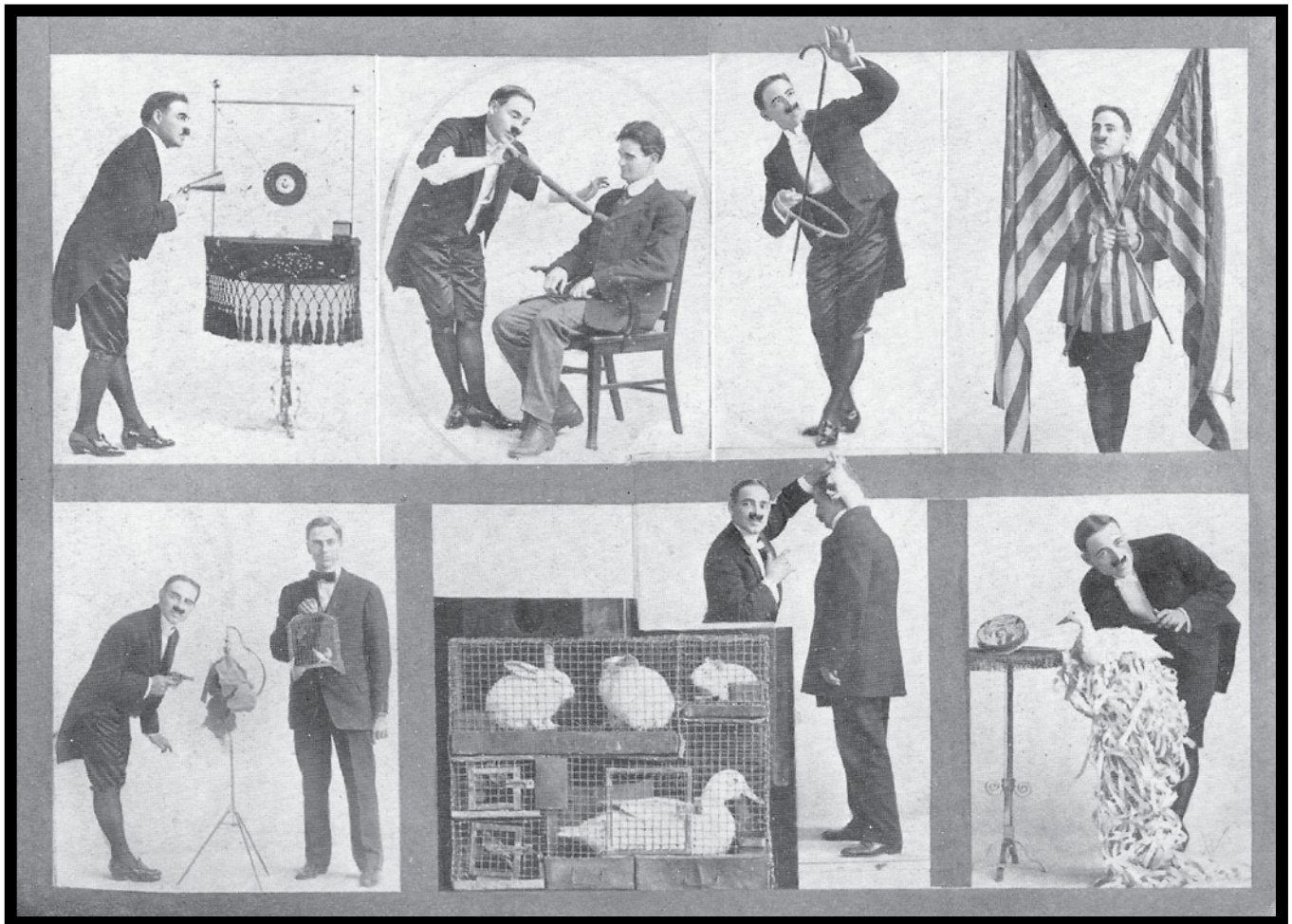
A typical performance included Miser's Dream, Chinese Linking Rings, vanishing and reappearing canaries, Floating Ball, Rising Cards, and ended with a small illusion. A number of his illusions involved him and an assistant wearing costumes and mysteriously changing places. He even worked this with a spectator from the audience.



The Hindoo's greatest illusion

Brush semi-retired in 1933 but continued working schools, churches, and clubs. His trademark was his upside-down mustache. In later life he explained how difficult it had been to train the hairs of his mustache to defy gravity with the ends pointing skyward. It did give him a devilish appearance.

As he got older he designed what he called "ten suitcase shows" that could be easily picked up and performed, each one different. He also got around the laws restricting performances on Sunday by creating a series of religious lectures that he illustrated with magic. He died March 14, 1967, one week before his ninety-fourth birthday. ❖



AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTED TO ASSEMBLY 77 MEMBERS BY ERIC DECAMPS

On November 10, 2014, prior to the evening's outstanding lecture by Garrett Thomas, four members of Assembly 77 (The Long Island Mystics) were presented with North Atlantic Region Awards of Excellence for their many years of selfless dedication to the S.A.M. and the Long Island Community. Awards were presented to:

Past Assembly President John Lepre in grateful appreciation of his twenty-five years of outstanding dedication and service to The Society of American Magicians, S.A.M. Assembly 77, and the Long Island Community.

Past Assembly President Pat Darienzo in grateful appreciation of his twenty years of outstanding dedication and service to The Society of American Magicians, S.A.M. Assembly 77, and his commemoration of the legacy of John Henry Anderson, "The Wizard of the North."



From left: Dr. Mitchell Goodkin, John Lepre, RVP Eric DeCamps, William Gleason, and Pat Darienzo.
Photo credit: Harry Mandel

Assembly member William Gleason in grateful appreciation of his twenty-two years of exceptional commitment and service to The Society of American Magicians, S.A.M. Assembly 77, and for founding the distinguished S.A.M. Heroism and Patriot Award.

Standing Assembly President Dr. Mitchell Goodkin in grateful appreciation of his nineteen years of service to The Society of American Magicians, S.A.M. Assembly 77, the Long Island Magic Community, and for his continued work in creating the new standard for S.A.M. Officer Insignias.

Congratulations to these remarkable members who so faithfully represent the S.A.M. mission statement and spirit.

FIFTEENTH WORLD DEAF MAGICIANS FESTIVAL IN CHICAGO BY DR. SIMON CARMEL

The fifteenth biennial World Deaf Magicians Festival took place in Schaumburg, Illinois, near Chicago, from Sunday, October 26 to Saturday, November 1, 2014, with the participation of thirty-eight foreign deaf magicians from ten countries (England, Cyprus, France, Germany, India, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Russia, and USA). Matthew Morgan was the Festival organizer, with volunteers from the Chicagoland Deaf Seniors and the Chicago Club of the Deaf.



Deaf Magicians Festival poster



Deaf magicians festival winners

Norwegian deaf historian Jon Brauti offered a PowerPoint presentation on the life histories of three popular Norwegian deaf magicians (1925-1974); Bill Cook (hearing) gave a workshop on coins and cards; Simon Carmel gave his "dollar store magic" workshop and also showed a PowerPoint presentation on the "history of magic"; John Sturk (hearing) demonstrated how to make colorful paper coils, and explained the rising card and other card tricks; and lastly, Duane Laflin (hearing) gave his marvelous lecture on silks, ropes, and predictions. In particular, Laflin made available copies of his new DVD, *Visually Pleasing Magic*, with the open captions for deaf magicians.

On Wednesday morning, October 29, four magicians

from India, England, USA, and France volunteered to give their magic acts at a school auditorium to eighty-nine young deaf and hearing students from four different public schools from the elementary school to the high school levels. Later, a group of magicians and foreign tourists visited Chicago's Willis (Sears) Tower, North America's tallest building. The next day a group of magicians were cordially invited to tour around the Fun, Inc. magic factory and were profoundly awed by the presence of a thousand different magic tricks and props lying on the beehive-like shelves in the stock rooms.

At the Congress meeting, Simon Carmel retired as secretary-general of the Society of World Deaf Magicians, after having served the international deaf magicians for twenty-four years. John "Fanastica" Gapp (England) retired as president after his twelve years of service. Both of them were voted as the honorary presidents of the Society. Matthew Morgan was elected as a new president for 2014-2016, with new board members from France, Germany, India, Lithuania, and Russia. An important proposal at the meeting was raised to create a future Young Deaf Magicians International Festival in order to encourage deaf youngsters with their parents to attend two- or three-day magic workshop sessions and amateur performances. Regardless of the winning places, trophies and magic gifts are to be awarded to all youngsters who participate in the festival. For this reason, it was a big concern about the presence of the declining number of adult deaf magicians in the near future. The Society wishes to attract more young conjurers to get involved with the Society of World Deaf Magicians and the biennial international Festival.

After participating in the competitions in four evenings at a high school theater and once at the Laugh Out Loud Comedy Club for micro-magic competition only, the Festival winners are: 2014 Grand Prix: Liliana Morgan (USA); Stage Magic: 1. Jayson Serripierri (France), 2. Franz Paulus (Germany), 3. Preeth Pavithran (India); Women in Magic: 1. Lisa Paulus (Germany), 2. Sheetal Kimmatkar (India); Comedy Magic: 1. John Gapp (England), 2. Maxim Sheinin & Sergey Klepeis (Russia), 3. Preeth Pavithran (India); Micro-Magic: 1. Franz Paulus (Germany), 2. Preeth Pavithran (India), and 3. Nikolai Chaushian (Russia); and Merlin Magic: 1. Morton Feldman (USA), 2. Horst Bormann (Germany), and 3. John Gapp (England).

After the trophy ceremony, the Society of World Deaf Magicians presented the highest outstanding awards to three magicians – Elena Kim and Anatoly Nemirovchenko of Ukraine, and Morton Feldman of the United States of America – in recognition of their long-time achievements as "Extraordinary Deaf Magicians" in their respective countries. Simon Carmel was surprised by an

award given in grateful appreciation of his twenty-four years of outstanding dedication and service as a secretary-general of the Society of World Deaf Magicians. In addition, President Vladimir Rudnev (hearing) of the Association of Russian Magicians and the Moscow Magic Club attended as a visiting guest. It was his fourth time to attend the World Deaf Magicians Festival; he has always enjoyed socializing with deaf magicians. He presented the highest award diploma to Simon Carmel as an honorary member of the Association of Russian Magicians for his hard work with international deaf magicians and his contribution into the development and popularization of the magic arts among deaf magicians.

