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Society of American Magicians,
6838 N. Alpine Dr.
Parker, CO 80134
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Subscription is through membership
in the Society and annual dues of \$65, of
which \$40 is for 12 issues of M-U-M.
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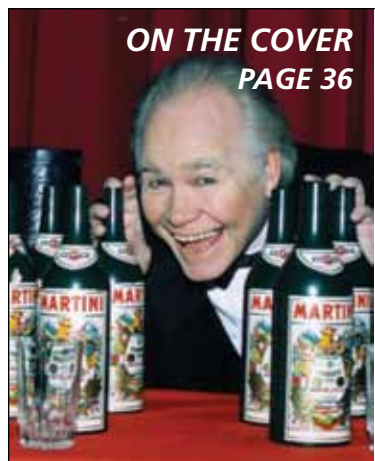
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Submissions for the magazine will **only** be
accepted by email or fax.

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Cover Photo by Scott Alexander



M-U-M (ISSN 00475300 USPS 323580) is published monthly for \$40 per year by The Society of American Magicians, 6838 N. Alpine Dr., Parker, CO 80134. Periodical postage paid at Parker, CO and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to M-U-M, c/o Manon Rodriguez, P.O. Box 505, Parker, CO 80134.



Editor's Desk

Michael Close

I am a big fan of contemporary physics and cosmology. I have read and studied the general public books of authors like Stephen Hawking, Brian Greene, and Lawrence Krauss. I don't mean that I have skimmed through the books by these learned gentlemen; I have read and reread them, trying to wrap my head around the concepts they introduce. And I'm gaining some headway. I'm beginning to understand the Big Bang, inflation, dark matter, dark energy, string theory, and the importance of finding the Higgs boson.

But no matter how many of these general public books I read, or how many of the wonderful science programs I watch on television, my knowledge of this subject would not cause any working physicist to worry about his or her job security. There is simply so much more to physics than the surface concepts explained in these books. If you doubt this, just open up a physics *textbook* and see how far you get through it. (The collected *Feynman Lectures on Physics* are fun, if you're brave.) I have been *exposed* to the concepts and ideas of contemporary physics, but in no way does this information diminish my respect and admiration for the people who devote their lives to science. Even a casual reader of these books (or viewer of the television shows) must realize that there is a lot more to physics than is presented in shows or books for the general public.

So what's the point of this little essay? I'll get to it in a moment (and I know that many of you are way ahead of me), but before I do, I want to define a term that I'll use in the rest of this article. The term is "gizmo." For our purposes, the "gizmo" is the one-sentence explanation of how a magic trick works; the kind of explanation that a lowlife masked magician or a kid on YouTube might divulge. "The coin is copper on one side and silver on the other." "The magician wears a plastic thumb." "There's a trapdoor in the stage." "The playing cards are marked." "The box has a secret compartment hidden by mirrors." For a generally disinterested layman, the one- or two-sentence explanation of the gizmo is all that's necessary to give the impression that the entire workings of the trick have been revealed. (If I want to expose the McDonald's Aces trick to a layman, I don't have to explain how I accomplish the switches, the laydown, or the various vanishes; all I need to do is show that three of the Aces are double-faced.)

Magicians get upset when someone indiscriminately exposes the various gizmos of magic tricks. I get upset, too, but not for the reason you might think. I'll explain why I get upset in a moment, but before I do, let's take a look at various types of magicians and how exposure affects them.

There are magicians whose only knowledge of magic consists of knowing the gizmo. In other words, the only difference between the magician and the spectator is that the magician got to the magic shop first. Such magicians aren't magicians at all; they are magic trick owners. Many neophytes start out this way, and there's nothing wrong with that, as long as their audiences

consist only of family and very close friends. Such magicians hate exposure because exposure makes a layman exactly as knowledgeable as they are.

Then there are the magicians whose presentations are such that the only message offered is that the magician is superior because *he* knows the gizmo and the spectator doesn't. Such magicians aren't magicians; they are jerks, and they are the reason that many people hate watching magic. Such magicians hate exposure because they can no longer use knowledge of the gizmo as the justification for their assumed superiority.

Then there are the magicians who are more advanced than the neophyte and who structure their presentations to avoid looking like jerks, but who are still knocked off their pegs when a trick in their repertoires is exposed. What can *they* do? What can *any of us* do? The answer is simple: we have to be better magicians. We must have a deeper knowledge of effects and methods. We have to know how to psychologically manipulate our spectators, to control what they observe and what they remember, to dispel possible methods, and especially to cancel the thought of any gizmos they may be aware of. And most important, we must offer content that goes beyond the mere presentation of puzzles – puzzles whose gizmos a spectator needs to deduce in order to be satisfied by the experience.

Sometimes you can get blindsided by an unexpected exposure. In 2000, the country was made aware of the existence of "hanging chads," which just happens to be a part of the method of a trick that I am well known for. What did I do? I retired the trick for several years. I have a large enough repertoire that I could do that. I missed performing the trick, but I was able to put it back in rotation after the knowledge of chads faded into the clutter of informational noise that normal people are bombarded with every day. I know that stage magicians suffer when the methods of certain illusions are indiscriminately exposed. But illusionists have always had a major challenge, that of transcending the "box." How do you justify the prop? How do you make it less of an object of intellectual interest? There's the challenge. After all, I'm not sure how much of a difference there is in a spectator thinking, "There must be something funny about that box," and that same spectator knowing *exactly* what the gizmo is. Either way, mystery disappears.

Why do I hate exposure? I hate it because it reinforces the stereotype that conjuring is simple and trivial; that if you know the gizmo, you have the right to call yourself a magician. Nothing could be further from the truth. Providing a disinterested, skeptical spectator with the experience of astonishment cloaked in an evocative presentation is one of the most difficult things I have ever tried to do. The information on how to achieve this is available, safely hidden away in books – books that must be read, absorbed, studied, reread, and internalized, just like a physics textbook.

If you're angry about exposure, fight back by being a living example of the fact that there is more to magic than the gizmo. Let your performances show that magic can be a deep, meaningful, and relevant art form. ☆

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President's Desk

Chris Bontjes

A NEW LOOK – A NEW BENEFIT

For nearly a year now, members of the national council have been working diligently on redesigning the S.A.M. website (www.magicsam.com). By the time this column is published, the new site should be up and running. What you see is the result of a great deal of work on the part of a great many people. The effort was led by our newest PNP, Vinny Grosso. Thanks, Vinny. It looks great!

We have done our best to work out all the bugs in the new site before the launch, but if you should happen to find an error or something that doesn't work correctly, please drop a line to the technology chairman, PNP Bruce Kalver, at SAMtalkBruce@cox.net so that we can work to correct the problem.

With the new site comes a new membership benefit – VIP (Video Instruction Program). The idea is to build a secure online magic learning center by and for S.A.M. compeers. Submissions may be made by any S.A.M. member. Details, rules, and instructions for submission are available on the website.

MAGIC WEEK

The objective of Magic Week (October 25-31) has always been the spirit of giving – the donating of our time and our talents to those who might otherwise never experience the wonder of a live performance of magic. In recent years, the focus has changed from a one-week blitz to a celebration of a year of charity and service, but a performance of this type *during* magic week is an excellent opportunity to get some media exposure for yourself and the S.A.M.

Now is the time to begin planning a Magic Week performance. Deciding on a performance date, time, and place at your August assembly meeting will allow you two months to line up performers, organize the show, and contact the news media before show time.

It is also important that you let us know what you are doing in honor of Magic Week so that we can share your accomplishments with compeers around the world. Reporting your activities couldn't be easier. Just send an email to Jeff Sikora (Chair of the Magic Week Committee) at jqmagic@cox.net. Please let us know what you are planning as soon as you decide, so that we can share your ideas with other compeers. Jeff would also love it if you would send him a second email when your performance is finished, including information like the names of the performers and some pictures from the show.

If your performance should happen to garner the attention of the media, let us know that, too. Send us a link to the story so that we can share your success and inspire your compeers. Be sure to mention the S.A.M. during your interview – it is a great way to *Get Involved* in letting the public know about the Society's goal of donating our time and service to those in need. It is also an opportunity to *Pass It On* by letting those interested in magic know that your assembly is there – ready and willing to accept new members.

ECHOES OF THE PAST

The following is an excerpt from "The Prez Sez," *M-U-M*, September 1971, written by National President J. Gary Bontjes:

"Each One Reach One – Increasing our membership is again our number one goal for the coming year. If each member would take just a few moments to obtain a single new member, we could double our membership in a very short period of time. This, in turn, would be beneficial to all in terms of things such as an enlarged monthly issue of *M-U-M*."

Increasing membership numbers continues to be an important yearly goal of the S.A.M. Two of the main objectives of our Society, as stated in our constitution, are to promote harmonious fellowship throughout the world among those sincerely interested in the art of magic, and to provide lectures and courses of instruction designed to elevate the art of magic. Increasing our membership will allow us to better accomplish both objectives.

Welcoming more compeers as S.A.M. members gives us the opportunity to build greater harmony among more magicians, to better promote the art of magic, and to provide more and better benefits of membership. It supports the work of the Society and underlines our Cabala –Unity among more Magicians will give us more Might. That might will, in turn, allow us to do more for our members.

With this in mind, I am joining Gary, and many other Past National Presidents, in asking each compeer to *Get Involved* in this goal by *Passing It On*.

Talk to people about your interest in magic. When you find someone who shares the interest, tell them about the S.A.M., invite them to an assembly meeting, and give them the opportunity to join the world's oldest magical organization.

We offer several membership options, including regular, paperless, military, household, youth, and life membership to fit a variety of needs and budgets, and membership in all forms carries many benefits.

MEMBERSHIP – A MATTER OF PRIDE

When you begin a discussion with a magic enthusiast about S.A.M. membership, you will certainly be asked about the benefits of joining. *M-U-M* magazine is a great starting point for answering this question, but it is only the beginning. When I served as RVP, I researched the benefits we offer and I learned that membership benefits were available that I did not know about. In sharing this information with compeers across the Midwest, I found that my list invariably contained at least one benefit that came as a surprise to those I spoke with.

I urge you to take a few moments to look over the benefits we currently offer our members. Chances are good you may learn something new. A list can be found on the S.A.M. website (www.magicsam.com). The list is filled with many important opportunities of great value to our members. It does, however, fail to list what I believe to be the greatest benefit of all – pride.

I am **proud** to be a member of world's first magical organization – **proud** to have my name added to a list of magicians that includes Houdini, Thurston, Kellar, Blackstone, King, Burton, Copperfield, and more than 47,000 others. I am **proud** to be involved in a group that promotes an art form I love and that is dedicated to fellowship among those who share that love. I am **proud** to support the S.A.M. and the advancement of the art of magic with my time, with my actions, and with my continued membership.

Recruit a new compeer. It's a great way to *Get Involved...and Pass It On!* ☆

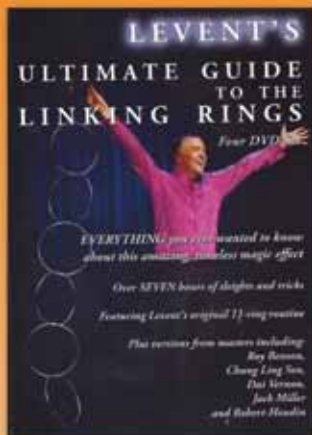
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Grendahl, Richard - Boynton, VA
Hagins, Ed - Surfside Beach, SC
Halbrook, Robert - Cloquet, MN
Hara, Hiroki - Wakayama, JAPAN JAPAN
Hardee, Ray - Gaston, SC
Hawkins, Mark - Fox River Grove, IL
Helal, Jad - Bellegarde Sur Valserine, FRANCE
Hernandez Herrera, Eduardo - MEXICO
Herrmann, Nicholas - El Cajon, CA
Higgins, Jeffrey - Indianapolis, IN
Hoag, Richard - Spreckles, CA
Hurley, Jerry - Magroom, UK
Johnson, David - Lehi, UT
Kanowsky, Gary - Sun Lakes, AZ
Kanter, Allen - Glendale, NY
Kearney, Paul W - Billerica, MA
Kinder, Jo Ann - Tipp City, OH
King, Matthew - San Diego, CA
Kirsipuu, Paul - Voluntown, CT
Kniffin, Trevor - Austin, TX
Lacey, John - Rochester, NY
Lauro, Gianpiero - Chieri, ITALY
Lawrence, Raychall - Washington, DC
Lerner, Joel - Monticello, NY
Li, Ying - Fresh Meadows, NY
Longley, David - Surprise, AZ
Marshall, Neil - Fremont, CA
Mc Mann, Larry A - Key Largo, FL
Miller, Randy - Tacoma, WA
Mossman, Harry - Sacramento, CA
Ortiz, William - Huntington Station, NY

Owens, Steve - Torrance, CA
Pierce, Mike - Tillamook, OR
Pudar, Nick - Farmington Hills, MI
Reader, Bill - Spencerville, IN
Rehmeyer, David - Puyallup, WA
Richard, Sean Paul - Baton Rouge, LA
Robare, Melinda - Kenner, LA
Rowley, Terry - Santa Cruz, CA
Royes, Stephanie - Metairie, LA
Runnells, Sarah - Spring, TX
Rushing, Glen - Clearwater, FL
Shimomura, Tomoyuki - Tokyo, JAPAN
Sluder, Michael - Canyon, TX
Smiddie, Jason - Crossville, TN
Smith, Stephen - Spring, TX
Swinger, Russ - Florence, MT
Templar, Sebastian - Monee, IL
Thomsen, Carl - Palo Alto, CA
Weissenberger, Glen - River Forest, IL
Wilbur, Charles - Paso Robles, CA
Zanardi, Augusto - Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Zarin, Richard - Kent, CT

REINSTATEMENTS

Anderson, Johnny - Mandeville, LA
Angello, Al - Collegeville, PA
Baker, Richard H - Hidden Hills, CA
Barnard, Michael - Madison, WI
Barnes, Kevin P - Janesville, IA
Blockburger, Robert - Newfoundland, NJ
Brandon, Ricky - Spanissh Fork, UT
Brewer, Dennis Michael - Austin, TX
Brothers, Sam - Alexandria, VA
Burrage, Trigg - Dallas, TX
Butler, Ryan - Kansas City, MO
Campbell, Robert - Florissant, MO
Champion, Shaun - Redondo Beach, CA
Crox Jr, Walter L - Cleveland, TN
Dempsey, Robert T - Battle Creek, MI
Dunlap, Robert - Lake Oswego, OR
Evangelista, David R - New Port Richey, FL
Fleming, Keith - Dade City, FL
Franzen, George D - Tucson, AZ

Giliam, Eric - Anchorage, AK
Gonzalez, Freddie - Fajardo, Puerto Rico
Grimm, Al - Pensacola, FL
Groves, Kyle - Pueblo, CO
Hargiss, Jeff - Waterloo, IL
Hasty, Chase - Holdrege, NE
Hickman, Curtis - Provo, UT
Hruska, Michael - Hollsopple, PA
Ingalls, Robert P - San Diego, CA
Kaegin, Terry - Lexington, NE
Kenemuth, Beverly - Lakeland, FL
Kerrigan, Joseph - Gettysburg, PA
Kramien, Stanley R - Tigard, OR
Lamantia, Carmelo - Thornwood, NY
Lawrence, Ray - Louisville, KY
Long, John - Brisbane, AUSTRALIA
Lowe, Robert A - Gilbert, AZ
Lucier, Ronald - West Brookfield, MA
Lynch, Mike - Ewa Beach, HI
Maloney, Bill - Bridgeport, CT
Mc Anespie, John - Lancaster, OH
Mcadams, Gregory - N Billerica, MA
Mcdermaid, James 'Hanson' - Vancouver, BC CANADA
Midkiff, Wendel - Huntington, WV
Muldoon, Michael - Glendale, NY
Murchison, Dale - Kettering, OH
Murphy, John A - San Antonio, TX
Padillia, Marie - Terryville, CT
Parekh, Kruti - Mumbai, INDIA
Plants, Gary - League City, TX
Principato, Michael - Mason, OH
Recca, Joseph - Stoughton, MA
Redmon, John - Tucson, AZ
Reyes, Ignacio - Joliet, IL
Saivipoo, Maitree - Ventura, CA
Shipman II, Dennis - Henderson, NV
Solomon, Ed - San Antonio, TX
Sparks, James - El Paso, TX
Springer, Stephen - Santa Rosa Beach, FL
Taylor, Stephen D - Louisville, KY
Toffolo, Ron - Denville, NJ
Varela, Ian - San Marcos, TX
Varkalis, Michael S - Damascus, MD
Weiss, Bob - Los Angeles, CA
Youngblood Jr, Hull - San Antonio, TX





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1

SALUTE TO MAGIC, NEW OFFICERS, AND ASI WIND

NEW YORK, NY— On Tuesday May 22, the Parent Assembly held our 103rd annual *Salute to Magic* at Theater 80 in New York City. Attendees were treated to great performances by illusionist Elliot Zimet, impalement artist The Great Throwdini, ventriloquist John Pizzi, and a grand finale by illusionist Lyn Dillies; Todd Robbins was the emcee. Victor Sendax received the 2012 Magician of the Year award and gave a heartwarming and gracious acceptance speech. A wonderful time was had by all. Congratulations to Salute producer Richie Magic and his committee for a great job.

June 1 was our last meeting before the summer break. After full reports from committees and the presentation of some certificates issued by President Jim Kelly, elections were held and the new board was sworn in. Congratulations to President Richie Magic, 1st Vice President Bob Freidhoffer, 2nd Vice President Jordan Linker, Treasurer David Adomovich (aka Throwdini), Secretary Pat Colby, Trustee George Schindler, Controller Rene Clement, and “at large” board members Richie Bossong, Doug Edwards, Ted Lee, Steve

Oculewicz, and Jerry Waye. These newly elected officers join the other two trustees and three past presidents to form the Board.

Our after-meeting event was the annual Willie Schneider lecture, featuring Asi Wind. Asi gave a great lecture featuring some wonderful card work and some great mentalism effects. A spectator cut to a named card, a borrowed dollar bill appeared under a spectator’s watch, and a mentally chosen card appeared reversed in the deck. After the lecture was complete, Asi spent another hour in a mini workshop and



Jim Stranges, Asi Wind

Q and A session. It was a great way to end the year.

On Wednesday, June 20, the grave site restoration committee held their fourth fundraising show at Tricky Business in East Meadow. Performers Kamarr, Rene Clement, and Omar O’llusion were introduced by host John Reid. All had a fun time and the funds raised will be used to restore the

graves of famous magicians in the New York area.

If you’re visiting New York, stop by the magic table, every Friday at the Edison Cafe, 12:30 to 2. —Jordan Linker

Parent Assembly One meets the First Friday of the month at Goldwurm Auditorium Mt. Sinai Hospital, 1425 Madison Avenue at 98th street at 7:15pm. Contact Tom Klem Tpk47@aol.com (SAMPAl.com for more details.

7

I “READ” ABOUT A CONTEST

OMAHA, NE— Tonight Vice President Tom Zepf introduced Mark Carson from Fat Brain Toys, who proposed a possible collaboration with the Omaha Magical Society to produce *The Celebration of the Mind* – an extension of the works of Martin Gardner, who is known for his recreational mathematics and magic. Tom also announced yet another lecture for this year by Cody Fisher scheduled for the week following our picnic at Boystown. Tom has done a great job providing programs of the highest value for our club. The club gave Tom a sitting ovation, recognizing his hitting a milestone as a member of The Society of American Magicians for fifty years.

President Bob Gehringer announced our “red/read”

contest and that we had eight entrants to be judged by the audience. Dan Rasmussen baffled us with a very complicated prediction of numbers, names, day, time, object and place. It was a powerful display of mentalism. Next up was Past President Larry Brodahl who asked, “Can the mind be read?” Acting the part of Sherlock Holmes provided the answer with some playful props. Steve Cotariu acted out the story of “Red and the olive test” and ended with a surprise production of three baseballs from the same Chop Cup. Bruce Jacoby (and assistant) asked the question, “Can I read with my eyes shut (or a mask on)?” Tom Neddo and his assistant (Johnny Impossible) played out some clairvoyance with a red deck of cards and a red sponge ball. Pete Petrashek stood in total silence while we watched him vanish a red stirring device; he then made it reappear.

Johnny Impossible brought Bubble Gum the Clown out of the audience to predict a matching card effect. Jeff Sikora ended the competition by producing a shopping bag full of red nightlights with the audience’s help (see photo) and then enlisted his grandfather’s teeth to produce a hilarious climax to a prediction produced from a torn newspaper.

This kind of evening brings out a veritable plethora of magic. The results of the audience voting were



Contest winner Jeff Sikora and his red lights

very close, but Jeff Sikora emerged the winner of the \$50 prize along with the “choice of the table” from all of the magic generously donated by one of our members, Dave Arch. There was an air of anxiety throughout the audience and performers all evening, but this resulted in a unique magical experience. —Jerry Golmanavich

Assembly 7 meets at the Southwest Church of Christ near 124th St, and West Center Road- right across from Hooters. Contact Jerry Golmanavich golubki@cox.net (402) 390-9834 omahamagicalsociety.com for more details.

8

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

ST. LOUIS, MO— Themed “Show Me the Medal”, this year’s installation banquet was a hit. The multitudes were fed, the medals awarded, and then the officers and board were installed. They are as follows: President – Don Becker, VP – Dan Todd, Secy/Treas – Dick Blowers, and Sergeant of Arms – Sandy Weis. Or newly-elected board members are: PNP Harry Monti, Mike Hindrichs, and Larry Minth.

What a show we had. Larry Lucy performed his first stage show. Good job! The Great Todd & Julia Roberts (okay not a personal appearance) performed. Good old Uncle Larry has us in stitches. President Don Becker performed several effects, but his assistant Elmo, stole the show.



Don Becker, Prez.

We cancelled our first meeting in June because most of us were going to the Ring 1 lecture that night. We have a very good relationship with Ring 1 and a lot of the magicians here are members of both groups. Sometimes we share costs, sometimes we invite them to a lecture, and sometimes they invite us. If only the whole world could cooperate like this... it would be magical! —Dan Todd

Assembly 8 meets on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month at 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM. We meet at Mount Tabor United Church of Christ on 6520 Arsenal St. near Hwy 44 Contact Don Becker joydonbeck@charter.net (636) 947-7963 Assembly8.com for more details.

13

RESTAURANT MAGIC

DALLAS, TX— On Wednesday, June 6, a lightning bolt struck Crosspointe Church and

Theatre 166, causing severe damage to the location that has hosted the Dallas Magic Clubs for over a year. Because of this, the June meeting took place at Wizards Sports Café in Richardson, Texas.

The meeting was called to order by incoming president Mark Jensen. Guests included Rob Divers (Magic Nurse Rob) and Jim Malone. After welcoming everyone, Mark opened the night by briefly discussing the Jim Steinmeyer book *The Last Greatest Magician in the World*, a biography of Howard Thurston. The book covers the life of Thurston and features his competition with rival American magicians, including Houdini.

After announcements, the Dallas Magic Clubs recognized magician Jordan Burgess for his help over the last year, presenting Jordan with a framed certificate of appreciation and the new book *Maelstrom* by Tom Stone.

With business complete, the theme of the evening was Restaurant Magic. Trigg Watson stepped up to demonstrate his brand of restaurant magic, with the assistance of Luis Acevedo, Tharpo, and Robert Rosskopf acting as restaurant patrons. Trigg performed a number of coin effects, starting with pulling an “invisible” coin from a spectator’s ear and changing it to a visible coin. After a number of vanishes and productions, Trigg changed a half dollar into an English penny in a spectator’s hand. Trigg then demonstrated the

power of “creative visualization” using playing cards. After a spectator selected a card and shuffled it back into the deck, Trigg was able to help the spectator “visualize” his card using



Panelists Derrel Allen, Dal Sanders, Jim Tyler, and David Hira

a blank card. When the blank card was unfolded, it had transformed into the selected card.

Mark Jensen also demonstrated a card trick – in particular, the first card trick he ever learned. Mark took a shuffled deck and successfully produced the four Aces, one at a time. When asked if he could do the trick with any deck, Mark said he could – and showed that the deck he was using had changed into fifty-two different card backs.

The second half of the night was devoted to a panel discussion on restaurant magic, hosted by Mike Squires. The panelists were Derrel Allen (Mr. Goodfriend), Dal Sanders, Diamond Jim Tyler, and David Hira. Topics included approaching a table, selecting appropriate tricks, establishing a rapport with the staff, tips, and the job market. All four participants gave great advice, and each pulled from their unique experiences.

Contact Reade Quinton at: reade.quinton@gmail.com (972) 400-0195 or go to www.dallasmagic.org for details.

17

SHARING THE MAGIC

SPRINGFIELD, MA—

Tonight was our last meeting for the season. It is hard to say goodbye, but our vice president, Leonard Nadeau, brought in a specially decorated sheet cake to celebrate another successful year with the S.A.M. Joe Bednar began the evening with his variation of Dai Vernon's Twisting the Aces. Bob Carroll taught us another easy self-working card trick he called Rubik's Cube. Using three piles of cards, he took one card out of one pile and put it in the pile to the left, continuing until all four Aces remained. Rich Pinonnault showed us his dexterity with coins, passing them from one hand to another; he even had one come out of a wand. Later he showed us his same dexterity at pulling cards out of the air.

Our treasurer, P.J. Pinonnault, took out his cards, and made us laugh with his Aces for Connoisseurs, or very rich people. Using his sense of touch he found all four Aces. Then he *wowed* us with Marlo's Estimation by finding the mates to the Aces and spelling them out. Leonard Nadeau had us guessing how he got the blue ribbon to escape from the card with his rendition of Houdini Ribbons. President Rich Gilbert had us roaring by using an old rat trap (Rich Marotta's Rat Trap) he found in our meeting space. Not only did he eat the cheese, but he produced the chosen card in the trap. He later showed us Truth, in which he was able to tell which one of five poker chips was put back in the bag by the

spectator. Jonas Toutant did a really wild King Switch by Simon Lovell. Our dean, Tom Gentile, finished the evening with a really "old" Kevin Menard blindfold. He revealed the chosen card with accuracy every time. Though the monthly



Aldo Colombini and Brian Dimock

meetings are over for the summer, we will still meet again one more time for our Summer Sizzler picnic at Look Park. It's been an annual event for the last few years; we hope to see you and your families one last time until the fall. —Karen Gibson

Dr. I.R. Calkins Assembly 17 Meets the first Friday of every month at 7 pm at Pinonnault Moto-X-Equipment, 69 East Street, Ludlow, MA Contact Rich Gilbert rgilbertmagic@yahoo.com (413) 210-5725 www.assembly17org for more details.

19

DAVID STONE LECTURE

HOUSTON, TX— June is a hot month for magic in Texas. Scott Wells lined up David Stone to lecture for us towards the end of May, and it was a very well attended lecture. Many agreed that it was one of the best lectures that we have had in a long time. If you get the oppor-

tunity to see David Stone lecture, then do so. You will not be disappointed.

We had a great Memorial Day BBQ and general get-together again this year. Gene and Betty Protas, Frank Price, Doug and Donnie Kornegay, and Bob Smith were major contributors to making this the success it was.

Our patriotic-themed magic teach-in session this month was led by Scott Wells, who presented a fine red, white, and blue three-rope routine. Jamie Salinas followed with a mis-made flag production. As Jamie stated, his presentation was about more than just the routine, but included excellent information about crowd control and focus while giving your performance. Both of these presentations were great and many thanks to both Scott and Jamie!

We also welcomed Stephen Smith as a new member of Assembly 19. He was presented with his new membership packet and wand by Regional Vice President Jeff Lanes with the assistance of Assembly 19 President Gene Protas. Congratulations, Stephen, and welcome!

We again had numerous performances at this month's meeting. Don Billings, Johan McElroy, David Hinken, Mark Melcher, Max Bradshaw, Jesse Rubio, Scott Wells, Rick Hebert, Jamie Salinas, Gene Protas, and Frank Price all performed for the group.

Don't forget the TAOM Convention this coming Labor Day weekend, to be held here in Houston. Visit TAOM2012.com for more information on this upcoming event. —Miles Root

Assembly 19 meets the first

Monday of every month at the IATSE 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.

21

SILK STUFF

HARTFORD, CT — We got elections out of the way fairly quickly. Angelo Chirico and Dan Sclare swapped president and vice president slots. Marlene Clark brought news that David Oliver was feted by his Boston area assembly, but also that he is looking at a lung transplant. Since David started at our assembly, we immediately began discussing fund-raising ideas. (David, if you're reading this, close your eyes!) Marlene and Steve Wronker were appointed to a committee to come up with fund-raising possibilities. One idea was to create wristbands for sale at the Vegas convention. Watch this space for future items.

The theme tonight was Silk Magic, hosted by Ron Strong. Dan started us off with a silk fountain produced from a red silk. At the end of the fountain was a silkworm, which changed into a silk butterfly. Steve Wronker brought out his "WOW" box, from which he produced sponge balls, sponge stars, silks, spring money, and a Rabid! Steve uses this routine as his opener for his first-grader show. It's an idea he got from Barry Mitchell. Soll Levine completed the revue showing us three huge handkerchiefs from which he produced a bottle of wine. Now that's my kind of trick! —Dana T. Ring

Assembly 21 meets



Soll Levine produces wine from silk

at Angelo's On Main, 289 South Main Street West Hartford CT 06107 Contact Dana T. Ring dana@danaring.com (860) 5239888 ctmagic.org for more details.

22

81ST ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

LOS ANGELES, CA— The Southern California Assembly 22 traditionally has an annual banquet each June to celebrate the anniversary of the assembly, and to install its new officers. The banquet is also the time when those who have excelled in competition for the various categories of performance trophies are presented their awards. This is always a highlight of the assembly year and well attended by members, spouses, friends and guests who come not only for the official events, but for the socializing, a terrific meal and great magic show. John Engman again served as our toastmaster for the evening's festivities.

Prior to our meal, Steve Jennings and Kim Hallinger conducted the "Turning of the Plate" ceremony for assembly members who had passed away during the

past year. These included our beloved assembly Dean, Robert Rodriguez, Derek Paine, Jr., Triny Peller and Howard Mitchell. This ceremony dates back to the earliest S.A.M. banquets in New York City before the S.A.M. became a national organization. The Southern California Assembly 22 has, during its eighty-one-year existence, continued to use traditional S.A.M. rituals and is proud of our history and heritage.

After our meal, the 2012-2013 officers and board of directors were introduced and installed by P.N.P. Ed Thomas. Jim Callen, elected for a second term as assembly president, then gave a "short and sweet" acceptance address that emphasized the quality and value of our assembly. Toastmaster John Engman, also acting as emcee for our show, then began the entertainment portion of the program.

Opening the show was Jeffrey Black, a very personable young talent and a graduate of the Magic Castle Juniors program. The second performer, David Gabbey, also a graduate of the Magic Castle Juniors, amused everyone with a magic coloring book and a needle swallowing effect. Closing the show was Tom Ogden; Tom kept the audience laughing and entertained from start to finish.

The final event of the evening was the awarding of trophies and certificates to those who earned them through excellence of performance and outstanding service to our assembly. Special recognition must go to Michael Perovich who deservedly won multiple trophies for his

performances at assembly meetings and for being elected into membership in the Magic Circle during a recent trip to London. —Steven L. Jennings

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

25

E.S.P. AND SPONGES

FAIRLAWN, NJ— The theme was ESP cards and sponge balls. First up was President Phil Schwartz, who presented an ESP coincidence, called Thought Force. It was supposed to be automatic in working, but Phil built it up so that it took a couple of tries before the "automatic" kicked in!

