

# MUM

MAGIC UNITY MIGHT

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS

DECEMBER 2014



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

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

# Magical Holidays



From all of us  
on the  
M-U-M team

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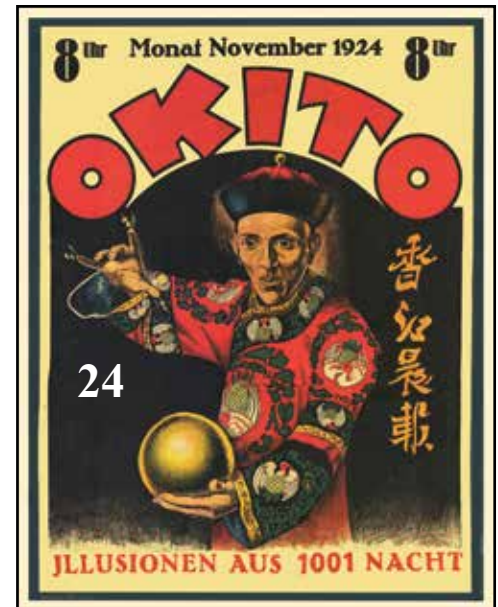
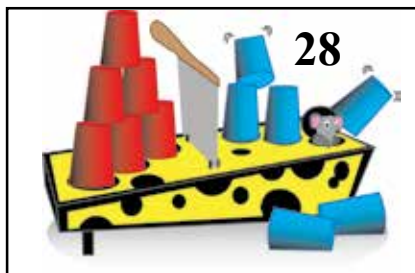


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## Editor's Desk

### Michael Close

I've known Taylor Martin for a lot of years. In performances, Taylor plays many different parts: the brash and brassy Andrea Merlyn, historical recreationist Rodney the Younger (and Elder), Shabby Bay Fakker (whose magic is based on television scam advertisements), and Esmerelda, Gypsy Queen of Magic, who is Taylor's most requested female character. But Taylor's most important role may be as a tireless champion for live magic in central Indiana. Through his continuing efforts with his show *Indy Magic Monthly*, established professionals and up-and-coming young performers have presented their acts to enthusiastic and appreciative audiences. You'll learn more about Taylor in our cover story this month, which starts on page 36.

This issue wraps up six years of editorship and seventy-two issues of *M-U-M*. I am happy to report that Lisa and I have signed on for another three years; we look forward to bringing information that will be of interest to all members of the S.A.M., from beginners to experienced professionals.

One of my sad, end-of-the-year duties is saying thanks and goodbye to several regular columnists who are wrapping up their tenures. George Parker, whose For Your Consideration column constantly offered interesting, out-of-the-box thinking, has started a new business venture that requires a great deal more of his time. Consequently, his column this month will be his last. Thanks, George, for being a part of the *M-U-M* team.

Ken Klosterman is also bringing an end to his three-year, written tour of the Salon de Magic. As I said when I introduced Ken's column in January of 2012, one can only marvel at this collection of props and ephemera and ask, "Where does he get these wonderful toys?" If you've been reading the column, now you know. Thanks, Ken; it's been a delight.

This month, Scott Alexander finishes his twelve-month series, Hit the Road. If you ever want to troupe your show, Scott's hints, tips, and real-world advice will save you time, money, and heartache. The good news is that Scott has a new column up his sleeve; you'll see it in the January issue. We have several more surprises for you next year, including some old friends who are rejoining the *M-U-M* roster. I think you'll have fun.

Because of the special Martin Gardner issue in October and the need to include some extra articles in November and December, the schedule of regular columnists got a little jumbled. Steve Marshall's I Left My Cards at Home column will return in January, alternating with R.D. Michael's El Roberto Enigmatico. Levent's Stage 101 Practicum will be back on its quarterly basis next year. And I hope to showcase some of the performers who will be featured at the national convention in Philadelphia.

Just a note to those who write assembly reports: Print demands a higher resolution photo than the Internet does. If you send a photo snapped on a smart phone, there is a good possibility that the resolution will not be acceptable. If you've sent a photo with your report and the photo did not appear in the magazine, that is the reason why. You may want to consider having someone with a digital camera bring it to your meetings.

Eric DeCamps sent along the following story and photo: On Sunday, October 12, 2014, friends and family congregated in Mid-

dletown, Connecticut, to celebrate PNP Father Cyprian Murray's fiftieth anniversary of his ordination as a priest.

The joyous celebration included many S.A.M. luminaries. Those in attendance were: PNP and current S.A.M. National Chaplain Michael Douglas and his wife Lori, PNP Craig Dickson and his wife Joanne, PNP and National Lifetime S.A.M. Dean George Schindler and his wife Nina, S.A.M. Contest Chair Paul Critelli, S.A.M. Assembly 194 President Monsignor Dermot Brennan, S.A.M. Assembly 77 Past President Steve Rodman, S.A.M. two-time silver medalist Meir Yedid, Compeer Sister Carol Anne, and former S.A.M. Canadian Regional Vice President Phil Matlin.

For those not acquainted with Father Cyprian Murray, he was born John Harvey Murray in New Rochelle, New York. Fr. Cyprian is one of the leading historical experts of magic performed in movies. He has served as S.A.M. chaplain and as the S.A.M. national president from 1989-1990. His other honors include Member of the Inner Magic Circle (MIMC) from The Magic Circle in London, and two cover stories in *M-U-M* (February 1981 and August 1989).

In the early 1980s, the S.A.M. needed to standardize and restructure their international contests of magic. The national council at the time realized that there was only one person who could tackle this monumental overhaul and that person was Fr. Cyprian Murray. Cyprian restructured the concept of an artistic contest; to this date the S.A.M. magic contests remain the gold standard of magic artistic competition. In 2012, in recognition of all his hard work and contributions to the S.A.M. and to the greater magic community, the S.A.M. national council unanimously voted to rename the S.A.M. stage contest in his honor. It is now and will forever be known as the Fr. Cyprian Stage Contest of Magic.

Congratulations again to Fr. Cyprian for this astonishing milestone.



From left: Steve Rodman, Eric DeCamps, Phil Matlin, Father Cyprian, George Schindler, Paul Critelli, Craig Dickson, Sister Carol Anne, Robert Olson, and Michael Douglass  
(Photo courtesy of Bill Hoagland.)

Before I wrap up this column, I'd like to offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes to this magazine: the regular columnists, the reviewers, those who write assembly reports, and those who have written cover stories and special articles. In particular, I'd like to single out Informed Opinion Editor Bill Duncan, proofreader Lindsay Smith, Ad Manager Cinde Sanders, National Administrator Manon Rodriguez, National President "ICE" McDonald, and my patient wife and graphic designer Lisa Close, whose efforts make this magazine a reality. *M-U-M* could not get done each month without you.