Matthew Morgan, organizer, received gifts of appreciation from foreign deaf magicians and leaders for his hard work to achieve a week-long international festival program, along with his volunteers from the Chicago area.

The next World Deaf Magicians Festival will take place in Panevezys, Lithuania, in September 2016.

THE S.A.M. HEROISM AND PATRIOT AWARD ADMITTED INTO THE NATIONAL SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM'S PERMANENT COLLECTION

On October 9, 2014, The Society of American Magicians Heroism and Patriot Award, dedicated to the memory of magician John Eichler, who was lost at the World Trade Center attack, was admitted into the permanent collection of the September 11 Museum.



Amy Weinstein of the 9/11 Memorial Museum accepts the donated items from Lt. William Gleason.

Lt. William Gleason, Chairman of the Heroism and Patriot Committee, presented two copies of the award, showing both the front and reverse side. Lt. Gleason's headlamp, which was used on September 11, 2001, and two of Lt. Gleason's challenge coins were also added to the permanent collection. —Eric DeCamps ❖



THE HIGH ROAD

SCRIPT WRITING, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, AND ACT CONSTRUCTION FOR THE MODERN CONJUROR

BY MICK AYRES

At the risk of stating the obvious, a conjurer's task is to create unpredictable, surprising moments for our guests. The key word here is "unpredictable." The entertainment value of an effect is diminished greatly when the finale can be anticipated by the audience. We need a "surprise" moment in our effects that delivers the baffled look that motivates us to perform in the first place. Though this sounds all too obvious, it is a theatrical dynamic often ignored by magicians.

We forget that what entertains a magician is usually far different from what will entertain the general public. Since magicians have a strong appreciation for the technical work that goes into a sleight-of-hand presentation, we will often choose effects based on that premise alone. That is why some tricks – though technically brilliant – fall flat in performance. If the method is more impressive than the effect, walk away.

Magicians must be aware of the audience's assumptions. Every time a magician holds up a rope and scissors, the crowd understands the rope will be cut and then restored. Once a signed dollar bill vanishes, the audience knows exactly what's coming as soon as they see the lemon. The list goes on: the chosen card will be found; a rabbit will appear in the hat; the guy in handcuffs will escape. There are exceptions, of course, particularly within the children's market.

Some effects are successful because they exploit those assumptions: the Sliding Die Box and Run, Rabbit, Run come to mind.

Within our industry, any magician who takes the guests well beyond their assumptions is one who stands out from the rest. For example, when Giovanni Livera assembles an empty pizza box, no one is too surprised when a pepperoni pizza

is found inside later; but no one sees it coming when Giovanni honors a request for anchovies by removing a large, brimming goldfish bowl from that same box. When Johnny "Ace" Palmer presents the Cups and Balls, the appearance of a live baby chick under each cup is a warm and fuzzy surprise, which is greatly amplified when Johnny stands up and is suddenly holding the chick's parents. Perhaps it should be mentioned that both of these examples are done in intimate, close-up settings?

For a long time, sleight-of-hand artists made coins jump from hand to hand. Magicians then brought the coins to the table and "matrixed" them into one corner. However, both plots ignore the audience's assumption that after the second coin jumps, the element of surprise is the only thing disappearing. Eventually, someone twisted the plot and made the coins reset to their original positions, thus giving the audience that unexpected surprise they deserve.

To jump-start your own efforts to go beyond the realm of anticipation, here is a playing card drama you may find useful.

SOUVENIR

A selected card hops from one place to another, each time going a little faster and farther. For a finale, the entire deck goes through a bizarre and unbelievable transformation. To the guest's delight, instead of transforming the deck back to normal, you present it as a memorable gift.

Get your hands on one of those 52-on-1 novelty cards. Most magicians have one or two of these cards lying around in their junk box. However, if you are going to use it as a frequent giveaway, you will soon learn the expense of these cards can quickly add up. Purchasing a full deck of them in quantity will reduce the individual cost.

Once you have one of these special

cards in hand, you're going to make it even more special – but it will only take a few seconds. First, use a set of nail clippers to trim the card in the upper right and lower left corners. These corner-shorts will help later. Next, use a sharp blade to gently trim around the tiny Four of Diamonds on the 52-on-1 card. Be careful to only slice into the thin upper paper layer of the card. Use the point of the blade to lift away this thin rectangle. Discard it. The Four of Diamonds is now missing from the card. Put this card on the bottom of the deck. Now locate the actual Four of Diamonds from the deck and put it on the bottom, too. You are ready to perform.

To begin, force the Four of Diamonds on a guest. I prefer to use the Classic Force, but the Hindu Shuffle Force or the Cross-Cut Force will do just as well – just get the Four of Diamonds into the guest's hand. Say, *"Go ahead and show me the card. It's okay; I've seen this trick before."* You may have the guest sign the card if you wish. (Having the card signed will necessitate having a stock of Four of Diamonds available for replacement purposes.)

Say, *"Here's what I propose: I want to give you an experience you'll never forget, but you get to choose. Using your card, I can perform the fastest trick in the world or the weirdest trick in the world – or I can do both. Please choose."* There isn't a guest in the world who will not choose "both." Say, *"Both? Both it is! Just put your card back here in the deck."*

Perform a Bluff Pass with two cards. That is, with your right hand, grip the top of the deck from above and lift the top two cards straight up. These two cards should be held with your right fingers extended over the front edge of the packet. Immediately extend your left hand with the deck. From the guest's point of view, it will look as if you cut the deck in half. Ask him to put the Four of Diamonds on top of this bottom portion. As soon as he does, replace the two cards smartly on top of

the Four. Done with an air of nonchalance, the guest will believe his card is buried in the middle of the deck. In truth, it is three cards from the top.

Spread through the deck and slightly in-jog the third card as you do. Say, *"Your card is buried somewhere among all these cards."* Close the spread and get a break below the jogged card as you square the deck. Say, *"Call your card, please. Just name it out loud."* Stare back at the deck in your left hand and start to gently wiggle the pack. The guest will suspect the wiggling has something to do with the method. Freeze when he says, "Four of Diamonds."

Smile and say, *"Very good. Look."* Take advantage of the break and perform a triple turnover, revealing the Four of Diamonds on top of the deck. Turn the three-card packet face down and deal off the top card into your right hand. Gesture with this card (taking care not to expose the face) and say, *"That wasn't bad, but, to tell the truth, it wasn't all that fast. I'll do it again. This time just say 'Go' whenever you're ready."*

Insert the card into the center of the deck and hold your left hand still. When the guest says "Go," perform a double-turnover to show the Four of Diamonds again on top. Say, *"See? It's getting used to the sound of your voice. That was a little faster – and this time there was no deck wiggling going on."* Turn the card(s) back over and deal the top card face down onto the table.

Say, *"I'll speed it up a little more this time. Say 'Go' whenever you're ready."* Hold the deck from above with your right hand and begin dribbling the cards on top of the tabled card. Drop all the remaining cards onto the pile as soon as you hear the word 'Go' from the guest. Immediately snap over the top card, showing the Four of Diamonds on top of the tabled pile. Give your guest a bemused look and then turn his card face down and drop it on the pile.

Say, *"You gotta admit: that's pretty darn quick. Sure, it looks fast, but if you think about it your card is only moving this far."* Illustrate the distance by holding your thumb and index finger a quarter-inch apart. *"I can move it farther and still be pretty quick."* Slide the Four off the pile so it lies face down on the table. Pick up the deck into your left hand.

Look at the guest and then look at the tabled card. Say, *"At this point, it would be a good idea to make sure that card really is the Four of Diamonds."* While he is busy picking up the card to confirm this, run your right thumb up the back corner of the deck until you feel the corner-short drop. Cut the deck at this point and offer the lower half to the guest. Ask him to place his card on top. He will put the Four on top of the gaffed card.

Reassemble the deck by placing the other half on top of his card while holding a break between the two portions. Pause and say, *"This time I'm not only going for speed but a little bit of distance, too."* Separate the halves at the break and overhand shuffle the top half onto the face of the bottom half. (This is known as the Mahatma Shuffle. See Roberto Giobbi's *Confidences*, page 93.) After the shuffle is completed, the Four will be on top of the deck followed by the special card.

Look up at the guest and palm off the top card into your right hand. Say, *"Please say 'Go' whenever you wish."* As soon as you hear the word 'Go,' dip your right hand into your pocket and withdraw the palmed card. Drop the card face down on the table and say, *"Speed and distance – not too bad. You better make sure that's your card again."*

As your guest takes another peek, get a discreet break below the top card of the deck in preparation for the Vernon/Marlo Depth Illusion. Insert the Four of Diamonds into the back of the deck just below the top card. The break causes the top card to angle up at the back of the deck. From the guest's point of view it looks as if you are inserting his card near the middle of the deck. It is the perfect illusion. As you square the deck, push down a bit on the Four as it slides home; this will give you a break below the top card of the deck.

Say, *"I'll do it again – right to the pocket."* The guest will assume the Four is going to jump into the same pocket as before. It will help if you glance at your right pants pocket. However, as the guest follows your eyes to the right side of your body, your right hand grips the deck from above and holds the top card stationary while your left hand cops the entire deck down and away. Make sure your right fingers are extended over the leading edge

of the single card to add to the illusion that the deck is still there. Your left hand now goes into your pant pocket, slides the Four off the top of the deck and brings out that card. Say, *"Sorry – wrong pocket – but the same idea."* Hand the Four of Diamonds to the guest.

At this point, the guest has no clue how his card has jumped from the middle of the deck to the top and then from one pocket to the other. Also, he believes your right hand is holding the deck. Say, *"Would you agree that I have delivered on my 'fastest card trick' promise? Good. Then it is time for the weirdest trick in the world. Watch carefully."*

Hold your left hand palm up in front of you. Say, *"You get to take these cards home with you as a souvenir. They are all yours now. But first, I'll make them easier to carry."* With your right hand, mime placing the deck into your left palm. Pause and allow your palms to come together as if squeezing the deck flat. Grunt a little; its good theatre.

Lift your right hand straight up so the guest can see the single card resting on your left palm. Smile broadly and say, *"See? Weird! All fifty-two cards squeezed into one itty-bitty living space!"* Show your guest the face of the card. After a beat, stare hard at the card and then slap your forehead, *"Oh no! I forgot one of the cards. You're still holding the Four of Diamonds."* Point to the empty space where the Four is missing from the gaffed card.