Joey Appleton was next with sponge ball magic; Joe had some beautiful moves, including a rarely seen interlocked hand production. Ron Dunklee, aka Mandu, did a ropes and knots transposition using two baskets, with an eerie story and sound effects.

Reporter Del Dixon used Jumbo ESP cards and tested to see if Meir Yedid was psychic enough to select one to match the prediction. He was. (Sorry, Meir, it was just a trick!) I then used a standard deck of ESP cards, and Joey Appleton selected one that matched mine. VP Bob Delaney sealed a card in a wallet and I used a pendulum to determine what it was.

Eric DeCamps did some classic sponge ball moves,

well thought out with surprise endings, with balls appearing in President Phil Schwartz's hand before totally vanishing from Eric's hands. Eric showed a neat wooden puzzle that allowed two extra pieces to fit in.

Bob Delaney did sponge ball vanishes and productions and then used two regular sized hats to make the balls jump around. Sometimes Bob even produces live baby chicks.

Scott Morley of WonderfunShop magic did a couple of ESP packet tricks: ESPerfect and E.S.P. Surprise with some help from Bill Schmeelk. Scott sponsors regular weekly workshops and lectures at his shop in Pompton lakes, NJ. Check his website (TheWonderfunShop.com) for details.

John Henderson tore up six cards with ESP symbols on them and gave them to Bill Schmeelk and Bob Delaney to divide between themselves; both men looked at half-cards in their individual packets and then later took out their half-cards only to discover that they had looked at the same card! Meir Yedid showed some original sponge ball moves that he had created while wearing a cast on his hand!

It seems all the guys had their own ideas on standard moves such as the retention vanish. All moves were well explained, along with interesting stories about famous magicians who had given them some input.

Member Richard Bangs is getting physical therapy for a recent stroke. Get well soon, Richard. —Delos Dixon
Assembly 25 meets the third Friday of each month at Veterans Hall, 6 Veterans Place, Elmwood Park, NJ

07407 Contact Bill Schmeelk
bill@wellingtonent.com
(201) 497-8179 www.
livemagicguide.com/sam25
for more details.

030

A WONDERFUL EVENING

ATLANTA, GA— Emcee Debbie Leifer introduced Martin Baratz, who presented a mathematical puzzle with a deck of cards. He had two magic numbers selected and through a process of counting cards into packets and eliminating packets, the final two cards on the top of each packet were Aces.

Dan Garrett provided us with a sneak peak at some of the effects from his new lecture, which will debut this fall. The first one was Unassisted Triple Play, based on Irv Weiner's Triple Transposition. Dan then placed a rubber band around his hand and placed a deck on top of the band. The band jumped off Dan's hand and around the deck. The final display was a paddle trick called the Amazing Jumping Arrow with thanks to Mark Young.

Bob Stultz performed a card effect by having a card chosen by a spectator and by himself; both cards were shuffled into the deck. The deck was cut into two piles and Bob predicted where in each packet the chosen cards came to rest. Marvelous!

Jim Driscoll gave us some ideas on how to jumpstart a meeting using magic. He used a red and white rope to demonstrate the thought processes. The knot in the white rope was an idea; when the ropes were intertwined, the idea (knot) jumped to the other rope (group). That way

it becomes part of the fabric of thinking in the company. Jim Mangham gave a summary of recent lectures that gave him some good ideas for performance; he then performed at linking rubber band effect.

Our Professional Development was presented by Merritt Ambrose. Merritt has always been fond of Tommy Wonder and his unique style of magic. Merritt even got permission to build the Ring, Watch, and Wallet. He performed Elizabeth, which has a card and two dollar bills in a clear folder. A card is selected from the deck and it becomes the card between the two dollars. —Carol Garrett

Assembly 30 meets the second Tuesday of the month at Picadilly Cafeteria, I-85/ North Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, Georgia.

032

TALENT ABOUND

LYNCHBURG, VA— April may mean many things to magicians, but in Lynchburg it brings out more than flowers and rainy weather. When I look over the entertainment list of performers, I am quite amazed at how lucky we are here in The Hill City. Our first female performer adds so much to our membership. Besides having a fancy business card, she has taught herself some of the newer effects. The rest of us seem to stick to the old favorites.

Old man Glen Rae started things going after a short business meeting. We are still looking for lecturers. We have joined a group here on the East Coast that pools talent when and where they are available. We have had

some real good lecturers in the past and appreciate the new facility. We will be doing several local shows during the coming months. We welcome visitors; the college crowd helps boost our attendance.

Getting back to brother Rae. Glen comes to us from Florida, where he amazed many folks with his Dr. Magic theme. He performed a great card prediction using two cards instead of one for the climax. He fooled everyone including eagle-eye Jennings. Speaking of Jennings, he is a master at rope effects and performed a ring on a rope. He then made the ring appear on a pencil that was held by two assistants. Bob Staton, who makes many of his effects, showed us a ring vanish; it appeared in a locked mahogany box. Good show, Bob. Brother Rumsmoke presented some card effects with sleight of hand.

Our gal Tiffnny surprised us with another coin in a locked box. Many people ask me about our meeting place. It is all for our benefit, because brother Hubble is employed here. Does the name Tharp mean anything? Come see us; we welcome visitors. —Dale Rumsmoke
Assembly 32 meets at the Tharp funeral home
Contact Dale Rumsmoke at iminthesam@aol.com (434) 239-8581 for more details.

035

YOU OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY— Our June meeting started with a lengthy, yet crucial, discussion of club business. From our August BBQ to

the upcoming September elections to fundraising opportunities for the assembly, it seemed no stone remained unturned. It was a certainly a night of spirited discussion. At one point Frank Monaco had to separate Joel Zaritsky, Larry Slezak, and me to prevent us from engaging in fisticuffs. The magical mayhem will continue in September when members enter the cage and we see if anybody can survive the Berger muscle pass, the Bochar palm, the Levine lift, or the Johnson Troublewit. We finished the June meeting with our planned video night – lots of classic magic performances on a huge screen! We look forward to seeing members at the August BBQ. —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.

036

INCREASING MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

NEW ORLEANS, LA— After a series of online discussions about the importance of membership and attending meetings, we had a good turnout for our June meeting. We discussed, and formed committees to organize upcoming activities. Carmen Rose gave us a great outline of activities that both of our local magic clubs can get involved with at our City Park. Dr. Joe Dalgo will contact the Girl Scouts to let them know that our magic clubs are

available to help girls to earn the new magic badge. The American Cancer Society is having a benefit supper in July, and needs walk around magicians – we have a group of volunteers that will participate in this also.

The meeting wasn't all business. Our theme was Magician's Choice, and we had a good variety of entertainment. Milton Scheuermann performed a card pre-



Rafael Benatar lectures

diction trick. Dr. Joe Dalgo performed a newspaper telepathy effect that didn't work, but we took the opportunity to discuss the dos and don'ts of a performance, and how to handle the situation when a trick doesn't work. August Garofalo performed a brilliant ACAAN by having a card and number selected, and then with only six faro shuffles, had the card appear at that number. As a finally, with one overhand cut, the deck was placed in new-deck order. Steve Reynolds performed a linking ring routine, and we got a rare, short, linking ring "tip" from Jon Racherbaumer. Joe Harrison performed an amazing psychokinesis effect with a nut and bolt. Dr. Joe also performed Tony Clark's Gypsy Balloon.

Racherbaumer ended the evening with the card trick, Coincidentally Yours, from

Harry Lorayne's *Close-up Card Magic*.

On the weekend prior to our meeting, we had a lecture by Raphael Benatar. We saw fantastic card magic, as well as an effect with silks, one with a tape measure, and one with coins. He also taught a private class to four members, the day after the lecture, which was priceless.

—Dr. Joe Dalgo

[The Eddie J. Adams Jr. Assembly 36 meets on the second Wednesday of every month at the Holiday Inn on 2261 N. Causeway Blvd., in Metairie, LA. Contact August Garofalo \[magaug@aol.com\]\(mailto:magaug@aol.com\) \[www.samnola.com\]\(http://www.samnola.com\) for more details.](#)

038 HOT JUNE MEETING!

[KANSAS CITY, MO—](#) Assembly 38 is on the rise; attendance for our June meeting was twenty-six, virtually double what we were doing a few months ago!

The meeting began with President Rod Sipe outlining upcoming events, including a magic flea market (including a hotdog eating contest) and a lecture by Dan Garrett. Then, the magic took over. Rod Sipe performed his signature guillotine routine, a crowd pleaser honed over many hundreds of performances. Dennis Burks followed by sharing some quite old S.A.M. memorabilia, followed by some clever card and silk magic. Shaun Rivera had us scratching our head over a mental card effect. Josh Chaikin performed a great routine revolving around Stewart James's Miraskill.

Joe Zeman entertained

with a funny bit that ended with the "Silk to Egg". Phil King shared construction details for a magician's table and passed out some 1960's magic catalogs; he then performed a card trick involving a combination lock and the Misers Dream, followed by a teach-a-trick. John Hicks did some amazing Four-Ace stuff along with other card miracles. Bob Goodin treated us to a Triumph effect. Terry Davolt ended the festivities by giving away a large box full of tricks and pamphlets; no one went away empty handed!

If you find yourself in the K.C. area, look us up!

[Assembly 38 meets at the Westport Coffeehouse on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.](#)

051 MAY MEETING

[PEORIA, IL—](#) President Jerry Tupper opened the May meeting by having reports on the recent public show, and some upcoming events. Secretary/Treasurer Brad Borland gave financial updates, which indicated that we did quite well from the show, and sales of magic sets. A report on the show itself is being sent, and will hopefully appear in *The Linking Ring*. Information on future events can typically be found on our website. Congratulations Peoria Magicians Assembly on a job well done!

The magic portion began with Troy Keefer showing some very good spectator management while entertaining us all with Hopping Half, Scotch and Soda, and the Growing Penny. Guest Christian assisted.

C.J.Diamond offered a

variation of Scotch and Soda that was well received and quite different than the usual handling. Many years behind a magic shop counter surely pays off!

Our min-lecturer for the month was Allen Broomfield on topic of coin magic. Although beginning with a disclaimer that he was not a coin worker, we would have never known that, as his detail and execution were very good. He covered the basics of coin palms, switches, and vanishes. He then gave recommendations for some books and DVDs on the subject.

Mike Tate showed us his offering for coin magic by making a dime magically rise while resting on his palm, and then made the eagle on a coin cry... or did he do something else? Kind of a Pea Can without the can.

Regis Kormick performed mentalism with a collection of credit cards, using some dice to select one of the cards. He then was able to announce in true mentalist fashion the number that was on the card.

Michael Baker performed a variation of Coin Across by having four half dollars in one hand, and four English pennies in the other hand change places one at a time.

Phil Raso showed us a fun phone app coin trick in which three of four coins showing on the screen disappeared, leaving only the selected coin.

After the meeting, several of us disappeared, while the rest of us translocated to a nearby restaurant for more magic chat.

—Gordon M. Snow
[Assembly 51 meets on the third Monday of the month At 4800 N University, Peoria IL at Schnucks Super-](#)

market in the Community room. Contact DR. JERRY TUPPER PRESIDENT jetmagic@juno.com (309) 673-7899 www.peoriamagicians.com/ for more details.

052

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS BANQUET

SAN ANTONIO, TX— June 7, 2012 Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 held its annual Installation of Officers Banquet at the Sea Island Shrimp House. Members and guests dined in the private dining room. After a delicious dinner, outgoing President Joe Libby welcomed everyone and thanked incoming President Paul Amerson for arranging the entertainment and the venue for this event. Joe Libby conducted the installation ceremony and charged each one of the new officers with the responsibilities that the office holds.

Congratulations to President Paul Amerson, Vice-President John Dahlinger, and Secretary/Treasurer Doug Gorman. Due to health problems, Sergeant-at-Arms-elect George Castillo, had to withdraw from his position. President Paul Amerson presented Joe Libby with a plaque of appreciation for his service to Assembly 52, 2011-2012.

After a short break, our entertainer for the evening was Houston Magician Scott Wells. He is a professional entertainer who has performed throughout the world with his stand-up, close-up, mind reading, and interactive magic. He amazed with an awesome and exciting show and kept us laughing throughout his



From left: President Paul Amerson, Vice-President John Dahlinger, Secretary/Treasurer Doug Gorman

performance. Thanks, Scott, for a wonderful evening.

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.

56

JUNE MEETING

DAYTON, OH — Our June meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. on Friday, June 15, 2012, by Executive Officer Paul Burnham at the home of compeers Fred and Millie Witwer. We had nine members and one guest in attendance. After a brief business meeting we broke for refreshments that included Millie's world famous pineapple upside down cake. Refreshments were followed by the performance portion of the meeting; our theme was Kid's/Birthday Party Magic.

Our program chairman, Fred Witwer, kicked us off with a very clever Breakaway Change Bag routine that combined a Ball and Vase and Silk Transposition. Stan Goode followed Fred by demonstrating

how he personalizes his performances by using LED-light message spinners. Our guest Bill Hagen demonstrated how he conjured a strand of pearls for his wife. Mike Herrick used his magic wand "metal detector" to determine which hand Paul was concealing

a coin in. Scott Miller made coins fly invisibly from hand to hand. Our newest member, Joanne Kinder, magically caused a silk to jump from hole to hole on a large card and performed a coloring book routine. Paul Burnham did a very entertaining talking drawing board routine and Matthew David Stanley performed a transforming and vanishing bottle routine. We socialized after the performances and fun was had by all. —Matthew David Stanley

Assembly 56 meets at various members' homes. Contact Barbara Pfeifer barbara.pfeifer@att.net (937) 433-8604 for more details.

59

ORGANIZE ME

PORTLAND, OR— Sometimes you see a lecture and you blink your eyes in astonishment – not that you are dazzled by the presenter's effects (although you may well be dazzled by them). What astonishes you so much is that the magician has every detail carefully planned, nothing is left to chance: the sound, props, effects, contingencies – all organized perfectly. That's the lecture members of Assembly 59 watched at their May meeting. The

presenter was Kevin Witt aka Presto the Magician.

The man is humble – so humble that you have to take some of his disclaimers with a grain of salt. He told us that he wasn't one of those "technology guys," and then proceeded to show us his various sound system configurations slicker than a deck of plastic playing cards and not much bigger. Presto has it all down: everything from how to pack for a week's worth of shows, to publicity photos, to how to get jobs, to after-the-show retail sales. File this all under the subheading of Get Organized. It wasn't until he was finished and we were in our sessions phase of the meeting that I realized that Kevin hadn't shown us a single effect. He knew we had plenty of effects. What we needed was the structure of what it takes to make a living at magic – something that Kevin knows quite well.

Following the lecture we broke into our session groups. While I didn't get around to seeing each group, I did see Larry Seymore producing some explosive effects from his fingertips. He also warned us not to get any of the stuff under our fingernails. You'll have to check with Larry for details, but...well...his warning was sufficient for me.

Our showtime magic theme was magic was Impromptu or Magic with Everyday Objects. Can you get any more every day than soda straws or pipe cleaners (okay, maybe pipe cleaners are not all that everyday)? Bob Eaton (the man with 7000+ shows under his belt and no sign of slowing down) showed an effect, then showed how to apply the principle to other objects

(such as pipe cleaners). Tom Waldrop followed up with a repeating Sixes card effect, smoothly performed and accompanied by interesting patter. John Edsall was next with a demonstration of sleight of hand with every day objects. Last was Mel Anderson with a pair of magical bananas – not too ripe either. —Glen L. Bledsoe

SAM 59 meets at The Beaverton Elks 3500 SW 104th, Beaverton, OR 97005 on the 4th Wednesday of each month except July and August. Details at www.sam59portland.org/ Glen L. Bledsoe: glenbledsoe@mac.com (503) 581-2795

71

WORK IN PROGRESS

ALBUQUERQUE, NM— Summer months are rapidly changing in all aspects and it seem to affect the magic club; several members of club were trying out new old ideas and getting inspired by the evening's magic. Wayne Hicks started off the evening with combination of new effects – Dean's Beads and a effect called ESP Chips. VP David Dunlap performed Colombini's Cannibal Kings, Gene Herria demonstrated Ken-tic Cards and Doc Daley's Last Ace Trick, Larry Markin did a very clever variation on linking paper clips, and Mike Magana did a rattrap card prediction.

Our second round started with David Dunlap, who did rising card from his card box. Gene Herria performed a work in progress; I'll call it the US card trick for kids, with a large US puzzle map. Don Johnston, gospel magician, did an elaborate

Heaven and Hell routine. David Brahinsky did a movie-themed Out to Lunch routine. As he started the effect, he suddenly realized his patter was wrong. He stopped, and then he realized that the patter was right, but the effect wrong. He finished and realized how to make it work. David Dunlap did a Paul Curry rope routine; Damon reworked a book test to a more modern approach. Mike Magana ended the evening on a funny note with a lot of gag cards. —Mr. David Brahinsky

Assembly 71 meets at 3205 Central Ave, Albuquerque, NM 87108 behind The Magic Shop. Contact Damon Reinbold davidbrahinsky@comcast.net 505-833-0155 for more details.

82

MARK MASON - JUNE LECTURE

SAFETY HARBOR, FL— Patrick Gaughn, our president, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. We welcomed two new members.

Mark Mason is very energetic and entertaining. He takes classic effects and puts his personal twist on them to add an amazing wow factor. Mark is a wonderful pitchman. Even the magic explanations were fun. His Stuck-up Monte card effect started like a basic Three Card Monte but had a very unexpected ending.

My favorite performance was Coin Flux 2. It was amazing. He effortlessly moved coins across the mat so that all three ended up under the last card. It is the cleanest coin matrix you will ever see.

I highly recommend Word



Mark Mason Lecture at Assembly 82

in a Million. Mark's "any word, any language, book test" is the most impressive version I have seen.

We have a great line up of magicians that you won't want to miss: Aldo Colombini on August 16, 2012, and Francis Menotti on November 15, 2012.

Assembly 82 meets the third Thursday of each month at the Sheriffs Youth Ranch in Safety Harbor Florida. Members only close up class at 6:30 PM. TBMC monthly meeting starts at 7:30 PM Contact Chris Ostrowski cmmagic@verizon.net (727) 8477837 www.tampabaymagicclub.com for more details.

88

CHRIS MAYHEW-BEN TRAIN LECTURE

ANN ARBOR/YPSILANTI, MI— For the Ann Arbor Magic Club's June meeting,



Chris Mayhew and Ben Train Lecture

we had one of the most interesting lectures in a while. In Ben Train and Chris Mayhew's "Playing with Your Pack" lecture they did more than just card tricks. I would compare them to the "Abbott and Costello" of card magicians! They were both entertaining and funny in their presentations. The explanations of the tricks were easy to understand and very doable. Some of them were self-working, others used break lifts, double lifts, etc. They also discussed how to "embrace character" while performing. Your card routines will get much better with some or all of the ideas that Ben and Chris have put together! —Randy A. Smith, **Hank Moorehouse Assembly 88 meets the 2nd Wednesday at 7pm at the Faith Lutheran Church, 1255 East Forest Ave, Ypsilanti, Michigan Contact Randy A. Smith randy.remarkable@gmail.com (313) 562-3875 www.aamagic.org for more details.**

94

LEARNING, FUN, AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

SILICON VALLEY, CA— Our Performance Experience Program continues. Sy Hoff, John Jones, Alan Leeds, Stan Sieler, Richard

Myer, and Kim Silverman presented close-up magic before performances of the Silicon Valley Gay Men's Chorus in April. In May, Kim Silverman, Ken Gielow, John Jones, and Joe Caffall performed bedside magic at the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital. In June, Alan Leeds, Sy Hoff, and Joe Caffall performed walk-around and platform magic for the Silicon Valley Top Dads Luncheon. Alan Leeds and John Jones, with San Jose I.B.M. member Fred Rasmussen, presented close-up magic for a summer dance for patients in a program at the Menlo Park VA facility. We will entertain at a Fourth of July VA BBQ in Livermore and for a VA event in Menlo Park later in July, as well as ongoing visits to the hospital in Palo Alto.

In June, Joe Caffall led a Learners' Workshop on the Cut and Restored Rope. We then viewed performance videos of upcoming lecturers, Losander and Shoot Ogawa. Ken Gielow started our performances using a pack of blank cards and six ESP cards to predict choices a spectator would make. Sy Hoff had a guest hold a bottle cap in his hand, struck the cap with a beer bottle, and the cap penetrated into the bottle. Hugh McDonald caused water to turn red, with much humor and mystery along the way. He then made two pieces of red yarn held by a spectator become one long strand. John Jones produced three coins from the air and made them travel invisibly from hand to hand.

Guest Tom Collett had a spectator deal out two stacks of cards. The cards were separated, reds and blacks.

He shuffled the deck several times and after each shuffle, the cards were separated by color; he even did it face-up. Alan Leeds caused coins from around the world to vanish and reappear inside a small globe. He also performed a Cup and Ball routine using a paper cup and a balled-up dollar bill. Kim Silverman closed our performances using magic effects to demonstrate advances in neuroscience. Referencing true science, his three effects became progressively less plausible and more compelling, starting with glimpsing the after-image of a chosen card in a person's retina, then detecting a mental after-image in a person's neural activity, and finally observing a person's neural activity to accurately predict a future choice. —Joe Caffall

[We do not currently have a regular meeting location. Contact Joe Caffall \[jocaff@pacbell.net\]\(mailto:jocaff@pacbell.net\) \(408\) 3751905 \[www.sam94.org\]\(http://www.sam94.org\) for more details.](#)

95

VINNY'S VANCOUVER VISIT

VANCOUVER, CANADA— June 5, 2012, marked the momentous occasion of the visit of Most Illustrious National President Vinny Grosso to Vancouver Assembly 95. This was the first time in over a decade that a S.A.M. National President has visited to Canada. Because this was Vinny's first time to Vancouver, the Assembly 95 executive committee had arranged a tour of some of Vancouver's unique sites. Prior to the evening's regular meeting, a reception



Rod Chow (L), RVP Canada and Lon Mandrake (R), Assembly President present Special "95" Gift to M.I. Vinny Grosso on behalf of Assembly #95

was held in Vinny's honor.

After dealing with the regular business, Rod Chow (RVP Canada) and Lon Mandrake (assembly president) had the privilege of presenting Vinny with an attractive commemorative framed certificate.

Appropriately, the theme for this evening was "Impress the Pres." And Vinny confirmed that he was absolutely impressed with his gift from Assembly 95 of an inside hand-painted Pandas Chinese bottle set with personally engraved plate and million dollar bill. Vinny started off the magic segment of the evening with an inspirational talk and the sharing of some of his practical performance tips. Giving impressive performances in this "Impress the Pres" show were Ray Roch, Jens Henriksen, Lon Mandrake, Dave Watters, Rick Mearns, Steve Dickson, Dennis Hewson, Henry Tom, Jeff Christensen, Juan Garcia, and Anthony Young. Anthony, who just reached the milestone of thirty-five years of continuous membership with the S.A.M., also had the honor of having his certificate officially presented to him by the national president. Thanks go out to Rod's wife Sylvia and sons Jack and Nicholas for helping with

the reception. Rod closed this outstanding evening by confirming with Vinny that out of the entire evening, he was impressed for at least ninety-five minutes! —Rod Chow

[The Carl Hemeon Assembly No. 95 meets the first Tuesday of each month at members' homes. Contact Rod Chow \[rod@rodchow.com\]\(mailto:rod@rodchow.com\) \(604\) 669-7777 \[www.sam95.com\]\(http://www.sam95.com\) for more details.](#)

104

FOOD FROM COLUMN A AND MAGIC FROM COLUMN B

SALEM, MA— Wednesday, June 6 marked the end of another great year for Assembly 104 as we wrapped it up with our installation banquet. This time we returned to our former haunt, the now revamped, but even more bountiful East Sakura Restaurant in Salem. With sushi added to an already burgeoning buffet of Chinese wonders, fellowship and cocktails were destined to take a back seat to second and third helpings. It was feast time.

Guests from Rhode Island's R.I.S.M. joint I.B.M. Ring 44 and S.A.M. Assembly 26 honored us by making the northerly hike to participate in the installation and

to entertain. These included Assembly 26 President Jeff Smith, Ed Hill, David Hill, and Larry Stangel. When waistlines had sufficiently expanded, President Jeff Smith conducted the officer installation for the coming year.

From that point on, the magic began and it flew furiously. Capable host Ed Hill performed a perplexing effect with a box within a box. This was followed by a volley of productions as Ed's son, David, and magic partner Larry Stangel emptied everything from multiple alarm clocks to a six-foot pole from an old-time radio. On his own, David offered a rope routine, an appearing champagne bottle, and a killer card in balloon trick with a sucker explanation at the end. Jackie Levesque was his delighted volunteer.

Burch Stokes's wife, Jamie, had a great time volunteering for Jeff Smith's card elimination trick, in search of The Truth. This was followed by hubby Burch himself assisting Larry Stangel's solo turn, in a painfully funny Card Stab routine. By the time Larry got to his hilarious take on the Insurance Policy revelation, the effects of at least a few pounds of overeating had been chuckled away. It was a great night, due in no small part to the generous donation of time and effort by our compeers from R.I.S.M.

As folks departed, the magic lingered across the restaurant. A cheering crowd of Chinese voices in another seating section betrayed the presence of our strolling Tim LeVesque. Meanwhile, in our own dwindling area, Evan Buso-Jarnis enter-

tained the wait staff with his fabulous flicking.

Currently, Assembly 104 has plans for a joint event with our S.Y.M.



Jamie Stokes gets carded by Jeff Smith

kids in August. It will be a barbecue, S.Y.M. competition, and auction at Camp Evergreen in Andover. From there, we regroup in September and prepare for November's SAMCON. —Bob Forrest

Information on SAMCON and on Witch City S.A.M. Assembly 104 can be found at the website: www.sam104.com. Assembly 104 meets the first Wednesday of each month, September-June, at 7 pm at the First Baptist Church of Salem, 292 Lafayette Street, Salem, Massachusetts. Contact Bob Forrest captainalbrights1@comcast.net (339) 227-0797 sam104.com for more details.

108

BUSY MAGICAL TIMES

SOMERSET, PA— It has certainly been busy spring, and a busy summer is on the way for Assembly 108. At the May meeting Magic with Change Bags was the theme for the combined S.Y.M. and S.A.M. magicians. President Gary Weimer started off speaking on the different types of change bags and a

good discussion followed about not over using a change bag in any given show.

The S.Y.M.'s John Bamman started off by making a sponge ball appear from nothing from his change bag. Aaron Trulick also multiplied sponge balls with his change bag. Adie Best used her change bag in conjunction with a Square Circle she built. In the end she had two live baby bunnies appear from the prop.

The adults talked about upcoming club shows; no magic was performed but a lot was accomplished. The S.A.M. portion had a new member, Mike Hruska, who attended for the second time. Mike is a part of the board of directors for The Venue Of Merging Arts in Johnstown, Pennsylvania; he has scheduled two performances for our club there this summer. The first is a family show and the second is being billed as date night. Performing in both shows will be Dan Miller, Gary Weimer, Dody-Jane Svetahor, Mike Hruska, Louis Paul, and Derrick Robey. It looks like it will be a good time for all involved. Two benefit shows are being considered for late summer at two local high schools, one for a French Club and the other for the Special Olympics.

Another new member, Josh Knotts, was finally able to attend, because his show schedule has him on the road a lot, promoting his one day Out of the Box Magic Expo in Weirton, W.V. on October 20. Scheduled performers are Scott Alexander, Puck, and Ben Salinas. We are a small assembly but we stay busy promoting magic in our area. —Dan Miller

The James Swoger Assembly meets at Wheeler Brothers Somerset Industrial Park 6:00pm SYM/7:00PM SAM Contact Dan Miller millermagic@centurylink.net (814) 733-4978 for more details.

118

MAGIC IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

NASHUA, NH— Assembly 118 has had a very busy spring performing at local events. In addition to our annual charity performance for the Merrimack Crimeline K-9 Fundraiser, we performed for the Manchester



Lady BlackSword (Kathy Caulfield) assisting Baxter the Mindreading Dog at Manchester VA Hospital

Boys & Girls Club and the Manchester VA Hospital. Our Second Annual Greater NE Magic Contest was a success, with Don Sanborn and Ed Morris tying for First Place. Our future performances include the Lyndeborough Community Day Festival on August 18.

Assembly 118 meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Nashua Church of Christ, 97 Farley Rd., Nashua, NH. Our venue rotates, so contact us first. Contact Robert Granville sam.nashua@gmail.com (603) 505-8749

<http://sam118.com> for more details.

120 MAY MEETING

CHAMPAIGN, IL— The May meeting opened with discussion of the club show at the VA on May 27. Andy Dallas will be performing at the Busboom Castle for evenings in August. A great show in a really cool venue. There was an update on the 2013 Get-Together as well.

Prof Higgins described a trick he had intended to do and followed up by producing two rabbits from a hat. Chris Bontjes predicted two cards using his membership card, which prompted discussion of variations. Andy Dallas demonstrated Ammar's Triumph and his working of the pull-through shuffle.

The evening ended with Andy Dallas telling us anecdotes and stories from his career – each more entertaining and informative than the last.

See you at the next meeting.
—Ken Barham

Assembly 120, Andy Dallas Assembly meets on the third 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. Phone: 217-841-5616 Email: Kebram@aol.com

127 MONEY MAGIC NIGHT

WALLINGFORD, CT— We started our June meeting in our temporary summer location, the Libero Pensiero Society club. The theme for June was "Money Magic."



Tom shows Dave linking dollar bills

First up was Tom Guerrero doing a great Linking Dollar bills, explaining this was his favorite impromptu effect. Next was Dave Wyskiel with a fabulous version of Six Bill repeat. Bill Hoagland was up next with a great copper/silver transposition; he ended with a Passa-Passa routine using multi colored poker chips. Last up was President Jeff Dskos, who changed a seldom seen two-dollar bill into two single dollar bills. Jeff finished with a few dollar bills, and found he would not have enough to pay for dinner. He magically changed them all to a pack of twenties!
—Anthony Martin

Libero Pensiero Society
91 Dudley Ave Wallingford, Ct. Contact Anthony Martin tonymartin@snet.net (203) 287-0805 for more details.

136 GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

TUCSON, AZ— Business first: Nate announced that Dan Fleishman will be lecturing for us on the October 1, 2012. Nate has not only stepped up and taken on the onus of "lecture-getter," but he has also volunteered to rebuild our S.Y.M. program! It has been years since it has been active, so he certainly has his work cut

out for him, and I'm sure he would appreciate any and all help. Thanks, Nate!

Sadly, it was announced that the Stage Magician of the Year Competition was found floating belly-up last week. Only *one* person wanted to be involved, and he only wanted to perform, not compete. This is the first year since I have been involved with this assembly that there has not been a competition.

Our resident cowboy poet, Bill Black, presented an excellent idea: let's submit a "lecture report" to the secretary after each lecture; he can send it for inclusion in *M-U-M*. After a short break, we had a seven-act show.

Arthur took the stage to the left of a large, ornate clock on a tripod. Did I mention that the clock was big? After some neat mental gymnastics, the hands of the clock suddenly moved to reveal the number that everyone was thinking. Kenny next took the stage and put his hands on the line in a very dangerous routine involving three cards, a nail, three cups, and his body. It could have been bloody, but it wasn't.

Nate then came up and performed one of the cleanest bits of mind-reading I've seen in a long while. I'm not even going to try to put it into words, it was slick. Mike Bekedam then fooled us badly with a very smooth Spell-a-Card trick. I'm not too fond of such tricks, but this one left me wondering. Mike DeSchalit came up next, and as a tribute to Joe DuPerry, stunned everyone with a very clean vanishing marble routine. Suave, just like Joe would have wanted it done.