And to all my compeers in the S.A.M., I hope you have a safe and happy holiday season and a Happy New Year. ♦



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*President's Desk*  
Kenrick "ICE" McDonald

I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season. As you travel this season be safe and enjoy every moment.

"New York, New York..." I remember hearing this song as a young man; the lyrics say, "New York, New York big city of dreams, but everything in New York ain't quite what it seems." In fact, New York is more than what it seems.

In October, I had the opportunity to visit the city that doesn't sleep; while I was there, I didn't sleep, either. A fast paced thirty-six hours filled with assembly visits, getting a firsthand look at our Past President Houdini's gravesite for restoration, and Rory Feldman's museum/collection of Past President Thurston items – an incredible collection that everyone should see. Just when it seemed it couldn't get better, we entered the Cafe Edison and had lunch at the famous Magic Table. Okay, let me slow down and break down the trip for you.

It all began with my desire to visit Past National President Harry Houdini's Gravesite to view for myself the wear and tear that time wrought. I invited President-Elect David Bowers to make the trip with me. I flew to Pennsylvania on a Wednesday afternoon and lectured to a magic club Wednesday night. We got up early Thursday morning to catch a train to New York City, a three-hour trip. We were retrieved by Pat Colby, who graciously drove us around to all the places we needed to go. Did I mention that Mrs. Bowers came along with us? I think it was to keep Mr. Bowers in line. (Yet I digress. Smile.) The first stop was the PNP Houdini Gravesite; the purpose for the visit was to begin the restoration process of the site. As the car pulled up to cemetery, the grave was visible from the street. The excitement of viewing this monument, this great part of history, and standing on this ground was overwhelming. I greeted and consulted with Mr. Jacobson, the site overseer; I also invited the press. After the interviews and photos, we headed to our next destination – the home of Dean George and Nina Schindler for a brief repast.

After a short visit, I had to leave for news interviews about the S.A.M. I later met up with the gang at New York's Parent Assembly 1. We attended the assembly meeting, then we were honored with a show, presented by Parent Assembly 1 and their wonderful magicians; many thanks to all who performed. Dorothy Dietrich and Dick Brooks, of the Houdini Museum and members of the S.A.M. Houdini Gravesite Committee, were also in attendance.

The next morning we hit the New York streets again. We visited the Thurston Museum; after seeing all the history that the collection could offer, we went to the Magic Table, held at the Edison Hotel Cafe. When we arrived at the Magic Table, lunch was already in process. While there, I had the pleasure of meeting one of our oldest S.A.M. members, ninety-two-year old Jerry Oppenheimer. From the Magic Table, we head back to Penn Station for our train ride back to Pennsylvania. Good bye New York, New York. It was magical.

I would like to honor and congratulate Presidential Citation recipients Manon and Dan Rodriguez for their contribution to magic.

**THE PRESIDENT'S GOOD WILL PERFORMER OF THE MONTH**



**Assembly 13 charter certificate**

My selection for this month's spotlight goes not to a person, but to an assembly. The Dallas Magic Circle (S.A.M. Assembly 13) was chartered on October 4, 1924. The following information on Assembly 13 comes from an article by Raymond C. Terranella, published in *M-U-M*, November 1968: "Dallas is a city often referred to

as 'Big D,' a nickname born in the thirties when it hit the top as the biggest town in Texas. Before that, as in 1924, it was just plain Dallas. And that was the year the Dallas Magic Circle made headlines by having no less than Harry Houdini, the president of the Society of American Magicians, personally install it as Assembly 13. On October 4, 1924, right after his night show, Mr. Houdini graciously came to the club at the Adolphus Hotel and made the now famous installation of Chapter (sic) 13 – *not* at all an unlucky number for this assembly.

"The group numbered about fifteen, and the Circle may have been two years old at the time. That evening Mr. Houdini offered to perform a little trick of his own. This he did with an old-fashioned hunting-case watch, handed to him with the lid closed after someone had set the hands. He touched it to his forehead and correctly divined the time hidden under its lid."

**THE PRESIDENT'S YOUNG MAGICAL ARTIST OF THE MONTH**



Megan Knowles-Bacon, twenty-two years old, London, England. Megan has been interested in magic since the age of five. At age ten she joined the Young Magician's Club (YMC), a youth initiative of The Magic Circle. During her time at YMC she won a scholarship from the S.A.M. to attend the Sorcerer's Safari Magic Camp in Canada. Megan also gained

second place in The Magic Circle's Young Magician of The Year Competition, and performed at the S.A.M.'s annual convention in Atlanta in 2010. On reaching the age of eighteen, she joined The Magic Circle.

For the past three years Megan has been studying Wildlife Conservation; she graduated in July. Her favorite genre of magic is stage. She enjoys the experience of performing to large groups of people, and feels it allows her to be more creative. She is trained in classical ballet, so she performs her main stage act *en pointe*, as Odile (The Black Swan) from the ballet *Swan Lake*.

On October 6, 2014, Megan was honored to be elected Honorary Secretary of The Magic Circle. According to Megan this makes her the first female officer in the Society's history, and possibly the youngest! ♦

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## 4

### DICK GUSTAFSON AND STUART RUDNICK LECTURE

**PHILADELPHIA, PA**— Our October meeting featured an excellent lecture on the subjects of routining a magic act as well as stage and audience management jointly presented by PNP Dick Gustafson and the very entertaining Stuart Rudnick. Prior to the lecture, President Eric Johnson welcomed our members and their guests to the meeting; we had a great round table workshop on rubber band magic presented by Johnny Mass, followed by a very informative “Book Nook” review by Seuss Metevier of the Pete



Dick Gustafson lectures on the effective routining of a magic show

McCabe book *Scripting Magic*.

The main event of the evening consisted of Dick and Stuart presenting their very enjoyable and highly informative lecture, which involved a thorough discussion of routining magic for both children and adults. Just a few of the subjects which were covered in detail included the effective use of preshow warm-ups to prime the audience for the show itself, trick selection, the proper placement of various effects within your program, how to seamlessly move from one effect to the next, the significance and benefit of patter—especially when presenting a repetitious trick, the proper placement of music within your program, the

selection of appropriate music and the type of effects that lend themselves to the use of music, stage blocking, how best to open and close your show, the effective use of volunteers from the audience, the number of effects that should be performed in a show and the appropriate length of a show for both children and adults.