Shrug your shoulders and wrap it all up by saying, *"Sorry, I goofed; I hope it was still weird enough for you. Uh...here's the box."* Push the empty card case toward the guest and walk away.

You are left with a loose, incomplete deck in your pocket, but this is nothing that a rubber band won't fix. Enjoy the moment and think about that souvenir you just created. Your guest will never forget you or what he witnessed. ❖

Souvenir copyright 1994 by Mick Ayres. Mick is a conjurer, tunesmith, and taleswapper. He welcomes opinions and dialogue. He can be reached at mick@mickayreswares.com.



WORKING IN THE REAL WORLD

Do you really want to be a professional magician?

Every magician, when he or she was young, dreamed of performing in an opulent theater on a big stage, standing in front of plush, red velvet curtains before an enthusiastic audience. The tinted lights whirl around the stage, highlighting the magical miracles. Enchanting, rhythmic music seduces the crowd as the magician gracefully maneuvers on nimble feet between the dazzling illusions. After the show, throngs of admirers crowd around the table in the lobby, eager for an autograph from the necromancer. Newspapers, radio, and television trumpet the magician's name. It is a fabulous fantasy.

As we get older, some of us begin to think about making that leap from amateur magician to full-time professional. We ponder the possibility of making a living performing our passion to a willing, enthusiastic audience. The problem occurs when the only frame of reference we have for becoming a professional entertainer is those precious few minutes when we see the magician on stage. There is a great deal more happening during the other twenty-three hours of the day that is not so glamorous.

Let's start by talking about the travel involved. Most professional magicians will travel a great deal. One year, Katalina and I calculated how much time we spent at home; it came out to eighty-five days. We slept in our own bed less than three months that year. At first, this might seem exciting. However, after a few years of it, you become extremely road weary.

Lumpy mattresses, marshmallow-shaped pillows, and noisy neighbors can make for some sleepless and painful nights in even the best hotels. You could easily be living out of a suitcase for half your life. Did you remember to take everything from home that you will need: toothbrush, cell phone, and your travel computer? Did

you remember to grab everything out of your hotel room before getting on the next plane: toothbrush, cell phone, and your travel computer?

Katalina and I have twenty phone-charger cables, external cell phone batteries, and computer cables. Why? When you are in a constant state of traveling, you will misplace them, lose them, and forget them. This is not just an irritating problem; these small expenses add up. We have also lost, forgotten, or had stolen, wallets, credit cards, props, and clothing items.

Travel can be stressful. Weight restrictions on your luggage, the number of bags you can bring, and the dreaded TSA inspections can play havoc on packing a show for travel. There is always the possibility that your bags will not arrive with you at your destination. There is also the challenge of packing your performing clothes so that they will come out looking fresh and ready for your show. You better know how to use an iron.

Of course, when you travel a great deal, you will be subjected to many people in tight spaces. Colds, flu, and other sicknesses can easily be transmitted. One thing I dread is sitting next to someone on the plane who looks like a prime candidate for Ebola. The flight is full and every seat is taken. Your thighs touch your seat mate's during this four-hour flight and all he does is cough and sneeze the entire time. Good luck avoiding that virus.

Let us not forget that there are no sick days in this job. You don't get to call in sick because you have a runny nose. The show must go on or you don't get paid. While we are on the subject of sickness, it should be pointed out that there is no health care in this job. There are no medical benefits and no dental benefits. You will either have to pay for your own or do without.

Your medical needs, the size of your family, and where you live will determine the cost of your medical insurance. I have friends whose costs range from \$1,800 a month for a family of five to \$400 for a single performer. How much of a deductible do you want to have? What kinds of medical emergencies do you want to be covered? All of this must be considered when choosing medical insurance. Even prescriptions can quickly add up in the medical costs column of your ledger.

Most of your shows will occur in

the evenings, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. This will affect family time. When will you see your family? Not during the day, because the kids are in school. You will be gone most weekend nights. You will also have quite a bit of travel time. You will miss your child's football games, recitals, and other school functions. There won't be a lot of time to take your spouse out to dinner. An entertainment career can create massive stress on relationships.

As a professional magician, you are now a business. You will need to educate yourself on how to run a business, including your business entity designation, federal identification number, performance insurance, expense tracking, quarterly self-employment taxes, and business banking procedures. What happens if you don't understand these things? Well, if you're late on your quarterly filings, you will pay a nice monetary penalty. You need to be knowledgeable in Microsoft Excel or QuickBooks and/or be willing to pay an accountant to handle this. You will also, occasionally, use the services of an attorney.

There is no withholding on the money you receive as a performer. You are considered an independent contractor and as such it is your responsibility to put money aside for taxes. A safe estimate is 30%. This type of business works under the principles of feast and famine. One month you might be swimming in money and the next two could be rather sparse. There is no set schedule to get paid and no set hours. You must have the discipline to budget your income. You have to manage your own retirement plan and set money aside for this as well.

Gigs don't magically appear; you have to earn them through sales and marketing. You will have to create and print promotional material. You will need to design, manage, and market your website. Business cards, photographs, a promo video, poster, fliers, and a letterhead will all have to be considered.

A good photographer can run you \$500 a session. Do you want studio shots or action shots? A good video with the right venue and the right audience is critical. You have to decide how professional you want the video to be. Will it be a friend using his iPhone camera or a multi-camera

WORKING IN THE REAL WORLD BY CHRISTIAN PAINTER

shoot you paid a professional videographer to do. Marketing costs can easily run into thousands of dollars.

Who is going to sell you? Will you sell yourself? Do you know anything about sales? Who will negotiate contracts for you? Do you have a well-written contract? This might not matter for the Elks club, but for the Ford Motor Company you will want to look professional. Do you have a technical rider for your show? Who will contact the venue to verify the logistics of the event to include sound, stage, and green room? There are a lot of elements to landing a show and getting the paycheck.

Let's look at the breakdown of the paycheck for a local show. You get a call from an agent. The show pays \$1,200. The agent keeps \$200 for commission. That is \$1,000 to you. But, don't forget federal, state, local, and self-employment tax. That will be thirty percent. You now have \$700. Did you have any travel costs? Since it's a local gig, the main expense is just some gasoline. However, did you consider the total cost of your automobile and factor that into your expenses? You will need transportation to perform your job. Let's make that a \$20 expense when you factor in the price of the vehicle, gasoline, oil changes, and maintenance. This brings our income to \$680.

However, there are a few more expenses to consider. You will have performer's insurance, bookkeeping expenses, business licenses, a business PayPal account or credit card, and other office expenses like paper and printer ink. Let's call it thirty dollars per show. That brings our income for this show to \$650.

Don't forget medical insurance. If we calculate that expense at a low four hundred dollars a month, and you perform eight shows a month, that would come to fifty dollars a show in medical insurance expenses. Your income is now \$600.

What about your marketing costs? Your agent probably had some printed promotional material to send to the client. Maybe the agent sent the client to your website. Websites cost money to create and maintain. Do you have a separate "Agent Friendly" website? If so, that costs more money. Did you have a promotional video made or promotional photographs taken? Marketing is what sells your show, and this expense is ongoing. How much do you spend on your marketing budget per year?

If you spend only five thousand dollars a year (and that is not very much) on marketing and divide that up among one hundred shows, that will come to fifty dollars a show. That brings your net

income from this show down to \$550. We started with \$1200. This can be a big wakeup call for many aspiring professional entertainers.

Katalina and I have been in many beautiful venues where we were treated like stars and were taken care of from the minute we arrived at that location. People were there to greet us and to help us load in the props. There was a state-of-the-art sound system, beautiful lighting, and a tray of fresh fruit, sandwiches, coffee, and sodas waiting us in the green room. Ahh – that is the life. These are great moments. However, only twenty percent of your gigs will be like that. Let me give you some examples to illustrate the performing challenges you will face.

Example One – Weather Woes: You arrive at your show with multiple ATA cases in tow. The temperature is a muscle-numbing ten degrees with a thick coat of slushy snow covering the ground. The loading ramp doesn't match the height of your vehicle, so you have to drag your show across the parking lot into a side entrance. Every time the wind whips across the parking lot, you can feel a part of your soul freeze and break into a million pieces.

The lighting and electrical cables are frozen into the shape they were packed. It takes an hour for them to thaw before they can be used. You dragged in snow and wet slush as you brought everything in, so you have to constantly wipe down your cases, equipment, and props to keep them from getting damaged by the moisture.

Example Two – The Vexed Venue: Well before the date of your performance you sent out your show rider explaining the needs of your show. You asked for a lavalier microphone and a twelve by

eighteen foot stage. When you get to the venue, you see your stage in the corner of the room. There is one sixty-watt light bulb barely illuminating the area. You can, however, make out that there is also a four-person band on the stage.

You seek out the person who hired you and explain you need the entire stage; you are told that the band won't be playing when you are performing. Their instruments will still be there, but they won't be. That this is an issue for you comes as a complete surprise.

Your enjoyment is intensified when you are given a handheld, wired microphone. The organizer smiles and says, "We couldn't get everything you needed. I hope that's not a problem." Before you can answer, he is pulled away by some other pressing event issue.

Example Three – Musical Chairs: You arrive at the venue, where the chairs are to be set up theater style. The first row starts a full twelve feet from the edge of the stage. The people who set up the chairs did not allow for a center aisle. You spend a half hour explaining to the organizer that you will need a center aisle and that the rows need to start closer to the stage.

The organizer replies that the crew who set up the chairs has already left. This forces you to spend an extra two hours moving chairs yourself to enhance the theatrical experience. You could elect to do nothing and have the show play flat, but you would like to be hired back.

I'd like to say that these examples are rare exceptions, but unfortunately they happen more often than you would think. This is just a glimpse of what life is like in the real world of entertaining. ❖



INFORMED OPINION - LATEST PRODUCT REVIEWS

COMPILED AND EDITED BY W.S. DUNCAN

THE MAGIC GRAVEYARD BOOK BY AL THE ONLY

Available from: www.abbottmagic.com

Price \$25.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



“Alas, poor Magician! I knew him, Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy.” Like Hamlet and Horatio, Al the Only has dug up memories of performers we knew in his book, *The Magic Graveyard*. These are not, however, sad tales of tragedies, but rather interesting life stories of performers who chose to be buried near their magician friends. Harry Blackstone is interred at Lakeside Cemetery in Colon, Michigan, where he spent many of his summers between tours. His wife, Inez, and his son, Harry

Blackstone Jr., are buried there as well. And so is his grandson, Harry Blackstone III, who was killed in a freak accident at the age of twenty-five.