Bill took the stage next with

a neat handling of the torn and restored napkin with a kicker ending. Very well done, Bill. Randy sauntered up to the stage with both hands firmly entrenched in his jacket pockets; he slowly turned around and suddenly he had a large lollipop in his mouth! He then ended the show with a wee bit of magic in Ashley's hand.
—Gary Husson

John E. Alexander Assembly #136 meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Monday of each month at the Fraternal Order of Eagles, 1530 N Stone Ave Tucson, AZ.

148 MYSTERIOUS VISITORS

ELMHURST, IL— Happily, there are many magic clubs in Chicago-land, so we periodically do an "invite and reciprocate" evening. This time, members of The New Mazda Mystic Ring from nearby Elgin came to Elmhurst and put on quite a show. Their president, Kevin Sarnwick, served as emcee; he opened the show with Stark's Hornswoggled, followed by a transposition of a \$1 and a \$5 in a spectators' hands, and wrapped up his money theme with a moving hole effect in which four holes were punched in each of the corners of a bill and assembled in one corner.

Bob Coluzzi did a highly effective version of Bank Night in which the five envelopes (one with a borrowed \$50 bill inside) were shuffled and then numbered. A spectator called out a number and that envelope was totally destroyed in a hand-held and very noisy shredder. This was repeated with 3 other

numbers. The final envelope was opened, revealing not the expected \$50, but a piece of blank paper. Bob apologized for his mistake, stuffed the shredded pieces into an envelope and suggested that his victim take them to the bank. Needless to say, Bob produced the borrowed \$50 before the evening was over. Then, life-member Doc Morrisy did an impromptu version of Vernon's Brainwave using business cards, followed by a jumbo card stabbing effect with a truly menacing looking Bowie knife. Ivan Tzonchev was up next. He did the classic Chinese rings with audience participation. Ivan's rings kept linking and unlinking, which the spectator's rings refused to do, even when Ivan traded his set for hers.

Sam Monaco, at one time a very in-demand bar/restaurant magician, has come back to magic although he's still active with his own rock band. Sam showed everyone that his conjuring chops were in no way diminished by his hiatus as he performed Red Hot Mama, card from paper bag, and a very slick version of Jim Ryan's Ring, Wand, and Rope routine, using a borrowed ring. Finally, Wes Wittekind, a wonderful family show performer, offered an unusual effect with two pieces of blank paper, each with four holes. Encouraged by some extravagant body language, one hole embarked on a journey, leaving three holes on one paper and five on the other. Wes then did the stage size grandmother's necklace penetration routine using a spectator's sport jacket, along with silks and a wand, concluding a very successful visit from The New Mazda

Mystic Ring. Of course, Assembly 148 will soon reciprocate. —Tony Noice
[Assembly 148 meets at 7.30 PM on the third Monday of every month at the Epiphany Lutheran Church, on the corner of Spring and Vallette, Elmhurst, IL. Contact Tony Noice \[noisea@net.elmhurst.edu\]\(mailto:noisea@net.elmhurst.edu\) \(630\) 993-3740 \[www.sam148.com\]\(http://www.sam148.com\) for more details.](#)

150 CELEBRATING DAN TONG

FORT MYERS, FL— Well, a meeting that seemed about to shape up as another “ho-hum” affair during which members sit with raised eyebrows as one of their fellows muddles through the Professor's Nightmare turned into a memorable night. When the meeting announcement went out a few weeks back, it noted that no big-name lecturer was on the schedule, no dealer demo, no auction, just this: “Members’ night, close-up, no cards.”

Also, with the “season” over in Southwest Florida and all of our “snowbirds” having flown back to their homes up north, attendance was expected to be slim. The first surprise was that twenty guys showed up, most of them prepared to step in front of the group and do something magical.

But first, President Tony Dunn introduced a guest – Ross McCourt, a talented young “worker” from London – and then made the dramatic announcement that longtime mainstay Dan Tong had just completed fifty consecutive years of membership in the International Brotherhood of Magicians

and was to receive that organization's Order of Merlin award! Since many FMMA members belong to the S.A.M., as well, everyone cheered the news.



Dan Tong explains a “pinky count” for a fellow member

And the crowd's mood, which had been somewhat gloomy at the prospect of witnessing yet one more performance of the 21 Card Trick, grew brighter in the burst of applause for Dan. It brightened even more when Treasurer Dick Payne came through the door with a giant congratulatory cake to be shared by everyone!

As to the magic, a dozen chaps went through a quick display of mostly standard effects: shoestring knot and a five-cut cut and retored rope routine, a three-coin matrix, the popular phone-in-balloon bit, that darned compass that points in all directions, and linking rings done with a dollar store miniature set. Pressured to perform, Dan Tong did a mental routine that was even more amazing when he explained its simplicity. And our guest from England showed how expertly a steady-work performer can make a chosen card vanish from the deck and reappear beneath the card case on the table, again...and again...and again.—Don Dunn

[The Charles And Rose Mary Brigham Assembly meets first Tuesday 7pm at Myerlee Manor, Wellness](#)

[Center Room, 1499 S. Brandywine Circle, Ft. Myers, FL. Contact same as always \[richardhpayne@aol.com\]\(mailto:richardhpayne@aol.com\) \[www.fmmaonline.org/homePage.htm\]\(http://www.fmmaonline.org/homePage.htm\) for more details.](#)

157 PICNIC, FUN, CONVENTION

BEAVER, PA— The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley recently held their summer picnic – lots of fun, food, and magic. Doug Ries reported the need to vote on the National Council Ballot for S.A.M. Decision was made for Doug to do this. An election committee was appointed by President Eric Davis to select a ballot for officers for 2012/2013. There is a possible new fundraiser in the offing. Seating arrangements for our meetings and performances were decided. Several members went to visit Ray Witkowski, a member on the sick list. Judy Steed passed out picture folders for those who participated in the last fundraiser.

Teach and Learn was presented by Rich Howard on “Thumb Tip Magic.” Eric Davis emceed the performances and also performed. He did a comedy routine with chattering teeth and showed how to juggle two balls that changed into one large one. Don Moody performed Queen's Coins; four coins magically move from one hand to another hand. Ray Lucas had three cards and three participants. Each chose his favorite card and a number. Ray's cards became the chosen ones. Tom Chidester had three eight-balls. He put two in his hand, which became

three. Hid did this three times until they changed into one large ball. Trent Rapp performed a routine on telepathy. A participant took a large envelope, sealed it, and marked the seal with his name. He gave another person a book and had him choose a page and a word on that page. He then put on music and dressed as his childhood hero (Michael Jackson). Trent asked for concentration; the page in the book was missing, and ended up in the sealed envelope. Bradley Barefoot had the name of a chosen card appear on his arm.

Bob Mullins showed how to make an "X" with a rubber band and change it from one color band to the other color. Bill Cornelius had participant pick a card and put initials on it; he then put it back in deck. The chosen card came to the top of the deck, and was put in a special envelope. Bill showed the envelope around; it was not the chosen card. He shook it, and it became the initialed card. —Judy Steed

[The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley 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.](#)

181

DAN HAUSS LECTURE

[HIGHTSTOWN, NJ](#)— Our June meeting, the last assembly meeting before our summer recess, featured a lecture by magic creator Dan Hauss. Before the lecture could begin there was some important business to be done, elections for

our regional representative. Visitors making presentations included National Second Vice President Kenrick "Ice" McDonald, RVP Pat Colby, and RVP candidate Eric DeCamps. A secret ballot was conducted with the results being delivered to the national convention by our Assembly Dean, Hank Strasser.

With the politics done, it was now time for the lecture, and it started with Lit, an effect that has been seen on national TV and used regularly by David Blaine. Dan performed too many effects to list them all here, but I would like to mention the noteworthy Dan Hauss effects that were demonstrated. First, Laced is an effect starting with a selected card that visually impales itself on a tied shoelace. Then, Flow, using an innocent bottle of water, in which Dan appears to defy the laws of nature. This was followed by Rise & Shine, using a borrowed deck and no threads, Dan caused multiple cards to rise from his pocket. And of course, the one he saved for last, Rattled. Using the cap from a water bottle, a coin vanished from under one cap, and reappeared under another. Truly astonishing.

We could have watched Dan perform all night. His imagination seems endless.



**Kenrick "Ice" McDonald,
Mitch Geier and Eric
DeCamps**

But all good things do come to an end, and with this meeting so did our season of magic. See you in September.—David Zboray
[Assembly 181 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 7:00PM. Contact Stephan Sloan lands10@optonline.net \(732\) 757-5337 \[www.magicsam181.com\]\(http://www.magicsam181.com\) for more details.](#)

194

EACH ONE TEACH ONE

[YONKERS, NY](#)— This was our last meeting before the summer, so we spent the time learning from each other. We began with our president showing us his favorite Rope with Four Ends, and then teaching us how to do it. Repetition helped to send some members home eager to try it.

Our newest member, Eric DeCamps, was up next. Eric is a full-time pro who has won several important competitions and has had a one-man show off Broadway. Known to several of us for quite some time, we are delighted to have him as a member and are sure he will prove a great asset to the assembly. Eric's contribution for the evening was a wonderful sponge ball routine that awakened in several members the desire to learn "to do sponges," one of the most popular effects in magic because so much of it happens in the spectator's hand.

We took a break for pizza and sodas during which some members shared an

effect or two. Mike Piazza amused us all with his collection of the "fleas" he will be using in the flea circus he is developing.

Following the break, Andrew Bieber demonstrated and explained a Magic Square. As a high school math teacher, this is one of his favorite effects, and several of us took notes so we could work on it.

During the Summer several of our members will be performing at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers where there is an ongoing exhibit about the great Harry Kellar, who was a native of Yonkers.

After enjoying the various teachings and the ongoing fellowship, we adjourned for the summer. We also recently conducted a survey by mail asking for suggestions to improve the attendance and programs for the future. We mailed out twenty-two surveys and got eighteen returns, so the board will meet during the summer to discuss the contents and draw up plans for another successful year.

[Assembly 194 meets on the third Wednesday of the month \(except July and August\) at 7:30 PM at the Catholic Slovak Club on Lockwood Avenue in Yonkers, NY. The President \(principal contact\) is Jim Stranges at \[magicjim1@optonline.net\]\(mailto:magicjim1@optonline.net\) or \(914\) 478-1473.](#)

200

JUNE MEETING

[SEATTLE, WA](#)— The theme for the June magic meeting was magic that involved cutting or chopping.

The club was lucky enough to have S.A.M. President Vinny Grosso and Regional

Vice President Michael Roth attend the June meeting. The club really appreciated spending time with both, and learning some information about the future of the S.A.M.

Ralph Huntzinger brought quite a few magic devices to show the club. He had items ranging from a small finger chopper to a neck-size guillotine. The club had a lot of fun checking out the workings of the devices. Special thanks to Ralph for bringing out the toys.



S.A.M. President Vinny Grosso and RVP Michael Roth visit assembly 200

Mike Jacobs presented an upside-down lantern he created based on designs from Jim Steinmeyer. Mike did some wonderful work and added some extra touches not found in Jim's initial design. The club was very impressed with Mike's work.

The club provides feedback to members who are currently working on routines in progress, and we had two members present items they were working on. Bill Murray presented a very nice multiple mind reading act revolving around a story of voices in his head. Bill has spent quite a bit of time working through the technique involved and really presented a much improved routine from his previous presentation. Bill is really turning the routine into a worker. John Cameron

presented a comedy routine he was working on for a family reunion. There were quite a few very funny moments, and the club was sure his family would love the magic by John.

Roger Sylwester presented a small hand-sized card duck, as well as a very funny routine involving multiple cards the duck selected. Roger always brings not only entertaining, but very interesting items to the club.—Jim Earnshaw

The Emerald City Wizards Meets the 1st Thursday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., at a Branch of the King County Library, WA. Please check website for meeting locations. Contact Jim Earnshaw jimearnshaw@comcast.net (206) 225-6715 www.emeraldcitywizards.org/ for more details.

215

STONE/JAY LECTURE

LOUISVILLE, KY— David Stone lectured for our assembly on May 8 and demonstrated many different routines, including a very smooth coin production and vanish, productions of bottles from a balloon, card routines, and book tests. Mr. Stone sells a device that will be usable for many routines and effects. His presentation was informative, creative, and entertaining.

Joshua Jay has lectured for our club several times, and each time he gives us wonderful advice and explains thing so clearly. Josh thinks out of the box and showed us routines using not only cards (amazing skill) but mind reading, coin routines that are mind blowing, watches, goblets, and other common items. Joshua Jay also gives each person in the lecture

a special download from his website. It was a great evening, with great performances; thanks Josh and David. It was...magical.—Tom Crecelius

Assembly 215 meets the second Tuesday of the month and as scheduled by lecturers, at the St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Contact Tom Crecelius Medimagic@cs.com (812) 633-7875 www.lmc.com for more details.

266

MAGIC HEATS UP LAKELAND

LAKELAND, FL— President Ed McGowan called the meeting to order. The business meeting was short, and it didn't take long to get to what we all came for – magic. Old members returned, and some out of state guests also joined the club – Richard Shapter and his son, Jack.

The magic started with Beverly and her routine about an empty bag and a sewing kit. The empty beg had a doll in it. Then it had a sewing kit and extra material to make a very large doll. All of which Beverly made herself. Jerry was next with a selected card and a piece of paper with the wrong card. When the paper was heated, it revealed the correct card. Jim Malone did a card effect with four indifferent cards that turned into Queens.

Elmo was up next with the two new members selecting a card each. The cards were revealed in a very unusual manner

Ed McGowan performed a dazzling group of four-Ace routines, with shuffling of the deck the likes of which you have never seen. New member Jack was up next

with a Coke bottle and a cap; he proceeded to put the cap inside the bottle, and then took it out. He showed the group an empty flower pot, then produced a flower out of the same pot. He had a stick with a Coke bottle tied to a string; he dropped the string and it tied it self to the stick. He had 5 ESP cards and had someone think of one; after some shuffling of the cards, he came up with the thought-of ESP card. He then blew up a balloon and inserted a spectator's cell phone into the balloon.

That ended the magic portion of the meeting; we then broke into groups and had some real good magic sessions. If you are in Polk County on the second Monday of any month, you are welcome to join us for an evening of fun and magic.—Elmo Bennett

Jim Zachary Assembly 266 meets the second Monday of the month at 7PM at the Lakeland I-HOP, I-4 & US 98. Contact Al D'Alfonso keeper0499@embarqmail.com (321) 4373814 for more details.

274

MAGIC AUCTION

BOCA RATON, FL— On Monday, June 4, we had our successful auction of new and used magic tricks by our members. It went quite smoothly, thanks to the planning of our president, Arnold Rosen, and our treasurer, Herb Arno. No change was involved, only "bills" to make the process go faster. Auctioneer Mike Shelley, a former club president, did a fine job and showed his extensive knowledge of magic. Helping him was Mark Horowitz, who has an extensive collection of

magic sets. I'm sure we have all owned a Mysto Magic Set at one time or another. Also assisting was Richard Adler, who is extremely knowledgeable and owns his own magic shop. A lot of bargains were available; the sellers found some spare money to put to good use. The club got ten percent, which helps us also. A good time was had by all. I'm sure we will have another auction soon with amazing magic again from our members.

—Marshall Johnson

The Sam Schwartz Assembly 274 meets at the JCC Campus on the first Monday of each month. Contact Arnold Rosen, President Arnold205@aol.com (561) 212-2575 for more details.

277

TELL US A STORY

STROUDSBURG, PA— The Pocono Mountains Magic Club met in their new location in June and "Story Telling Magic" was the per-

formance theme.

Austin Alexander Miller was up first; he told us the story of Phineas Gage, who suffered a mental illness as a result of having a metal spike thrust into, and out of, his head. Since mental illness wasn't very well known back in the 1800s, his illness was thought to be the work of Satan. Phineas was buried tied down to his



The PMMC Booth At The Local Arts Festival

coffin with ropes actually threaded through his skull. However even after crossing the ropes and tying a knot, the skull still managed to mysteriously escape the ropes.

Joseph Raven was up next with a mini-lesson on suggestion. Joe showed us how his words and actions could suggest the name of a card to a spectator subconsciously. He then riffled down the deck and had another spectator look at one card. He then revealed the card on a pad; it proved to be the correct one.

S. Patrick was up next with a story about the I-Ching Coins. The Chinese believe in maintaining a positive chi, and the I-Ching Coin is a symbol of that. The "Xie Chen," or mischievous spirits, would take the coins off the ribbon creating havoc. It would take the help of a "Wu," or Chinese Shaman, to correct the problem

and banish the evil spirits. Jordan Benoit was up next with a great story about the Time Machine Deck. The deck works in both manual and automatic modes. He showed the manual method

by incorporating some great ambitious card moves. The automatic method was way cooler as the deck cut itself to reveal a chosen card.

Our last performer, Odes Odhner, shared with us "Who would you do voodoo to?" Odes showed two stacks of chips that displayed symbols of the Loa spirits. Odes placed one of his chips face down into the small coffin, and then the spectator would place a random chip in the small coffin. After all the chips were inside, Odes showed that they all matched, proving the spectator has some voodoo inside him after all.

—S. Patrick

Assembly 277 Meets on the Third Friday, Each Month, at the "Art Space Gallery" at 18 N. 7th St. Stroudsburg PA. 18360. 7:30 PM start. Call S. Patrick at (570) 242-6821 for more info. Contact S. Patrick damagician@verizon.net (570) 242-6821 www.pmmcmagic.webs.com for more details. ☆

S.A.M. SPOTLIGHT — Dr. John Risher

Assembly 32 in Lynchburg, Virginia, is proud to honor Dr. John Risher, who turned 102 in May. Dr. Risher is still in good health and regularly drives himself to Assembly 32 meetings. He joined Assembly 32 fifty years ago, and was recently made an honorary Life Member.

Dr. Risher was introduced to magic and the S.A.M. by the late Hersy Basham. He never performed magic professionally, but has had great fun showing unbelievable things to his grandkids. Although he seems to enjoy watching all types of magic, he dabbles with close-up effects more than anything else.



Carl J. Schnepf Jr. (1934 – 2012)



Carl J. Schnepf Jr. of Indianapolis passed away June 26, 2012, at the Indiana Masonic Home. He was seventy-seven.

He was born December 6, 1934 in Indianapolis to the late Carl J. and Thelma Amann Schnepf. He graduated from Emmerich Manual High School, and he attended Butler University. His memberships included Zion Evangelical Church of Christ, Evergreen Oriental Masonic Lodge No. 500, Prospect Masonic Lodge No. 714, Indianapolis Valley of Scottish Rite, Forest A. Wakeman Council No. 110, West Side Chapter No. 138, Wm. D. Bray Commandery No. 65, Shrine Transportation Club, Shrine Past Masters Club, Shrine VCM Club, The Society of American Magicians, and the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-eight years, Laurel Schnepf, his son Carl J. Schnepf, grandsons Christopher Schnepf of Indianapolis and Ryan Schnepf of Tucson, great-grandchildren Nicolas, Michael, Elizabeth, and Rebecca, and brother Paul Schnepf of West Lafayette. He was also preceded in death by his son Kurt Schnepf.

The Broken Wand Ceremony was performed at his wake by Taylor Martin, Tom Winterrowd, and former Assembly 31 members, the Callerys.

Robert O. “Bob” Utter (1923 – 2012)



Robert O. Utter died June 29, 2012, at age eighty-nine, after complications due to hip replacement surgery. Bob was a past president and Honorary Life Member of the Fort Worth Magicians Club, I.B.M. Ring 15, and S.A.M. Assembly 138, and was a longtime trustee of the clubs. He was also a past president of the Texas Association of Magicians.

Bob was born April 30, 1923, in Sioux City, Iowa, to Oliver and Mary Leone Utter. From Sioux City, Iowa in 1923, Bob settled in Dallas and graduated from Forest Avenue High School. World War II came along and the Air Force wanted him to fly the “hump” in C47s for two years. In the process this earned him three Air Medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross as a member of the 2nd Air Commandos Group.

His interest in magic came from Calcutta, India. Flying can be monotonous at times; during a furlough in that eastern city he purchased a book on rope and coin tricks to while the time; he ultimately entertained the troops at the command of his C.O.

The G.I. Bill allowed Bob to begin his college career at Southwestern University, now Rhodes College, and later to continue at Texas Christian University. Entertainment at that time was in short supply, so Bob used his repertoire of legerdemain to emcee at a local night club. His bride-to-be refused to go see him for months; she believed that poor magicians are embarrassing, and she did not want to run the risk that he was not a good entertainer – no matter how entertaining he was in school. Bob married his college sweetheart, the former Betty Bynum Webb, and forty-nine years of marriage, two sons, a grandson, and a lifetime of experience in and out of magic convinced her that she should have gone to that first performance.

To have known Bob is to realize that he was a perfectionist, who, when he believed in something, would go the extra mile in involvement. He went to work for American Hospital & Life Insurance Co. One of his insurance groups happened to be Channel 5 in the Dallas/Fort Worth areas, and Carter Publications. Visiting with the station manager one day, he regaled him with the idea of promoting a live magic variety television show. That was the beginning of *Tricks and Treats* with the former Disney cartoonist, Johnny Hay. The hour-long show lasted over two years and years later he would hear those astonishing words: “Weren’t you Mr. Mystic on Channel 5?”

His insurance career took him to World Service Life Insurance Co. as a sales agent, then into the home office as the public relations director; he was later promoted to vice president of corporate services. Bob was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Bynum Utter, and son, Richard Alan Utter. Survivors: Son, Steven Lawrence Utter; and grandson, Nick Perry Utter.

Please take a minute and spread a few words of cheer with a card or note to one of our less fortunate members. Send additions, changes, or deletions to: Anthony Antonelly, Chairman, Sick and Convalescent Committee, (215) 820-3192 ext. 1512. magicforfun60@aol.com

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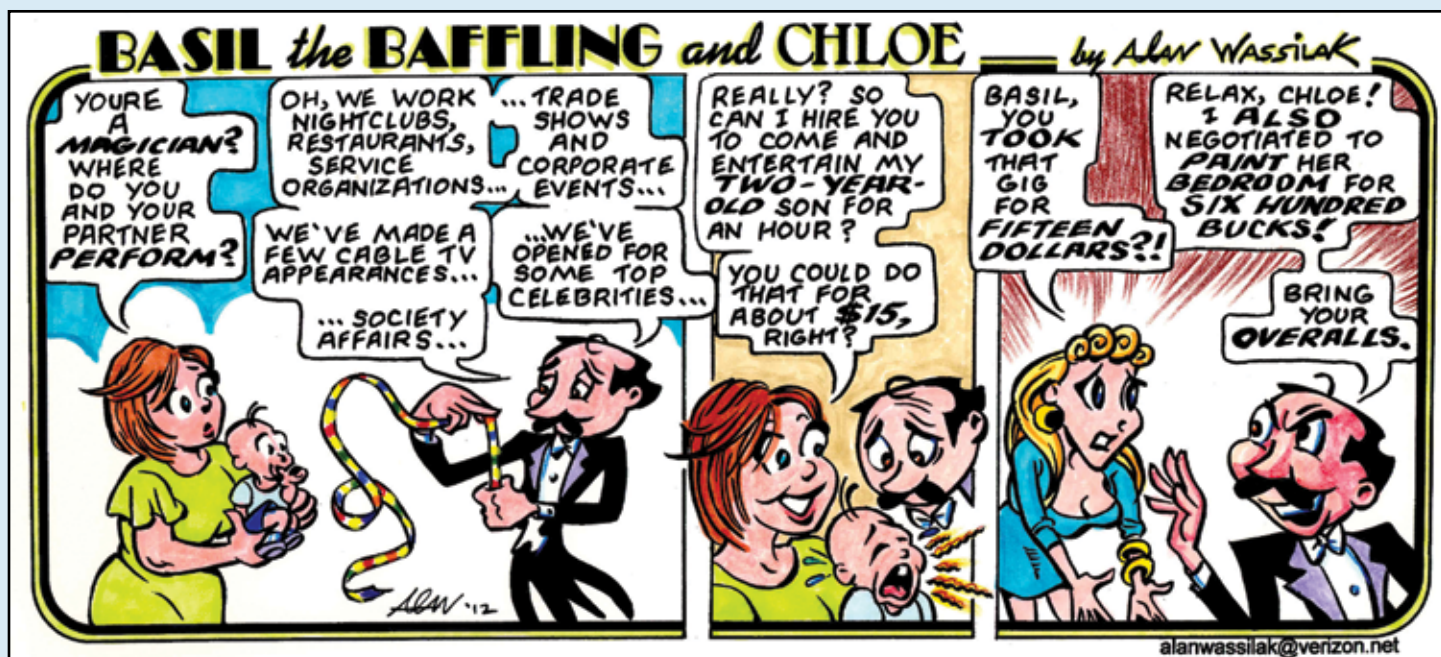
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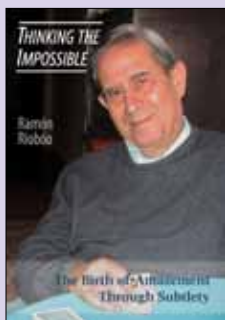
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QUICK LOOK BOOK NOOK



Excerpt From:

Thinking the Impossible

Author:

Ramón Riobó

Description: Hardcover, 303 pages with dust jacket.

Available From:

www.HermeticPress.com

I've never met Ramón Riobó, so I haven't had the pleasure of being fooled by his ingenious card creations. Mr. Riobó came to magic late in life, but he made rapid progress, no doubt aided by the fact that, living in Madrid, he had access to the SEI Circle of Madrid and Juan Tamariz. Starting with mathematical and self-working effects, Mr. Riobó progressed to a mastery of unorthodox sleight-of-hand techniques, psychological manipulation, subtleties, and naturalistic acting. His creations combine ingenious "semi-automatic" methods, cleverly placed (and unexpected) sleights, and evocative presentations that produce effects that thoroughly astonish laymen and magicians.

Speaking of "semi-automatic," I became aware of Mr. Riobó through routines published in Steve Beam's *Semi-Automatic Card Tricks* series. Volume eight of that series features a large chapter of his material. Steve Beam writes, "When Ramón performs, there is always the feeling you are being fooled by someone who is incredibly lucky. After all, there is no way anyone could cause the outcomes he repeatedly creates....Only after he has repeatedly assaulted your senses do you realize you are watching a master at work."

Thinking the Impossible is the first large collection of Ramón Riobó's work in English. My thanks to Stephen Minch and Hermetic Press for allowing these excerpts to be published in *M-U-M*. —Michael Close

A BAD MIND READER AND A GOOD PREMONITION

EFFECT: Someone thinks of a card and whispers its name to two other people. Holding the deck under the table, out of view, she removes a number of cards from the top equal to the value of the card she is thinking of. She sets the rest of the deck on the table. With her hands and cards still under the table, she double-checks her count of the cards she has removed.

Let's say she thought of the Eight of Clubs and has removed eight cards. You hand the deck to one of the two people who knows the identity of the thought-of card. Holding the deck again under the table, he shuffles it and removes as many cards as are needed to spell the suit of the card. In this example it would be five cards for the five letters in *clubs*.

This person hands the deck over to the third in the know, who follows a similar procedure, shuffling the cards, then removing as many as are needed to spell the color of the card – *black*, in our example.

This third helper hands the deck back to the first, so that she

can replace her cards and shuffle the deck. She then passes it to each of the other two, who also replace their cards and shuffle. The last person to shuffle the deck puts it into his pocket.

After concentrating for a moment, you announce that the color of the card thought of is coming to you – it is black. The person who spelled the color confirms this. You next announce that the thought-of card is a spade. The person who spelled the suit tells you that you are wrong.

After apologizing for your mistake, you concentrate harder and correctly name the freely thought-of card, the Eight of Clubs!

METHOD AND SUBTLETIES: The deck must be set up beforehand, with the whole suit of hearts on top, arranged in ascending order from Ace to King, the Ace being the top card. Put any card on top of the heart stack, so that the hearts now occupy positions from second to fourteenth.

After the first person removes cards from the top equal to the value of her card, the heart of that value will be on top of the deck. In our example, she thought of the Eight of Clubs. So, after removing eight cards, the Eight of Hearts lies on top of the deck.

You take the deck in order to hand it to the second participant. In this brief action, you palm the top card. Then, while everyone watches your helper spell the suit under the table, you have abundant opportunity to glimpse the palmed card and secretly slip it into your pocket. Don't be in a hurry. Wait until the time is ripe. It will come.

When seated, I will often run the top card to the bottom of the deck during a very short and casual shuffle, and then lap it. I then have even greater opportunity to glimpse the card while the suit and color are being spelled.

By the time the third party puts the deck into his pocket, you'll know that the thought-of card is an Eight.

The spelling of the suit and the color play no part in determining the identity of the thought-of card. They are done merely to mislead the audience and to make them forget that you touched the deck before handing it to the second person.

You can later stress that all the spellings were done out of sight, that you never touched the cards they removed, and that the third person put the deck into his pocket without you being near him.

You know they are thinking of an Eight. All you have to do is fish for the suit. The procedure changes, governed by the responses you receive. The case given in the description of the effect is the worst it gets. Let's look at the possible outcomes.

Your first statement (not a question) is about the color. You say the card is black. If the third person, who spelled the color, confirms this, you now say it is a spade. If you are wrong, you have made one mistake, but now can name the card.

If they had thought of the Eight of Spades, the result would have been impeccable, because you would have guessed the color, the suit, and the value without a single misstep.

If they had thought of the Eight of Diamonds, your first statement that the card is black would be wrong. You apologize and immediately proceed to state that the suit is diamonds. They confirm this, and you conclude by stating that the card is the Eight of Diamonds. In this case, you made an initial mistake on the color, but follow up with two much more impressive hits.

If they had thought of the Eight of Hearts, again you will miss the color when you say black. You next say diamonds and miss the suit. You apologize, explaining that mind reading is not your forte and that you shouldn't have risked it. Suddenly let your expression brighten. Say that, despite your being a bad mind reader, you nonetheless had a premonition, a hunch, of what the card would be, before they even thought of it. You then triumphantly pull the Eight of Hearts from your pocket – another impeccable ending.

Producing the thought-of card from your pocket is the strongest outcome. You may have failed as a mind reader, but if you deliver it convincingly, it looks as if all this has been only a theatrical ploy to dramatize a planned finish. And this finish is overwhelming. You had the card in your pocket before they even thought of it!

The next-best outcome is hitting three correct statements in a row, merely by looking at the participants' faces.

In the remaining two cases, you miss once, but this is an *experiment* in mind reading. You are correct two out of three times, and always get the value, which is the most difficult element of the three. The result is still impressive, since they genuinely thought of one card out of fifty-two.

Keep in mind that after the value has been counted, the deck is shuffled before and after each of the following spellings, and everything has been done out of sight under the table.

The two spellings of suit and color make the result seem truly impossible when the effect is later recalled, as they contribute to altering the memory of how the value was treated. It was counted, but it is likely, after the spelling of the suit and color, to be remembered as also having been spelled. This sets up an extra roadblock to attempted analysis when the trick is over.

The weak moment of the trick is when you ask the first participant to remove a number of cards equal to the value of the card she is thinking of. She should do so without looking at the cards, taking them from the top, and without shuffling the deck. The presentation, then, should not place any importance on this process.

NOTE: Needless to say, you could use another suit for the setup, but experience has proved that hearts is the suit most often chosen, especially by women. The second most popular suit is probably spades, but there is not enough of an edge to make that suit desirable to use.