Dick and Stuart illustrated many of their points by performing various portions of their own acts. For example, Stuart explained how to effectively utilize such effects as the Blooming Bouquet and D’Lites in a children’s show to create name recognition for the performer and to educate the audience as to how to properly respond during the show. Dick showed how to make the Six Card Repeat, which can be a boring and repetitious effect in the wrong hands, simply hysterical by virtue of his unique patter. All in all, the lecture was a big hit with the club and was accentuated by insightful questions from the audience as well as helpful suggestions from others in attendance, including George Hample, Calvin Tan, and Steve Black on some of the issues presented. It was a great night for magic! —Peter Cuddihy

James Wobensmith Assembly 4 meets third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the Bustleton Memorial Post, 810 (American Legion) 9151 Old Newtown Road. Contact Contact President Eric Johnson [coinhandler@gmail.com](mailto:coinhandler@gmail.com) (267) 317-5675 [www.sam4.org/](http://www.sam4.org/) for more details.

## 6

### MORE OR LESS HALLOWEEN MAGIC

**BALTIMORE, MD**— Of course there was serious sessioning going on even before our October meeting began, this time mostly dealing with the subtleties of the Nines Force. We welcomed a large contingent of Johns Hopkins University visitors and kicked off the magic with Ira Kolman doing his sponge balls to cube and rabbit (for kids). Dean Joe Bruno, performed his own Blue Phantom card effect from fifty years ago followed by an appearing and disappearing ghost

(silk) accompanied by weird electronic sound effects, “the forlorn call of a lonesome ghost.” Tony Anastasi had three helpers mysteriously link separate colored beads, an effect he learned from “Chief Sunrise” (and who can say he didn’t?). Resident mentalist Oneil Banks demonstrated precognition of three objects chosen by his helper. Howard Katz performed his dime to sealed sugar packet, an effect he markets at Magic Warehouse.

Guest Justin Simpson performed a fine finger ring on and off rope. Mark Wolfire had his spectators shuffle and cut red and blue decks, then separated red cards from black, aiming for three amazing coincidences (Juan Tamariz’s Total Coincidence; we settled for one coincidence). Eric Hoffman had his spectator merely think of a card; its name (“Dracula”) then appeared on the card back as well as in an “antique” picture frame previously shown empty. Hopkins guest Ronann Carrero did a short and sweet Ambitious Card and his fellow guest Hyunjong Lee performed an amazing one-handed coin matrix. Craig Feinstein did his kids’ version of Miser’s Dream.

Kenny Caplan was next, stabbing a knife right through a spoon bowl, which then turned into a fork (Axel Hecklau’s Spoonaround).

Andy London used his lucky number (13) to find all four Aces, after which all the other cards turned blank. Hmm. Jay Silverman performed (and tipped) an interesting “count to sixteen” card trick (Michael DeMarco’s Sweet 16, totally self working). Wrapping up the performances was Hopkins guest Salomon Vainstein, who performed even though his arm was in a sling. He used a tiny plunger to find and lift cards, apparently violating the laws of physics. Another great evening of magic! —Eric Hoffman

The Kellar/Thurston Assembly 6 meets every first Thursday at 8:00 pm at the Magic Warehouse, 11419 Cronridge Drive suite #10 in Owings Mills, Maryland. 410-561-0777. Contact Andy London

[alondon@comcast.net](mailto:alondon@comcast.net) [www.baltimoresam.com](http://www.baltimoresam.com) for more details.

## 7

### OCTOBER MAGIC

**OMAHA, NE**— The October meeting started with the necessary housekeeping of reading the club bylaws and the listing of officer nominees and recommended Life Members. The new Life Members are: Ann Rourke, Ron Gerard, and Bob and Letha Pitlor. Congratulations! The Officer nominated for 2015 are: Jerry Golmanavich (President), Larry Brodahl (Vice President), Tom Neddo (Secretary), Walt Graham (Treasurer) and Bob Gehringer (Sergeant at Arms). Jerry Golmanavich then took us through a list of upcoming events, including the annual Wizards banquet on January 17.

After the paperwork, the magic started to flow. Jerry Golmanavich was up first with a dirty rotten trick involving a deck of cards transforming into a spider and scaring the assistant. Tom Zeph then gave his spooky science/magic lecture, demonstrating such things as “Walking away from your shadow,” the Electric Lady, and the penetrating scarf through Broomstick set to a Harry Potter theme.

Tommy Hughes then performed his take on a classic Nick Trost effect called The Detective, using the deck of cards as a portable lie detector. Neil Bable (dressed as an ax murderer) did a semi-silent trick (he did moan during the trick) using a black deck of cards



Tom Zepf pulls an “invisibility cloak” through a witch’s broom.

and a spooky Jack-in-the-box. Considering that he came into the meeting in full garb, including a facemask, his identity wasn't known until the trick finished, which added a great deal to the spookiness of the night.

Bob Charleston then performed a spooky spelling trick to the theme of "Scary cats." Phil Hardiman then used Jerry Golmanavich, Betty Golmanavich, Avi Littky, and Travis Newcombe for a session in "channeling" Eddie Fechter during a presentation of a four Ace trick.

Travis Newcombe was up next and performed a single needle version of the needle in mouth with a hesitant Ann Rourke. Travis claimed that this was a less "circus geeky" trick than his last year's performance of walking on glass, but I'm not sure.

Dick Sanders then performed a mummy trick, referring to Tom Zepf's alleged background in archaeology, which fit the evenings' theme perfectly. Jeff Sikora finished off the evening with a haunted house coloring book and a piece from his current library program.

The Omaha Magical Society meets at 7 p.m. generally on the third Monday of each month at the Southwest Church of Christ near 124th Street and West Center road, right across from where Hooters used to be. Contact Jerry Golmanavich golubki@cox.net (402) 390-9834 www.omahamagicalsociety.com for more details.

## 8

### DANNY FLESHMAN, GENE DEVOE, AND DAD!

**SAINT LOUIS, MO**— October 9: Danny Fleshman lecture. I missed this only because my father started hospice and I stayed home with him. I was told that Danny was in great form, as always. Dan is a native of Oceanside, California, but resides in St. Louis. He taught practical close-up magic that we could use and stressed the use of showmanship. Probably because when he was younger, he bought most of his magic from DeVoe's Magic Den, like many of us in St. Louis did back in the '60s and '70s and that was how Gene DeVoe taught us. We lost Gene in 1989.

October 24: I missed this meeting, too, because my father had passed away the morning of 10/21/2014. I should mention that my father was a ninety-one-year-old WWII veteran, and that decades ago he had driven me to my magic shows and to DeVoe's Magic Den throughout the '60s,



Gene DeVoe

because I was a preteen then. He once asked Gene's advice about what he needed to know when purchasing a tux for me to use for my magic shows. One time he picked up my new Grant's six-foot French Guillotine that had been delivered to Gene's shop. When my mother came home, it was setup in the living room, with my head in the socks, and after saying "Hi Mom," I pulled the chain! Mom didn't like magicians or magic...