These and a plethora of other stories of magicians, famous and not-so-famous, are wonderfully recounted in *The Magic Graveyard*. Al's premise was to explore (through stories and information, facts and fiction) the many magicians whose last resting place is in the city known as the Magic Capital of the World. This book recounts his efforts at unearthing (please pardon that grave pun) some tales about the performers who are buried at Lakeside.

This is not an advanced autobiography of each spiritual tenant, just a light, yet reverential, recounting of the people many of us has counted as friends. Duke Stern, Hank Moorehouse, Monk Watson, Don Alan, Karrell Fox, and Bob Lund are a few. There are about thirty more, including spouses. For each person buried in Colon, Al has given a brief history and recounted some of the magical ties to Abbott's or Colon, and to other magicians. The book is lovingly written by a man who has personally conducted graveyard tours as a part of the Abbott's Get-Togethers. His empathy for the performers shows respect and admiration, not only of the individuals, but for our chosen field and the strange idiosyncrasies it carries. And therein lies the rub.

Most of the subjects of the book, as well as the author and most of the resources, are connected through the Get-Together. These are all people who went to Colon every August to make, meet, and revisit friends. In some ways, it is a tribute to the attendees of that annual convention. So if you've never been to Abbott's and do not know the people who became collectively famous, then the stories and anecdotes may not spark either nostalgia, or interest, as intended. But there is still a lot here to pique your attention and spark your curiosity. And it is a far easier read than, say, twenty-five full-length books, each a biography of one of the notables.

I thoroughly enjoyed discovering that Blackstone bought discarded posters of other magicians and then toured under that man's name to avoid having to pay for new posters with his own name. Or that “some” of Karrell Fox is buried in Duke Stern's

grave. Or that Greg Bordner had to petition the Colon City Council so that magicians who were not residents of Colon could be buried in the cemetery. The stories are intriguing, fun, and informative, though short. The author attempts to keep the book from becoming morbid, some of his lightness even taking a turn towards silly. For example, among the opening pages is a “Dedication.” It is well-written and thoroughly researched. What makes it worth your time is the combination of dates and facts coupled with insider anecdotes, stories, gossip, and tales. These are remembrances not about Yorick, but about magic, the profession, and its people. The book is available at many magic outlets, but I suggest you buy it from Abbott's. It seems only right that you should send your money to Colon.

793.8: WHERE IS THE MAGIC PAPERBACK OR PDF DOWNLOAD BY JEFF STONE

Available from: www.StoneColdMagic.com

Price \$39.95

REVIEW BY PAYNE



The title of this book will mean little to those who grew up in the digital age. For those of you who learned their magic from DVDs, digital downloads, and YouTube videos, the number 793.8 probably has little meaning. Yet for most of us over forty, or even perhaps thirty-five years of age, the number 793.8 holds a special place in our hearts. It is the Dewey Decimal delineation for books on magic and conjuring; it was stuck on the shelf in the library whose contents many an aspiring baby-boomer magician knew by heart and frequently checked out. 793.8

was the starting point for many a magician. So it is only fitting that Jeff Stone uses it as the title of his most recent book on magic.

793.8 is a book aimed squarely at the up-and-coming mentalist or presenter of mental magic. While it contains a fair share of tricks and routines among its pages, its central focus is to present the author's performance philosophy, which he expounds on in a series of essays liberally disseminated throughout its nearly 270 pages.

Yes, it's a book devoted to performance philosophy. But don't let this keep you from adding this volume to your magic library. Stone's thoughts on performing mentalism and finding that magic moment in one's presentations are well worth reading and mulling over. Though the beginning and intermediate mind reader will benefit the most from this tome, there is enough thought-provoking material to keep the seasoned performer's interest as well. And though the material in the book is squarely aimed at the mental or psychic entertainer, there is much information that can be applied to the other branches of the magical arts as well. Plus, anyone putting a show together for next year's summer reading program will find a great routine involving superheroes. It has lots of audience participation and great potential for bits of business and audience interaction that will fit perfectly into the

superhero theme many libraries have chosen for their upcoming programs. So as you can see, even though this book is aimed at the mentalism market there is something for everyone to be found between its pages.

AHEAD OF THE GAME TWO-DVD SET By JONATHAN LEVIT

Available from: www.jonathanlevit.com

Price \$40 for the two-DVD set: \$50 for the digital version
(playable on all devices)

REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT



California-based actor and magician Jonathan Levit has a solid, half-hour close-up act that he has honed to razor sharpness by a myriad of performances at the Magic Castle, on cruise ships, and at private parties and corporate events. On this two-disc set he tips nearly every secret

about his “baby,” and much more.

I was reminded of the education one receives by watching Max Howard and Diane Bray’s character-driven play with magic, *The War Wizard*. Jonathan’s act is filled to the brim with treasures about the performance of magic. There is insight to be gained by studying the structure of the routines, the way the audience is treated, and the way everyone (magicians included) is entertained while having the crap fooled out of them.

More magicians need to think this way.

The first disc contains two complete performances of about thirty minutes each. Is there any value in seeing the same routine all over again for a different audience? In this case, yes! Subtle changes in the performance play to the reactions of the audience. Jonathan creates his character from the very beginning. Most of the comedy he aims at himself, not the audience. He uses a lot of byplay, and reacts with great humor to individuals in the audience. In order to do this, Jonathan must know the material and his routine backwards and forwards. The expression “able to do it blindfolded” comes to mind. I only mean that metaphorically, of course.

Most of the movies one buys on DVD these days can be viewed with commentary by the producer, director, and actors in the film. On *Ahead of the Game* the viewer can see both performances with Jonathan’s commentary in the background. This is useful; I can’t understand why I haven’t seen others use this idea on a magic video until now.

There are also two interviews with Jonathan on the set. The first disc has an interview with the producer Anthony Asimov, concerning the whole concept of being “ahead of the game” in building and performing this act. There are also valuable insights into Jonathan’s acting background and his life story. The second disc contains a longer, in-depth interview by magician Suzanne, and includes all the psychology, methodology, and everything. This shows the thinking and philosophy, the heart and the brain, of the act.

Counting the voice-over commentary, there are about five hours of content to devour. It is an outrageous bargain for the price. The material is almost all classic plots with cards, but with clever twists. As examples, we have color-changing cards (“everything changes”), cards divined or revealed in flabbergastingly

(is that a word?) fun ways, the disappearance of all the faces of the cards, and a wonderful coin matrix to end.

With two exceptions, every trick is explained in detail. You get a chance to see a real-time performance of C-4, an amazing color-changing card case, and Un-Matrix, a wonderful coin routine with a very surprising finish. These two items are not explained, but are available for purchase separately on Levit’s website.

Both of us had consecutive close-up performances on the same cruise ship earlier this year, and I had a chance to have a short chat with Mr. Levit. We share a love of many things in addition to magic. He really shows the value of theatre and acting skills in the performance of his craft, and a more personable fellow you are not likely to meet. And don’t let his comedic and acting abilities overshadow the fact that he’s got some excellent technical chops.

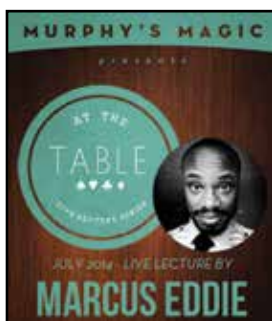
Check out his website; you may find that you have seen Jonathan on TV as a character actor or a TV host. *Ahead of the Game* is an act worthy of study, for many reasons. Highly recommended.

AT THE TABLE WITH MARCUS EDDIE DOWNLOADABLE VIDEO

Available from: www.murphysmagic.com

Price \$25.00

REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS



Marcus Eddie is a creator of several marketed effects as well as an award-winning magician. In this video lecture download, Marcus shares many of his ideas using a variety of common items. Marcus’s persona is that of a very likeable and fun guy and his creations fit his personality.

This two-hour lecture was recorded in a studio setting with a live audience. The first effect taught is a complete routine using a quarter and breath-strips. This is followed with an eyeglass effect in which a lens is removed and magically restored. The routines look very impromptu but will require a simple set-up. Both routines are very solid.

The last routine taught in the first segment is an effect using a borrowed ring and a simple key tag. The ring links and unlinks several times. This routine uses some of the same principles taught in the effect with the breath-strips.

Next up is magic with money. Marcus teaches and performs a nice jumbo coin routine, a borrowed bill penetration effect, and a classic version of a bill traveling up a “ladder” of rubber bands that are stretched between his hands. The jumbo coin routine does have some angle issues, but at the right angles it looks great. The bill penetration is okay as a quick effect, though I did not find it that strong; the rubber band and bill routine is direct and visually stunning. A color-changing rubber band is also covered as a quick interlude.

Marcus moves on to cards by producing a deck from an empty box and then performs a full deck Oil and Water routine followed by a torn and restored card. The last thing covered is a three-phase prediction using Post-it Note type pads. The opening effect is not taught because it is a separate item that is for sale. The Oil and Water routine is easy to do and looks very good. The torn and restored card is a nice piece as well. The three-phase prediction is

okay, but the “works” may inspire more ideas.

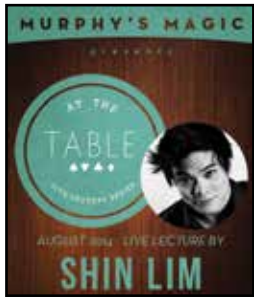
Priced at just \$25, this is a very good buy. The rubber band routine is worth the price of the entire download. If you are a close-up worker, there is some really good material here. All the routines are practical and fairly easy to perform.

AT THE TABLE WITH SHIN LIM DOWNLOADABLE VIDEO

Available from: www.murphymagic.com

Price \$29.95

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



Well, I guess we have to face facts. The lecture industry has begun its decline and products like this will be one of the causes. I am not saying this as a complaint; it is just the reality of the world, which has gotten a lot smaller with new technologies. Why go to a lecture when you can just sit in the comfort of your home and watch it? And, if you want a snack, need to go to the bathroom, or just don't have enough

time to watch the whole thing tonight, no problem. You can watch it over and over again. Are there downsides? You bet. Unless you are tuning in live, you don't get to ask questions and you don't get to listen to someone else ask the question you were too embarrassed to ask.

This is a small quibble, though. I think the concept of online lectures is actually pretty great. I also believe that watching someone do an online lecture may actually make you want to see that performer if they come to your town to lecture. I just did one recently for another company and the experience was great for me as a performer, because I did not have the time constraints I normally have when lecturing at a club or at a convention.