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL (THAT'S ME)

I was working under the influence of several of Edward Marlo's solutions for the Open Prediction problem when I devised this two-deck Sympathetic Card effect. I've added little that is new to the physical method, but I've simplified the handling and added a number of psychological touches that strengthen the deceptiveness and impact of the effect.

EFFECT: You put a cased blue-backed deck on the table, explaining that it has magical properties. Without looking at its face, someone takes a card from a shuffled red deck. The red deck is turned face up and the unknown selection is placed face down in the middle. You announce that, without knowing the identity of the card, you will make its counterpart turn over in the magical blue deck. With a simple gesture, the magic happens.

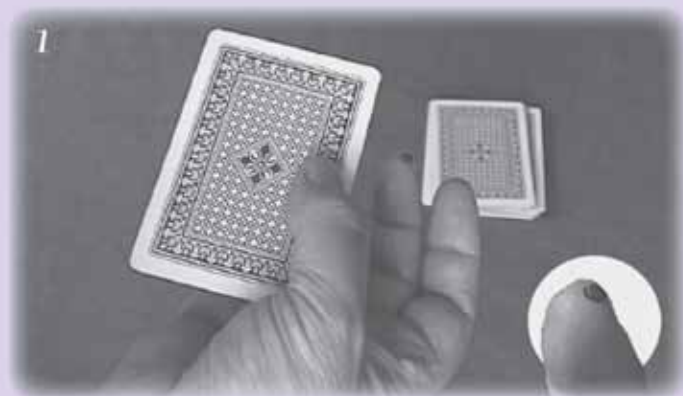
The red deck is spread face down to reveal, for the first time,

the identity of the selection, which lies face up in the middle. Your helper takes the blue deck from its case and spreads it face down to find the same card reversed!

PREPARATION: Stick a tiny ball of poster putty such as Blu-Tack – about 1/16" (1.5 mm) in diameter – in a place where it can be easily obtained. I usually stick it on the earpiece of my glasses.

Reverse a card, say the Nine of Hearts, in the middle of the blue-backed deck and put the deck into its case. Reverse the same card in the red-backed deck, fourth from the bottom.

METHOD: False shuffle the red-backed deck, keeping the reversed card in place and unexposed. Ask your helper to cut the deck into two piles. As he does so, secretly obtain the Blu-Tack from its hiding place and lodge it under the nail of your middle finger (Photo 1).



When your helper has cut the deck, tell him to take the card he has cut to; and, to convince him of the freedom of his selection, offer him the option of changing his card for another. He may do so as many times as he wishes, but make sure he does not inadvertently expose the reversed Nine of Hearts.

Once he has made up his mind, take the selected card between the forefinger and thumb of the hand with the Blu-Tack and set it to one side. As you do so, your middle finger can readily stick the Blu-Tack to the center of the card face.

Pick up the original bottom half of the deck (which contains the reversed Nine of Hearts) and spread it face up in your hands, pointing out all the other cards your helper might have chosen. Begin by pushing over the first two cards, then a small block that conceals the reversed Nine, and continue to spread normally (Photo 2). This is an easy operation, given that your apparent intention is a casual display of card faces as you make your point.

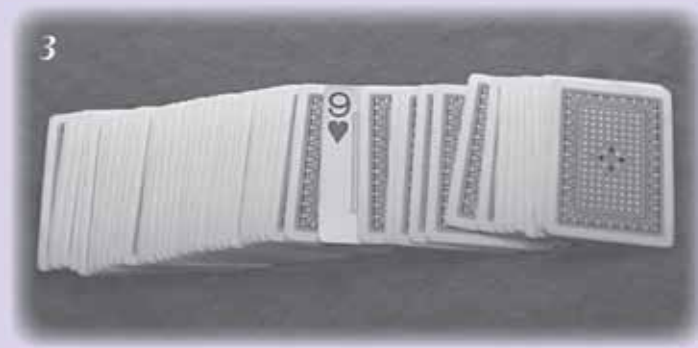
Square the cards and leave them face up on the table as you continue talking to the audience. Put the selected card face down on top of that packet.

Take the other portion of the deck, turn it face up and spread its cards in the same casual way, this time with no restrictions. Square the cards and drop them face up onto the selection.

The assembled deck is now face up with the face-down selection and Nine of Hearts, separated by just three cards, in the center.



Due to the weight of the cards, the face of the true selection will stick to the face of the card directly under it. If you now turn the deck over and spread it, the only reversed card to be seen is the Nine of Hearts. You may spread without fear of exposing the real selection (Photo 3).



Conclude by instructing your helper to remove the blue deck from its case and spread it on the table – to find the reversed blue-backed Nine of Hearts.

SUBTLETIES AND MENTAL MANIPULATION

You could write a prediction for the Nine of Hearts, instead of using the blue deck. The important thing is to avoid any suspicion that the card has been forced or exchanged, and to convey the impression that the magic happens in the blue deck. Let's look at the weak moments in the trick and how we can work around them.

The selection of the card in itself is not weak, but it's a bit strange not to let anyone see its face. We must, therefore, provide a reason for delaying the display of the face and for placing it reversed in the deck. The patter and presentation should work toward that purpose. As already explained, you stress that the selection is free by giving your helper the option of changing it, and you show all the different cards he truly could have chosen. That justifies turning the rest of the cards face up. At the same time, we are establishing, without saying so, that there are no cards reversed (though the face-down Nine of Hearts is being hidden).

When I put the packet face up on top of the face-down card, I

say, *"And remember, I cannot possibly know the card, as I haven't seen it at any time. Even if I see these other cards, it would be difficult to know which one is missing, which one is face down."*

The whole point is to provide a fairly convincing reason for not looking at the card at this point. After turning the assembled deck face down, I say, *"And now, despite the fact that I cannot know what your card is, I'll make the identical card reverse itself, in sympathy, in the magical deck."* With that, I have given a logical reason for reversing the card in the other deck.

After making my magical gesture and claiming that the magic has happened, I add, *"And now that I have made the card turn over in the blue deck, would you mind if I look at your card for the first time?"* And I spread the cards without waiting for an answer.

My new interest in the identity of the selection, only after I have dealt with the challenge of turning over the duplicate of an unknown card, further strengthens the logic of not having shown the face of the card before this point. This mental misdirection, added to the neat switch of one card for the other, without my actions offering the slightest hint of trickery, is what gives the effect its deceptive beauty.

NOTE: I often have the card selected from a borrowed deck. When I am first handed the deck, and while I ask whether it is complete and if it contains Jokers, I casually locate the Nine of Hearts, reverse it, and put it in position, all while attention is relaxed.

When I do it for people who are familiar with The Invisible Deck, I point to the blue card-case and tell them to imagine that it contains a magical deck. Later, I explain that a card will reverse itself in that deck, and I add that I will clearly spread it at my fingertips. In such cases, the force of the card from the red deck becomes easier, as they believe I'll be using a gimmicked blue deck to match the selection. When I then tell them to take out the deck themselves, the surprise is enormous.

A VARIATION

If you put the blue-backed Nine reversed in the red deck, and the red-backed Nine reversed in the blue deck, you can expand the effect, first showing that you have made the matching card turn face up in the blue deck, and then revealing that you've gone further – turning the two Nines face down, you reveal that you have made them change places in their decks!

THE FATEFUL MONTH

EFFECT: Someone names one of the suits in the deck, say hearts. You take all the heart cards out of the deck and arrange them in sequential order while you explain that each of these cards represents a month of the year, according to its value. The Ace will be the first month, January; the Two the second month, February; and so on, up to the Queen, which represents the twelfth month, December. Since there is no thirteenth month, the King isn't needed and is returned to the deck.

Have someone think of a month last year in which something unpleasant happened, something he would like to erase from his life. That will be his *fateful month*, and he is asked to remember it.

You shuffle the twelve heart cards, and then start taking single

cards from the face-down packet, holding each one as if estimating its weight. A fateful month, you explain, being full of sorrow, should be a little heavier.

At a certain point you stop on one of the cards. It feels different. Set it aside, saying that it feels heavier, so it may be the fateful month.

So far, your helper hasn't said which month he is thinking of, and yet you have set aside a card to represent the month he would like to delete from his life.

You now ask him for the month. Suppose he says May. This is the fifth month. You hand him the remaining eleven cards and have him deal them singly onto the table, turning each one face up. The Five is missing!

"Thanks to magic, before you even told us the fateful month, we removed it." With these words, point to the card you set aside earlier.

"But what I actually promised was not to remove it, but to eliminate it, so that it ceases to exist altogether." Suiting actions to words, you turn the solitary card face up – revealing a blank face!

METHOD AND SUBTLETIES: You need a card with a blank face, which you secretly load on top of the deck before you begin.

In performance, once you have found all the cards of the chosen suit, remove them from the deck, set it down, and arrange the thirteen cards in sequential order – Ace at the rear, King at the face – as you explain how they relate to the months.

You must next palm the blank-faced card from the deck or otherwise secretly add it to the suit packet. You could keep hold of the deck as you arrange the thirteen cards, but I feel this looks awkward and unnatural. It is better to set down the deck while you do the arranging. However, after you have the cards in sequence, you need a motivation to pick up the deck again, so that you can palm or steal the blank card. To provide the motivation, we have removed the King along with the other cards of the chosen suit. This seems perfectly natural. So, after arranging the cards and explaining that only the Ace through Queen are needed to represent the twelve months, you remove the King from the packet, set the packet down, somewhat unsquared, pick up the deck, and insert the King into it. With the deck once more in your hands, you can palm the blank card.

As you next put the deck aside, turn your attention to the unsquared twelve-card pile and pick it up in your left hand, turning it face down if it isn't already. Then secretly add the palmed card onto the packet as you square it.

You can also avoid palming entirely by squaring the face-down packet over the deck and stealing the card under it.

As you add the blank card to the packet, misdirect from your actions by asking the person you wish to help you to think of a particularly bad month he had last year.

During the ensuing conversation, give the face-down packet a casual false shuffle that retains the sequence but can give the same result as a straight cut. A Charlier shuffle is perfect for our purpose.

Glimpse the bottom card of the packet to determine where the blank card now lies. Since the packet contains thirteen cards, if

the bottom card is, say, the Three, the blank card should be the tenth from the top ($13 - 3 = 10$).

By this time your helper should be thinking of his fateful month. You now pretend to estimate the weight of each card to determine which month he has in mind. With your right hand, take a card at a time from the top of the packet, pretending to feel the weight of each one. While doing this, count the cards secretly and do not reverse their order. Just take each new card under the previous one, leaving it widely side-jogged as you sense its weight. Then pull it square with the card or cards above it as you take the next card under the right hand's packet. When you reach the number you calculated for the blank card (ten in our example), act as if the card is heavier than the others and set it down, saying, *"I think it's this one. Yes, this could be your fateful month."* As a part of this action, cut the packet at the point where you remove the card. The packet will now be in order, with the Ace on top and the Queen on the bottom.

When your helper names his fateful month, perform an overhand shuffle, running single cards while secretly counting them. When you reach the needed card, throw it and all the remaining cards onto the ones you've run. Begin another shuffle by running the first card (the fateful one) and shuffling off the rest honestly to destroy their order.

Now palm off the bottom card and dispose of it when attention is elsewhere. If you are sitting, you can lap the card, which is what I do, because it's a technique with which I'm very comfortable, and the result is cleaner.

If you prefer, you can control the necessary card to the top of the packet during the shuffle, and palm it from there, eventually unloading it onto the tabled deck. However, a top palm from a small packet is more difficult than a bottom palm.

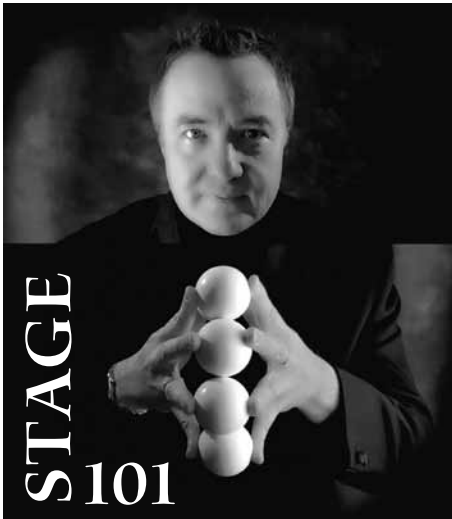
Whatever method you've chosen to remove the required card, hand the remaining eleven cards to your helper and tell him to deal them one by one, face up onto the table.

At this point you should be building excitement and making everyone aware that you removed a card before knowing what month your helper had chosen.

Conclude the effect as described – and keep in mind that the stolen card, representing the fateful month, should *not* reappear. You have, after all, eliminated it, leaving it blank.

AND FOR THOSE SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Occasionally, it is worth the trouble of carrying a couple of blank-faced cards with different back patterns, ones for common brands of cards. You can then borrow a deck and add the blank card. Ask the owner of the deck if he will mind if you do a very good trick that may leave one of his cards slightly altered. If he agrees, perform The Fateful Month with his deck and secretly pocket the stolen card, leaving him the blank-faced card as a souvenir. Done with a borrowed deck, the trick is more deceptive and more astonishing. In addition, the blank-faced card will be a strong reminder of the amazing thing you have done. The story will grow with each telling. ☆



RUNNING GAGS

One of the best ways you can improve your act is by watching a great performer. The thing to bear in mind, however, is that as a rule you shouldn't watch another performer in order to copy a trick, joke, line, or a routine. The things that you really should be looking at when studying another performer are the act structure, the strategies used to entertain the audience, and the overall showmanship. If you follow my advice, you will find it easier to develop an original act. And if you are lucky enough to study the work of an exceptional performer, then you might learn some great lessons that could last a lifetime.

As it turned out, one of the first magicians I ever saw taught me a lesson in magic that I have used for many decades; it is probably the single most important thing I ever learned.

The magician to whom I am referring is the late Earl Everett "Presto" Johnson. Presto was a funny comedy performer, a very skilled coin and cigarette manipulator, and, in his prime, probably the best kid show performer in New York City. I was about six years old when I saw Presto perform. Since I was quite young and not yet a magician myself, my memory of his show is a bit hazy. But there are two things I remember from this show.

The first thing I remember was that he kept a stuffed toy dog sitting on top of the rim of a Lota bowl. As soon as he completed a trick, he would lift the toy dog off of the Lota bowl and empty the water from the bowl into a pail. Basically, the illusion was

that the toy dog was peeing into the bowl throughout his act. Needless to say, this is certainly not high class humor. But I can assure you that to a room full of youngsters, this was hysterically funny. The thing that struck me the most was that this gag got funnier each time he emptied the water from the Lota bowl. Incidentally, I would learn much later that this gag was originally from an old magic book from the 1940s, but I have to give Presto a lot of credit for capitalizing on it with a great deal of comic flair.



Presto Johnson

The other thing I remember was that early in his act a rubber chicken magically appeared; he acted terrified of the fake bird and quickly threw it into his prop case. Presto then told the children that he was very scared of the bird and if they (the children) saw another chicken, then they should let him know. With that said, a few minutes later another rubber chicken appeared, and I, along with the other kids, screamed and pointed at the chicken in his hands. A second later, Presto himself apparently "noticed" the chicken and in what can best be described as a violent struggle he fought with the chicken until he was able to get control of the wayward bird, throwing it into his prop case. This happened about five or six times throughout the show. As I remember it, near the end of his act, Presto turned his back to the audience to get a prop from his case and stuck on his back was another rubber chicken! As you can imagine, all of us went nuts as we pointed and screamed, "The

chicken is on your back!" Presto yelled for help and rolled around the floor as he struggled to remove the offensive creature from his back.

When I was ten years old, I visited a flea market and met a man named Bill Farkus, who was selling magic tricks in a booth. I bought a set of cups and balls and a dice divination effect from Bill and was immediately hooked on magic. Like most kids, I was mostly performing pocket tricks, and on a couple of occasions, during events such as school talent shows, I got to perform on stage. I enjoyed being a "stage magician," but being a child and an amateur, I didn't get to perform on stage often enough to get good.

Later I became a regular customer at The House of Hocus Pocus, a Brooklyn magic shop owned by a man named Steve Fields. In addition to the magic shop, Steve also owned an entertainment agency; when I was about twelve years old, Steve began to book me for kids' birthday parties.

My first kid show was a collection of tricks cobbled together. There was no rhyme or reason to anything I did; I just did the best tricks I could, one after the other to cover the amount of time that I had to perform. Eventually, I learned that the primary job of the kid show magician was not to amaze the audience. No, the primary job is actually to amuse the audience. In other words, I had to learn to be an entertainer who could whip the children into a collective frenzy and get them to laugh and scream throughout the show.

One way to get children to react strongly is to do a few sucker tricks; to that end I purchased tricks like the old Harry Leat effect known as Run Rabbit Run. Still, I was just doing a series of tricks with no connection to each other. The bottom line was that I got a good reaction, but what I did was not what I would consider a cohesive "show."

When I was about fourteen years old, I was visiting Tannen's Magic Shop in Times Square. While there I ran into Presto Johnson. Presto was a very kind man and that day he gave me all sorts of performing advice and told me funny stories about his career. I told Presto how much I loved his show when I was a little kid and how great

I thought his bits with the Lota bowl and the rubber chicken were. He told me that this kind of routine is known in comedy as a “running gag.”

The running gag is a standard comedic device in which a joke, a line, or a situation appears repeatedly throughout a single performance. For instance, there is an old vaudeville running gag called the “medal gag.” This gag works like this. Imagine a juggler opens his act with three-ball juggling; after the routine is finished, he pulls out a military medal and sticks it on his chest, as if to congratulate himself on a successful performance. Then, for his second routine, he juggles five rings beautifully; at the conclusion of that routine, he gets another medal and puts it on his chest with even greater bombast. Then the juggler pulls out three clubs and begins to juggle. Suddenly, the juggler makes a mistake and the clubs fall to the floor. The performer acts dejected and shamefully removes the two medals from his chest. Finally, the juggler climbs aboard a six-foot tall unicycle and does a fantastic routine with five clubs; as the audience applauds, he pulls out a very large medal and puts it on his chest as the crowd roars with approval.

The medal gag as I described it above is primarily a joke. But it has an extremely important secondary benefit that should not be overlooked. Let me explain. If the aforementioned juggler did *not* do the medal gag, then he would have an act with four routines (balls, rings, clubs, and unicycle) with no connection to each other. But *with* the medal gag, the four routines become tied together as part of a greater whole. So the lesson here is that a well-crafted running gag can become a unifying element to your show.

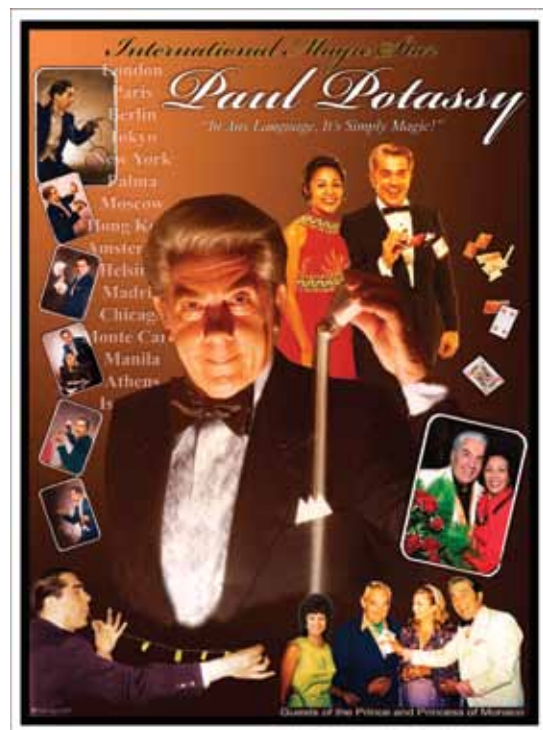
When it comes to magic, a performer can choose to omit a comedic running gag and instead use a repetitive premise or theme. Take for instance my friend Paul Potassy. Since the early 1950s, Paul has opened his act by introducing a salt shaker that contains “magic salt.” Throughout his act Paul uses the premise that the salt makes all the magic happen. For instance, when he sprinkles the magic salt on a set of scarves, they suddenly become knotted together. And when he sprinkles magic salt on a borrowed bank note, the money disappears.

A good example of using a repetitive theme is the act of the Mexican magician Abe Cantu. Historically speaking, for hundreds of years magicians have used doves for various effects, but the first magician to do a dove-themed act was Cantu in the 1940s. Basically, Cantu did various magic tricks and at the conclusion of each routine a dove appeared as the orchestra played a few bars from the famous song “La Paloma” (which in Spanish means “The Dove”). For example, Cantu did the torn and restored newspaper and at the conclusion of the trick a dove appeared from the paper. After he did the 20th Century Silks, a dove appeared from the silks. And after he did the Miser’s Dream, a dove appeared from the coin pail. On their own the three aforementioned tricks have nothing to do with one another. But by capping each routine with a dove production, Cantu was able to create a cohesive and commercial act.

Which leads me back to Presto. By doing the running gags with the Lota bowl and the rubber chickens, Presto elevated his kid show to another level. After I met Presto that day thirty-four years ago, I headed back home as my brain buzzed with ideas; it was then that I decided to create a running gag for my kid show.

During the opening of my kid show, a cane vanished; this led into a change bag routine with red, white, and blue silks. I attempted to make the silks change into an American flag, but I failed to do so. As I told the kids that I was sorry that I could not make an American flag, I actually held a flag in my hands. When the children called out to tell me that I was holding a flag, I looked at my hands and the flag magically changed back into the three silks. I then made the kids promise that if they saw an American flag, they would let me know. With that set-up, I continued to do standard kid show tricks, but very often at the end of a trick an American flag would appear. As the kids alerted me about it, I would look for the flag, but it was gone.

For instance, when I did the magic coloring book routine, after the trick was



Paul Potassy poster -
photo courtesy of Nielsen Magic

over, I flipped through the pages without looking at the book; on every page was a picture of an American flag, which made the kids go completely crazy. When I did the Run Rabbit Run trick, the flat rabbit would appear in my back pocket and as I was putting the rabbit away a flag would unfurl from behind the rabbit, which elicited utter pandemonium. I finally would *see* the flag and at the finish the flag would change into the cane that had disappeared at the beginning of my kid show. Once I developed the American flag running gag, my kid show became extremely commercial.

But my appreciation of the running gag did not stop at the children’s show. For instance, when I developed a manipulation act, I created a running gag in which my boutonniere flower appears and disappears from my lapel throughout my routine. And in my current comedy magic act, I have many different running gags that run throughout my show. I believe it’s the inclusion of these gags that makes my performance seem like a complete show and not just a bunch of tricks strung together. ☆

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Ellipsis* [ih-lip-sis] an omission of a word, sentence, or whole section from an original text

by Michael Perovich

A Tip on the Spread Switch

Dai Vernon's Matching the Cards is described in *Inner Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson. This was the first of the *Inner Secrets* trilogy, and this trick was one of Vernon's signature effects. He virtually always performed it as part of his close-up act at the Magic Castle. It gave him the opportunity to not only fool and surprise an audience, but also to gently poke them, because the trick leads them down the garden path as they think that the magician has made a mistake.

The effect involves having a card chosen and placed on the table without revealing its identity. The magician boasts that he will locate the three cards that will match the value of this unknown card. Three cards are located and they are indeed all of the same value. The spectator is now asked to reveal the originally chosen card; this proves to be of a value different from the three that have been located. The magician triumphs when the three "matching" cards are found to have changed into three cards that *do* match the chosen card after all. This may sound a bit confusing, but the effect is very direct and easy for an audience to appreciate.

The effect requires that three cards of the same value be shown and switched as they are placed on the table. These switches are accomplished by the double lift (although Francis Carlyle used a top change), by the glide we discussed last month, and by a maneuver from a spread of cards that is credited to Henry Christ. It is this last move that we will address here.

Although it might be possible to read into Ganson's description what I am now about to describe, it is subject to misinterpretation at best.

For our purposes we will assume that the magician is holding a break *above* the card to be shown and *below* the card to be rung in. The magician spreads the cards between his hands and divides the spread into two sections at the break. The edge of the spread above the break is used to lever over the first card of the section below the break. It is levered over on top of this lower half-spread (Photo 1).



Ganson's description says: "Hold the left-hand packet above the right-hand packet, then with the left thumb push the Eight [in our description it is an Ace] to the right to make it project over the right side of the packet." These instructions assume the reader is right-handed; bear in mind that I'm left-handed and that the photographs reflect a left-handed handling. Regardless, the point

to consider is the meaning of holding one packet above the other. You inherently need to position one packet above the other to lever over the card, yet this relative positioning has a second use as we will see.

As the card is levered back over to its original face-down position, the thumb holding the lower spread pulls the bottom card of the upper spread onto the card just levered over, and in a continuing action places the new card on the table. This effectively switches the card originally held below the break for the one above the break.

The issue to be addressed is that the spectators may notice that a card has gone missing from the upper half of the spread. At least two or three cards should be spread out with about three-quarters of an inch between their edges. If this pattern suddenly goes from three to two (or much worse from one to none) the spectators can easily become suspicious.

In order to hide the discrepancy of the missing card, it is imperative that those cards at the edge of the spread be seen as little as possible. This is done not only by holding the lower spread *above* the upper spread, but actually by holding it *over* the upper spread. This makes the pattern of cards, which will be disturbed by the removal of a card, impossible to see while the face-up card is being shown (Photo 2).



So the flow of the sleight is as follows: The top card of the lower spread is levered over; immediately as that happens, the lower spread is brought over the upper spread, hiding the edge of the spread. The card is now levered back over; the card is stolen from the edge of the upper spread; and the switched-in card is tossed on the table as though it were the top card of the lower spread (Photos 3, 4, and 5).

Properly done, the cards at the edge of the bottom half-spread are either covered or in motion. When the cards are in motion, attention is naturally drawn to the card being levered over and the ability of the spectator to register the spread pattern is minimized. When the hands are still and the face-up card is shown, the spread pattern is covered.

If you don't follow the procedure I've just described, your chances of getting away with the sleight are substantially reduced. You may also want to pull back the upper spread as the card is put down, altering the pattern.

I'll also note that it was very hard to catch the Professor doing this switch because there was an energy drop as he did it. Just



Photo 3



Photo 5



Photo 4

as you were getting ready to hone in on the procedure, you realized it was already over. He spoke a lot of “telegraphing” moves. If you pause before this switch is made or tense up, as I am wont to do, the audience will have their antennae up and be sniffing for something out of the ordinary. If it happens on the offbeat as you are talking and as a preliminary movement of little importance, then you will greatly increase your chances of getting away with it. All this is easier said than done, because it goes against our natural grain. It is, nonetheless, the essence of what we are trying to accomplish.

As in all such things, the goal is to perform the sleight so well that an observer won't tip to it, and to also perform it when the observer isn't looking. ☆

Photos by John Michael Perovich

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DENNY HANEY - DEFENDER OF THE OLD SCHOOL

BY SCOTT ALEXANDER

THE EARLY YEARS

The distinctive clink of his Zippo lighter cuts through the silence as a cigarette begins to blaze at his lips. "People tell me all the time that I shouldn't smoke. I guess these things are bad for you," Denny admits. But don't tell Denny Haney what he can't do, or he will make it his mission to find a way to do it. "People have been telling me I can't do things all my life. It makes me crazy." If there is a way, even against all odds, he will take his best shot. This has made his life in magic interesting, to say the least.

Denny's first exposure to magic was a local Baltimore television show, *Foodini and Pinhead*. "They were two little puppets. I'm sure if I saw the show today I would think they are the sickest looking set of puppets I've ever seen; but when I was five, they were real." Around this time, Denny's sister collected cereal-box tops and sent away for a magic trick. When the plastic Adams Ball and Vase arrived, she showed him the trick. He was mesmerized. That memory stuck with him. Five years later, fate intervened.

"I was ten and was walking through the dime store – remember those things? Today they are called dollar stores." His early childhood memory was re-awakened when he saw that beautiful red Ball Vase taunting him from within the shiny Adams blister-pack. He bought it and learned it, and there was no going back. He was constantly at that store, buying every twenty-five cent trick on the rack. His interest deepened in the sixth grade when, on the first day of school, his teacher performed the Thumb Tie with a broomstick and the cut and restored string. "He told the class that all of those who ended up going through the entire year with good grades would learn the secrets of how to do those tricks." Needless to say, that was the year Denny scored his highest marks. In the seventh grade, he discovered magic in the school library. Denny developed an insatiable desire for reading magic books. "I loved books like Joseph Leeming's *More Fun with Magic*, and stuff by Bruce Elliot, Walter Gibson, and Bill Severn."

That year, his teacher had the class put down on a sheet of paper several facts about themselves to share with the class. "I looked over to the kid sitting right next to me; he wrote 'magic,' too." They became fast friends, and his new pal Howard taught Denny about ten-cent magic catalogs and the back of *Boy's Life* magazine, where tricks and paraphernalia could be ordered through the mail, the precursor of the Internet. Then Howard dropped the real "magic bomb" on Denny; he told him about Phil Thomas's Yogi Magic Mart in Baltimore – the Mecca for magicians, according to its sign. Denny began frequenting Phil Thomas's shop. "No matter who you were, Phil always called you 'my dear boy.' 'My dear boy, that trick is not for you...My dear boy, you need the *Tarbell Course*.'" This is a sentiment that Denny now voices constantly in his own magic shop.

Denny's mom was supportive of his love of magic, but his dad wondered why he never got a real job. "When I told him I wanted to be a professional magician, he said, 'What? You can't do that; there is no such thing.' And he was right, because there wasn't, really. Occasionally, on the *Ed Sullivan Show* you would see an act, but when I saw Mark Wilson one Saturday morning, I knew that it could be possible; after all, he was doing it." Denny's interest in magic began to grow exponentially. It was all-consuming to him. When he was fourteen, he signed up for the Chavez



Denny with Blackstone Jr.

Course through the mail. "It was eleven dollars a month; my mom said she'd pay for it, but I'd really better learn this stuff. It couldn't be a whim." Back then, the kit came with all the props you'd need for the course. "It was great, because one of the first things you had to learn was cigarette manipulation and they sent you a pack of cigarettes with your kit." Since the defiant Denny had already been smoking since the age of thirteen, he considered this a bonus. To this day, Denny remains the youngest graduate of the Chavez Course.

The majority of Denny's vast magical knowledge (quite encyclopedic actually) grew from a deep connection with magic books. His real love of books took hold when he went to the Yogi



Denny and Lee performing the Sword Suspension

Magic Shop and returned a broken Abbott Backdrop Frame he had received as a Christmas gift. When he took it back to Phil Thomas to exchange it for something, Phil suggested a full set of the *Tarbell Course*, which then consisted of six volumes. "He was always trying to sell me that damn set of books. It was on the top shelf, all old and beat to hell. I didn't want that damn thing," Denny moans. But begrudgingly, he decided to make the trade. And he was glad he did. "Everything I needed to know about magic was in those books: mentalism, card magic, how to present magic, publicity stunts – everything! Those books changed my life."

For Denny, those were good times, growing up with the burning desire to become a professional. Denny put an act together and began winning magic competitions. "Frank Thompson, the underground card man, helped me a lot. He knew a hell of a lot about manipulation and boy, did he know stage magic. He would tell me about guys like Count Artell with his Clock Act and Gus Fowler, acts that none of the kids today have any idea about." Walter Cummings, who was a Chavez teacher, performed regularly at the MAES convention and every year would help clean up and polish the routines in young Denny's act.