My father, William Howard Todd, supported my addiction to magic and Gene DeVoe was the supplier. Life was good. I miss them both terribly!

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

## 12

### MINI-LECTURES A HIT

**TWIN CITIES, MN**— With our October meeting we introduced mini-lectures, during which someone volunteers in advance to demo a single illusion along with context, patter, convincers, and even the genesis of that illusion, as well as sharing the method.

We also circulated a poll to collect opinions about what



Jack Nordin: a friend of SAM & IBM

works (and doesn't) regarding our meetings. (You can find a sample here: [www.mobosurvey.com/S8DR3](http://www.mobosurvey.com/S8DR3))

Nominations and elections for all positions will be held at the meeting in November. S.A.M. member Jack Nordin was pleased to share with us an award of recognition presented to him by the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Larry Kalow presented our first mini-lecture. It was a seasonal (Halloween) rope and silk illusion. He was followed by seven other SAM members presenting myriad other excellent illusions. —Steven Peer

**Assembly 12 meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Fridays (September through May) at Eagle Magic, 11995 County Road 11, Burnsville, MN 55337. Contact Steven Peer spear@gttd.org (612) 6368600 http://www.sam12.org/ for more details.**

## 16

### A GREAT START TO THE YEAR

**WORCESTER, MA**— An amazing evening – we are back in the Magic Barn. The place is truly magical, and Pete Lentrors' renovation of the Barn is incredible. Come on down to a meeting just to see the Barn and stay for the meeting. This was the first meeting of the new year, and what a meeting it was.

We started with a teach-in. Peter Lennis presented a mini lecture on thread work. He brought enough thread for everyone, close to twenty people. Peter Lennis covered everything from thread stripping to the use and preparation of loops. It was an evening of ghost decks, floating bills and coins, orbiting cards, and levitating soda straws.

Next, the almost twenty of us retired downstairs for dinner and some lively discussion of the goings on.

The Steelgraves discussed the upcoming second annual Oceanside Magic Invitational, April 9-12 in Cape Cod. It is shaping up to be better than last year. This was followed by the historical musings of Scott Martell. This month it was Al Baker, a magician who "never stopped thinking about a trick." All the Baker effects that Scott spoke about and demonstrated were straightforward and direct.

The evening ended with member's magic. Peter Lennis divined the value of four bills that were given to him by one of the audience members while his back was turned. Peter held the

bill behind his back and correctly identified each bill. Everyone was so impressed that they asked for a repeat. The second time through more bills were added, including a denomination not in the original four. Peter was not aware of the add-in and was as surprised as were all of us when he called out the unexpected bill.

A great start to what is going to be a great year at the Barn. —Joe Berman

**Assembly 16 meets on the first Monday of the month at The Magic Barn, 175R Main St., Ashland, Mass. Contact Dennis Pimenta (508) 881-1818 for more details.**

## 17

### FACING YOUR FEARS

**SPRINGFIELD, MA**— October was our Scary Trick month, and there was plenty of spooky magic to go around! The first shock of the night came when Butch announced he was performing first! What a treat! He performed a card routine called Reversal, in which the Tens first reverse themselves, and then change into the four Aces! Peter Lennis was next with a couple of cool scares: first, a coin was dropped into a box that exploded and a previously selected card was inside. Next was a Brainwave effect with the Ace through Ten. Finally, a voodoo effect with a straw man and a writhing, screaming club member. Nice.

Jeff performed and taught a couple of effects. First, Tenyo's Eye of the Idol. Next was a nice raccoon involving a rat, a box, cards shooting out of the box, and a selection being caught in the mouth of the rat. David Williamson would be proud! Rich Pinsonnault showed a couple of new items: Noted 2.0, in which a notepad changes into a complete deck of cards, and then Transformer Card, which is like origami meets the magician-in-trouble plot. Awesome new magic!

Pj Pinsonnault performed R. Paul Wilson's Gypsy Monte, a story effect using tarot cards in which an unlucky gambler swindles the wrong witch one day and loses everything. Dylan, who didn't expect to be screaming in pain (thanks to voodoo and Peter) when he came to the meeting, performed a Triumph-meets-Glorpy routine he called Houdini's Ghost. Then he took a card and made it pass through a borrowed bill like a ghost!

Ed Kazar began by yelling at Conrad to motivate him to help out with the trick. He then had members call out random numbers, which he wrote down

into three, three-digit numbers. These were added up, and a prediction he wrote earlier was shown to have correctly guessed the sum.

Conrad was next with a nice theatrical handling of Envy-Lope, an offbeat card effect in which a selection is inserted into the pack, which then vanishes leaving an envelope in its place. Inside the envelope? The selection!

Finally, our newest recruit Brad discussed ideas for an upcoming performance with the club before showing off a slick card control he calls the Fear Control. Simple, clean card handling at its best! —Pj Pinsonnault

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

## 19

### DAVID SOUSA LECTURES IN HOUSTON

HOUSTON, TX— This month we had a short meeting as David Sousa was in town to lecture on our meeting night. David presented a fine lecture revolving around his FISM award winning Red Envelope act. A video of his act from a French TV show was shown first on our big screen. David then proceeded to go through much of his routine, explaining the inner workings of how the phases of the routine were developed. I really enjoyed David's frankness with his own mental development of his act and explaining the process by which the final performance was produced.

David kept a few of the secrets to himself such as the final glove appearance but overall shared the basics of his routine. He stressed that he did not want someone just copying his act, but rather taking his ideas and using them to create one's own act or improve upon the magic that they are currently performing. His explanations were well presented and time was given to questions from the group as well. He also had an ample number of items for sale which seemed to go over very well. Overall, I found it to be a very good lecture with good examples of how the creative mind can be used to obtain a vision of where one wants to go with his or her own magic. —Miles Root

Assembly 19 meets the first Monday of every month at the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 51 Meeting Hall, 3030 North Freeway, Houston, TX. A teaching lecture begins at 7:30 pm with the meeting beginning at 8:00 pm. Contact Miles

Root milesroot@aol.com (832) 6076678 houstonmagic.com for more details.

## 21

### PACKET TRICKS

HARTFORD, CT— This month's theme was Packet Tricks, but with this proviso: no Three Card Monte.

President Dan Sclare did a trick with pictures of cereal boxes, in which the chosen card had the only blue back. Another packet had pictures of famous magicians. A die was rolled to pick one of the photos and the selection proved to be Dan's own picture.