The first online lecture I'm reviewing is by Shin Lim. Despite issues I've had with a number of his commercial releases, I really liked this lecture. I think this is an excellent venue for his work and the time allotted for the lecture made him tighten up his normal rambling style. He began with his most recent competition act, *52 Shades of Red*, which he has recently released (in its entirety) on DVD. During the lecture he chose only certain portions to discuss in the explanation section. These included his work on flap cards, from both a construction and handling point of view.

Shin has some really good handlings of this tool. He also discusses the use of black art in close-up. I believe he has improved the handling of these tools since I last saw him, using a different type of material than he had previously used. He went on to show a number of vanish techniques, some good, some just fair. My primary complaint is that a number of them are just too direct, leading a viewer to the only possible solution, thereby exposing the method. By this exposure, much of the mystery and impact of the remainder of the act is destroyed. He finished this section with his use of magnets and cards, discussing both construction and handlings. Again, he has some fine card vanishes using these gimmicks.

The next segment of the lecture continued with a signed card appearing in a TicTac box. This was the highlight of the whole download. It has a similarity to David Regal's Clarity Box, but with a different method. I guess that the Card in Clear Box is the new ACAAN – there are two other versions on the market recently by others. Shin's version is excellent. He then demonstrates the

vanish and reproduction of a single coin under a card. This is more of a tool to be used for a Matrix-type routine, employing a magnetic card and coin.

Moving on, he discusses his inspirations and demonstrates some flourishing. A quick four-Ace production is shown, which segues into a change of four Aces to four Kings and back again. He used the Aces for a Twisting routine with the cards in a spread condition. This is similar in concept to Hollingworth's Waving the Aces, but with a different handling. This routine is challenging, but very magical looking. A visual card control is shown, along with a variety of snap changes and variations on them.

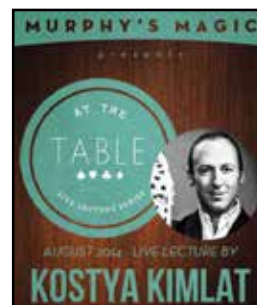
He finishes up the session with a performance-only presentation of his original competition act, a discussion of the use of music in magic, and finally, his handling for the Mercury Card Fold, which he uses for Card in Mouth. All in all, a very fast-moving two hours of visual card magic. You certainly get your money's worth of magic in this download. It is a good first taste of this young artist and many of you will want more. I recommend this download.

AT THE TABLE WITH KOSTYA KIMLAT DOWNLOADABLE VIDEO

Available from: www.murphymagic.com

Price \$24.95

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



This is a most unusual product. It is a download of an online magic lecture that contains no tricks. Okay, technically there are two tricks, but they are meaningless in the context of everything else here. Although there are few magic tricks to be learned, I feel every magician should watch this several times. Why several times? Because there is so much here to learn and digest that you will likely find something you missed the last time you watched it. The presenter is Kostya Kimlat, who, despite his young age, is a very experienced performer and businessman. He has already done more magic business than most of us have done in a lifetime.

This video is far different than any magic lecture you have experienced. It is a motivational speech, a mini-marketing course, a discussion of how to conduct yourself in the world of magic and the world of business, and a great pep talk for magic in general.

Kostya presents his material in a well-planned and cogent manner, aided by PowerPoint slides where appropriate and video enhancement. He begins with an overview of the types of magic he deals with and the company he created. He speaks of his goals and the need to raise the level of magic for the benefit of all, as well as stressing the need for personal and professional growth and development. Kostya then outlines a number of strategies and practical advice for close-up and strolling performers. These include being aware of and acknowledging the audience's reactions to your work, as well as effective scripting to establish you and your performance. At this point, he teaches his effect Warning, an excellent icebreaker with a lighter.

Kostya then continues with a discussion of audience management in strolling situations, emphasizing the need to do some quick magic to establish yourself early. Other subjects discussed in this section include getting the DJ and servers to work with you for the benefit of all, and a very detailed analysis on how to

have successful TV appearances. He also talks about investment in your magic and the use of professionals in a variety of fields to enhance your marketing.

Next, he turns to the subject of restaurant magic. There are discussions of the benefits to your overall marketing that restaurant work provides. There are discussions of analyzing your audience; after all, each table is a new audience. There is a plethora of invaluable information and ideas presented, including the use of cheat sheets for your material, the need to have reliable back-up, the use of a case, and other topics. Then Kostya gets to the real meat, which is the business end of things, including setting fees, the use of business cards, using mailing lists, and maintaining professionalism. Further, he talks about using a marketing package to sell your services, selling points aimed at detailing the benefits of your services to restaurant owners, learning about the restaurant industry and how that will help you determine who to sell to, how valuable your work can be to them, and the need to understand that you are in the business of customer service.

The final segment of the lecture is about stand-up magic. Kostya discusses ideas to build and implement a stand-up show, emphasizing that there is a different set of skills required, as compared to close-up magic. These include the need to use lights and audio, how to routine emotionally, writing scripts, and preparing your checklists. He also made it clear that doing stand-up magic will help you grow your business, and that you should always do close-up before your stand-up shows as a warm-up, as well as establishing yourself with your audience. He then performed a lovely jumbo card piece called Who Killed the King, which has a wonderful script, as an example of turning a close-up trick into a full stage effect. Kostya finished out the session by emphasizing the need to create emotional experiences.

Kostya is a wonderful example of how someone with a true passion for magic can transform that into a terrific business and make a good living from it. He is putting his experience and knowledge out there for you to use. Now, it is up to you to implement it and create your own business. The information shared in this lecture is worth far more than the small amount asked for it. Even if you don't use any of the information (and you would be foolish not to) Kostya's successes to date should be an inspiration to all of us. On my first viewing of this lecture I took three pages of notes. I am ready to watch it again to glean more information. You need to watch this and more than once.

DREAM PREDICTION ELITE TRICK

By PAUL ROMHANY

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$99.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



Alan Shaxon's Confabulation plot has been visited by many performers, including notable versions by Ron Wilson, Cris Johnson, and Don Wayne. It is a clever plot idea and has found its way into the regular sets of many seasoned professional mentalists. In case you don't know the effect, a spectator gives you several separate bits of information related to one

event, and you show that you have predicted all of the information correctly. Usually the event is travel and the three pieces of information you get will be a destination city, an amount of money

spent, and the name of a person to accompany the traveler.

Paul Romhany's Dream Prediction has been marketed as a stage trick for several years and is in the repertoire of many working pros. Dream Prediction Elite is his new product, a close-up version of this plot that comes with everything you need except a few common office supplies. The handsome and classy leather notepad holds a regular pad of note paper and a pen. You also use a window envelope as an open prediction. This is placed face up on the table; spectators can see a slip of paper inside before you begin asking for information. You write their three bits of information on the page in the notepad and set it in front of them. Then you slide the other paper out of the windowed envelope and compare the information that was previously written there. Both sets of information match, right down to the last detail.

The notepad looks like a fine leather wallet, and holds the pad of paper, a pen, and the prediction envelope. It is completely ungimmicked, but using it helps you to cover some work that you need to do. The envelope is gimmicked; although you only use one, you get ten, enough to change or add additional routines and still keep you in business for the rest of your performing life. The envelope, developed by Mark Parker, is the crux of the routine and allows you to show a prediction paper before you begin asking questions, yet still hand out that paper for the final revelation. It is clever, functional, and very easy to use. Although it cannot be handed out for examination, in the routine that activity would never even be considered.

I was very impressed by the clear and simple handling instructions on the video, as well as the personal attention Paul paid to my own circumstances. The DVD in the package I got did not work on my computer and Paul immediately responded with a secure link so that I could watch the instructions online.

There is a very effective Confabulation-style routine shown and explained, but the props are open-ended enough to allow you to use them for any number of alternate routines. You could predict the winning numbers on a lottery card, a series of playing cards freely selected by several people, or random trivia facts about your spectator's personal lives. Basically, you openly write several things on a notepad and then you show a second paper on which you had previously written those exact same things. There is very little reset, so you could table-hop with this all night long, or at least until you run out of pages on the blank notepad. I was impressed with the ease of handling and the high quality of the leather wallet and envelopes. This is well worth the cost to anyone who works close-up, because you not only get a great routine, you get classy props that appear very innocent, and you get to openly predict several freely-named items at every presentation. And those facts, the ones the spectators just randomly came up with, are written in your handwriting on a paper that you leave with the spectators. I'm lovin' it.

UPGRADE DVD AND GIMMICK

By DANNY WEISER

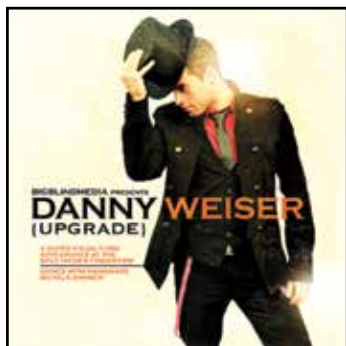
Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$27.00

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA

Upgrade is a very clever idea with several fine applications. I was unfamiliar with the creator, Danny Weiser, which is odd, because he is from Philadelphia (home of the 2015 S.A.M. convention). In any case, Mr. Weiser now makes Baltimore his home.

This is a really fine first effort, produced by the crew at Big Blind Media. The video and audio are superb, and BBM-regular



Liam Montier is on hand to help lead the discussions. A card is selected, signed, and replaced in the deck. Two other cards are removed from the deck and held slightly spread in a fan. The spectator is asked to hold the corner of one card, while the magician holds a corner of the other. The magician pulls his card away causing the card held by the spectator to visibly change into the signed

selection. This is a great magical-looking change that actually happens in the spectator's own hand.

One simple gaff enables you to accomplish this startling effect. The gaff is reminiscent of some of Mark Mason's effects, but with a very different-looking result that occurs under seemingly impossible conditions. On the DVD you will first discover the very detailed instructions on how you can make your own additional gimmicks. There are a few variations taught, but all of the gimmicks can be made with materials easily found at a fabric store and an office supply store, as well as a few common card gaffs you probably have laying around your magic room. Weiser also discusses care of the gimmick.

The next section begins by teaching the basic handling of the effect. Other uses for the gimmick and variants on it are also discussed. These include an Ambitious Card phase (I really didn't care for this), a version in which the cards are trapped under your foot and one disappears, a face-down gimmick that can be used for a sandwich effect, and Card Through Table. The highlight for me was a great handling of David Solomon's Fingerprint Trick. The Upgrade gimmick turns it into an amazing visual card routine.