A pivotal moment came when Denny met Howie Schwarzman at Phil's shop; Frank Thompson introduced the two. Howie saw much potential in Denny and readily took him on as his student. In 1962, when Denny was seventeen, Howie took him to the New York City Parent Assembly for their annual student/teacher night to present him as his student. Denny recalls how nervous he was performing his act, which consisted of doves, card manipulations, billiard balls, the Blue Phantom, and the Mis-made Flag. "I did way too much," Denny laughs jokingly. (Incidentally, Howie had been presented there years earlier by the venerable Dai Vernon.) Denny's nerves were well justified, because sitting in the audience were the likes of Milbourne Christopher, Roy Benson, and Frank Garcia. "After the show, Howie said to Benson, 'Hey Roy, what do you think of the kid's billiard balls?'" Benson was impressed and stopped backstage to give Denny some personal tips on presentation of the balls. "At the time, I thought to myself, 'How great of this nice gentleman to help me.' I was young and I had no idea who he was, or how special that moment was. I do now!"

Despite Denny's accolades and contest wins, Denny's dad still insisted that he prepare for a real job by earning a college education. But remember, nobody tells Denny what to do! Even his professors in college encouraged Denny to drop the magic and focus on becoming a teacher, where he could make a good, solid living. "Again, here is someone telling me I can't make a living doing magic." Defiant as always, Denny cut classes to practice his craft. "Yeah, I got thrown out of college because I accidentally burned down the study lounge doing the human torch bit." The stunt almost burned up the whole lounge, which didn't sit too well with the college administrators. The Dean of the college said, "Mr. Haney, do you want to stay here and learn, or do you want to continue to do your silly magic tricks?" Big mistake. Denny looked at him point-blank and said, "I'm taking liberal arts here to be a teacher, but you know, I'm sure I can make a lot more money doing magic." Needless to say, his college career left a brief but blazing light. Now forced to try to earn a living at magic, it was church basements, Scout banquets, and anything he could get to scratch by and make good on his word.

During this time, Denny went to see Harry Blackstone Jr. perform in the *Holiday on Ice* show at the Baltimore Civic Center. After the show, he was invited to have dinner with some magicians, including Phil Thomas and Blackstone himself. Phil suggested that Harry give Denny a kick-start to his career. "Harry

was going to put in a good word with Shelly Caston for me at the Playboy Clubs in Chicago." Unfortunately, Denny had just gotten his draft notice for the army and he asked Blackstone what he should do. Harry said, "Volunteer for the draft; do your two years; and then come back. The work at the Playboy Clubs will be waiting for you." He took the advice; a few weeks later he went for his army physical. Much to Denny's surprise, he was deemed 4F, unfit to serve.

The military doctor told Denny he had a mild kidney problem, as evidenced by albumen in his urine. If he were to get up quickly from a crouching position, he could possibly faint. He was not allowed to be in combat. "I thought to myself, 'Great, Playboy Clubs, here I come.' I was on the bus, saying, 'Hot damn, I don't have to go.'" But he just had to see his own doctor to get a second opinion. Then, still on the bus ride home, Denny remembers thinking to himself, "What do you mean I'm not good enough for the army?" The more he thought about it, the more it bugged him. His inner voice nagged at him. "I've been hearing 'you can't' all my life. They told me I couldn't be a magician; they told me I couldn't do billiard balls because I have small hands. Now they're telling me I'm not good enough to join the army?"

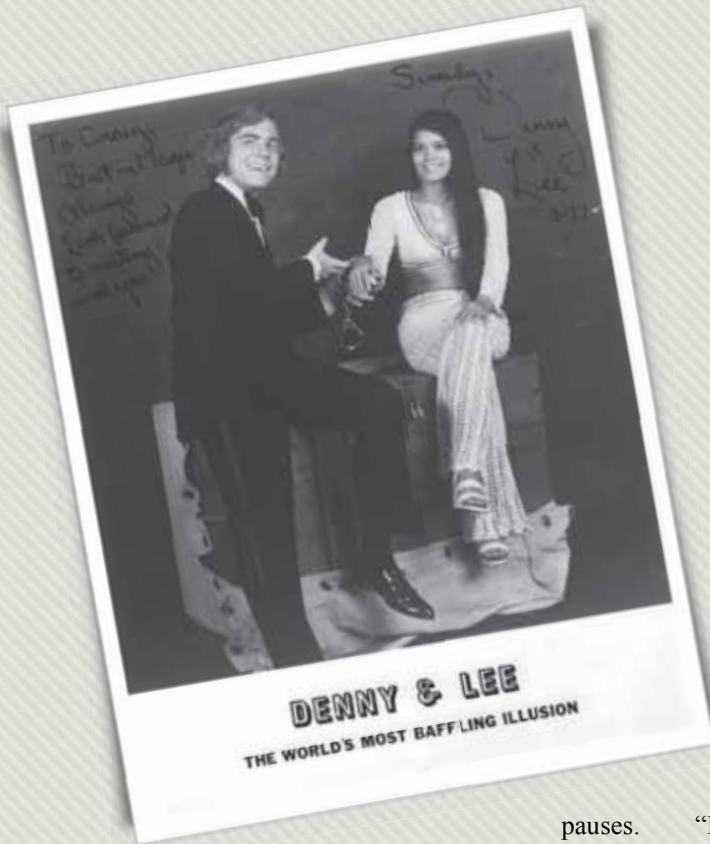
The next day Denny went to his own doctor to get his second required verification. Sure enough, albumen in his urine was confirmed. The doctor told him he would sign the form; when Denny turned it in, he would be off the hook. Surprisingly, Denny asked the doctor if there was a way to beat the test. The doctor, shocked, said "You mean you *want* to go to Vietnam?" Denny said, "I just don't like the idea of being told I can't do something." The doctor told him that there was a way to possibly beat the test. Denny followed the doctor's suggestion, no albumen showed up in his urine, and he was cleared for duty, feeling confident that he had taught the US Army a lesson!

VIETNAM

In his training with Uncle Sam, Denny showed an aptitude for languages. Courtesy of the army, Denny was trained in Vietnamese. He was made a part of the ASA, the Army Security Agency. Denny was happy, because he realized this part of the army did cool, action-hero, top-secret stuff.

However, he assumed he would be sitting at a desk somewhere in Washington, D.C., safely sifting through and translating enemy documents. As it turned out, the army had different plans. In 1966, Denny found himself standing in the mountains of Pleiku, a strategically important town in South Vietnam's central highland region. Yes, Denny was translating, but in real time, right on the battlefield. "I would have to go out on patrol with a huge radio unit on my back with a big antenna whipping in the air, essentially saying, 'Shoot me, shoot me!'" But the adventurous and energetic Denny volunteered for all kinds of top secret missions. The CIA even sent him into the field with a team of diggers to locate enemy telephone lines and physically tap into them. "I was literally out in the middle of a field crouching and listening with enemy all around."

Denny saw all kinds of combat in Vietnam. During an intense battle, Denny mounted a huge 50-caliber machine gun and shot thousands of rounds into the jungle. "We laid out walls of lead. I never looked into an enemy's eyes face to face. I never engaged one-on-one with the enemy." Denny had two fears during the war: being captured, because of how prisoners were tortured for information, and having to fight up close with a bayonet. "I just couldn't imagine stabbing someone or being stabbed." Denny



pauses. "I really don't like talking about this stuff."

Despite the bombs, bullets, and blood, there was something Denny oddly enjoyed about Vietnam: a sense of freedom. "Because it was so remote, we were pretty much out there on our own. Plus, what I was doing over there was so top secret, not even the commander knew what I was doing." Added to that, Denny had seniority, so he could basically do what he wanted, which is why Denny volunteered for another tour of duty, not once, but twice. "I figured if I made it through the TET offensive, I could make it through anything. I got all the medals, the bronze star. Once I got through the TET offensive, I felt indestructible. I let my hair grow long; I could do whatever the hell I wanted." Denny served three tours of duty in Vietnam, but was itching to get back into performing, and it was all inspired by a traveling magician who had come to entertain the troops – Johnny Aladdin.

"We had just come back from a fire fight, filthy and smelling of gunpowder, and we heard that there was a magician coming to entertain us," Denny scoffs. Denny had his doubts about how this magician was going to go over for this tough crowd. "We were nineteen-year-old trained killers...and some magician is going to entertain us. We were ready to eat him alive."

But when Johnny Aladdin took that stage, it all changed. "He killed! He did nothing more than the Serpent Silk with a rope, the vanishing bird cage, card manipulations, the Kellar Rope Tie, and the Dr. Q hypnotic act. But it didn't matter what he did, he was just so entertaining." During the Dr. Q act, Denny recalls that Johnny had some of the guys' hands stuck to the floor, some with their thumbs stuck up their noses. When Aladdin clapped his hands these grown men, seemingly under his command, collapsed into a pile on the floor. By the time he was finished, he had earned the audience's respect because he had thoroughly entertained them. "That's when I realized what magic was all about. It wasn't about trophies and winning contests. It was about *entertaining* an



audience. Johnny Aladdin taught me that." Aladdin's way of connecting with and controlling the audience and his ability to relax and go with anything were the main lessons Denny absorbed. "I learned confidence from him. Display the confidence without displaying arrogance. That's where a lot of today's performers fall down." Denny and Johnny struck up a friendship. Johnny told Denny to look him up in Saigon for a job opportunity when he got out of the army. Denny was thrilled, but the war raged on.

For Denny, there was love in the midst of war. It was in Vietnam that Denny met Lee. She was a cashier in a club where he used to hang out. He taught her some tricks, and they hit it off. Before long they made plans to get married. Lee's father had other ideas. He didn't want some horny American GI running off with his daughter. Her father forbade their marriage. Predictably, Denny dug in his heels.

When Denny finally left the army behind in Vietnam, he returned to the States, got his bearings as a civilian, and determined to make good on the promise he made to Lee to come get her. When he showed up at her parents' doorstep, they were in shock, especially her father. Because he saw that Denny had honored his promise, her father indeed agreed to let Denny marry his daughter. It was a machine-gun wedding however, because



Working behind the counter at the Denny & Lee Magic Studio

Denny had to escape from Pleiku; Lee's brother did not approve of the marriage one bit, and he stalked Denny with an M-16.

The newlyweds fled to Saigon. While there, Denny found Johnny Aladdin and began working for Aladdin's successful entertainment agency. He worked in every aspect of show business at Ladd Promotions, from booking acts and transporting them to gigs, to running the ins and outs of a booking agency. "I would even escort acts to gigs in a helicopter while getting shot at." Denny also performed his own gigs as well, all the while learning valuable lessons on the nuts and bolts of professional show business.

After his time with Johnny Aladdin's company, Denny and Lee headed back to the United States. They were now home in Baltimore, working on the act and performing small gigs. But as time went on, Lee wanted the act to remain suave and sophisticated, with her as the center of attention. This caused friction in the marriage, and over the next few years things began to get a little rocky. "She was always telling me what to do," Denny says, slowly crushing out his cigarette. His gut was guiding him to add more and more comedy to his presentations. His confidence was building, thanks to inspiration from Johnny Aladdin. Now, the spotlight began to be focused on Denny and his funny elfish rapport with the audience and not on his sultry sidekick. According to Denny, Lee really didn't like the sidekick role. Denny pauses and says thoughtfully, "I was finally trusting my instincts and becoming an *entertainer*." Denny's epiphany caused tension in their marriage, and it eventually led to divorce.



Johnny Aladdin

THE MONEY YEARS

Now that the act had split up, Denny considered throwing in the towel. A long-time buddy of Denny's who had become a big player in the TV industry in Los Angeles suggested Denny should just pack up and come work for him at his production company and forget about magic for a while. But Denny, ever defiant, thought he would just give it one more shot. Denny held auditions for a new assistant, and he found his new "Oriental Antagonist," Minh Dang. Minh joined the act; their relationship was simply employer and employee. Denny could do the act he wanted to do, the way he wanted to do it. But as it turned out, he and Minh just clicked. The relationship was never romantic, but she was the perfect straight man for the comedic and dynamic Denny. There were lots of laughs backstage and on the long truck rides to the gigs. Denny felt free to toss out ideas and try them with the new "Lee." Since the name Denny and Lee already had some traction with agents, Denny decided not to change the name. Minh always jokes that she didn't really mind, as long as the check cleared. It has stayed Denny and Lee to this day.

It was now, during these years, that the act really started to gain momentum. During long rides to college gigs and one-night club dates, Denny, Minh, and Denny's new male stage assistant (a young Alain Nu) brainstormed new ideas and bits for the illusions Denny had performed with the original Lee. These new twists and bits of business would become the core of the Denny and Lee act for the next fifteen years. Routines for the Canvas Covered Box, Sword Suspension, and Sword Basket became the hallmark of the show. It was grand illusion, mixed with comedy and a dash of sleight of hand. It was this act that shot him to the top of the corporate entertainment market in the 1980s – that, and a little boost from a hot new magician named Doug Henning. "Henning had just come on Broadway doing the Sub Trunk, Sword Suspension, and illusions like that. Clients would put calls into agents asking if anyone they represented had an act that did stuff like that Henning guy." As it turns out, Denny and Minh were in the right place, at the right time, with the right act.



Alain Nu, Denny, Tim Conway, and Minh

The Denny and Lee show began commanding thousands and thousands of dollars for one-nighters; they opened for stars like Glen Campbell, Air Supply, and Joan Rivers. "I was never personally 'a big star,' but I was very successful. To be a success in magic, you don't have to be a star...just have a wonderful life. That's the cool thing." Denny studied and learned from working with and watching these show business legends in person. These experiences only served to reconfirm what he had already learned from Johnny Aladdin years earlier in Vietnam. "It doesn't matter what you do, as long as they like you while you're doing it. It has to be entertaining, and of course as a magician you really have to fool them and fool them badly, with the best equipment and methods you can." But the real secret to all the successful acts he saw, from Johnny Aladdin to Joan Rivers, was confidence. And now in his career, he was brimming with it.

Denny's success in the industry was unparalleled. Here was a magic act getting standing ovations from engineers and executives at corporate events. The word spread through the corporate entertainment world like wildfire. In an article in *Tops* magazine from the '80s, one of the trivia questions asked was which act was the highest paid corporate magical entertainer. The answer was Denny and Lee. Denny was raking in the cash and using it to build his enormous collection of props, posters, and magic memorabilia. "I added it up recently; I have about a million dollars worth of things in my collection right now." Those were the good years.



THE MAGIC SHOP

As the days of the Reagan administration came to a close, Denny found himself burned out from the road. "I just got a little tired of all the traveling." He decided to open a magic shop. "That must have been the day I hit my head." Everyone tried to tell Denny not to open a magic shop. They said that no one would appreciate it. They told him you can't make money with a magic shop. All that did was add fuel to his fire.

"When I first officially opened the shop around 1992, it was gangbusters." Denny was known as a pro in the industry; when all the pros heard he was opening a shop, Denny became the go-to guy for the real high-end stuff. Denny's mantra in the early days was, "I'm only going to carry the best money can buy." This was great for a while. Then, with the economy starting to circle the drain, the vociferous growth of the Internet, and the virus-like expansion of the "online discount magic shop," Denny slowly felt a choke-hold on his business, a hold that he has been trying to maneuver his way out of ever since.

"In order to keep up with the variety of products these discounters can offer, I have to get *this* trick, and then *that* one; and I have to order six or eight of each. These discounters have no overhead, because most of them don't even have a physical address. They don't really stock anything." Looking around his shop, you can see display case after display case brimming with tricks. "I'd say that eighty percent of the magic being released today is unnecessary," Denny proclaims, slamming his hand down on the table.

It's true. Today, magic tricks are being released at a breakneck pace due to the abundance of technology that makes it easy for any yahoo with a computer to put together his own DVD or packaged trick.

Denny laments that people come into the shop constantly asking the same thing: "What's new?" They should be asking: "What's old?" The phone constantly rings at the studio with people asking about tricks and effects. "At least seventy-five percent of everything I'm asked over the phone can be answered by saying, 'It's in *Tarbell*.' And when I ask if they have *Tarbell*, they always say, 'Well...I've been meaning to get that.'" According to Denny, the general population of magicians doesn't read anymore. "I can tell when a pro walks in, because nine times out of ten the first thing they head for is the bookshelf. That's when you earn my respect."

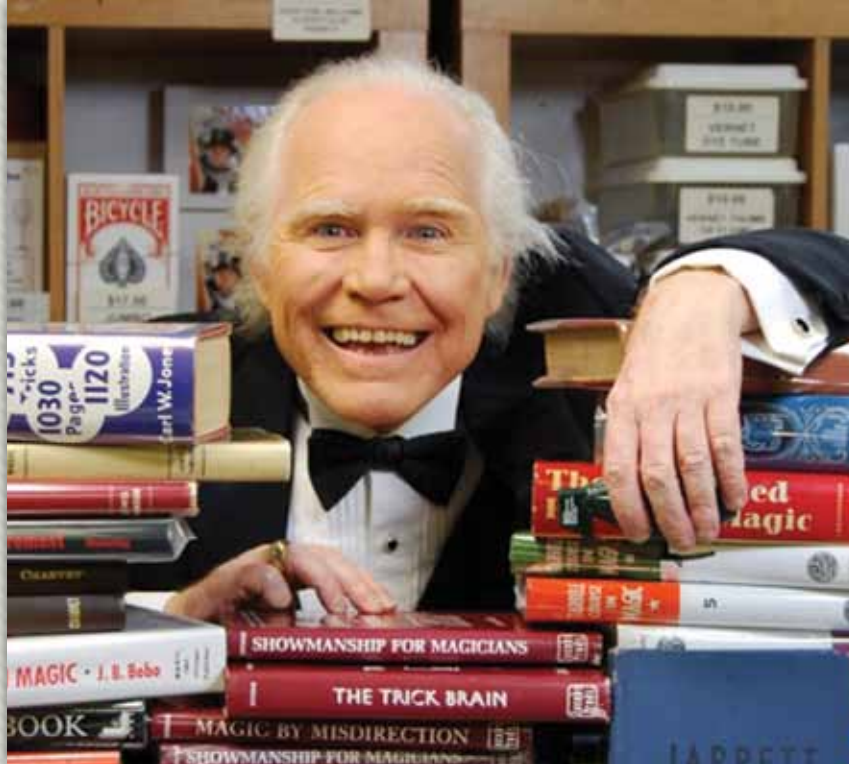
Denny believes that the great thing about books, something that Phil Thomas knew back in the day, is that they lead you to places you never thought your mind could go. "Books are a discovery. You discover things as you read; you picture ways to do them in your mind. You see things you never thought of, or never saw, and you try them out."

Denny observes that much of the magic being released today in instant downloads or on DVDs are just quick tricks that are, for the most part, re-hashed tricks from long ago, void of any real entertainment value or presentation. In Denny's opinion, the best kind of magic, stand-up magic, is virtually nonexistent on TV. The new generation growing up in magic just doesn't know anything about doing stand-up magic, because no one is showing them, no one is teaching them. "I love stand-up magic. I still perform whenever I can, like at conventions, in Vegas, or at the Magic Castle. There is nothing like standing on a stage. I'm trying to get a lot of the guys who hang out here into this type of magic. Get up on stage and try it. That's what a real magician does!" Denny exclaims.

People always argue that there are no venues for stand-up magic anymore. But there are still Cub Scout banquets, birthday parties, and civic organizations; those haven't gone away. And bigger gigs are available for stand-up magic, too. In these tough economic times, corporations are leaning towards stand-up shows that fit their budgets better than large stage spectacles. From cruise ships to private parties, stand-up magic is where most working magicians actually make their living. "Nothing beats being on stage, getting those laughs and that applause; they love you, and they give you money for it! But most young guys today don't even know that this kind of thing exists. I consider it my mission to educate these young magicians."

Denny got a call recently from a young magician who had been in magic for ten years. He got into magic via the Internet. Denny leans forward. "The problem with a young magician learning from the Web is that they enter magic randomly." What Denny has observed is that their first trick is most likely well above their skill level. They have no foundation or fundamentals to build on. They are just thrust into the fray. This kid was the perfect example. He bought tricks here and there, surfed YouTube learning things, but he had never cracked a magic book. He finally called Denny, frustrated, and said he had been in magic for all this time and was totally confused. "The first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem. This guy had no guidance, no foundation, and he knew it," Denny says sadly. Denny has since helped him and put him on the right path. "Maybe that is the way I am going to make an impact in magic," Denny realizes, "helping one person at a time."

Denny has influenced countless magicians he has helped along the way, including Alain Nu, Puck, and me. Denny beams with



pride when he speaks about how we have gone on to have successful careers in magic as working pros. And it is all because Denny took the time to put us on the right path, just like Phil Thomas did for him. Denny has taught and mentored us in big ways, but this advice and teaching is available to anyone who walks through his door and shows they care. Denny is magically paying it forward, and that's the kind of real-world, personal, one-on-one, passed down experience and knowledge that can only be obtained at a brick-and-mortar shop

like Denny's – face-to-face instead of screen-to-screen.

But you can't actually walk into many magic shops today. Most of them only exist on the Web. Denny explains it this way. "Some of the Internet shops selling magic to this new generation are able to attract customers by discounting and even selling cheap and inferior quality products." Denny himself has even strayed from his original goal of trying to stock the best quality items that he really believes in, rather than going for quantity and discounts. "People are just looking to save money when they buy magic nowadays; they will buy crap just because they think they are getting a deal. They buy inferior tricks because they save a few bucks and get free shipping. I often ask people, 'Do you have any other hobbies?' They say, 'Well, yeah, I collect stamps.' I say, 'Do you only collect the bad ones?'"

Denny battles on to sustain a real magic shop, one reminiscent of the days of the must and dust of the old Phil Thomas shop he loved in his youth – a smoky, beautifully dingy, and magical place where young and old can gather and mix and mingle, teaching each other personally. However, with the death of more and more brick-and-mortar magic shops, magic today is losing its intimacy. This kind of human experience is fading into ephemeral nostalgia, hard to recapture in a world of fast-food and Persian bazaar magic on the Internet. Denny is almost quixotic in his battle to fight it, an enemy he seems helpless to defeat.

Denny may have fought on the front lines in Vietnam, but now he finds himself fighting a different battle. Instead of hidden snipers and hand grenades, he now fights for his beloved shop, against his digital discounting opponents. Now instead of crouching in a field for hours surrounded by the enemy, here is Denny, battle-worn and bloody, managing to somehow stay alive, pushing the old-school ways of reading books, the ways of sitting around a real magic shop learning from human beings with real world experience, swapping stories, memories, sharing new and old ideas....being real magicians. "My goal is to be the last real magic shop standing!" So Denny will keep performing, puffing, and plugging away, helping anyone who makes the effort to walk through his doorway. He will continue to change lives, one customer at a time, because nobody is going to tell him that he can't! ☆



Denny receiving the Milbourne Christopher Award with Bill Rauscher at the S.A.M. convention 2011



PERFECT TIME WATCH CONTROLLER

When I started this column in January of 2009 I made a promise to myself that I would not write the kind of column in which I threw together a new, untested card trick just for the sake of publishing an article. I knew that what I had to share was the experience of having done thousands of shows from 1970 to the present. I was determined to write about things that I had used professionally. In this column I'll break that rule. The props were built,



but I never performed it, because it requires an assistant. That assistant was going to be my second wife, Annette (Photo 1), but we separated before we performed it. It works perfectly today after twelve years in storage (the trick, not Annette).

Rich Bloch invented Perfect Time, and I bought one of them years ago. I loved the effect, but I just wasn't comfortable with the method. It was manufactured and sold by Collec-

tor's Workshop, the company that was run by Rich and his partner Nick Rugerio. The Collector's Workshop line of products has been taken over by Viking Manufacturing in McAllen, Texas. They have been kind enough to allow me to discuss the Perfect Time watch and my system for using it. The Perfect Time effect is still available from them in a variety of styles and finishes (www.vikingmagic.com). The photos of the Perfect Time watches (Photos 2 and 3) and the revelation of the method are used with permission of George Robinson, owner of Viking. The new version of Perfect Time has some changes to the method, so if you plan to buy one I suggest that you give George a call at 956-380-3929 and discuss it with him. He's a great guy and very knowledgeable about magic. He provided the version of Perfect Time that Criss Angel used on TV.

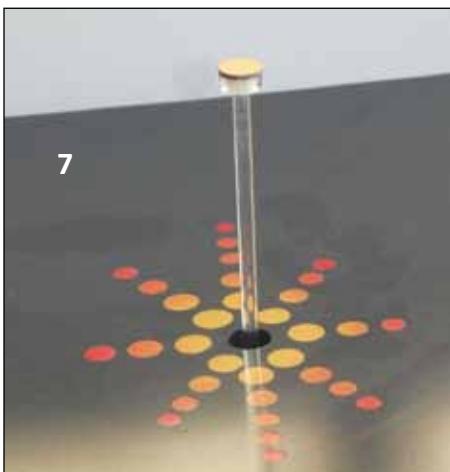
Today, Perfect Time is available in two different versions. My system uses the original method: magnetism. A spectator names any time, both the hour and the minute. If a magnet is placed close to the Perfect Time watch, the hands start to turn, scrolling through all of the hours. The watch is placed in view of the audience, oriented so they cannot see the face. If the hands are stopped at the right time by taking away the magnet, the watch will display the time chosen by spectator, confirming the prediction. As the hands turn, the proper time may come up soon, or it may take quite some time. During this process, you have to look at the watch frequently to keep track of the progress; this is hard to do without exciting suspicion. With the watch, I received a ballpoint pen with a magnet in the cap. The cap was placed down

next to the watch, triggering the action. You could write or doodle with the pen to fill the time. At the precise moment when the watch registers the correct time, you pick up the cap, stopping the watch.

I thought of another method well suited for close-up work. I put a stack of fifteen or twenty sheets of paper onto a clipboard. The papers had a hole to contain a magnet. Two or three uncut sheets were on top to hide the magnet. With the clipboard on the table, the watch is placed onto it. On another part of the stack of papers I drew a watch face. If I needed to kill time, I could write in all of the numbers on the face of the watch. If not, I could just put the 12, 3, 6, and 9. Then, I could draw in the hands showing the selected time. The watch was within my field of vision as I drew. And I could pick up the watch to stop the hands. While this worked better, I did not like having to be in such close proximity to the watch. I wanted to put the watch down, step away from it, and never look at the face again. I would let the spectator pick up the watch and show the face to the audience with the correct time. This could be a good routine for stand-up shows. When I thought of having my assistant control the process, I soon came up with the following system.

It involves a back drop, like the one in Photo 4 and a special tripod table with a plunger topped by a magnet. Photo 5 shows the table, Photo 6 is a close-up view of the pattern of spots that disguises the top of the plunger,





and Photo 7 shows the plunger in the upright position. The plunger is operated by a thread that runs down the table's upright and out one of the legs. It then goes through a cup hook screwed into a block of wood (Photo 8) and up to the assistant's hand. The backdrop has a small hole positioned at just the right height so that the assistant can peek out and see the face of the watch. In order to prevent a little spot of light coming through the backdrop, it was doubled and the assistant stood in between the two pieces of material as seen in Photo 9.

The assistant puts one foot on the plywood to steady it. When the thread is pulled upward, the plunger rises from the table. For the perfor-



mance, a bottomless cut-glass sugar container (Photo 10) was placed on the table, and a square sheet of glass was placed on top of it. The spectator



was allowed to look at my watch. He would confirm that the watch showed the current time and was running. I would reset the watch to a new time, as a prediction. Then I'd set it on top of the piece of glass (Photo 11). The assistant would hear the time chosen by the spectator and pull the thread, lifting the plunger, which brought the magnet near the watch, causing the watch hands to revolve. When it was about an hour before the designated time, she would release tension on the thread, the plunger would drop, and the hands would stop. Then she could tease the hands forward, just a little at a time until they were at the correct time. I could end the routine by directing the spectator to pick up the watch and read out the time. It would be spot on, of course, and the spectator could show the face to nearby spectators. At least that was the plan. The special table with the plunger was designed and built by my friend Bill Bell in Sacramento. He did an excellent job. I still have the unit in storage; I might be persuaded to part with it.

I hesitate to suggest this, because many magicians consider the use of a stooge to be either unethical or beneath their dignity. But if you don't have that objection, it would be very effective to have a stooge wear the Perfect Time watch to your show so you could "borrow" it from him. You should arrange to have it returned to you in private, of course. ☆

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and control them separately from the handy app on your phone. You can even set up timers for the devices.

In magic, a person in the audience could control your plug-in device from his or her phone. People who perform séances could have a field day with this handy device. As my magic friend James Harris from Atlanta said, "I can perform the Milk in Light Bulb and my wife can stay at home!" Not quite, but close. The app is free. The **WeMo** plugs are around \$50 each; they are available on Amazon.com or in the Apple Store.

PROFESSOR MARVEL'S CRYSTAL BALL



At my Tech Talk at the S.A.M. Las Vegas convention, I surprised everyone with an app that has been sitting in my vault for a while. Honestly, my programmer Rob Faiella and I forgot all about it. It was written during the months

that we were working on MagicSAM two years ago.

Professor Marvel was the traveling magician in *The Wizard of Oz*. He studied with many of the best ghost talkers of the time. Your device shows a beautiful transparent crystal ball on a draped table. You show one spectator a group of magic posters from the golden age of spiritualism – Alexander, Fay, Thurston, Carter, and Houdini. One spectator selects a poster. The other spectator rubs the crystal ball and the selected poster comes into view.

I had a great time performing this effect and thought of all sorts of nuances that turn this thirty-second trick into a four-minute presentation. The only person who touches the device screen is the spectator. The graphic looks beautiful, especially on the iPhone 4s and the new iPad. There is nothing surprising here methodologically, but it is a fun effect to present. The

posters can be downloaded from a special website and complete instructions are included. The price for **Professor Marvel's Crystal Ball** is *free* for now; it is available in the iTunes App Store.

VIBER



I remember when I was a RVP and stood up at a council meeting to tell everyone about the wonders of Skype calls. Within three months Skype became the way we communicated with each other. We still do. Well, I am here to tell you about a "portable"

free-call program called **Viber**. I tried it when it first came out and wasn't impressed, but Alan Watson in New Zealand asked me to take another look at it. *Wow*, did they do a good job rebooting it. When you use **Viber**, calls and text messages are free to any other Viber user. Sound quality is better than a regular phone call. Viber calls can be placed either through Wi-Fi or on your smart phone using 3G. Again, the calls are one-hundred-percent free and require no additional purchases. For once I can say that this app works on iPhone, Android, Blackberry, and Windows phones. Look for it in your respective app stores or go to the website (www.Viber.com). I'm using it now. Let me know if you are.

MagicSAM UPDATED

Here's another reminder that if you haven't done so already, please delete **MagicSAM** from your devices and re-download it from the iTunes App Store. The old version will not be supported anymore. The new version (put out by The Society of American Magicians) has current convention support as well as a faster engine and some other bonuses.

Why the switch? When we wrote the app, the S.A.M. did not have a developer's license to put out the app in the iTunes Store. They tried to get one, but the legal papers on the formation of the organization had the old address from 1902. Apple wanted proof that we did in fact have offices in Colorado and not the old one on the papers.

To save time while we worked this out, the S.A.M. had the app put out on my license. We had to go through hoops to get an S.A.M. license. They finally granted it. To move the app to the new license, we had to remove it from mine. Please remove the old one and download the new one so you will be notified about the updates. Thanks. ☆

Found a cool gadget, app, or website for magic applications? Share your discovery with Bruce to include in a future column. Email him at SAMtalkBruce@cox.net.