Peter Lennis put money in an envelope and called it a packet trick. Since it involved money, he had our attention. Four bills of different denominations were shown and swapped with equal denominations of bills among the spectators, so that each bill was now one that Peter had not previously touched. Holding them behind his back, Peter was able to identify the bills by touch alone. Later he did a one-out-of-ten card selection he called Brain Friction, and did a version of Bank



Brian Scully performing

Night in which the non-"winners" got a scratch-off ticket. He also demonstrated a nut-and-bolt that unscrewed itself under a chop cup.

Brian Scully turned a packet of Aces into a royal flush, then performed a Four Card Monte! Rick St. Pierre did a "pinochle" trick, well sort of. He had a packet of Queens and proceeded to show that each Queen had a small feature on the face that made her unique, and also was the only Queen to have a different color back than the others. Four times. Jason Abate turned a blank-faced blue-backed packet into a red-backed royal flush. He also changed the backs of a four-card packet individually. Norm St. Laurent did a version of Oil and Water using a packet of Tarot-style cards. Dana Ring performed Larry West's 1-2-3-4. —Dana T. Ring

every month (except December) at Angelo's on Main, 289 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT Contact Dana T. Ring dana@danaring.co (860) 5239888 www.ctmagic.org for more details.

## 22

### NATIONAL MAGIC WEEK IN LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES, CA— Assembly 22 in Los Angeles has, for most of its long history, had a close association with National Magic Week: the final Houdini Séance at the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood, October 31, 1936; Bess Houdini and Dr. Edward Saint frequently attending assembly meetings; and National Magic Week officially incorporated into the S.A.M. constitution during the national presidency of John U. Zweers from Los Angeles. Much of the legacy of National Magic Week resides in Southern California.

Early arrivals at the assembly meeting were again treated to filmed bits of magic performed by great magicians of the past. Assembly president Perovich again opened the meeting with a lesson in magic, the art of performing the pass and palming small objects. First readings for assembly membership were then completed for Robert Westgate, John Clougherty, and Patrick Murphy. The show for the evening was produced and emceed by Tom Meseroll, who also opened the show. Tom performed an act with a supernatural mood that included a coin and coin bank united while circulating through the audience. Tom's presentation of a 1936 card effect by Stuart James called Miraskill, and closing with the Haunted Key, using a storytelling presentation regarding the sinking of the Titanic in 1912.

Mike Perovich had the identity of a spectator-selected ESP card revealed by a mysterious stranger called on the spectator's own cell phone. Mike closed with a newspaper headline prediction from this morning's edition of the *Los Angeles Times*. Matt Savin, a true believer in ESP, then presented a lesson in Tarot card reading. Ed Thomas illustrated the ability of Houdini to escape using a red silk escaping from a sealed glass, a tied loop of red rope escaping from another rope loop, and a block falling free after being impaled on a rod.

Our fifth performer was Roy Ball, who performed ghost card, a jumbo card vanish, Joe Monti's Sakkaku Cat, an optical illusion sequence, and closed his act with White Star, in which two specta-

tors chose from a packet of photos of passengers on the Titanic. One had selected all survivors; the other had selected photos of those who had perished. Henry Springer, in costume as the Ace of Spades, did a four-Ace trick, a card rise, and a torn and restored card effect. Closing the show was Ted "Suds" Sudbrack, who used Glorpy the Ghost to find a selected card and, as an added feature, an animated fat lady revealed the same card in a most humorous fashion. —Steven L. Jennings

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

## 30

### FREE CUT PRINCIPLE

ATLANTA, GA— Our Professional Development series was presented by John Miller. John, an expert in card magic, introduced us to the Free Cut Principle, published by Gene Finell. The twenty-five page manuscript now lists for \$125-150, if you can find it. The principle was originally presented in the *Pallbearer's Review* in a John Hamilton effect called Eyes of the Gods. John presented three effects using the principle, which is a mathematical principle to find a card.

Magical presentations began with Rick Hinze presenting ten items used by a magician. Rick had someone think of a number and Rick divined the item by way of the chosen number. Matt Baker harkened us back to Oedipus in a card prediction. The card was initialed to seal its destiny and slid into the deck. The chosen card and initials appeared on a business card.

Matt also gave a poker hand demonstration using the Free Cut Principle. What else would you expect from our resident math professor? Merritt Ambrose gave us a lovely show with his three coins and glass transpositions. Martin Baratz demonstrated the mathematics of a deck of cards by spelling out a number of cards.

Jason Grech, one of our three visitors for the evening, presented a Jon Armstrong effect using a small plunger to reveal the selected card in a stack of cards. Our other visitors were Scott Edwards and Tom Epps.

Steve Goldstein showed us a prediction using the four Queens. Two Queens were removed from the hand and the face-up Queen was the predicted card. It was

sealed around a dollar bill. Upon further inspection, the chosen card had a yellow back while all the other Queens appeared with different backs.

Jim Driscoll combined science and music to perform some parapsychology. He had a book of top-forty songs with numbered cards. Cards were chosen to predict a page number in the book. More predictions gave us the number of the song on the page. It was "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" by Diana Ross. The sealed prediction from Jim showed us the name of the song he predicted was correct.

Dan Garrett presented the difference between a trick, a puzzle, and real magic with his presentation of Crazy Eight. The evening was a magical success and enjoyed by all. —Carol Garrett

Assembly 30 meets on the second Tuesday at Picadilly Cafeteria, I-85 at North Druid Hills Rd, Atlanta, GA. For meeting information contact Carol Garrett at carolmswiz@aol.com or 678-643-0250.

### 35 THINK

**POUGHKEEPSIE, NY**— This evening we had a most unusual lecture – unusual that not a single magic trick was taught. Obviously most people would consider that to be a rather boring night. However, our lecturer tonight was Bob Fitch, and his words and thoughts did indeed make it a magical evening.

He started his talk by saying that magic can change the world. People have a reaction to it, and are affected by it. Affected in a good way when thought and meaning are put into the process. "Thought" is a key word for us to consider as much as "practice," in order to make our magic better for our audience.

He focused on things that we can look inward to ourselves for a better outward effect, however it wasn't just thought-provoking ideas that he presented, but physical ones as well. Depending on the image that you wish to display, would dictate whether you enter from stage right or left. Plus, what you are doing as you enter makes a difference, because Bob isn't going to have you just walk out and that's it. Oh no. Ryan Dutcher found that out. Bob had him walk out so many times that we believe Ryan actually walked an official marathon. We're still awaiting the certification. Bob then went over what to do once you are finally front and center onstage. He is a firm believer in scripting. There's nothing wrong with adlibbing, but you should

have a base to get back to.

We finished with a series of breathing exercises that would have had anyone walking by on the street thinking that he was watching a yoga class. Bob had Frank Monaco and Professor Platypus stand in front of everyone to say a few words. He then had them do the exercises and speak again afterward. There was a marked difference that they and everyone else noticed in the timber of their voices. Everyone then joined in to try it.