The DVD finishes with a brief interview with Weiser. He seems like a very pleasant young man. If this product is any indication of his body of work to date, he has a great future in this field. I highly recommend this.

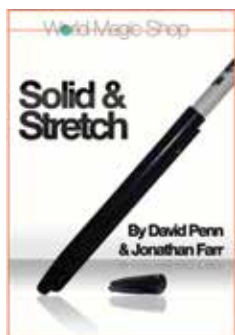
SOLID & STRETCH TRICK

By DAVID PENN & JONATHAN FARR

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price: \$39.95

REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSELL



Along with the instructional DVD, you receive two special caps to use with a regular, black Sharpie marker. One is a stretched cap (six inches long) and the other is a regulation-size cap that is solid; that is, you can't put it on a Sharpie. These are used as sort of sub plots in any routine that requires the spectator to sign a card or other object with a Sharpie. In the basic use, the cap is apparently removed from the pen and placed on the table. The spectator signs the card but when he tries to recap the pen, he can't. The magician

then switches the solid cap for a regular cap, recaps the pen, and continues with the routine, with the spectator wondering what just happened. Obviously, thought must be given to the presentation so that the event enhances the regular routine, rather than detracts from it. A couple of methods for this are presented.

A nice twist on this is when the magician looks at the solid cap, shakes it a bit, and out of it (apparently) falls a real eight-ball. The switch is made during the surprise and the pen is then recapped. The production is fully explained.

The long cap simply gives you a different interlude effect when the spectator signs the card. The magician takes the cap from one hand to the other and then apparently stretches the regulation cap to three times its normal size. This long cap is then placed on the Sharpie, which is put away. This is very startling.

A couple of handlings on the long cap are included, along with some nice sleeving and flip-stick techniques, which can be used to produce or vanish the long cap. Also covered are ways to change the long Sharpie cap back into the regular cap, although one might question the value of changing the long cap back again; that is, it might be best to end with the impossible cap rather than the regular cap.

David Penn, our host and instructor, concludes the DVD by performing his preferred Solid & Stretch routine, which includes using both the solid and the stretch gimmick and the eight-ball production. By the way, he leaves the long cap in place at the conclusion of the routine, which technically means the routine requires some minor resetting.

The question remains, does a routine within a routine play well? Does it enhance or detract from the magical experience? Maybe that's the bonus. In addition to a clever, fun, and magical interlude, you have something to kick around with your magic friends. That's how magic improves.

You receive the DVD and the two gimmicked caps. The regulation Sharpie and eight-ball are not provided. This is good magic!

C4 PROP AND DVD

By JONATHAN LEVIT

Available from: www.jonathanlevit.com

Price \$45.00

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



When you receive this package, your first thought is most likely going to be, "This is a classy product." And you would be right. The outside wrapper and custom case with magnetic flap are opened to reveal three small,

glossy cards. Two of them promote Jonathan's new DVD set (more about this in a moment) and another of his products at a discount price for buyers of this product. The third card tells you how to access all of the contents of the DVD as a download so you can watch them on your favorite mobile device for free. Nice touch. There is a block of foam that contains the special card case and beneath that are some card seals (if you wish to use them; the DVD discusses this), and the instructional DVD.

So what is this thing and what does it do? It is a perfect adjunct to any Color Changing Deck routine. The deck is cleanly removed from the case, which is then tabled. The routine is performed and then the case is picked up from the table. With a wave of the hand, the case instantly changes color. You then hand the case to one of your spectators; it can be fully examined – it is a regular card case. The gimmick is a very clever idea that has been expertly manufactured by Uday Jadugar. This is not a self-working prop. You need to be able to palm what is essentially a card, and then you need to ditch the gimmick. Have no fear. Both of these moves are well covered by misdirection and are well within the capability

ties of most of you. There are two alternatives for the ditch; one for those who work in more formal performing conditions behind a table, and one for the strolling performer. You receive the “extra something” required to ditch the gaff properly.

The DVD is superb; well filmed, with great audio. You get to see Levit perform his full Color Changing Deck routine, using this gaff as the blow off, at the Magic Castle. You get to see the incredible reaction from the audience. You get to experience what makes Levit such a wonderful performer. But you don’t get an explanation of the routine. I think it would have been a nice touch to include it, but I kind of understand why. It appears on his new DVD set, *Ahead of the Game*, a review of which appears on page 59 (alas by another reviewer, but for my two cents this is a great set!). However, this effect can be used with your favorite color changing deck routine.

This is an excellent effect, with beautifully made props. Levit teaches you what you need to perform it properly. He has thoughtfully provided everything you need to learn and perform it immediately, even including the regular card case. You just need to put in the work to do it the justice it deserves. Highly recommended.

COIN THRU NOSE TRICK By TYLER SUTTER

Available from: www.themagicestate.com

Price \$35.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



The good news: Magic Estate’s Coin Thru Nose is one of the most thorough and complete explanations I’ve ever seen on a one-trick DVD. The photography, editing, and sound are professional caliber, and

the trick is nicely performed, clearly taught, and thoroughly examined. We are given succinct and valuable tips on handling. It is the quality of product that I always expect, but seldom get.

Now the bad news: you probably won’t like the trick. Yes, it is exactly what the title says. You put a marked quarter into your mouth, swallow it, regurgitate it, and then pull it out through your nose. One look at the cover photo on the package tells the entire story. It’s a geek trick. If you are prone to grossing out your audience with stunts like lifting a cement block with your tongue, pulling a Lifesaver on a string through your neck, or laying on a bed of nails while getting whacked with a sledgehammer, then this is your bailiwick.

Tyler Sutter conceived the routine, and has had it in his stage repertoire for years. Some of those real-world performances were filmed for this DVD. Sutter’s Coin Thru Nose routine is definitely a stage act, because the performer needs to be standing and to handle large surgical forceps. As you can imagine, in most of the live shots, the spectator on stage reacts with some combination of fascination and revulsion. Lonnie Lyerla presents a second routine involving a spectator-signed dime, which he places into his eye socket and then extracts from his nostril. He ably teaches how to ring in a signed coin, vanish it to a retrievable location, and produce the desired effect of having it appear to drop out of his nose. That is to say, the effect is desired by the performer, not necessarily by the spectator.

In both cases, the overall effects have been routinized to have a non-magical impact. That is, although you are actually perform-

ing a magic trick, the spectators are convinced that you actually do what you say you are doing: moving a coin through various orifices using your facial, throat, and stomach muscles. If you want to put this kind of geek routine into your show, then this product is a good place to start. But it’s not for everyone. Maybe you should decide whether the audiences you work for want to see something revolting or not.

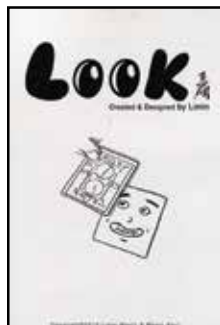
I won’t be performing this, not even practicing it, so I cannot say for sure how easy it is, but Sutter’s clear explanations and the exacting camera work certainly make it look doable. The entire set of videos lasts nearly two hours, so everything is covered and re-covered to the nth degree. To their credit, the team has made it abundantly clear that this is geek magic, and there are many inherent dangers. Warnings abound about not swallowing the coin, not getting it lodged in your nasal cavity, and about keeping your props and utensils sanitary. Despite those, I am certain some seventeen-year-old magic newbie is going to buy this and end up in an emergency room somewhere. Use it at your own risk. Or maybe, don’t.

LOOK TRICK By LIMIN

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



If you have a few extra bucks, have nothing better to do, and want to amuse yourself or a friend for a few minutes, you can get Look by Limin. Look is a quickie card revelation that plays smoothly and should entertain your spectators in a light and fun manner. What you actually get in the package is a packet of ten, blank, write-on/wipe-off cards, twenty plastic, stick-on googly eyes, and a card gimmick (mine is a blue-backed Bicycle card). You must provide your own Sharpie and a deck

of matching cards.

The routine is simple. You stick the two eyes on the blank card and finish drawing (or have a spectator draw) a face. Setting this interactive mini-project aside, you have a spectator choose a card, sign it, and lose it in the pack. Then you remove cards from the top of the pack one by one and pass them over the playing card with the drawing of the face. At some point, the googly eyes will move, following the card you are moving above it. It appears as if the drawn face is looking at that card. You turn the card over to show that it is the spectator’s signed selection. You can put away the deck, or ditch the gaff and go into other routines with it. The spectator can keep the googly-eyed face card as a souvenir, or you can take it back, wipe off the face (if you use an erasable marker instead of a Sharpie), and use it at your next performance.

The quick instruction card is clear enough, and a resource for additional online video instructions is included. Oddly, those are filmed entirely in Mandarin without English or any other language translation. The video is decently filmed, but a translated version would have been most helpful.

Look is fairly straightforward magic. There is no elaborate or awkward handling, just a card selection, a card control, and a little additional easy manipulation. What you are buying here is the “cute” factor of allowing the spectator to draw a face and have it watch for their card. It’s a fun little presentation that would work

very well for table-hopping in a family restaurant. Give a child the pen and have her draw a face, animate the face to find Dad's card, and then leave the face card as a souvenir for the kids. After you ditch the gaff, the eyes on the face will not move whether near a playing card or not.

The idea that a spectator can draw the face makes this nicely interactive, but the actual magic effect is not particularly strong. I found it a bit hard to recognize the eye movement. You have to pass a playing card across and above the face of the drawing, and in so doing you partially obstruct the face. The eyes move under cover of the passing card. In other words, the eyes are looking right when you begin to cover them, and then are looking left after you uncover them. So the spectator does not actually see the movement, just the results. Another downside is that you only get ten blank cards and sets of eyes, so if you give one away at each show, you have to continually buy more. The instructions claim that Magic Soul Products offers refills, but I could find no mention of those on their website, which is in Mandarin, and tricky to navigate. This might mean you have to buy the entire trick again if you want to perform it more than ten times. At \$2 per performance, it isn't bad for a special event, but you might not want to put this in your continuous table-hopping repertoire.

BILL-FLASH REVERSE DVD WITH PROPS

By MICKAEL CHATELAIN

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$39.95

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



Here is another one-trick DVD from the very creative Mickael Chatelain.

This one comes with some gimmicks that you will use to create the final gimmick required to perform the effect. The DVD details a number of routines that you can do with the gimmicks you will create. The DVD also details the process of creating and repairing the gimmicks. This section is very clear and the process requires only a minimum of arts-and-crafts skill and time.