GEOFF WILLIAMS LECTURE

103RD SALUTE TO MAGIC



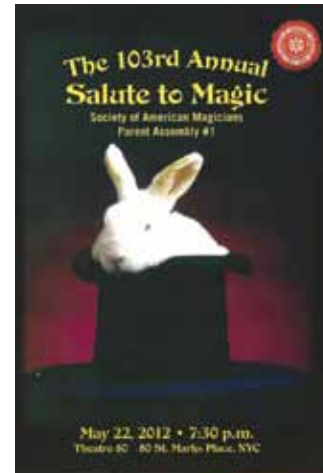
Geoff Williams

On May 9, 2012, Assembly 92 and Ring 57 hosted the incredible Geoff Williams for a lecture at the Mingus Magic Shop in Reading, Pennsylvania. This lecture was arranged by the Rev. Michael Reist, aka The Amazing Magi, as a thank you for the support of both organizations over the years for the *Creating Miracles Brick by Brick* magic show that raises money every year for Habitat for Humanity.

The lecture was attended by nineteen people, and they were in for a real treat. Unlike some lectures that many times are primarily either cards, coins, or both, Geoff presented an incredible mix of cards, coins, and many other items primarily from his lecture, "The Lecture Your Mother Never Gave You."

Just a few examples of the effects that wowed the audience were Geoff's classic I Hate David Copperfield card effect, his Rabbit in Hat, his vanish of a coin, and especially his Electrical Artlet. Geoff presented many other effects, including several new items he has released. A real hit of the evening was Geoff's Everything's a Radio, a wonderfully clever piece of magic that has been incorporated into this writer's repertoire.

The club had a wonderful evening of magic; we all hope other clubs will take advantage of the talent that Geoff can bring. After well over two hours of lecturing, a few of us joined Geoff at a local restaurant where we received almost another whole lecture as we spent several more hours with him talking about coins, cards, and many other items. Thank you Geoff Williams. – Rev. Michael L. Reist



The 103rd Salute to Magic was a resounding success. The May 22, 2012, show was a complete sellout!

Four acts and a great emcee carried the PA 1 tradition forward in New York. Emcee Todd Robbins did a fantastic job keeping the show moving. Elliot Zimet opened with some quick-paced dollar-bill manipulations, a unique bullet catch, and some very fine dove work. He ended by producing a loquacious macaw whose comments acted as a running gag, because it could be heard from backstage during the acts that followed.

The Great Throwdini, an award-winning knife-throwing act, showed skills that included the Veiled Wheel of Death, with his two assistants on a spinning wheel. The intermission was followed by the presentation by President Jim Kelly of the "Magician of the Year" award to long-time member Vic Sendax.

Ventriloquist John Pizzi performed several hilarious routines interacting with his figures; he closed with a side-splitting Big Baby puppet routine with a spectator. Todd Robbins created a human table with four spectators before introducing final act, Lyn Dillies. Lyn presented an array of standard and original illusions that played especially well on the small stage with the audience quite close.



Elliot Zimet



Throwdini



John Pizzi



Todd Robbins



Lyn Dillies

Producer Richie Magic is to be complimented, as well as the four S.Y.M. 69 youngsters who did close-up magic during the intermission. They were Danny Braff, Ben Siber-Marker, David Rosenstein, and Adam Kravitz. —George Schindler (Photos by George Koury)

THE LONG ISLAND MYSTICS ANNUAL END OF YEAR DINNER – 2012

On June 11, 2012, The Long Island Mystics (Assembly 77) celebrated the end of year with their annual dinner and show. Thanks to the efforts of producers Steve Rodman and Jeff Miller, a record crowd filled Governor's Comedy Club to support the event.



Eric DeCamps



T.J. Tana

Prior to the formal show, T.J. Tana and Eric DeCamps performed tableside magic for the guests. After a lavish and delicious buffet dinner the stars of the show took the stage.

Our emcee for the evening was none other than Steve "Ziggy" Zieglman. Ziggy had us in stitches with his topical humor and funny anecdotes about our assembly. The Magic of Elle (Linda Fieldman Robbins) followed; she performed an elegant handing of Tabary's rope routine and a sentimental routine with a borrowed finger ring.

Ziggy returned to the stage and performed a mental magic routine in which he correctly predicted the total for a randomly selected three course meal. Ziggy's stage assistant/"waiter" had a little arithmetic problem when totaling up the bill, but it all worked out in the end and the

NEWSWORTHY



The Magic of Elle



Joe Starr



Scott Interrante



Ziggy Ziegelman

audience responded with a large round of applause.

Stage illusionist and escape artist supreme Scott Interrante enchanted us with his take on some classic illusions, such as his water transposition, razor blade swallowing, and Kellar rope tie. He closed with his tribute to Houdini by performing his rendition of the straitjacket escape. Upon his release from the jacket, Scott received thunderous applause. To close the show, comic headliner Joe Starr literally had the audience in pain with laughter!

It was a great night of magic, mystery, comedy, and S.A.M. camaraderie. On a personal note, the greatest pleasure of the evening for me was reconnecting with so many old magic friends and their families. It brought back a flood of marvelous memories of growing up in the Long Island magic community, and I would like to thank the Long Island Mystics for making that possible. ☆

—Eric DeCamps

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Treasures from the Salon de Magie



by Ken Klosterman

THURSTON'S FLOATING BALL



For this month's column we focus our attention on Howard Thurston, the magician who, with his *Wonder Show of the Universe*, was America's favorite magician from 1908 (when he took over Harry Kellar's show) until his death in April 1936. He was an illusionist, of course, and while the Salon contains a massive archive of printed memorabilia and a lifetime of correspondence, there is little in the col-

lection by way of Thurston's illusionary apparatus.

Still, there are some unique items such as a shirt and dress collar worn by Thurston on stage and autographed by the magician and his company. There is Thurston's cigarette case, and even the crosscut lumber saw used in his *Sawing through a Woman* trick. I'd like to devote this column to another item, his Floating Ball. Like many of Thurston's feature effects, it was not an original creation. David P. Abbott of Omaha, Nebraska, is credited with devising the first practical one-person method for the trick. Abbott sold the trick to Thurston in 1902; he used it first to broaden his vaudeville act, and then in his full-evening production before taking on the Kellar show.

Originally, Thurston presented the trick attired in a royal blue tunic, soft breeches, riding boots, and a turban - a theatrical interpretation of a Western adventurer's garb in India in the days of the Raj. He entered with a hoop in hand, followed by George White, his assistant. George held a decorated box in front of him, and stood silently with it, center stage.

Thurston gestured toward the box and its lid opened. A ball floated out, as if guided by unseen hands, following the motions of the magician. Soaring over the stage, the silver sphere's flight made a spectacular display. In response to another gesture, the ball floated to the magician, where it remained suspended between his hands. Thurston then moved from the stage, carrying the ball into the audience. Standing next to the spectators, he would release his "mental hold" on the sphere, commanding it to float from between his hands back to the stage. The ball drifted over the footlights to remain suspended high in the air, awaiting its next command. Thurston again gestured - this time toward the box in George White's hands. In response, the ball glided into

its casket and the lid slowly closed, bringing the routine to a fitting and dramatic climax.

Abbott's original version used a *papier-mâché* orb treated to appear as if it were made of metal. Thurston used this approach too, but later used a larger and heavier ball. It was also presented under much dimmer lighting conditions, for the ball needed a more substantial support than the nearly invisible thread suitable for a *papier-mâché* ball. While modern floating balls have been made of lightweight aluminum and plastic, this metal ball of Thurston's is actually rather heavy, weighing nearly four pounds. It is 8½ inches in diameter.



Thurston used this ball in a greatly modified version of the trick as part of his Spirit Cabinet routine. A large wooden cabinet with a darkened interior stood on stage. Thurston summoned the spirits forth; they rang the usual bells, played musical instruments, rattled tambourines, and produced spirit hands and the ethereal floating ball. This was accomplished by a hidden assistant garbed in black velvet who held a similar velvet bag containing the ball. He also

manipulated the ball's levitation. At the end of the routine, other assistants came on stage and disassembled the cabinet beginning with the top, which they folded in half and placed behind the cabinet, allowing the hidden assistant to drop down through a stage trap. The rest of the cabinet was likewise folded up leaving the audience none the wiser.

The idea for the ball rising from the casket is attributed to Okito (Theodore Bamberg), who also acquired a ball from David Abbott; Bamberg so improved the working and presentation that the trick is now most commonly referred to as the Okito Floating Ball.

The floating ball in the Salon de Magie's collection came from Baltimore magician and magic dealer Phil Thomas, who identified it as Thurston's and who displayed it in his shop for many years. It was among the items rescued by magician Fred Cook when the shop burned in 1978. The container, or art nouveau casket holding the ball, came from the Circus Museum of Sarasota, source of most of the collection of Baltimore collector Thomas Chew Worthington III, Thurston's biggest fan. ☆



I LEFT MY CARDS AT HOME by STEVE MARSHALL



Beverly Suzàn

Raised in New Jersey, Beverly grew up watching her dad doing magic tricks; but it was a chance happening at a dance club in her early twenties that changed her life in a magical way. "I was at this dance club with a girlfriend of mine," Beverly said, "when this young man came over to our table, threw a ball of fire in the air, and produced a bouquet of roses. I was so impressed. When he left, I turned to my friend and said, 'That's what I want to do!'" Since she didn't know how to go about learning magic tricks, she asked the magician at the dance club. "As it turned out, he really wasn't a magician; he was just a guy who knew three or four tricks that he would perform while walking around the club. He told me he would teach them to me if I could first tell him how they were done."

This interesting style of becoming a magic teacher actually sent Beverly to the library, where she discovered the magic books that were hidden in plain sight on the shelves there. Although she didn't find the exact tricks that she had seen performed, she did find a whole bunch of new and different ones, and she was hooked.

The next big step in her quest for magical knowledge was when she found Mecca Magic (a large and respected magic shop in Bloomfield, New Jersey) and met Ted Collins, who was the owner at that time. "Ted is the person most responsible for keeping me in magic for as long as I have been. Whenever I would go into his shop, he would not only show me what I went in to see, he would show me something that was a little more difficult, in an effort to make me work even harder." Beverly did return to the dance club to tell the magic man how he did his four tricks, but by that time, she knew more than he did!

Her knowledge of magic was growing, and with the help and support of her mentor Ted Collins, Beverly began performing anywhere and everywhere that she could, including places like the types of dance clubs where she saw her first magician. "These places had small stages, and some of them had mirrors on the walls behind me. To this day I am very good with any types of angles since I constantly had to be aware of my surroundings when I was first starting out."

Soon she bought bigger illusions and began performing with a male assistant. Even though she and her partner split up after a few years, she kept traveling, spending more and more time on the road. She performed everywhere, from big theaters, to a seventy-three-day, fifteen-thousand-mile tour of the USA and British Columbia traveling on the back of a motorcycle, to a cruise ship that went up and down the Nile River in Egypt.

In 1995 she was involved in a head-on collision in which she

sustained head injuries, broken ankles and legs, and a broken knee. Doctors warned her that she might never perform again. Being a survivor though, this only pushed her to work harder to do whatever it took to continue with her love of magic. Soon she was teaching magic from her wheelchair. This led to a regular teaching gig at Montclair State University, where she teaches a magic class for the talented and gifted program nine weekends in the spring and fall and for two sessions of a three-week magic course in the summer.

While at Montclair, Beverly was encouraged to write her own study manual, which led to her writing and publishing *MAGI-CALL: A study of the magician's art*, a book that teaches the art of sleight of hand from an academic approach. It also includes profiles of over two hundred famous magicians, over eighty of them being female magicians.

Today, when she is not teaching courses at Montclair or other workshops and art programs, she can be found traveling around New Jersey presenting her own special and unique style of magic.

Steve's Stuff

I'm breaking tradition this month by putting my stuff before the effect to give you a little history.

After Harvey Berg's effect *The Real Article* appeared in the January 2012 installment of this column, I received a letter from Ms. Beverly Suzàn saying that she had a version of the newspaper column prediction that she would like to contribute. After looking over Beverly's version of this effect, I decided to include it here; I liked her approach on making this pretty much an impromptu effect and all of her thoughts and nuances on the performance of this piece. It was clear to me that this is something she has performed for real audiences on a regular basis and she knows what works.

I especially liked her attention to detail when it comes to picking which pages of a newspaper to use. This piece of advice could save you from some embarrassing situations in any newspaper effects that you do. I know that, performing in many countries where I could not read the language, I always asked someone to translate the headlines on the front page of a newspaper before I did my torn and restored routine.

Without further ado I give you:

Pick an Article, Any Article By Beverly Suzàn

I have always loved the newspaper article prediction, but while performing this routine over the last ten years, I have encountered several problems with the original presentation. The audience's reaction was good, but I felt that with some improvements I could help make this into a reputation maker.

First, I believe that when performing an audience participa-

tion trick, the more the audience is involved, the more entertainment value the trick has for them, thus making your magic stronger. The more steps you involve them in, the greater the effect is *on* them, *to* them, and *for* them.

It also bothered me to present a pre-cut article to the audience. By magicians pre-choosing an article, they eliminate the higher astonishment value.

The biggest obstacle with giving my audience free choice of the page and article within the paper is that newspapers sometimes had terrifying news that shouldn't be read aloud in mixed company. Certainly you would not want the conclusion of your trick to be about an ax murderer! Worse yet, what if someone in the audience knew that victim?

I started examining papers and noticed that you could usually find a few good pages. Most Sunday papers have lifestyle sections, gardening sections, entertainment sections, sports sections, and pages with local news that would not be traumatizing to your audience.

I collected interesting pages from many newspapers and compiled small sections with enticing pictures on the front for the audience to pick from. It does not matter if the pages in a particular section are different dates. Part of the working method that this trick relies on is that the spectators cannot read the print, even when the paper is rather close to them.

After I state to my audience that we will perform a mind-reading trick together, I pick a volunteer and ask her to remain in her seat. I then ask her to pick a paper that we will work from: section one, two or three, as I show the front pages. The sections consist of a double-page with a single page inside. This gives the audience member six pages to choose from within their selected section. The unselected pages can be used in future performances.

If she picks section two, I make sure that I keep this paper (and me) in the audience's sight at all times. (Why? Because I can.) I drop the other papers on the floor and openly show the audience the six pages within the chosen section. *"Would you like page one, two, three, let's skip four because it doesn't have any large columns, page five or six?"* (This patter, of course, depends on the actual layout of the pages.) This provides plenty of choices. When she picks her page, I tear it from the other half of the double page (if necessary) and I drop the remainder. I ask, *"Column one, two, or three."* If this page only has two large columns, I just ask, *"Column one or two?"* Notice that I say *columns*, not *articles*. This gives you more freedom when it comes to the next step. The longer the column is, the better you can control the finale. I stay away from pages with wedding announcements because it is full of pictures; you are going for words.

The secret to the dynamics of this particular method is in the cutting out of an intact column right in front of the audience. Everyone sees it with his or her own eyes. The article is being removed from its place on the page in full view, so the audience is sure you have the article that was freely chosen by them, and you do!

Start the cut across the top, just above the first sentence, down one side, across the bottom and up the other side. As you are cutting, silently read the top paragraph of the article and choose a great line to cut on, thereby making *this line* the new *top line*. As you angle the paper slightly away from the audience cut across, just above your chosen sentence. This does not have to be at the very top of the page or at the start of a sentence. In fact, sometimes it is more convincing later on if

the chosen line starts in the middle of a sentence.

Remember a few key words in this new top sentence. You will be amazed at how easy this is to do. You can control the mood with a simple move. Take a glance at the back of this column while asking someone else to quickly read and verify that this is indeed a real newspaper article, and have him or her confirm that all the lines are different. This strengthens the trick many fold. When your audience is talking about this amazing trick later someone will inevitably question that person about what they read, just to make sure that every line was different. You could just as quickly show a few people, thereby strengthening the move even more.

Show the spectator the article by holding the top of the page with your fingers pointing down, placing the column in front of his face for him to read. This hides the actual line that will be predicted later. After he confirms that it is a real newspaper, if there happens to be a picture on the other side, quickly show the picture and point out that the side we want to read is the side without the picture.

Ask the original person to come up and hold her hand out flat in front of her. Place the newspaper article-side down on her palm. This is very important so that she does not catch a glimpse of any of the words, or their placement in the column. Put your hands above and below, encasing her hand so she does not get control of the newspaper. Look into her eyes and claim to read her mind. *"Oh you have beautiful eyes...I'm seeing something about...children... anticipation...and a hoot and a holler."* Of course the people will be thinking, "What is going on?" but they will be captivated.

You tell the audience, *"Now let me see if I can find that sentence that you were sending me mentally."* You look up and down the article and say, *"Ah, here it is."* Remind them to remember this sentence as it is spoken, then you read the top line while allowing your eyes to gaze further down the column. *"...window upstairs, but after much anticipation the children hooted and hollered when the parade finally started, and it was grand!"*

Mention now that you have done your job of reading her mind and now it is her turn. During this statement, pick up a pair of scissors while turning the column upside down with the article facing the audience. Open the scissors around the column and run them up and down, saying, *"I want you to tell me what line in this article to cut on, so tell me when to stop."*

When she does, give her the freedom to change the position of the cut. When she has given you her final answer, cut the paper, letting the cut piece fall to the ground. Again, this is very important; it shows that you have not touched the paper after she selected the chosen line.

Ask her or another audience member to pick up the paper and to read aloud the top sentence where the article was cut. If by chance she reads the wrong side, the audience will think you messed up, but will chuckle when you say, *"Turn the page around and read the other side, please."*

The spectator reads, *"...window upstairs, but after much anticipation the children hooted and hollered when the parade finally started, and it was grand!"*

This revised method plays solid, and it can be a lengthy section in your show. Audiences love it and talk about it. They are convinced, because they were involved.

So remember my tip for stronger magic, always play your audience participation *with* the people, *to* the people, and *for* the people! ☆

James Muntton's

Pro Files

True Stories from the Files of Working Pros



James shares an entertaining tale from the performing lives of professional magicians. These stories illustrate various tricky situations that working pros have found themselves in and how they handled them.



Canadian mentalist Paul Pacific bills himself as “Canada’s leading mind reader,” but even he cannot always tell what awaits when he steps on stage. Paul specializes in corporate stage shows, or “concerts,” as he likes to call them. Over the years, he has developed a set that ends with a crowd-pleasing Q&A session. But that was not always the case.

When he first started out in mentalism twenty years ago, Paul decided to incorporate a prediction effect as the closer to his performance. He had done headline predictions before and received a tremendous response. A regular prediction, introduced at the outset of his show and completed at the end, seemed like a good way to bring the audience full circle and leave them mystified.

As the show began, Paul brought a spectator up on stage and asked him to select a card and a coin at random; he then asked him to think of any word in the English language and to write that word on a piece of paper. The person returned to his seat and Paul continued with his concert. At the end of forty-five minutes or an hour, when the Q&A had concluded, he invited the man back up on stage and had him open a sealed envelope. The envelope contained a handwritten prediction with the card, the coin, the date on the coin, and the exact word the person had been thinking of. The spectator received the prediction as a souvenir, and Paul finished up with final remarks. Cue thunderous applause.

The routine was a success and worked like a charm...until

the day it went horribly wrong.

To explain what happened, Paul must reveal the methodology of his effect. “At the start of the show, I forced a card and a coin on the fellow. Because they’re forced, they’re already pre-written in the prediction envelope. Everything is fine as far as that’s concerned. The only free choice is the word he selects and writes down. At the time, I was using Al Baker’s center tear, which is a read-as-you-tear method, so I could see the chosen word.”

Paul then had a second envelope, in which he kept the prediction. That envelope had a strategically placed cut-out window, where he could fill in the missing word by hand later in the show. When the spectator returned to the stage, he would tear open the sealed envelope to find the name of the card he had chosen, the coin, the date, and the freely selected, random word he had chosen. It was an impressive and astounding effect.

The fateful night began like any other. “This was at a corporate event. I had a man come up on stage. As always, I forced a card and a coin. I handed him an invisible book, and had him turn to an invisible page and think of any word. I did the center tear. I saw that he was thinking of the word ‘rosebud.’ I did my usual program and had reached the Q&A portion. I was sitting on the stage with my portfolio, taking impressions as they came to me.”

Hidden in the portfolio was the window envelope. But as Paul put pen to paper, he was unable to write. “For the life of me, I couldn’t remember the word.” Panic raced through Paul. The room around him dimmed as his mind raced. He began an internal monologue of rebuke. How could he have forgotten? How could he have been so stupid?

Meanwhile, the show went on. Paul tried to conceal his anxiety as he continued to point and smile and engage the audience. He knew the word began with an “R,” but that wasn’t much help. Nevertheless, another part of his brain began trolling through “R” words. Was it radish? Racoon? He had no idea.

At that point, he wasn’t sure how the show would end. The Q&A was going well, but the whole evening would be a flop if the prediction failed. As he stalled for time, he considered abandoning the trick and ending on the Q&A. But then the audience would wonder what had happened with the guy who had come up at the beginning. He immediately dismissed that option.

And then, the solution came to him. He jotted something down in the window on the envelope, finished the Q&A, and

brought the man back on stage. Normally, Paul would read the prediction himself, but this time, he asked the man to read it.

Paul recounts what came next. "He read out, 'I, Paul Pacific, predict that the person will pick such and such a card.' I predicted the card and the coin correctly. Now he's getting to the word. He continued reading, 'And I, Paul Pacific, predict that this randomly selected audience member will choose any word in the English language, and he will settle on the word... Damn! You son-of-a-bitch.' The guy started to laugh. And the audience started laughing, too."

Instead of the word "rosebud," Paul had written, "Damn! You son-of-a-bitch." The volunteer was turned into an instant stooge, and thus was in on the joke, but the audience laughed and applauded because they assumed he'd seen his word and was swearing in amazement.

Paul went on. "I asked him, 'And what word were you thinking of?' He replied, 'Rosebud.' Once the applause died down, I said, 'You were thinking of the word rosebud, weren't you?' And he laughed again and said, 'Yes.'"

Although Paul tells it as a horror story, the reaction he received made it a trick almost worth repeating. His quick thinking turned what could have been a disaster into a delightful end to a great evening. It is amazing what the prospect of failing in front of several hundred people will do to stimulate the creative juices.

Even the most seasoned and polished performers can end up in tricky spots, especially when dealing with fluid situations

like a live show. Paul was lucky that he was able to resolve his dilemma speedily and smoothly, but there are things that can help out any pro in a similar situation.

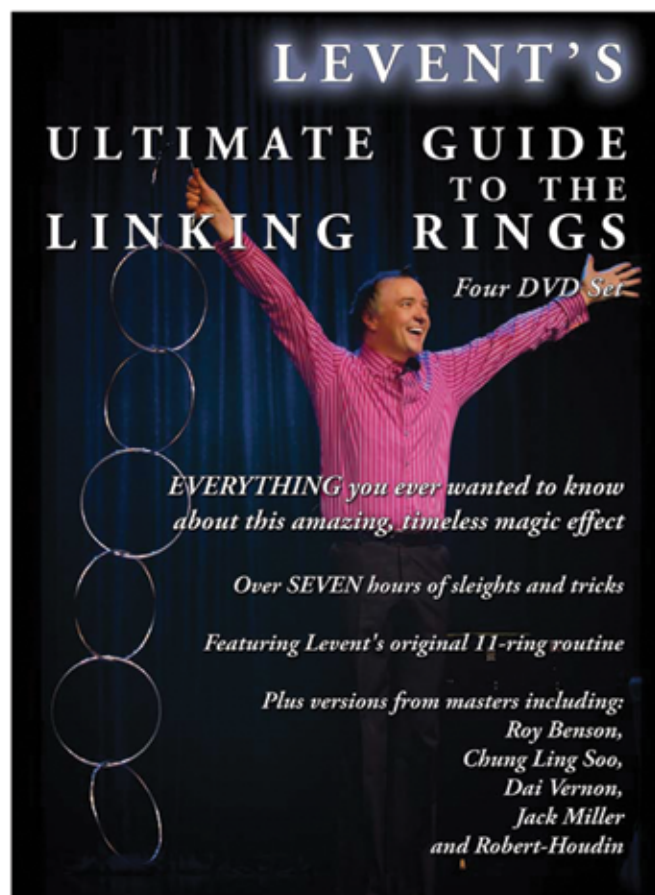
The first is to be prepared in advance. Just as you check the emergency exits when you fly, know your possible escape routes in each routine. What things could go wrong? Play out possible scenarios and find ways to rescue the routine if it goes awry.

It's important to remember that audiences don't know what's supposed to happen. They don't know what you had planned, so if you have to change your plans, they'll be none the wiser. In the worst-case scenario, if you have to drop the trick and move on to the next one, they probably won't even realize what they're missing.

Paul did well to incorporate humor into his solution. If the mistake is an obvious one, take the opportunity to make fun of yourself. Audiences want to have a good time. Make them laugh and they'll forgive you for anything.

Follow Paul's cue and keep the panic on the inside. No matter how you are feeling, you want your audience to remain reassured and relaxed. Keep calm and carry on.

Although the incident happened two decades ago, it is still fresh in Paul's mind. He acknowledges that sometimes, when you're under pressure, "you get great ideas," but he no longer performs that routine in his show, preferring to end on the Q&A. And, in the ultimate irony, the word that so eluded him that evening will now stay with him forever. Rosebud. ☆



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The Nielsen Gallery

Devant - Artist's Dream

Dimensions: Quarter-sheet: 15.5" x 19.5" • Lithographer: Dangerfield, London. • Date: 1893 • Nielsen Rating: Rare

DEVANT'S ARTIST'S DREAM

Come back with us to September 4, 1893, to the darkened theater of London's Egyptian Hall, and witness the first appearance of David Devant, England's most talented and beloved magician. For his premiere he has created *The Artist's Dream*, a remarkable and thoroughly mystifying illusion presented as a playlet in pantomime.

As the scene opens, the audience sees in the center of the stage an elaborate platform easel, bearing the unfinished portrait of a lady. The performer, attired as an artist, first takes the portrait off the easel and, showing it on all sides, replaces it and continues with his painting. S.H. Sharpe in his biography, *Devant's Delightful Delusions*, describes the rest of the act:

"Becoming tired of his work, he draws a short curtain before the picture and, sitting down in a chair, falls fast asleep and dreams that his picture comes to life. Whilst he sleeps the curtain is suddenly put aside and the lady steps out of the background – alive and undoubtedly human – approaches the young artist and gently awakens him. After a few words of encouragement to him to continue his work and to do his best, even against adversity, she tells him again she must leave him. He attempts to detain her, but avoiding his clasp, she steps behind the curtain, which she draws once more over the picture. The young artist pushes it aside and rushes to clasp her in his arms but she is gone. Nothing but the picture remains, which he again takes from its frame and shows as before."

Keep in mind that the painting is shown front and back before the lady appears and is lifted easily back onto the easel. When the woman steps down from the painting, the woodland background behind her is complete, meaning that there is not a blank outline where the lady should have been. And, when she returns into the painting, the entire picture is removed from the frame and shown front and back.

Devant's family name was Wighton; he was born in London on February 22, 1868. The son of a Scottish landscape painter, he claimed that the inspiration for the illusion came from watching his father attempt to sell a painting of several cattle pulling a plow. The potential buyer asked how much, and when given the cost, replied, "Yes, I'll give you that when those bulls come to life." Devant said, "In the few seconds that it takes to say that sentence, I thought of *The Artist's Dream*, a picture that comes to life."

In the version presented by British magician Cecil Lyle, the spectral lady hovers near her lover; as he starts to awaken, she hurries back to the picture. Nearby on stage an angel materializes and comes forward. The artist, now fully awake and sensing the presence of his beloved, turns in distraction to the angel for help. As he reaches the side of the heavenly apparition, the angel, gown and all, vanishes. Lyle closed the first half of his show with

this illusion.

The woman who materialized from the picture and returned there twice daily was Devant's wife Marion Melville; a publication called *The Amusing Journal* sent a reporter to interview her at Egyptian Hall in May of 1894. The reporter came expecting to spend an hour or so interviewing the woman, but upon arriving was informed by Devant that Miss Melville was at the moment away at her home in Brixton and unable to make the interview in person. He offered, however, to have the spirit of Miss Melville appear on stage and complete the interview. There, in the middle of the stage, Devant opened an oak door of a heavy cabinet, and after some conjuring gestures, the astral figure of Miss Melville appeared floating in the cabinet. The author spoke at length with the spirit and concluded the article by writing:

"To tell the truth, the whole thing savoured too much of the black art to be altogether satisfactory. I am far from superstitious, and even now I do not believe it was really the disembodied spirit of Miss Melville that conversed with me in the ebony cabinet on the darkened stage of Egyptian hall. But if not, it was a wonderfully realistic piece of stage conjuring."

Devant was an unquestioned genius at devising both illusions and the dramatic sketches that accompanied them. The source for the drama was often drawn from the headlines of the day. Asked how he created his illusion, Devant said:

"It is a very difficult question to answer, because with such work it is impossible to proceed on well-ordered lines. One cannot say to oneself, 'Tomorrow I will sit down and invent an illusion.' However, I will describe some of the ways in which I have worked."

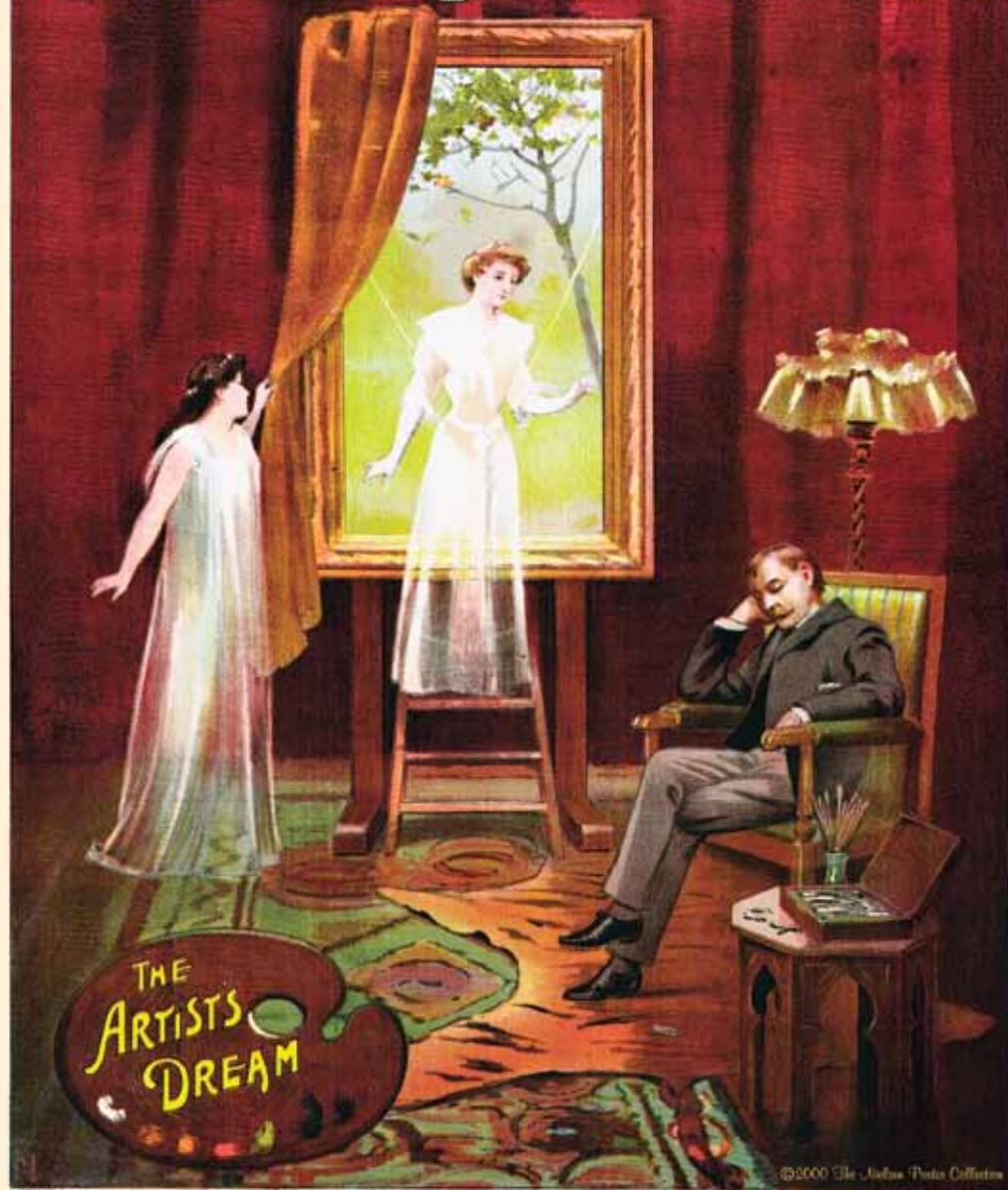
"First I get an idea for a plot or story, just as a writer of a book does. That idea grows very gradually, and, like a rare bloom, has to be tended very carefully. Sometimes I have to call in the assistance of specialists in different branches of science in order to make the flower grow. Possibly the flower has to be grafted on to another before it finally expands into exhibition form."