Thank you Bob for an interesting lesson in stretching our minds as well as our arms. —Darryl Bielski  
[Assembly 35 meetings are held at the Milanese Restaurant in Poughkeepsie, NY. Typically, meetings are held every 2nd Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 7:30 pm and include a short business meeting followed by the evening's main topic or guest lecturer. Contact Joe Zaritsky jzdds@optonline.net \(845\) 546-1559 www.sam35.com for more details.](#)

### 37 ODD OCTOBER

**DENVER, CO**— In the beauty of fall we had an evening of odd hosted by professional mentalist Mark Strivings. First up was President Matt Brandt who, with the help of Doctor Christopher Faria, brought out a jumbo deck to prove that a heavy-duty stab to the back could involve a card trick. Gregg Tobo employed Marty Jewell and Michael Anger to help with a red rope in his spirit box. Or wait, perhaps it was white. Oddness was implied when a ghost appeared with a ring on the string. Dr. Faria continued on to take the audience on a magic journey to England's White Chapel district in 1881 to meet the infamous Jack the Ripper. He gathered round the usual, or should I say unusual suspects.

Oddly, Mark came in with an non-odd rope trick when Rich Nakata appeared with a horrendous little fellow named Jack



**Gregg Tobo recruits Marty Jewell and Michael Anger**

that he trapped in a gruesome yet charming box. Poor Scott, Anita's husband, was afraid of small vicious clowns to begin with. Chances are he didn't sleep well that night. Gregg Tobo was back, dressed in full coveralls with a tarp in tow. He carried with him a six-pack of root beer cans to experiment with. President Matt shook them up further while Dave was the judge. Alas, his experiment didn't work too well as the audience felt a bit drippy in the end.

Refreshments were to die for. Witches fingers, blood muffins, guacamole guts, and everything else to keep a grisly body was provided by the clubs favorite creative lady, Karen Wake. After the break everyone was delighted to watch the creator of you-do-oodoo, Needle thru Arm, perform it. Bruce and Kitty Spangler were just great with at least a pint of their famous movie blood. Rich was back with some monsters as the Wakes prepared their head-chopper routine with the grim reaper right behind.

Mr. Strivings then obtained his mind-reading hanky while Dave picked eight fingers. That was wrong, considering there were only two un-owned in the box. We ended this bizarre evening of odd with five bags, five poker chips, and a row of Clorox, Drano, Bubble Bath, bottle of water, and brake fluid. Rich Nakata promised to drink the unattended choice. Audience members were crossing their fingers and then counting them to make sure none were missing on this evening. —Connie Elstun

[Assembly 37 meets at the Riverpointe Senior Center in Littleton, CO. Contact Connie Elstun connie@comedymagicbunny.com \(303\) 594-2555 www.milehighmagicians.com for more details.](#)

### 38 AN ECLECTIC EVENING

**INDEPENDENCE, MO**— Our October meeting was called to order by President Rod Sipe, who announced upcoming lectures and the nominating committee's proposed slate for our 2015 officers. RVP Shaun Rivera spoke about Magic Week's "Magical Moment in Time," when thousands of magicians will simultaneously levitate just about anything from a playing card to another person. Should be great fun.

Then it was time for our monthly "Parade of Magic" put on by our members. It was good to see our newest members and nearly all of our younger members participating. Keep up the good work,

everyone!

Our first performer was Daniel Jackson who vanished a dime and caused it to reappear (amidst bright yellow flames and the scent of sulfur) inside a matchbook cover. Next came Samantha Carignan, doing her first public performance, and doing no less a challenging effect than Matrix. For both the trick and her daring, she received a well-deserved round of applause.

Josh Theno did card manipulations set to music. His split fans and on-the-arm ribbon spreads reminded some of us older members that a time honored art is still alive. Nicholas Theno followed with some well-timed vanishing and reappearing card work. Between him and his twin brother Josh, stage level card manipulating still thrives.

Then it was Don Becker's turn. He demonstrated a Wellington Light



**Victor La'Yon performing card magic**

Board, an attractive and fascinating electrical mystery that needs to be seen rather than described. Victor Le'Yon did a very good ambitious card routine. Ambitious card is so basic, and so extraordinarily magical, that it's hard to imagine anything eclipsing it. Karso also did card magic including Vernon's Trick that Cannot be Explained. No one could explain it. John Hicks, who never disappoints, told a story of some of our members with a card trick. Very creative.

Shaun Rivera and Bob Goodin each performed tricks commemorating the 100th anniversary of Martin Gardner's birth. Has there ever been another both as brilliant and as clever as the late Mr. Gardner? A sincere "Thank You" to all the performers.

Then it was time for a night owl session at our Not Quite Five Star Bar and Grill, where late night magic had to compete with the televised World Series game. Hard to say which one won the battle for attention. The Royals lost the ball game. —Don Becker  
[Assembly 38 meets at the Westport Improv Theater, 4010](#)

Pennsylvania Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri Contact Don Becker [joydonbeck@comcast.net](mailto:joydonbeck@comcast.net) (816) 886-6780 for more details.

## 47

### ASSEMBLY 47

**ROCHESTER, NY**— Our first assembly meeting of the fall was jam-packed with magic! Dan Grayson tore a packet of four cards down the middle and asked a spectator to mix the cards. Once mixed, the spectator dealt the halves into four piles. To everyone's surprise, all halves were matched with their original counterparts. Professor Rem conducted a para-sympathetic test in which he asked a spectator to place a coin on any one of five circles. He was able to correctly predict where the coin was placed! Don Aman blew a soap bubble and was able to make it bounce from hand to hand without letting it burst! President Mike Ihrig shared one of his new ideas involving the use of a tiny plunger to pull out a spectator's chosen card from the deck!

Nick Young tore a card into fourths and made all the pieces vanish except for one piece; the three matching pieces were later found in his pocket inside a Chap Stick container! Mark Toker made four coins travel beautifully from one hand to another. Joel Greenwich allowed several spectators to shuffle his deck of cards. He asked a spectator to cut the deck in half and to then choose one of the halves. The spectator was asked to call out any suit; he chose Spades. Joel was able to correctly identify all of Spades in the spectator's hand! It was a great time had by all! —Joel Gallegos Greenwich

**Assembly 47 meets at St. Joseph's School at 39 Gerbhardt Road in Penfield, New York, the third Tuesday of every month. Contact Mike Ihrig [ihrigmagic@aol.com](mailto:ihrigmagic@aol.com) for more details.**

## 51

### MIDWEST HARVEST OF MAGIC!

**PEORIA, IL**— Fall is in the air in Peoria. Our September meeting took the guise of our annual picnic. As we have in the past, we held this at Marquette Heights, and we thank Barb Griffin for securing the use of the pavilion. There were a number of members and guests, and lots of great food. The PMA supplied the chicken, the Gardner family supplied the drinks, everyone brought wonderful side dishes, and a handful of magicians supplied the entertainment after

we ate. September also saw the Diamond Jim Tyler lecture and the final two appearances at the Riverfront Market for 2014.