The main gimmick allows you to show a playing card in a very open manner on both sides. The card has been pre-folded. You fold it into quarters and hold it at the fingertips. The card is shaken and it visibly changes to a bill. The bill is opened and is clearly shown on both sides. This gimmick can be used in tandem with a second gimmick that allows you to show a folded bill that is placed under a wallet on the table. When the wallet is lifted, the bill has transformed into a folded card. The disc goes on to explain a number of variations with each of these gimmicks.

The production values of the video are average, but certainly as clear as is needed to learn the material. If you are a fan of Chatelain's body of work, you are no doubt familiar with these techniques. The primary transformation is very visual, but the showing of the card at the beginning looks a little cozy. Considering that you get the required gimmicks along with the DVD, this is reasonable value for the money. Although this really isn't my taste and doesn't fit my working style, I am sure that many of you will appreciate it. You will have to determine for yourself if it is something you can really use. Check it out on his website, www.gimmickmagic.com, to see it in action.

COLLISION PROPS WITH DVD

By TOM WRIGHT

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$95.00

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



Here is the basic effect: A fork is shown and replaced in your back pocket. A card is selected and folded into quarters. The folded card is placed into a plastic bag filled with many folded cards. All of these cards are divided among

several spectators. You remove the fork and ask all of the spectators to throw their cards at you on the count of three. They do so and you stab a folded card out of the air. It is impaled on the tines of the fork. When it is removed, it is seen to be the selection. Now everyone has to clean up the mess.

Okay, not a bad effect, but for what type of environment? You certainly would not do this in a strolling environment. It is too small for the average stand-up show. It might work in a parlor show, perhaps.

There are many variations taught. One involves identifying the chosen card by first tearing off a corner. Not great, but better than no identification at all. There is a way to do it with a signed card, but that card does not end up impaled on the tines, it is woven between them – not as satisfying a conclusion. The same effect can be achieved with a signed business card – not so thrilling either. These versions, using this condition for the climax, have been published by others before.

The method borrows heavily from John Kennedy's Mid-Air Card Stab, likely released before Tom Wright was born. He does credit Kennedy, as well as others. The DVD is basic but pretty well done. You can certainly learn everything you need to perform any of the versions of the effect. The change from pocket knife to a fork seems a bit nonsensical. I don't feel a fork is as compelling as a knife. The gimmick is well made and about as simple as you can get. In fact, if you watch the online video, you will probably guess exactly how it works. Will your audience be able to do the same? I don't know, but this is certainly not an effect I would ever contemplate using. My dissatisfaction is compounded by the high price. \$95 for a couple of forks and a DVD is not my idea of good value. Not recommended.

COOTIE CATCHER MAGIC DVD

By JASON MICHAELS

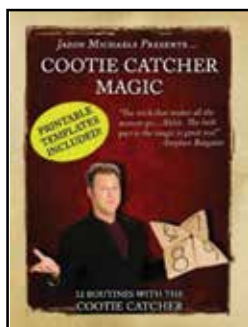
Available from: www.JasonMichaelsMagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$25.00

REVIEW BY PAYNE

Don't be misled by the title of this DVD. Cooties are not involved in any of the routines detailed on this recording. In fact, technically speaking, the device that Mr. Michaels employs in all of the routines he presents is not actually a cootie catcher. It is a fortune teller – sometimes also referred to as a chatterbox, salt cellar, whirlybird, flap-dapper or bumbledumpling. It is a bit of simple origami that young children manipulate on the thumbs and first fingers of both hands in a pre-pubescent pursuit to predict their playmates' possible portends.



Mr. Michaels has taken this classic prognosticating plaything and applied it to a series of routines and presentations with a magical bent. These range from playing card revelations to a gospel routine. All of the routines are well within the grasp of even the novice performer, and are a good way to establish character with one's audience. None of them are major mysteries or deep magic. But they are all fun, unique, and offbeat. The creative conjurer will

find them a springboard to other possibilities and presentations, because the paper fortune teller easily lends itself to multiple themes and makeovers. I am already mulling over a presentation based on the device being constructed from the page of an ancient grimoire or perhaps the *Necronomicon*.

Eight routines are outlined in great detail on the DVD and three more complete with detailed scripts are provided in the PDF ebook included on the disc. This file also comes with printable templates for the fortune tellers required for the included routines. The only thing you need to add is a Himber wallet and some form of double-ended envelope for the predictions that are made in some of the routines.

This would be a great little trick for walk-around; it folds flat, resets quickly, and uses an item that sparks curiosity. So it's a good conversation starter; plus you could give it away at the end of the presentation as a memento of your performance. It's also not limited to close-up or strolling work; the DVD starts out with Mr. Michaels presenting a routine using a stage-size version of the prop. So, if you're looking for a versatile and offbeat effect, Jason Michaels's Cootie Catcher is worth a look.

THE VERNON COMPANION BOOK By MICHAEL A. PEROVICH

Available from: www.hermeticpress.com
Price \$65

REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



This is a book of anecdotes about Dai Vernon's magic, life, and times at the Magic Castle, told by someone who had the good fortune to sit with the Professor several nights a week, every week, for many years. That alone is enough to sell this book to the small but constant audience of lovers of all things Vernon. Considering that there will only be six hundred copies of this book printed, I should consider my job done right here. But it turns out that there are quite a few items in

this book that a more general audience will find valuable, and I feel I should share them. If these sound like teasers to get you to buy the book, I apologize.

In addition to stories that will be familiar to fans of the Vernon mythos, the author shares personal stories that few others could possibly know. Mr. Perovich is one of the magic-crazed enthusiasts who migrated to Southern California to be near the Professor and the Magic Castle (1969 to approximately 1980). He was frequently in Dai Vernon's company, and for many years spent at least three nights a week at the Castle. This book is about this relationship with that time and place, and with people you'll recognize, among them Tony Giorgio, Bruce Cervon, Larry

Jennings, Michael Skinner, and of course, Dai Vernon. This is not the essential biography of Vernon, but a companion piece to such books, as the title promises. To those who have read the essential biographies, this book adds texture and shading to the picture.

For those more interested in crafting a show than in the lives of famous showmen, there is advice from the Professor, both in word and deed, on how one constructs an act for the public. Mr. Perovich has recorded the effects he saw Vernon perform in his sets in the Magic Castle Close-up Room over the years, and the set list, and the order of the effects, is very interesting. For instance, Mr. Vernon customarily opened with the Cups and Balls, an effect that most performers save for their closer. If you're wondering how the Professor closed a set after opening with the big guns, that information is in the book. Also interesting are the tricks Vernon chose to perform in between. This reviewer was surprised to learn that Penetration of Thought, one of the effects from *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic* that's seldom performed, was often included. Along with the set lists, Mr. Perovich shares show-building advice from the Professor, such as the thought that once you've finished with a prop, say, a deck of cards, you shouldn't go back to it. That's something I've never heard before, and it has me thinking about my own shows. Similarly, I was surprised to hear which handling of the perennial Cards Across Vernon thought was the best. (Hint: It was created by a female performer; that should narrow it down.) And, at some point in *Ricky Jay and His Fifty Two Assistants*, reference is made to a Professor Erasmus of Rotterdam. If you were as perplexed by that reference as I was, I believe the explanation is in this book, and it had its beginning with Dai Vernon.

During his many years performing on cruise ships, Vernon also created several acts for what we would call platform or stand-up shows, and Mr. Perovich lists the tricks that Vernon chose for those situations. For someone who thought that Vernon's stage performances were mainly the Harlequin Act, this was a second surprise. That feeling continued with the discussion of Vernon's interesting relationship with Paul Rosini, and Vernon's recounting of J. Warren Keane's act.

Of course, I can only touch on a few personal highlights here. There are a great many stories, from the Professor himself and from his friends, including Max Maven, Brad Berlin, John Carney, Bruce Cervon, Larry Jennings, Martin Lewis, Michael Close, Roy Walton, Gary Plants, and David Roth. Mostly these relate to Vernon as a man, a mentor, and a raconteur. For those of you who know even less than I do about the Professor's life and career, Mr. Perovich includes an extensive Appendix describing where Vernon was, and what he was doing, decade by decade. In another Appendix, he sets the scene for our story by describing the creation and development of the Magic Castle. And there are two others, all both enlightening and useful.

The Vernon Companion is a light, casual read that's over a bit too quickly. Mr. Perovich's writing style is colloquial and conversational, and as a result, he sometimes turns a clunky phrase. The most amusing is in his description of a memory peg system developed by Vernon and Al Baker composed entirely of pornographic words. Describing the list as being "worthy of the Merchant Marines," the author says, "I don't recall the details of the list, but I can assure you it was memorable." That paradoxical statement notwithstanding, this is an enlightening and enjoyable collection of recollections. Hopefully, there will still be a copy left by the time you read this. ❖

**If you wish to have your product reviewed, please send it to:
Bill Duncan, P.O. Box 50562 Bellevue, WA 98015-0562**

Working with the Card Now App



I have mentioned this app a few times in my column and realized that it is one of my top four “go-to” apps. My other three are **Magic Gig Slips**, **Professor Marvel’s Crystal Ball**, and **Magic Shuffle**. (Full disclosure: the first two were designed and created by me.)

When I do my Tech Talks at conventions and meetings, I always bring up **Card Now** and show different handlings for it. I have seen a few magicians fumble through the effect and cringe when I see that happen. It is such a great effect that I wanted to give you a few pointers on performing this app.

The Effect: When someone asks for a business card, take out your iDevice and tap on the **Card Now** app. The app prints out a card on your screen. It is loose inside your screen; you can move it around. To give the card to the spectator, simply flick it off the screen. It comes out of your phone and turns into a real card that you can hand out.

The app creates a beautiful illusion of the card being printed. When you flick the card off the screen, it disappears and the real card takes over. It’s a smooth, beautiful, visual illusion!

Because you’re a magician, you probably have assumed that the real card is hidden under your phone. It is. Simply rest the card in your palm and place the phone on top of it. Don’t worry about getting the card ready. You’ll have plenty of time. I always keep my business cards loose in my back pants pocket. When I am ready to perform the effect, as I am showing my phone, my other hand is grabbing a card. As I bring my “card hand” in front of me, the phone drops on top of it.

While the card is printing, pinch the card with your fingers to get ready to pull it out. You have a great distraction here, so take your time. The spectators are watching the card printing and are not paying attention to you.