"The first question I have to propose to myself is, 'What shall I do?' The question, 'How shall I do it?' is quite a secondary consideration, because there are always many means or devices available for obtaining the effect."

So, for Devant, the plot or story was tantamount. Coupled with his unique ability to set the scene and to use appropriate lighting and selection of colors, the audience was transported to a land of make-believe where they could easily suspend their disbelief. Devant created many illusions over his lifetime, including *Vice Versa*, *The Enchanted Hive*, *Beau Brocade*, *The Mascot Moth*, *Dyno*, *The New Chocolate Soldier*, and many others. When Devant died at the age of seventy-three on October 12, 1941, the *Times of London* called him, "the greatest magician of all times," a sentiment still widely held today. ☆

—Tom Ewing

MASKELYNE & COOKE'S MYSTERIES



THE
ARTIST'S
DREAM

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INFORMED OPINION

LATEST PRODUCT REVIEWS

Compiled and Edited by W. S. Duncan

REFLECTIONS BOOK By HELDER GUIMARÃES

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies
Price \$39.95

REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT



Don't worry if you can't pronounce his last name. No one but his parents can, either. If you follow state-of-the-art card magic, then the name Helder Guimarães should already be familiar to you. For those who have never heard of this Portuguese card master, the title of World Champion in Card Magic (FISM) is all you need to know. A full biography may be found on his website (www.helderguimaraes.com).

You will discover that Sr. Guimarães has been educated in the theatre, and his magic is a reflection of the style of some my favorite theatrical magicians –

Bob Fitch, Max Howard, Peter Samelson, Tommy Wonder, Rudy Coby, McBride, Burger, Maven, Tamariz, Tempest, and others (including most of the “Big Five” superstar magicians).

There are only five card routines taught in this book, but in the process of learning each one you will be receiving a master class education of advanced magical thinking and professional theatrical staging of magic. Don't purchase this book to find some new card tricks you can show at the next assembly meeting. Get this book and take the time to absorb it slowly. You will be a better magician, no matter what level you currently consider yourself.

After Roberto Giobbi and Helder himself prepare you for what is to come, the first effect dissected and rebuilt is the Cards Across plot. Helder credits Tom Mullica's performance of Cheek to Cheek as his first inspiration to tackle this effect. Mullica's presentation was a wonderful and original comedy magic romp, but his inspiration came, in turn, from Chicago bar magic legend Jim Ryan. We come out of this process with Helder's unbelievably strong Cards, Signatures, and Glasses.

Four other effects receive a similar treatment. They are: Three Cards and a Box, Three Progressive Choices, Aces and Glass, and Cards, Numbers, and Matches. If you follow along, study, and learn each one (a process that will take weeks, if not longer), and then apply your own personality and presentation, you will be rewarded with five jaw-dropping performance pieces with playing cards. Even those who belittle card magic will have to admit that this is as good as it gets.

Reflections is highly recommended for intermediate and advanced students of card magic. It is not for beginners, but if you wish to look into the mind of one of the true thinkers in magic to see what puts Helder into the same class as the names mentioned above, buy this book and study it well.

Would you like a treat? Go online to the previously mentioned

website and view six very short videos on the “Who is Helder?” series. I promise you will be entertained.

ILLUSIONARY DEPARTURES 2012 BOOK By JC SUM

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies
Price \$95.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



JC Sum has released an updated and expanded version of his first illusion book, *Illusionary Departures*. Note the slight variation in title. The added year indicates that this is an update. If you have the original, published in 2004, you have the bulk of the material already. There are a few new illusions and a chapter on base design that may appeal to builders and designers, but you and your accountant will have to decide whether it is worth \$100 for you to add this latest edition to your shelf.

In case you don't have the original, then your C-note will get you decently thought-out plans and routines for thirty-five illusions, printed on heavy glossy paper, and compiled into a full-sized perfect-bound book. Most of the illusions are relatively easy to build and perform. As with most illusion books, you are getting a rough sketch of the workings and a rough draft of a routine, not detailed instruction. The clear line drawings are semi-drafted and include many measurements, but they are not full construction blueprints. You will have to work with an experienced illusion builder to make any of these dreams come to fruition. Sum claims to have built and performed each and every one of these, and his track record is prolific, so that may well be true.

I like the range of plots in the routines. There are vanishes, appearances, transpositions, penetrations, escapes, and ghostly spirit routines. These are not all variants on “show an empty box, have a girl pop out.” In one, you show an upright wine rack filled with bottles. You perform a few tricks with a couple of the bottles, and then walk right through the wine rack without breaking or upsetting the bottles sitting on the shelves. In Sweepstakes, Sum combines a vanishing radio and a torn and restored paper into a routine about winning (or losing) the lottery. In Graffiti Girl an audience volunteer chooses a color of spray paint, and paints a figure of a girl on a roller-shade in a doorway. The quick graffiti sketch turns into a beautiful painting of a girl with a dress of the chosen color. Then the painting turns into a live girl, wearing a dress of that color. Like these, most of the routines are well-thought-out and described completely. This is a well-rounded book with illusion designs, plans, effects, and routines.

There are a few shortcomings. The one glaring omission is photographs of finished props. If Sum has built these as he says, why not include photos of the actual equipment? In many cases,

he extols the beauty of the finished design, yet the line drawings only show the prop in its basic construction components. I would love to see his Time Machine in particular. This routine cries out for an elaborate Jules Verne type of prop with fanciful Victorian decoration, but all we get to look at is a line drawing of a plain box on a table.

In one chapter, Sum gives eight variations on the Sub Trunk. Most are without drawings, explained in terms of movement and adaptations to standard methods. For example, in one routine he simply states that you should “start with a back-loader with a locking trap and a skeleton framework.” Working illusionists will know how to adjust their equipment and blocking to perform these routines, but for many this approach is a bit thin.

There is a chapter on using deceptive bases. Although a scant six pages, the advice herein is solid and highly practical. If you ever watched a TV special during which a girl pops out of a box sitting on top of a twelve-inch-thick table, you’ll see why the information on designing for deception is vital.

The information in *Illusionary Departures 2012* is solid, and the plots and routines are good. Check your bookshelf to make sure you don’t already have a copy of the 2004 work with mostly the same information. If you are new to this work, and don’t mind paying the hefty price that almost all illusion books command, then it’s a worthy investment.

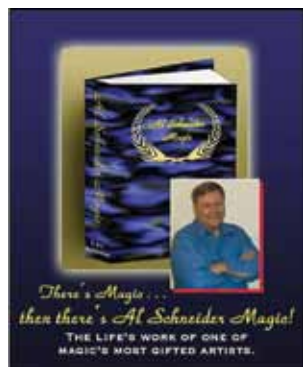
AL SCHNEIDER MAGIC BOOK BY AL SCHNEIDER

Available from: www.llpub.com

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies

Price \$80.00

REVIEW BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL



As pointed out on the L&L website, if Al Schneider had only managed to create the trick Matrix it would have been enough to secure his reputation in magic. He didn’t invent the coin assembly, and he didn’t invent the concept of card-and-coin tricks, but something about the near-purist version he invented just out of high school and published in *Genii* twelve years later in 1972 grabbed everyone’s attention and imagination.

At one point, Schneider relates in the Matrix chapter of *Al Schneider Magic*, so many magicians had come up to him at conventions to show him their latest twist, tweak, or “improvement” on the trick that he’d compiled about twenty-five different “approved” methods and was going to make them a book in themselves. Heck, he manages to get nine pages out of the history, theory, and general butchery of the trick alone. Beyond that, however, he’s created other tricks, moves, and compiled a handful of theories of magic – all of which are now available in the hefty, 700+ pages of *Al Schneider Magic*.

I don’t know if *Al Schneider Magic* is meant to be a magnum opus, but it’s certainly a hefty contender. The book manages to cover a lot of ground, much of which was previously presented on Schneider’s four-volume DVD set (also from L&L) *The Al Schneider Technique*. Here, he begins with five chapters of magic theory, including his concepts of the “Intention of Reality” and the “Intention of Magic,” before delving into the “Al Schneider

technique.” There follows a whole chapter of coin moves in which, at first glance, Schneider seems to be trying to reinvent the wheel, but he is in fact simply re-examining it. Schneider’s approach to the foundations of coin magic (palming, false transfers, etc.) is a very personal one. He digs deep for naturalness and, above all, deceptiveness. Watch him perform the Pop-Up Move, for example, and you’ll realize that he might be on to something. One result that really caught my eye was his Max Al Ping Chen (sic) sequences. The Han Ping Chien move is a lovely move when it’s done correctly and slapstick when it isn’t. Here, Schneider changes up the whole rhythm of the thing by placing the coins down one at a time instead of slamming them down in a group. You can see him perform it (and many of the routines described in this book) on his YouTube channel. I’m not a coin guy, but I found the idea very intriguing and potentially powerful in the right routine. Schneider applies similar thinking to a handful of Cup and Ball maneuvers that he later combines into a very disarming routine also available for viewing on YouTube. Again, you might rethink your own approaches based on his ideas.

Next come about thirty tricks applying Schneider’s moves, theories, and ideas on what makes good magic. It’s not surprising that the majority of these are coin tricks, given the creator’s tastes and reputation. You can skip to the rear for “My Best,” which delivers Schneider’s own thoughts on Matrix, his Cups and Balls routine, the simple-yet-effective Cone-n-Coin, and the very pretty Osmosis (in which you pluck silver dollars visibly through a sheer handkerchief), among others. For more variety, there are “Quick Tricks,” a number of short-but-sweet items for impromptu occasions. These are good and simple, but mostly unremarkable in conception. Still, a tidbit here and a touch there make for interesting learning.

The rest of the tricks are a selection of rather ordinary card tricks and more coins across variations than I had patience for. The coins across routines are various combinations of his (admittedly deceptive) Pop-Up Move and Han Ping Chien variations, continuing exercises that might have well been left up to the reader. The card tricks aren’t terrible, but it’s very clear that cards are not Al Schneider’s forte. He presents a banal four-Ace Triumph routine as if he has no clue about the long history of the trick and the many played-out variations. Likewise with his version of the Insurance Policy – it doesn’t differ at all from the basic format of the trick and uses a Henry Christ force with no attribution. By his own admission, Al Schneider doesn’t spend a lot of time around magicians anymore, so his confessed general cluelessness about what everyone else is doing is understandable, but not really forgivable. Moreover, it brings me to my biggest complaint about *Al Schneider Magic*.

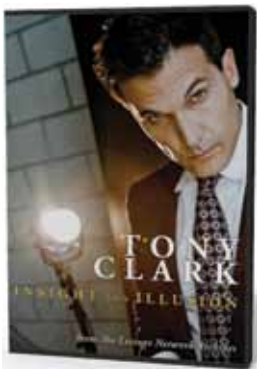
This is a very poorly written book, which makes for very difficult reading. Bad writing occurs when an author is trying to sound either intellectual or poetic, or both (philosophical). Diving into the first chapters on Schneider’s theories of magic, I did a lot of blinking, head-shaking, and rereading. After a while I wondered, who in the heck edited this thing? Turns out, no one did. I don’t know if it was an oversight or a contractual condition, but this book apparently exists just as Al Schneider wrote it and turned it in. It’s a shame, because it does a huge disservice to the material and to any good ideas Al Schneider has to pass on to the learning magician. For example, I can’t comment on the merits or detriments of his Intention of Reality concept, because I’m not sure I managed to figure exactly what it is. This is where someone like Stephen Minch or Stephen Hobbs would step up to distill those ideas into well-formed thoughts with proper research, crediting, and fewer typos. On top of which, since most of the

techniques that Schneider uses are, on the surface, elementary, it's extraordinarily tempting and easy to speed over the descriptions and miss how good some of these routines can actually be. To that end I think the material is better served on video, where the deceptiveness speaks for itself. In print, in this form, it takes a lot of concentrated effort to slog through all the molasses to find whatever nuggets of gold might be hiding. I'm sure Al Schneider's magic is well-deserving of a big book, but this really isn't it.

TONY CLARK: INSIGHT AND ILLUSION DVD
BY TONY CLARK

Available from: www.miraclefactory.net
Price \$30.00

REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



This is a lecture Tony Clark presented for The Lecture Network online video series, rendered in DVD form. On it, Mr. Clark covers a great deal of material in about sixty minutes, and as that suggests, the instruction is casual, quick, and not in great depth. Mr. Clark states that he studied with Slydini himself for several months, and appears to have been a student of Slydini's material for much longer than that. He conveys his heartfelt enthusiasm for his teacher and his teacher's work, along with some very useful tips

and insights of his own. But seeing Mr. Clark perform the material without becoming Slydini is the most valuable lesson. Mr. Clark has developed definite ideas about how and why Slydini's techniques worked, and he has applied those ideas to his own magic. In explaining this, he makes a particularly good point about knowing your character, and knowing how far that character can go in teasing or cajoling a volunteer. The advice about tension and relaxation is sound, as are Mr. Clark's observations about posture and timing.

Students of Slydini's work will enjoy seeing the Imp Pass, the Coins through Table, the Revolve Vanish, and other favorites done successfully by a contemporary American performer. For that reason, this DVD is recommended viewing for anyone who finds it impossible to perform Slydini's material without suddenly acquiring an accent.

Mr. Clark's interpretations of the Slydini classics often work well, and sometimes not so much. I enjoyed his coin work, for instance, but didn't care much for his re-handling of The Helicopter Card. His adaptation of a classic cigarette trick to something other than a cigarette is especially clever.

Familiarity with Slydini's magic is necessary if you want to perform the knotted silk effects discussed here. That's less true of the other material, but a solid grounding in basic coin magic is definitely an advantage.

Also covered are a few effects sold by Tony Clark, both stage and close-up, including a dove production that you could do even in a parlor setting. Of course, any bird-sized item could replace the dove, if you prefer not to conjure with critters.

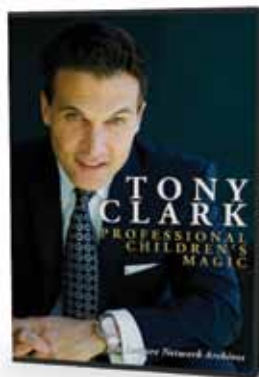
Expertly hosted by the effervescent Jeff Hobson, the lecture is presented here as it was when it first aired, with breaks for who-knows-what reason, offers for services you can't buy anymore, and without a menu. In other words, the lecture plays from beginning to end, and to get to any specific moment, you have to fast forward

or rewind. That takes us old guys back to the days of videotape, but some might find that cumbersome. There are also frequent plugs for a DVD set on which Mr. Clark teaches the material in more detail. So there's the distinct aroma of solicitation here, but no more so than in your average magic lecture, I suppose. The Online Lecture series offered a "premium" membership, and happily, the extras that those special members got are included.

TONY CLARK: PROFESSIONAL CHILDREN'S MAGIC DVD
BY TONY CLARK

Available from: www.miraclefactory.net
Price \$30.00

REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSELL



We all know Tony Clark for his Phantom Dove and Card routine, for his extremely successful Lake Tahoe and Reno stage shows, and as a show producer. We don't think of him as a children's entertainer. However, as Tony explains on this *Professional Children's Magic* DVD, while he was earning his stripes, he performed over two thousand kid shows, from school shows to birthday parties. What we also know about Tony Clark is that he is a perfectionist who fully understands showmanship, regardless of the audience. This comes through

clearly in this DVD.

Todd Karr's Miracle Factory release puts onto a DVD Tony's lecture from the Lecture Network archives. The Lecture Network was popular on the Internet a few years back (around 2007-2008), but only ran for a couple of years. You will find an interesting discussion about it on The Magic Café forum. The format of the Lecture Network was that people watched online, in real time, and could email Jeff Hobson with questions for the guest performer. This works nicely, because often those watching this DVD will have similar questions.

The format combines a presentation by Tony and a discussion between Tony and host Jeff Hobson. The video footage shows Tony performing a kid show specifically for the lecture just prior to the discussion. Segments from the show are intercut with the discussion. This format works very well. And although Tony indicates that at the time of the performance it had been some time since he regularly worked kid shows, he still has the touch.

Perhaps Tony's approach to kid show magic can be summed up in a single concept: Engage the audience – engage, engage, engage. That is, even while working with a specific helper from the audience, constantly keep the rest of the audience engaged both visually and audibly. Indeed, we see this time and again in the video clips (and it is emphasized by Tony in his discussion).

While a high percentage of today's kid show magic is a reworking of tried and true routines and bits of business of the past, I was pleased to see some new ideas from Tony that could only come from real-time discovery. Those sudden nuggets of creative discovery that come now and again during performance and that makes a working performer think, "Aha! I'll use that in every show." We see this in his early paper tear routine using the birthday boy, and in his use of the standard coloring book with, as Jeff Hobson says, many bits and sight gags that turn it into a full routine. The same is true of Tony's cut and restored rope routine

and really excellent work with a mouth coil that you likely have not seen before.

Much of the discussion has to do with Tony's insights into the business of performing kid shows. The long list of covered topics includes marketing, creating repeat business, increasing fees, tips, and so on. Also included are suggestions on using animals, conditioning the audience, the use of physical gags, and one of Tony's favorites, the use of a misleading set up, which Tony calls "the miscall." Throughout his show, Tony would say he was going to do one thing, but really do something else. This concept is much stronger than it reads!

Of course, in addition to Tony Clark's material, the discussion is often enhanced by Jeff Hobson sharing his own performing experiences. The DVD runs just a little over one hour. It will be the rare kid's show performer who doesn't come away with something he or she can use.

WORLD'S GREATEST MAGIC – GAMBLING ROUTINES DVD By VARIOUS PERFORMERS AND L&L PUBLISHING

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00

REVIEW BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL



Gambling material is like card magic in general: it seems like performers either do no gambling routines at all, or they do nothing but. But any decent performer should have at least a couple under his belt. For those performers eager to really strap on the cardsharp/hustler vest and cufflinks, the L&L catalogue offers the super-

lative work of Martin Nash, Darwin

Ortiz, and Jim Swain, none of whom are

featured on this *World's Greatest Magic – Gambling*

Routines collection. For the more generalist performer who's looking to add some grifter-like material to their repertoire, the routines on this DVD might not be "the world's greatest," but they're pretty darn good.

The *World's Greatest* format, if you're new to it, culls material from the L&L video catalogue and packages it by category. On the surface, it's a great way to make an extra buck off of old footage, but it's also a convenient and inexpensive way to explore different creators' takes on classic plots en route to deciding on your own favorite version. To that end, it's great when the subject is a specific plot or trick like the Ambitious Card, the Three Ball Trick, or the Linking Rings. "Gambling Routines," however, is not a trick or a plot, and covers wide enough ground that the selection on this DVD is spread a little thin. Of the six routines offered, two are poker deals, two are short-change routines, one is a Three Card Monte routine, and the last is sort of a routined bar bet/gotcha. Technically, a short-change routine isn't gambling-related at all; it's a con. And the bar bet is just a sucker trick unless you can get someone to put money down on it. To me, these are distinctions worth making, whether you do a ton of gambling material (like I do) or you are just looking for the right addition to a broader repertoire. All gambling material isn't the same, any more than all card, coin, or close-up tricks are the same.

Having said that, the routines themselves are very good, and in fact some of the best of their individual types you're likely to find. Starting off is Johnny Thompson presenting the Vernon Poker Deal, one of the all-time blockbuster poker deals. It's perfect if you're looking for just one routine to cover your "I wouldn't want to play cards with you" needs. It also has the benefit of not requiring a lot of technical abilities like riffle stacking or false dealing. If you're looking for two such routines, the other deal is Harry Lorayne's routine for the Ten Card Poker Deal. Lorayne was the first magician to really routine the Jonah Card principle, and his sequences still rank with the best. If you don't know it, get with it.

In the short-change category you get Michael Ammar performing and teaching George Starke's Hornswoggled! with a number of subsequent touches that make this a solid, clean, and baffling short-change routine. After that, there's Scotty York's Fast Eddie Smith, which is more of a bill transformation than a short-change routine, but the presentation gives it a short-change feel. Of the two, I prefer Hornswoggled! because there are a number of magical moments in the routine, and it seems easier to follow. On first viewing Fast Eddie Smith, I couldn't even tell that the bills had changed by the end. Either routine, though, will lend your performances a little con-man flavor, if that's your idea of a good time.

John Mendoza offers a solid Three Card Monte routine that's a decent starting point if you're looking for a legit, "tossing the broads" style routine. (If you want more, there are three volumes of *World's Greatest* DVDs on this one trick alone.) Finally, Dan Harlan busts out the venerable Circus Card Trick (the one in which "the next card I turn over will be yours") in a three-phase sucker routine designed to really beat an audience to a pulp. Not a lot of folks dig sucker tricks, but with the right soft sell you could get some mileage out of this sequence. Just remember that selling a sucker trick isn't as hard as you think; selling a sucker bet is a different story.

The routines taught on this DVD should fit into the repertoire of most general performers. However, if you're still itching for a real taste of the dark side, the bonus feature on this DVD is some good old-fashioned, old-timey exposé footage courtesy of Ross Bertram. He runs the gamut of card control (false shuffles, false deals, holdouts), throws in some Three Card Monte, a Shell Game, and some dice switches to boot. This stuff is where I live, and if you're interested in real gambling table work, you'll enjoy this footage as well. Again, the target audience here is the general practitioner as opposed to the double-duke cardsharp, but the routines on this DVD are solid and certainly worth your time. If you end up on the slippery slope down into blackjack demos and center deals, well...don't say I didn't warn you.

BOLD DVD

By RUS ANDREWS

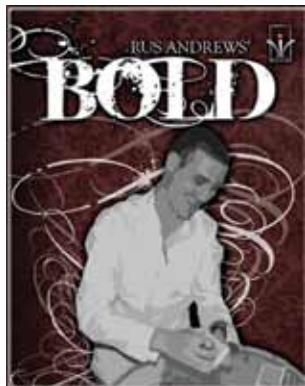
Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$30.00

REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS

This DVD is a compilation of five "bold" card effects. There is no fluff here in the production of the DVD as you are presented with a performance followed by a short discussion and explanation of the effect presented. The theme of the DVD is effects that require a bold move.

The first effect presented is called Collared; a selected card



transposes with a random card in the spectator's hand, and the random card appears on the spectator's back under his collar. This is not completely logical, but it has a gratifying surprise finish. This is followed by: a three-phase Oil and Water trick with eight cards that is short, direct, and ends clean; a thought-of card to shoe that is direct and has an easy-to-follow plot; a quick transposition using four cards; and a non-gaffed moving pip effect.

Although the title of the DVD indicates that all of the material will require bold moves, the routines on this DVD do not all require a bold move to complete the effect. As an added bonus, Rus covers a few moves that are used in several of the routines. This DVD is not for the beginning card worker, but the effects are not too difficult to master for the intermediate and advanced card worker. All of the effects on the DVD use a standard pack of cards. There are no involved routines, just direct solid card magic. This DVD is worth a look.

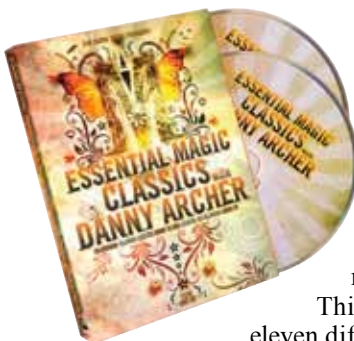
ESSENTIAL MAGIC CLASSICS DVD By DANNY ARCHER

Available from: DannyArcher.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS



I have known Danny Archer for a couple of years now from attending the Mindvention convention that he and Robert Allen produce. Danny is a great guy, but I had never seen him perform, so I looked forward to his take on the classics presented on his new release, *Essential Magic Classics*.

This two-volume DVD set teaches eleven different items.

The video begins with Danny providing a brief introduction of what is going to be covered; he states that all of the material has been performed and tested many times in front of real audiences. The first DVD contains Eye Exam (a very commercial version of Twisting the Aces), a cute coin routine called Pick a Coin, Animal (a mentalism routine using images of animals on laminated strips that packs small and plays big), a multiple-card-selection routine with eight selections (each one found in a different and entertaining manner), and a card on forehead routine. As Danny states in the introduction, these are his takes on classic routines and plots. As expected from a working professional, all of the material presented on the first disc is very good, solid magic for the close-up and stand-up performer.

The second DVD contains a sponge bunny routine, a variation of the Anniversary Waltz in which two different signed cards are fused together to become one, a Three-Fly coin routine that begins and ends using a purse frame, a multi-phase routine using a one-inch ball that vanishes, changes colors, and has a surprise ending, a fast-paced color-changing hank, and a multi-phase card

routine using a memorized deck. You will also learn Danny's false shuffle.

Danny has some great handlings on the second DVD on a variety of effects. His presentations are more of the classic style and may not fit with the younger generation, but the material is really good. What you get here are the personal handlings and variations of effects developed by a working pro. The card material presented here will take some time and effort to master, but it is well worth the time.

Danny is a very good teacher and provides you with very good information to allow you to learn the effects presented here. This is a very good buy for the close-up performer.

PRINCESS IN A PICKLE TRICK By DAVID KAYE (SILLY BILLY)

Available from: www.SillyMagic.com

Price \$250.00

REVIEW BY PAYNE



Over the years, many tricks have advertised themselves as being able to pack small yet play big. While some have actually lived up to that hype, few of them can hold a candle to Silly Billy's latest release, *Princess in a Pickle* – a routine that is six minutes of quality, stage-filling entertainment that can fit inside a file folder.

Four children, one girl and three boys, are invited on stage to participate in a bit of magical

storytelling. The tale is a classic one involving a princess and her three suitors. The little girl is to play the lead and is given a "headless silk" bearing the image of a princess. The three suitors are each given similar headless silks to help them out with their roles, which are a dragon, a frog, and a prisoner. The story centers on which of these three suitors the princess will marry. After a great deal of byplay, bits, and eventually audience selection, the frog is chosen. The headless silks of these two characters are then placed in a bag and after some more byplay involving magic spells and a kiss to break the curse, the silks are removed from the bag and found to have merged into one giant silk bearing the images of a prince and princess.

Now I generally don't go for this type of routine myself. But after seeing the video of Silly Billy performing it, I knew I had to have it. The comic potential and endless opportunities for interaction that were possible with this set of custom-printed silks were just too good a thing to pass up. I think anyone who entertains children, or specializes in family entertainment, would agree with me.

As is typical with all of Silly Billy's line of magic, he's really thought this routine through and has improved the design of the headless silks. To start off with, they aren't square. All but the last silk (which is produced at the end) are banner shaped, 21-inches wide by 36-inches in length. Thus the image of the character fills the whole silk. This makes them much easier for the child to hold in place. The narrower size keeps back lighting from obscuring the image on the silk and has the advantage of taking up less space in the change bag. The narrower size also makes the appearance of the final 42-inch square silk at the end more logical as well as

surprising.

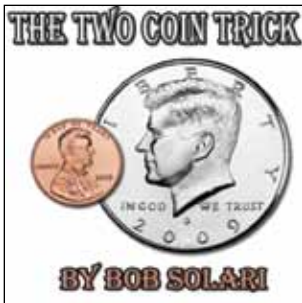
All of the silks are bright, contemporary looking, and designed to be seen in the largest of theaters. You receive the four character silks, the prince and princess 42-inch square (a first, because no other headless silk trick has had one silk to be used with two people), a change bag, and a detailed DVD featuring two routines. One routine can be used with children younger than six years old, and one can be used for children over six. There is also a very clever feature these headless silks have that all others lack (that I'll not tip here). Just know that there is a great way to have the children display the silks without them having to hold them in place. If that doesn't intrigue you enough to tip the scales and persuade you into getting this great and versatile set of silks, I don't know what can. Princess in a Pickle is definitely going on my A-list.

THE TWO COIN TRICK By BOB SOLARI

Available from: www.BobSolariMagic.com

Price \$20.95

REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



I like this. The effect won't land you a television special, but it is a quick bit of magical fun presented as a guessing game. While this sort of presentation can easily run afoul of the "you're an idiot" moments that plague some magicians, that's simply a pitfall to *avoid*, rather than a reason to reject this sort of thing altogether. Based on a Milbourne Christopher trick and a Sam Schwartz routine,

this is as close to "no skill required" as a coin trick gets. The coins supplied are gaffed, but they're gaffed in such a way that the coins may be examined. (This is not possible in the original versions.)

Two American coins are shown: a half dollar and a penny. After they are offered for examination, the magician invites the audience to play a little game. He puts the penny away in his pocket, but it returns to his hand. (The coins are shown in a clean and natural display that's not possible in previous versions.) The performer then cleanly pockets the half dollar, but instead of returning to the performer's hand, both coins vanish.

Yes, only the penny really vanishes, but play it right and it can feel as if both coins disappear.

That's it. It's quick, easy (but does require a little attention to noise), and can be fun, provided you're not a jerk about it (that last part being the most difficult thing about it). Reset is quick and easy, and there is nothing to refill or replace. Just be sure not to spend the penny. If you're new to coin magic and are looking for something to carry in your pocket, you might like this.

NOW LOOK HERE! DVD AND SPECIALLY-PRINTED CARDS By CHAD LONG

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00

REVIEW BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL

What a great little card trick this is. Sometimes, when per-



forming, you want to use a trick to ponder the meaning of the universe; sometimes you want to touch someone's soul with a sense of deep astonishment; and sometimes you just want to have a little fun. This trick is a *lot* of fun. Chad Long's Now Look Here! first appeared in his 1994 lecture notes and was subsequently made available as a marketed item through Doc Eason. Now it's back through Chad's own Chad Long Magic, so if you missed it before, now's your chance to get one.

Chad Long is one of those glorious performers who has tremendous chops, is a solid magical thinker, and is funny as hell. Now Look Here! is a lovely combination of all three of those elements. You start in the time-honored "pick a card, look at it, put it back" fashion. After some fancy cuts and shuffles, you turn over the top card to reveal a printed card that says "Look in My Pocket!" Tossing that card on the table, you reach into your pocket and pull out another card that says "Look on the Table!" The card on the table is turned over; it has changed, and now says "Look in My Hand!" The card in your hand is now shown to be the selection. Sound confusing? It isn't. It's fast-paced, entertaining, and packs a punch. The effect comes with specially-printed red Bicycle cards and an instructional DVD.