Our October meeting began with some business, mostly associated



**Kyle Bassett performs for some Farmers Market attendees, as Michael Couri and Grant Golden look on**

with the Teach-in and Houdini Tribute show. Scott Gardner won the drawing in our quarterly incentive program.

Our theme of rope magic was well represented, beginning with an in-depth discussion and demonstration of ropes through body. Regis Kormick, Jay Zentko, Grant Golden, and Kyle Pfister all participated. Grant then demonstrated and explained the Pretzel Bow Knot that vanishes and Silk Through Rope.

Michael Baker used pieces of orange-and-black tissue paper to make a jack o' lantern mask. Brock Cassidy showed his furry dragon pet and Rodney Nordstrom showed how two chosen card values come together in spite of the deck being well shuffled. Actually he showed us the .001% of the time that it doesn't work! It was kind of funny because the trick usually will work.

On October 25 we held our Magic Teach-in for kids. Char Gott, Regis Kormick, Kyle Bassett, C.J. Diamond, and Michael Baker each taught easy-to-learn tricks. Brad Borland and Rodney Nordstrom were on hand to assist. The turnout was low with only ten kids in attendance, but it seemed to be a fun time for all involved.

That evening, we had our Tribute to Houdini show to kick off Magic Week. Performers included Grant Golden, Troy Keefer, Jay Zentko, Brad Borland, Matthew Gardner, Kyle and Mollie Sue Pfister, Kyle Bassett, Michael Baker, and C.J. Diamond, who graciously flew in from Boston to be part of the show. Each performed with a tie-in to Houdini. Dennis Peacock served as the emcee. Kyle Pfister supplied projection screens that had clips of Houdini running before the show and during intermission. Several other PMA members played integral roles taking tickets, serving conces-

sions, running the spotlight, and doing close-up magic. The turnout was better than expected and the audience seemed to really like the show. Happy Magical Halloween! —Michael Baker

**Assembly 51 meets the third Monday of the month at 7:00pm at Schnucks Grocery, 4800 N. University Street in Peoria, IL. Contact Michael Baker [themagiccompany@aol.com](mailto:themagiccompany@aol.com) (205) 612-3696 <http://peoriamagicians.com/> for more details.**

## 52

### TWISTED AND WEIRD

**SAN ANTONIO, TX**— October 2, 2014, Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 held its monthly meeting at LaMadeleine Restaurant. President Ray Adams called the meeting to order. Welcome to guest Mike Melito, who just recently moved to San Antonio from Kansas City. President Adams reminded everyone that next year's TAOM will be in Austin, with the theme being Magic, Music, Weirdness, and Women. The suggested theme for our November meeting will be Heat and Smoke.

We were all deeply saddened to hear of the death of Ed Solomon's wife, Dee. Ed has been a long time and loyal member of Assembly 52. Please keep Ed and his family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

This month Joe Libby presented a review of an article in the September 2014 issue of *M-U-M* called The Justin Case, which spoke about an emergency kit that every performer should have with him, just in case. Some of the items included gaffers tape, superglue, sticky-backed Velcro, and Sharpie markers. Thanks, Joe, for a practical review. Next month Claude Crowe will be our reviewer.

The suggested theme for this meeting was Twisted and Weird, and starting off the performances was Sal Manfredo with his Demon Doll, followed by Ed Solomon, who did a jumbo card effect. Ray Adams performed a transposition, Wayne Kunkler did a Four Card Monte, and Michael Tallon did a card trick titled Four of a Kind. Doug Gorman did a diminishing card effect and Matthew Orta did a card effect called Sweet 16. Paul Mims entertained with Cigarette through Card, Paul Amerson told a story about stone soup, and Mike Melito performed a card effect called Personality Prestidigitation.

Joe Libby conducted a Teaching Table on pseudo-hypnosis stunts. He showed us how to hypnotize a person so they could not thread a

needle, and he demonstrated how, no matter how hard we tried, we could not lift our ring finger off the table. Thanks, Joe, for an informative and entertaining teaching table

Door prize winners were Wayne Kunkler, Matthew Orta, and Ray Adams. Wayne won a mystery prize, Matthew won magic flowers, and Ray won the DVD *Holy Moly*.

**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](mailto:douggorman@att.net).**

## 56

### OCTOBER MEETING

**DAYTON, OH**— Our October Meeting was well attended with thirteen members and three guests; it was held at the home of compeer Pamela Edwards. Pamela's theme was Colorful Magic and members were encouraged to dress up in Halloween costumes.

After our business meeting, we had excellent homemade food provided by our hostess Pamela. After our refreshments and conversation, we gathered to do magic. We had performances by Pamela assisted by Thomas, then the tables turned and she assisted him. We also had great performances by JoAnn Kinder assisted by Chief Larry Kinder as her ventriloquist dummy. Scott Miller did some card and money magic, Paul Burnham showed us a gambling demonstration, Fred & Millie Witwer each showed us some colorful magic that they are best known for, and Dave Davis showed us some spooky magic and even trapped a ghost.

After the show, Pamela hosted a game where everyone went away with a prize followed by a costume contest that was won by Patricia Griswald. A great time was had by all. —Matthew David Stanley

**Assembly 56 meets in various locations, contact for details. Contact Paul Burnham [pburnham@woh.rr.com](mailto:pburnham@woh.rr.com) (937) 773-7409 for more details.**

## 59

### DESMOND CONTEST

**PORTLAND, OR**— On this fall night there was magic in the air when Assembly 59 held the annual Desmond close-up contest. We started the night with a few announcements and up-coming events, and then the contest

was on.

The first contestant was Randy Stumman as a character named Moloch. He presented a dark séance including tarot cards, spirit hankie, acrobatic matchbox, and a few other surprising effects. Tom Waldrop was next on the contest. He presented a piece call "A Stones Throw" and a cup and balls routine followed by a closing effect with Japanese cards. Glen Bledsoe was next under his stage name Satie. He performed a four Ace revelation followed by a coin/card Matrix using the four Aces and half dollars.