Hand the card to the spectator and drop your phone on the table. Now immediately reach in your back pocket and grab another card, because they will want to see it again. Reset and do it again.

Instead of a business card, what are some other ideas? Massachusetts magician Dennis Pimental suggested a Card to Phone, in which a signed card comes out of the phone. Have a card selected and signed. The magician signs the back of the card. The card disappears from the deck. Open **Card Now** and “print” the card into your phone. They will see your signature on the back of the printed card. Pull the card out of the phone and turn it over to show the spectator’s signature.

Card Now is available in the iTunes App Store for free, or you can pay the \$3.99 or \$5.99 for pro versions with more options. What do *you* do with **Card Now**? Write to me and let me know. We’ll share it in the column.

Here are some other apps that are worth looking into.

Coin Scan

I describe Coin Scan as a cool trick with one gutsy step. You hold a few different coins in your hand; ask someone to take one of the coins and hide it in her hand. Your iPhone becomes a sort of metal detector; it tells you which coin was taken. This is from the creative mind of Carl Andrews. The visuals on this app are cool. Coin Scan is available in the iTunes App Store for \$0.99.

Levicam



Want to levitate in a photo? This app makes it easy. Take a photo without you in it. Now get in the photo and stand on something like a ladder or a box. The app helps you erase the ladder and then melts the two photos together to create a photo of you floating in space! This would be a great app to use at an

event or party; you can take photos of people levitating in front of you. Make the photo and then email it to the person. There are lots of possibilities here. Be sure to use a tripod to hold the camera still. **Levicam** is free with in-app purchases that add a timer and remove the watermark from the photo. **Levicam** is available in the iTunes App Store. Android users can find **Levitation Photography** in the Google Play Store; it is also free.

Magic Tattoo



Remember the old “rub ashes on the arm to reveal a message” trick? The **Magic Tattoo** app brings this effect into the twenty-first century. Explain that this app creates tattoos on your arm without pain, needles, or ink. Draw a picture on your iDevice screen. Hold the screen on your arm and watch the light peek

through the edges, which looks like a copy machine scanning. Show your arm with nothing on it and explain that it takes a while to be seen. Burn a napkin, take the ashes, and rub them on your arm. The tattoo is revealed, matching the drawing you make earlier.

There are different presentations for this effect. I’ve had fun doing a drawing of Mickey Mouse; it “creates the tattoo” on my arm, yelling “ouch” as if it was stabbing me. This is getting great responses and may move to my front screen real soon. Suggestion: The next time you are in a hotel, stock up on small soap bars! Magic Tattoo is available in the iTunes App Store for \$0.99.

Bruce is always on the lookout for computer magic, iPhone/iPad apps, Android apps, and tech toys that can be used in magic applications. If you have any suggestions for future columns, write to him (SAMtalkBruce@cox.net).

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POP QUIZ

Magic is a big part of my life, but I have a rather strange day job. I pay the bills working a job that requires I carry a phone 24/7/365. I *must* answer it when it rings. The call doesn't get to go to voicemail. I have to pick it up.

The other day the phone rang; I did not recognize the number. I used my normal line: "SCA Promotions, Norman speaking. How can I help you?" I did not catch the guy's name, but it became clear what the call was about. I did not have a customer with a problem; I had a sales person. He was pitching and I didn't even know I was up to bat. I got his name and then I asked for the name of his company. Den of Thieves. I had to ask if that meant that truth in advertising was true. He laughed and said no. After about fifteen minutes, the call was over.

The guy followed up with an email and a second phone call. I was then told that he wanted to stop the project he was working on and fly to Dallas to give me a personal pitch. I still had a problem with the name Den of Thieves. Could you really do business or take someone seriously whose company was named Den of Thieves? I assure you that I am not a soft sell, but Jared was very persistent in a non-pest way. I broke down after the fifth phone call and seventh email.

I still had a picture in my mind based on Den of Thieves. The picture was not a nice picture, but that changed when the meeting started. Jared was one of the nicest people I have ever met. He did everything that he said he would do and then some. When the dinner check came, he grabbed it. I could tell that he really wanted to know what our thoughts about the project were, and if Den of Thieves could be in the mix, that would be even better. You could also tell that he loves his job and has a great passion for his work. I was glad that the name didn't stop me from meeting him.

The way things worked out, he didn't get our business, but he was a very close second. The big lesson here is never judge a book by its cover. I have thought about this a great deal. The second lesson is that I will never forget that company name. A person could never forget that name. The thing that Jared and his company have learned is that if you have a name that is potentially off-putting, you need to quickly prove that the name has nothing to do with how you do business. (In case you are wondering, Den of Thieves was the production company on a show you may have seen last year – *American Idol*. I had no idea.)

I received this email from Jared: "Hey Norman – Thanks again for the opportunity to meet with you about being your partner on this project. Everyone here is disappointed we are not working together, but we wish you all the best of luck with the project. Again, thanks for your time. I really enjoyed meeting you and wish you guys nothing but the best." That is class, plain and simple. He didn't get the job, but if things don't work out with the company we chose, he will get the job. If I get the chance to send him work, I will.

The lesson here is that the sales call is not over when the customer says no.

I have room for a couple of quick jokes. The first is a riddle. How are men and parking spaces alike? All the good ones are taken. Here's the second one: "I went on a diet and four ice cream parlors went broke because of it." See you next time. ❖

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Card Magic
Clown Magic
Thumb Tip
Coin



FREQUENT FLIER

"I" before "E" except after "C" – That's just weird

About me: I know I love Michael Close. I'm forever assuming (as a sort of hobby thing) that I love Jon Racherbaumer. I must love magic. I'm writing for *M-U-M*. Again.

About you: While the idea was always that the "magic" would be happening between "you" and "them," how wonderful is it that so much of it seems to happen between "you" and "you?"

Let's be honest (sp?): *No one* loves magic the way magicians love magic. I mean it's not music; bar flies who request "Stardust" from the piano player are unlikely to ask for "Three-Fly" from the roaming finger-flinger, nor order an "Oil and Water" from the mixologist.

I'm betting you're following. Stay with me.

Airports are like vacuum cleaners; they take and release, acting as assistant to our need and desire for dispatch and renewal. Plus they suck.

Even at the best of times, life at Gate B23 is the wrong end of the cow. Add in a cancellation, and you're committed to a job my church frankly disallows. I'm ready to share this time-served situation with any sucker – a casting call that, by the way, includes you. So...

Calling Jon Racherbaumer is a crapshoot. You're either going to get the Magic Muskrat who makes it all feel worthwhile, or you'll end up with the "Guess Who Died Today?" basic-cable host – the sexy Jody Arias or the one who dressed down for sentencing. My iPhone lucks out; I get the cute one.

In apparent anticipation of my current misery, Jon's all jazzed up about Stewart James's Miraskill, an effect published in *The Jinx*

back in the '30s, which I recall the way I recall the names of my children, Eric and Lyle. Jon reminds me of the principle:

Give them a shuffled deck, and have them pull off cards from the top in pairs. Any pairs that are different in color go into a pile. All black pairs go into another pile, the same with red pairs. You will find that the black pile and the red pile are of equal size in every case.

I have a little trouble accepting all that. Is this some marvel of math that is eluding my reasoning? I hang up on Jon (recommended), hustle over to the one empty table that offers no recharging option, bring out my ever-ready Bicycle Leagues, and try out the idea.

Shuffled deck. Mixed pair pile, black pair pile, red pair pile. First pass: fourteen in the red pile, fourteen in the black. Second pass: eight red, eight black. Really? I'm whipped. Then comes the "Aha."

There are magical methods as concealed as the palm of a fist. There are others as obvious as a monkey's nipple. (I've lived with several monkeys): Out of This World vs. The Vanishing Elephant. Plus, how is it so many of our inner dialogues begin with "WTF just happened?" and end with "OMG of course!"?

The pile of mixed pairs must contain an equal number of each color. Hence, the other two piles must also be equal. Duh.

So then, here's your Hollywood ending: Jon had, from a distance, once again, employing nothing more than his unwarranted memory and basso lilt, lifted me, if only for minutes, from the coal mine of O'Hare to that laboratory of mystery where the impossible is the expected and joy is the currency.

As I hand this deal over to Racherbaumer for its reason-to-be, I'll say one more time that marvel is a respite. A holiday and a delight, even, if not especially, for those who pretend to do the marveling. Hey, Jon. All yours.

ALMOST NO MIRASKILL REQUIRED

There is a fast-and-loose way to do Stewart James's Miraskill without touching the cards. In fact, if you or your mark has the "time" (not the kind that's D.O.A.), you can perform and predict the feat three times. Here's the "whoop" and the "do":

Ask the mark to shuffle his deck and then explain that he is going to play a game akin to

War, done with the colors red and black.

Ask him to hold the deck face up and to deal twenty-six cards face up into a pile. The other half of the deck is placed aside. Say, *"As you deal, note how randomly mixed the cards are..."* While he does the deed, you casually note the number of red cards dealt. Remember this key number. Suppose you count ten red cards. This means there are sixteen black cards in the pile. This also means that the other half has ten black cards and sixteen red cards. You're now armed and ready.

At this point you predict the color black will win the game by six. Have the mark shuffle the top half (the portion he counted) and tell him to deal the cards face up in pairs to determine the outcome. If both cards are red, ask him to place them to his left. If the pair consists of a red card and a black card, ask him to place them into a "discard" pile. If both cards are black, have him place the cards to his right.

In other words, the spectator eventually deals cards into three piles, the middle pile consisting of discards. At the end of the sorting process, have the spectator count the red and black cards and note the numerical difference. Your prediction is correct!

The working is elementary! Because there are more black cards in this portion, black will win. The math consists of subtracting the smaller number of red cards (ten) from the larger number of black cards (sixteen). $16 - 10 = 6$.

Have him pick up the other half. Because of the Miraskill principle, when the spectator eventually deals out thirteen pairs from this half, there will be six more black cards than red cards. In other words, the outcome is just the reverse of the outcome of the first phase. You predict by saying: *"This time I'm going to cause red win by the same number of cards!"*

Sure enough, at the end of the sorting process, there will be six more red cards than black cards.

If you want to do it a third time, you can combine all of the discarded cards. You can now predict a tie! This works because the number of red and black cards in this portion is equal. If you were a betting man, you'd say this is a "lock."

Onward.

"I couldn't fix your brakes, so I made your horn louder." – Your guy ❖

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