I've seen the "instruction card" idea appropriated elsewhere (without credit) and not done nearly as well as in this routine. A good part of the fun of this routine is that you get a series of transformations that happen with the different "road sign" cards. It's a world of difference from simply preloading a bunch of "funny" messages in different places. To that end, the alternate handling provided by Scotty York just isn't as good in my opinion. It is less technically demanding than the original, which may be the deciding factor for some. And Chad manages to make both play equally well. Then again, Chad Long is the kind of performer who could read the phone book and make it play – and he probably has.

A word of caution: during the DVD production the clips ended up out of order. The performances are swapped: the one labeled Scotty York's is Chad's, and vice versa. The explanations are described correctly. Just remember that Chad's is the one with the top change, and that's the good one. I'm not even sure this trick fits my performing style, but I'm going to do my damndest to make it fit. I really like this. Recommended.

SPINELESS TRICK By CHAD LONG

Available from: www.ChadLongMagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD

How would you like a really good routine that you can do anywhere and you can learn with fifteen minutes of instruction and two minutes of practice? A routine that is witty, magical, and impressive. How would you like to get a routine like that for about twenty bucks? I can help you out with that. Well, Chad Long can help you out. All I can do is recommend it and tell you where to get it.

Spineless is a wonderful routine taught on DVD. The trick runs for several minutes, is full of dry humor, and plays to just



cover. You hand out bunches of pages and have them shuffled. You collect the bundles and pile them all together. You have a spectator insert the book's cover anywhere at all into the stack. The spectator concentrates on the first word on the page next to where the cover was inserted.

You write a prediction, but it is not the word the spectator is thinking of. It is a number. You ask a second spectator to open a thesaurus to that page number and read the top word. The word found by the second spectator and the word seen by the first spectator match. Your number turned out to be an exact, if obscure, prediction.

You can play it tough and serious, skip the wit, and just go for the mental reveal. Or you can beef it up with more humor and byplay. You can adapt it to books of any kind, magazines, newspapers, or other printed material. One of my favorite variations is to use a torn-apart folding road map and predict a destination city.

The video is short and to the point. Mr. Long performs the routine for a live audience at a club, and then follows this with a succinct explanation. You can learn this quickly and easily. You may have to tear up a paperback book and handle the pages a time or two to get the knack, but it is a simple and fool-proof procedure.

Buying this is a no-brainer. Present it once for your friends over coffee, and you'll discover that it was worth both the cost and your time. Or make it the headline bit in your stage mental act. Use it for kid shows or corporate strolling. Spineless is a very easy and very useful routine, and it is very reasonably priced. Go get it.

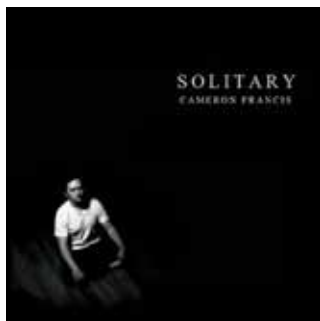
SOLITARY DVD **By CAMERON FRANCIS**

Available from: www.papercranemagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00

REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



The video and audio are fine (with the editorial exceptions noted below) on this forty-five-minute disc from Paper Crane Magic. The DVD begins with Cameron telling you what the effect will be, and only then does he show (sort of) the effect. The illusion is that an initialed quarter vanishes from your fist and appears inside a stapled coin holder (a small square of

cardboard stapled on four sides with a clear window in the center that allows you to see both sides of the coin). What you do not get to see is a performance of the effect from start to finish for

a layperson. Maybe the thinking is that since you already have purchased the DVD, you don't need to see a complete performance of the effect. Call me old school, but I prefer to see a complete, unedited performance.

Next Cameron shows you how to prepare the three included coin holders to make them ready for use. In addition, you will also need a standard stapler (not for performance, but to prepare the holder). Eventually you do get to see the effect from start to finish (more or less). For some reason, the fashion for magic video productions seems to be to try to avoid showing a clear uninterrupted shot of what is happening and instead to show unmotivated close-ups and less than helpful viewing angles.

Thankfully, the pictures and angles are clearer and better when Cameron explains the not too difficult handling. Preparing the holder is quite easy to do. Ripping open the holder to extract the coin is a little more challenging, but it is nothing that anyone reading this could not learn.

There is another way to remove the coin from the holder by pushing it through the plastic membrane. This requires some additional preparation on the holder; I did not like this as much as the first handling. Either way you perform it, a holder is destroyed each time. I spent a few minutes on the Web and found one hundred holders for three dollars plus shipping.

Another variation follows with the coin appearing in the holder, vanishing from the holder, and then appearing in your pocket. I did not like this either, because it seems to me that a sharp spectator (perhaps even a not so sharp spectator) might wonder if the coin was really inside at all. I should also mention at this point that there cannot be anyone standing behind you as you perform Solitary. No discussion of angles or audience management is provided.

In the Handout routine, instead of the coin being initialed, the performer writes the name of a card that the spectator had selected in a previous routine. The card-coin appears inside the holder, which can be examined by the spectator. A second empty holder is introduced and the card-coin in its holder is pocketed. The card-coin now appears inside this second blank holder (which can be given away) and the now-empty holder is removed from the performer's pocket. Again, I found this confusing and it made me realize that the effect I *wanted* to see cannot be done (at least with the handlings Cameron provides). The effect should be: the stapled holder is introduced, a borrowed coin is initialed on both sides by the spectator, and then the signed coin appears inside the holder, which can then be given to the spectator as a memorable souvenir. Now that, my friends, would be a great trick, one that would also leave the audience member with the coin in the holder and a great tale to tell.

To sum up, Solitary has some good points in terms of effect and ease of performance, but I think that it ultimately falls short of being an effect that I would use for a real world audience.

BUNNY SURPRISE PAPER TEAR TRICK **By TONY KLUSMEYER**

Available from: www.ToeKneeMagic.com

Price: \$20.00

REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSELL

Telling a child from the audience that he is going to turn the child into a bunny, the performer shows two pieces of tissue paper, one pink and one white, both 7½ x 14 inches in size. Handing the white piece to a helper, he instructs the child to tear the paper in half. He does the same with the pink paper. They exchange



one half of their torn papers and, placing the white and pink papers together, each then tears the papers in half again. The performer takes the torn papers from the helper and adds them to his torn papers, bunching them together. When the performer unfolds the papers, a colorful bunny mask is discovered, with a nose made from the bunched tissue papers. This mask is made

from paper more substantial than tissue paper. It is white, trimmed in pink, blue, and black, and has two eye-holes and an elastic band to hold the mask against the helper's face. This effect will be well received by younger children, and adults will enjoy seeing the children's delight. It is a cute idea! You receive instructions and ten sets of prepared bunny papers. That means it will cost you two dollars per show, but it leaves the child of honor with a present.

PIRATE'S BOOTY TRICK

By BOB SOLARI

Available from: www.bobsolarimagic.com

Price \$14.95

REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSSELL



Here is exactly how Pirate's Booty looks. While chatting about the current interest in old-time pirates, the performer counts six red-backed playing cards face down in a row onto the table. He then shows a plastic pirate coin, "especially valuable because plastic was very rare in the days of old-time pirates." A spectator is invited to place the coin on any card – a completely free choice.

The performer picks up the remaining five cards and shows all five faces. If they are all skulls and crossbones, the card under the coin will show a colorful image of a treasure chest filled with gold – the spectator has found the pirate's booty. If they are all treasure chest cards, the card under the coin will be found to be the only one with the image of the skull and crossbones. Too bad, the spectator missed the "booty." This double-outcome effect uses a special set of cards, a special way of handling the cards, and one standard sleight that is easy to learn and perform. The images are bold and attractive. This is a great little packet trick to carry around in your coat pocket. Kids will love it, but it is clever enough for adults to enjoy as well. You receive the cards, a plastic coin, instructions, and a plastic card wallet.

ANY CARD CALLED FOR TRICK

By DENNIS LOOMIS

Available from: www.loomismagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$36.00

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA

Imagine this effect: Any spectator is asked to call out any playing card; you immediately cut to it. The effect can be repeated



over and over. Sounds incredible, no? And yet, it is that quick and effortless. I have seen several performers, like *M-U-M* Editor Michael Close and the late Pat Page do this with an ungaffed, but stacked, deck. This requires a lot of memorization or calculation, and it is not 100% sure fire. Billy O'Connor of the UK created his Instanto Deck in the early 1900s and the effect in this review is based upon that deck. There have been several "re-inventions"

of this deck over the years, most recently the late Art Kahn's Cardini Cards. *M-U-M* columnist Dennis Loomis has created a gimmicked deck that is light years beyond either of those, both in the placement and quality of "the work." This is a deck that can do what it's supposed to do consistently and with reliability.

This is not a self-working effect, but you can learn the simple mechanics and system in no time at all. There are no sleights per se, but you do have to learn how to handle the deck and devote a bit of practice to it. The instructions teach you how to cut to any card and the manner in which the deck needs to be handled, depending on the card cut to. In addition, Dennis teaches four different deck switches to help you ring in the deck after handling a straight pack. Finally, he provides an introductory script for the routine and some presentational ideas. Dennis will also custom make the decks, using whatever pack you'd like.

I think this is a fine version of this effect, but I believe there are more possibilities with it. You might be able to use this as a visible card index, allowing you to instantly locate and obtain a named card. It can then be used in a variety of card revelations, even using multiple card revelations, but you will be limited in the manner in which they are revealed due to "the work" in the particular card named. If this type of magic is to your liking, you will find no better made tool than this. Recommended.

SPEEDREADER DVD AND DECK

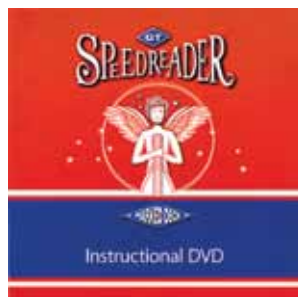
By GARRETT THOMAS

Available from: KozmoMagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00 (DVD), \$25.00 (Deck)

REVIEW BY NORMAN BECK



This is a factory marked deck of cards that Garrett Thomas was involved in. I have known Garrett for a long time. His magic reflects the fact that he is a very thoughtful magician; this project is no exception. The cards are the best quality that Bicycle makes, and the marks are factory printed, not added after the fact.

The markings are of the Ted Lesley variety, which makes them easy to read, but Garrett has moved the marks to a location that makes them both easy to read and hard to read at the same time. That is to say, it's easy for you, and harder (than the Lesley original) for the spectators to notice. The new location is decidedly right-handed, a point that could be an issue for left-handed users. Also available for an extra \$20 is a DVD that shows you how to use a marked deck and not get caught.

The folks at Kozmo Magic actually filmed Garrett working with the deck in a real world situation. After each effect Garrett explains in great detail the ins and outs of how he did what he did using the marked deck. He also touches on using a marked deck with a stack. I think for someone who has never used a marked deck, this is a good starting point. If you currently use a marked deck, Speedreader is a nice deck to add to your close-up case. The back is the Mandolin back design rather than the standard Rider back, which for some people is a minus. I don't fall into that group, because I don't think the audience cares one bit about the backs.

GYPSY BALLOON ONE-TRICK DVD
By TONY CLARK

Available from: www.tonyclarkmagic.com
Price \$25.00

REVIEW BY PAYNE



I love it when someone takes an old trick and puts a great new spin on it, which is why I love Tony Clark's Gypsy Balloon. He's taken one of the classics of magic, the trick that has come to be known as the Gypsy Thread, and made it into a modern miracle suitable for parlor and stage. Plus it's breathtakingly beautiful to boot.

The effect is straightforward and direct. A twelve-inch helium-filled rubber balloon suspended from a single string is brought out on stage. The string is then broken, one piece at a time, into several shorter strands until the balloon is held by a single six-inch piece of string. The loose strands are then balled up and placed on the middle of the remaining strand. The balloon is given a bit of a shake; with that it rises up towards the ceiling, restoring the string as the ball of loose strands unwinds. This is a sight that should elicit gasps from the audience; with the proper storyline it might even bring a sentimental tear to the eye.

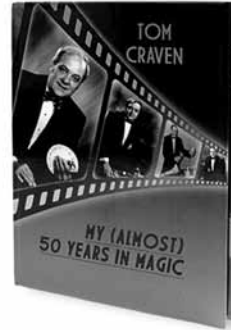
Mr. Clark has done a fabulous job making this effect bullet-proof. The balloon can be freely shown and handled. There is no need to hide any portion of the string. You can even hold it at the fingertips by the very end of the string and the audience will see nothing. There is nothing for them to see. The camouflaging of the gimmick is simply brilliant and makes the working of the trick extremely easy, allowing one to concentrate more fully on the presentation.

It's easy to set up, taking only a minute or so to rig the thread and balloon. Once the prop is set, it's set; it will sit there ready to go. You could keep the balloon floating, tied to a table or chair, in full view throughout your entire act. It's virtually angle proof and could easily be done surrounded, so it's the perfect effect for the banquet room entertainer. All you need for this is a balloon, some string (which Mr. Clark has provided a nice sample of), and a tank of helium (obtainable at any party store) and you're ready to go. Detailed instructions as well as two presentational ideas are provided on the well produced instructional DVD. This one is definitely a keeper and is going into my summer reading program shows this year. Seriously, give this one a try. You won't be disappointed.

MY (ALMOST) 50 YEARS IN MAGIC BOOK
By TOM CRAVEN

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies
Price \$75.00

REVIEW BY CHRISTIAN PAINTER



If you've ever sat next to Tom Craven at a convention, I'm sure you found it impossible to not learn something from this master magician. Tom is always friendly and willing to share his vast cauldron of knowledge. If you don't know Tom, here's a word of advice: when you do sit next to him, have your notebook open and ready to take notes. Ideas and tricks spill out of him like a waterfall. While you are mulling over his last idea, he will already have offered three more.

I was happy to see that Tom has written a semi-comprehensive book on his decades of study in magic. I don't know if he could write a comprehensive book of *all* of his knowledge. This book is big. It's an 8½ x 11 hardcover with 190 pages.

So the question is: is *My (Almost) 50 Years in Magic* worth the \$75? Let's use math to solve this question. In today's world, a DVD with a single trick is sold for about twenty-five to thirty-five dollars. Using that as a yardstick, we would need three good tricks to make the book worth the price. This book contains over 150 tricks. Yes, you read that right, over one hundred and fifty. I think we can find at least three.

This impressively large tome contains mostly card magic. There are fifty pages of non-card magic that compose tricks with other items such as silks, ropes, and mental magic.

Next question is, are the tricks any good? If you know Tom Craven, you wouldn't have to ask that question. However, for those that don't know Tom personally, I will give some examples:

Head to Head: You hand the deck to a card player and let him take out the best hand he can for a game of poker. You then do the same. You each get a chance to draw new cards. In the end, you win using the fairest of rules. The audience will enjoy the cleverness of the routine and it makes for a nice segue into your next trick.

PSI-Handkerchief: Five wine glasses, each with a different colored handkerchief inside, sit on a table. A participant chooses any color. An envelope that has been sitting on the table the entire time proves that the magician knew what would be chosen.

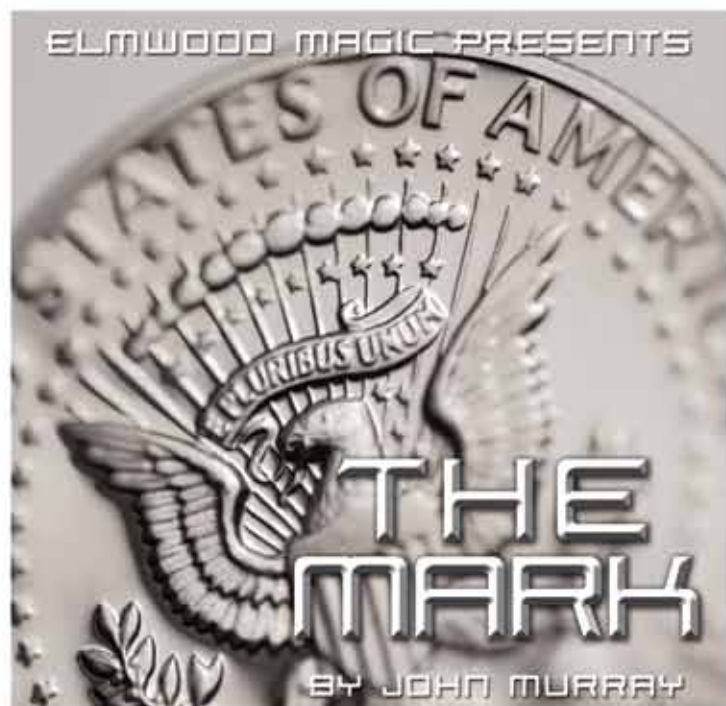
Spirit Hank: I can't believe that this routine makes me want to break out my Silk Cabby. It's a multi-phase routine that makes sense and will surprise your audience.

Plugging the Keyhole: This is a very interesting idea that allows you to find a spectator's card while setting yourself up for the next trick you are going to with the deck or small a packet.

Wait, I've already given you four things that I think are gold, and trust me, there's a lot more where that came from. This is the type of book that will tickle your thinking, fire up ideas for your own routines, and give you lots of fuel for some fun magic presentations. Tom Craven's *My (Almost) 50 Years in Magic* is very easily worth the price of admission. ☆

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The Salad Bowl Prediction

By Paul Osborne

Let's face it, as magicians we get invited to dinner parties for the free entertainment aspect we provide, unless our entertainment is lousy, in which case the invitations are not as forthcoming. I have considered this on occasion, based on some of the parties I have attended.

Something unique is this prediction done with seemingly everyday objects. Typically, when you arrive at a dinner party, it is customary to bring a bottle of wine. In this instance, the performer brings along a bag of spinach. *"You can pour the wine and I will make the salad, unless you would like to see a trick."* Putting the bag of greens down, the performer passes out small pieces of paper and some small golf pencils. Guests are instructed to write down their favorite salad additions. As examples, the magician mentions croutons, mushrooms, tomatoes, etc. Audience members are encouraged to be creative and feel free to write as many suggestions as they can come up with; they are then to fold each paper four ways. A paper bag is introduced and the suggestions are dropped within. The bag is closed and the contents are shaken to make sure there is no order within the bag.

"May I borrow a salad bowl?" The hostess presents one as the performer rips the bottom of the bag to allow the suggestion slips to fall within the bowl. The hostess is asked to select one and only one of the many slips and to hold on to her selection. The remaining slips are gathered up and, along with the bag, discarded.

"Where is that bag of spinach?" It is brought forward and a party guest is asked to open the bag and pour the contents into the now empty bowl. This is done; it appears as if there is a small envelope contained within the sealed bag of spinach. The magician selects a volunteer to remove the small envelope from the bowl. *"Please remove the envelope, open it up, and remove the contents, but don't read what it says yet."* The hostess is asked to read her slip of paper. "Chicken," she says. Addressing the volunteer, the performer asks him to reveal the contents of the envelope. "Chicken," he says. A dinnertime mystery!

A double bag must be prepared for this effect. I used a standard lunch-size bag. You will need two. Also you will need small slips of paper cut to about two inches by two inches. At first I used Post-it Notes, but they are not good for this effect. They stick together and to each other, causing your secret to be revealed. Cut about twelve slips (or the number of anticipated guests) and write "chicken" (or whatever your prediction word is) on each; then fold them into fourths and drop them into the bag.

Next, prepare the bag by cutting the second bag in half. Use rubber cement around the top of the bag and insert it into the bag that has the production slips in it. Push it all the way down until the tops of the two bags are even (Figure 1). Once done, pinch the bags together until the two bags are stuck together at the top. Use a small knife to cut a slit in the bag just below the position of the second bag. When the time is right, this will allow you to easily rip the bottom of this newly prepared bag.

Next, cut another set of twelve slips and put them in your pocket along with some small mini golf pencils (which can be purchased from a party store).

Prepare a small 2 x 3½ envelope with your folded prediction inside. The bag of spinach comes from the Whole Foods market

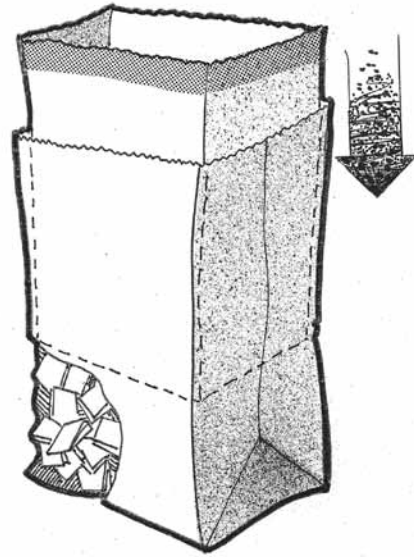


Photo 1



Photo 2

(or a similar store in your area that carries prepackaged lettuce, spinach, or greens). Slit open the bottom with an X-Acto knife and slip your prediction into the center of the bag so that the produce hides it on all sides. The bag is then sealed at the bottom using a clear tape (Figure 2). If this is neatly done, the preparation will never be noticed. Fold the bag and put it in your inside breast pocket along with the blank papers and pencils. Take the salad bag to the party and you are ready to go. ☆

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INSIDE STRAIGHT

BY NORMAN BECK

ONE-UPMANSHIP

Last week I told a guy I know that I had made a hole in one on the golf course. He informed me that he had actually played that same hole, and he had scored one less than I had. I bought a new car and was able to get it for the dealer's price; my friend told me that he had bought the same car for \$2,000 less than the dealer's price. I was in a very good mood when I talked to the guy, because I had just gotten my highest fee ever for an hour of close-up magic – \$5,000. He informed me that he was regularly getting \$6,000 per hour.

My friend is what I call a one-upper. If you check, you can find a definition of a one-upper in various urban dictionaries. A one-upper is a guy who – no matter what *you* have done, what you will do – has done the same thing, but just a tad bit (and in some cases a whole bunch) better. In most cases, one-uppers lie. I don't know why they lie, but they do. The goal of a one-upper is to build himself up and to tear you down.

In the pool hall, the guy who comes in and tells you how great a player he is and that he likes to play for money is not a threat. Simon Lovell, who plays a good amount of pool, will back me up on this. The guy you have to watch out for is the one who simply says, "I'll play." When you suggest that the stakes be \$20 a game, he says, "Okay." That's the guy you have to watch out for.

Recently, an article was published about the top salesman at a Lexus dealership here in Dallas. This man offered some sage advice: *Never* let anyone know you're the smartest guy in the room.

The best way to handle the situation when someone is telling a success story is to smile, compliment him or her on the accomplishment, and move on. Fight the impulse to offer your "topper." (I'm sure that because of your great charm, innate talent, stunning good looks, superhuman perseverance, and improbable good luck you have a better story. But trust me, you'll probably do yourself a disservice if you tell it.)

I also think that this carries over to the joke-telling field. Often, when someone tells me a joke, I will know the punch line before the end of it. Even if I know the punch line, I never ever step on a person's joke. I do this for three reasons:

1. The teller may have a different take on the joke, one that I haven't heard.
2. It is rude to step on someone's joke.
3. Stepping on a punch line makes you look like a jerk.

My normal tactic when someone tells a joke is to laugh at it, not to try to one-up them with a better joke. A similar situation occurs at a club or bar where a fellow magician is working; under no circumstances should you do any magic at all. To do so is just bad manners.

I do have a joke for you. A wife walks in and says to her husband, "I have good news and bad news." The husband asks, "What is the good news?" The wife says, "The air bags on the car work just fine." ☆



George Schindler

The Dean's Diary

FOUR OF SPADES

On March 31, 2007, after a national council meeting in Austin, Texas, we were invited to an afternoon party at Richard Garriott's home, "Britannia Manor." Before 1995 it had been a famous haunted house; it was decorated with medieval items such as crossbows, swords, and armor. There were secret passages and rooms filled with great artifacts.



Richard Garriott's home - Britannia Manor

Over the garage was his famous automata collection. The room was set up for a show, and here is where my story begins. Hull Youngblood, one of the most charming of the Texas magicians, was doing a version of a David Regal card trick, which he appropriately called an "Effect of Galactic Proportion." He had my wife Nina select a card, and after some by-play inadvertently came up with the wrong card. This has happened



Garriott's automata collection

to most of us, but Hull quickly recouped with, "Nina, I will make it up to you. I promise." (It is important to note that the selected card was the Four of Spades.) We all chided Hull, who fortunately has a good sense of humor. But he would eventually be true to his word.

We will now skip ahead to 2008. A message from Hull suggested that we take note that on Columbus Day (October 12) a special event would take place; Nina's Four of Spades was to be revealed in a spectacular way a few days later. And it was! During that week, Soyuz space shuttle astronauts Richard Garriott and Greg Chamitoff (another S.A.M. member) performed some magic on the flight that was broadcast around the globe. Hull's friend Richard revealed the selected card in outer space. It was indeed



George with Hull Youngblood

the Four of Spades. Was Hull psychic?

You may remember that at the Buffalo S.A.M. convention, space traveler Garriott spoke about that trip. Someone had him take a card, which he promptly forgot (?). He could not remember the card; instead, he showed us the space film that depicted him awakening from a dream in which there was the haunting image of the Four of Spades. A coincidence? I think not!

After his experience with Nina, Hull has kept an emergency Invisible Deck in his pocket. I believe him when he claims that he has never needed it. Along with the two astronauts, Hull Youngblood founded Assembly 17210, the first assembly in space. The number coincides with the speed of the Soyuz. Hull is its president. Nina is a charter member, along with several others. We are still awaiting information as to where and when they will have their next meeting. I might add that Richard sent the original Four of Spades that was on the mission (duly framed and autographed) to Hull.

If you saved your Houdini membership card (2010) you will note that the trick embedded reveals the same card. Next time we meet, ask me to think of a card and you can easily impress onlookers when you name the Four of Spades. For a complete story on Richard Garriott and Assembly 17210 see the January 2009 issue of *M-U-M*. ☆

He's Erdnase with an arrow-through- the-head.



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Rod Danilewicz

Confessions of a Paid Amateur

Recently, at an annual event, I interviewed almost fifty part-time magicians regarding their opinions on the future of brick-and-mortar magic shops. I favor such businesses, because I own one. I know the hidden expenses that must be met before you can declare a profit.

Based on that survey, I am issuing a wake-up call to all brick-and-mortar dealers. If your plan for survival is dependent upon the part-timers flocking back to your store when the recession ends, forget it. Get out now and begin selling recreational pharmaceuticals.

They don't care about you. They have enough magic hidden in drawers to last them the rest of their performing lives without repeating a trick. If they do need cards or rope they will go to the dollar store.

Chris Faria, PhD., from Colorado Springs, commented on last month's column and included some excellent observations. He thinks that if we are to attract younger people to our meetings and conventions, we must establish a cadre of younger role models. I agree with him.

There are a few pockets of youth recruitment out there, but I feel the majority of magicians in my age group want no part of this. We are a penurious lot. We are stingy with our money, our praise, and our knowledge and we don't like sharing our stage and our spot light.

Again, paraphrasing Dr. Faria: On the surface it may appear that youngsters attend our meetings wanting to learn magic tricks. What they are actually seeking are meaningful relationships with experienced magicians who will share their time, knowledge, and friendship. When these relationships are not forthcoming, they quit coming to meetings and stop hanging out with us at conventions.

The dealers must focus on the young if the future of magic and their own futures are to be secure. Forget about us old guys. Indications are that most of us have already forgotten about you. We already own a thumb tip and a Svengali deck; the kids don't.

Step into *my* imaginary magic shop. The Internet doesn't intimidate me, because they sell stuff, not intangibles. My stock in trade is time, advice, and personal attention. I offer encouragement by giving a few items away as the young magicians progress. Better to invest in them rather than the Yellow Pages, which never spends a dime in my store.

All merchandise is labeled with stickers – red, white, blue, silver, and gold. The first time someone comes in they will fill out a form asking for their contact information, including their parents' names. They will list their experience and their specific interests with regard to magic.

Based on their response they get a punch card. Let's say it's a white one for beginner's magic. When they buy ten items they get one free. If they buy a book, I punch out two squares. I will work with them until they master each purchase in succession before buying something else. When the card is full, they move up to the next level of magic and the next colored card.

If the youngster shows promise, I will match him up with a suitable older magician willing to act as mentor. When he reaches silver or gold status there are no more punch-outs or freebies. His gold card has earned him the right to buy anything in the shop.

Using the information on his questionnaire, I send his parents a letter. I include the usual blurb about how magic will make him popular, give him self confidence, and clear up his acne. I will tell them that based on his level of participation, magic can be a passing fancy or a rewarding lifetime hobby.

I will ask them to help me bring out their child's full potential. I assure them that if it appears that magic is not a good fit, I will advise them to save their money. I want the parents to know that I am selling an educational experience that will last a lifetime. I am not running a toy store. I want then on my side.

Most of my advertising is hands-on and local. The store will host a magic club. Members will get a gift certificate on their birthday. Proficient younger members

On the surface it may appear that youngsters attend our meetings wanting to learn magic tricks. What they are actually seeking are meaningful relationships with experienced magicians who will share their time, knowledge, and friendship.

will appear with me at presentations to promote magic. The club will perform at local events. I will host a holiday party that includes a magic show for the parents to see how their children are progressing.

Success in business is a numbers game. You have to take advantage of every opportunity to get favorable publicity in the local media. The more prospects you reach, the more responses you get back. Your success will be measured in percentage points. So concentrate your efforts on the seemingly infinite supply of young people. The ranks of us veterans are thinning out.

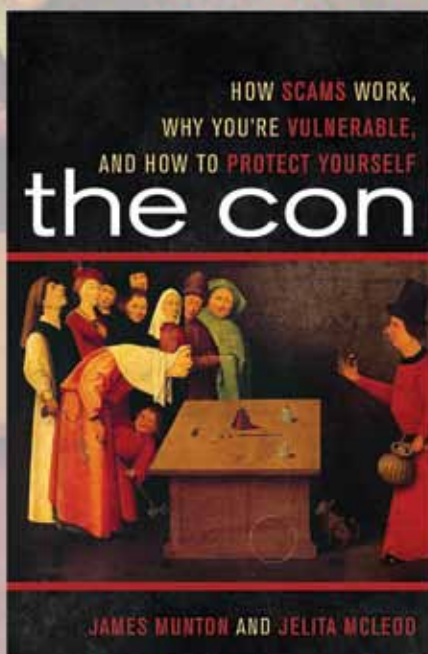
The only money you'll get from us old guys is after we're dead. The wives will be happy to sell you our lifetime collection of boxes and tubes. A section in the shop of antique and collectible magic can be profitable.

Everyone laments that too much magic is available from too many sources. Places to buy stuff abound. Sources where you can obtain a serious education in the art of magic are few. Take down your signs that scream adult toy store. Change your name to magic school or college of magic. Offer a curriculum as your primary product. You and magic will both prosper.

Don't waste your time trying to teach old dogs new tricks. ☆

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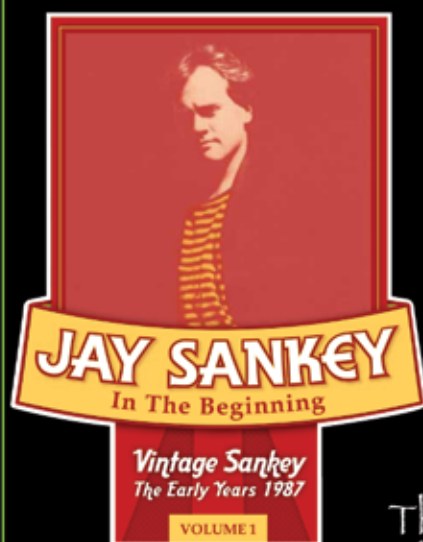


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