President Mel Anderson closed the show performing multiple penetration effects, an act with sewing needles, and the final effect using a ribbon pushed through a pane of glass. This year's trophy went to our own Randy Stumman. We had several members in attendance along with our guests. November is our board elections and the nominating committee presented the nominations for 2015: President, Randy Stumman or Mel Anderson; Vice President, Jay Fredricks; Treasurer, Brian Adams; Secretary, Andy Turner; Sergeant at Arms, John Edsall; and members at large, Tom Cramer, Michael Jaffe, to be determined, Mel Anderson (if not president), Danny Schreiber. It was an exciting night of fun and magic in the house and sure to be another great night next month with the annual Thanksgiving show presented by our S.Y.M. clubs, so be sure not to miss out! —Andy Turner

Assembly 59 meets at 3500 SW 104th, Beaverton, Oregon at the Beaverton Elks Lodge. Contact Andy Turner [mysteriofmagic@gmail.com](mailto:mysteriofmagic@gmail.com) (503) 975-6139 [www.sam59portland.org](http://www.sam59portland.org) for more details.

## 88

### OCTOBER 2014 REPORT

**ANN ARBOR, MI**— Boo! October's meeting showcased our members' "spooky" side. Club webmaster Karl Rabe and son Bill presented a hilariously original routine complete with original props. Their theme, appropriate to the season, was amputation. Karl was the "amputor," with Bill the reluctant amputee. Set to a creepy soundtrack, Karl proceeded to separate Bill from his right hand, with the requisite chainsaw and attendant antics. Bill's hand was placed in a box, which then did its animated best to escape, lifting the lid and lunging at the audience. Finally, Karl removed the appendage and successfully reattached it, to everyone's relief,

particularly Bill's!

President Bill Brang was up next; he demonstrated a series of effects. He began with a tale of evaporated water that could magically be transformed to real H<sub>2</sub>O, which was accomplished via a mysterious kettle/lota bowl. With the help of two volunteers' arms, Bill sliced and diced, employing a Delben-type two-hole wrist chopper. As with Karl and Bill, his scary surgery was accomplished with aplomb. Bill's final routine was woven around a Harry Potter theme producing a spectacular quantity of Halloween-themed silks from a seemingly empty chest/Tip-over Box.

Secretary Jim Folkl brought an old box found in his attic. Sur-



**Karl and Bill Rabe**

prisingly, it contained magically haunted stuff! A "hand sandwich" appeared, along with a very large Irish spider appropriately called a "paddy" long legs. After piercing his thumb with a dangerous looking hatpin, a vintage rat bottle was produced. Jim concluded with a comical vent routine, using "Mr. Bones," his detached skeleton head.

Vice President Scott Kindschy closed the entertainment with a spirit routine employing a simple light bulb. After a complete examination of the device by the audience, Scott called upon the spirits to answer members' questions by the bulb's lighting pattern. By the end of the presentation, we were all believers! —Jim Folkl

Assembly 88 meets at Faith Lutheran Church, 1255 East Forest Avenue, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 48198 on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm. Contact Bill Brang [havewandwilltravel2002@yahoo.com](mailto:havewandwilltravel2002@yahoo.com) (313) 9371577 <http://aamagic.org/wp/> for more details.

## 95

### BAMBOOZLE MAGIC

**VANCOUVER, CANADA**— The October 2014 meeting was held at the home of Ray Roch. After coffee, drinks, and snacks, including tasty hot wings, the evening of con magic started. Lon started with a two-card trick with the

pair going behind the back and someone betting on a card and always getting it wrong. Shawn did a three-card trick con, and taught how he knew which card the volunteer chose, even when repeated. Glen LaBarre did a ten red card and ten blue card Cards Across con.

Henry borrowed two credit cards and used the magnetic strips



**S.A.M. 95 Members learning Asian Multiplication from Shawn Farquhar**

to cause the two cards to cling together. Rod did an auction for a two-dollar coin with two rules: the winner gets the coin and the second highest bidder still has to pay, but does not get the coin. With final bids of \$4.25 and \$4.50, Rod ended getting \$8.75 for \$2.00, but ended up letting the bidders off the hook. Ray Roch did a three-box con with three of his Impossible Boxes, similar to the shell game, but with a mini baseball. Anthony Young did a con with three piles of coins so that whoever ends up with the last coin is the loser. Shawn taught Asian multiplication, and also taught Toxic with an iPhone. Steve Dickson did a con with a handful of peanuts, inserting them magically into different parts of his face. —Rod Chow

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

## 99

### ASSEMBLY 99 IN HALLOWEEN STYLE

**ORLANDO, FL**— President Mark Fitzgerald called the meeting to order. He introduced a guest from Newfoundland, Ken Parsons. Mark went over the many magic venues here in Orlando. Dan Stapleton mentioned a new magic shop and theater in New Port Ritchey, called The Visual Magic Shop and Merlin's Theater. He performed there.

Bev Bergeron did a teach-in and showed us a great dinner table stunt. Bev took a bite out of a ceramic plate and you could hear the plate crunching.

Phil Schwartz, our Ring historian, presented Magic History Moment #62. This moment was a look at Houdini, since October is the month of Houdini's death on Halloween in 1926. Phil mentioned many little known facts about Houdini. As a real treat, he showed rare posters, window cards, and many photos and autographs from Houdini in his collection.

Our monthly show began with Dennis Phillips, who made a handful of coins vanish. He did a Halloween story of a young teacher who died in the Salem witch trials and her haunted slates. The serial number of a borrowed dollar bill appeared on a slate. Finally, Phillips showed his Abbott's Phantasm. Assistant Lynn Fitzgerald's head momentarily vanished.

Charlie Pfrogner burned some matches and added some ingre-



**Assistant loses head**

dients and a few candy kisses came out of a brass tube. He then showed how audience's selected cards matched his predicted colors. Greg Solomon made a knot in a rope vanish. Then Greg demonstrated the old novelty, the Red Snapper, in which the audience is confounded when they cannot seem to snap back the insert with the rubber band. He then generously gave everyone one.

Chuck Smith did an impromptu prediction of magazine pages freely selected. He showed an old and clever method that none of us knew. He followed with a card selected from one deck that matched the same value card in another deck. Finally he was able to draw a map to a spectator's house. Felix Vasquez did an effective version of The Princess Card Trick.

Last was Dan Stapleton with a great trick for banquet shows. He passed out a plastic knife, fork, and spoon to ten people. They placed them freely in any order on their chairs. He then asked them to exchange them randomly and pick up the left one. Dan revealed a giant spoon in his hand and everyone was holding their spoon.

—Dennis Phillips  
 Assembly 99 meets at 7:30pm at the International House of Pancakes, 5203 Kirkman Road Orlando, FL 32819. Contact Dennis Phillips dphillips13@cf.rr.com (407) 341-9088 for more details.

## 104

### A MEETING SWITCHED OUT

**WITCH CITY, SALEM, MA**—NE RVP Thomas Gentile attended the Assembly104 annual picnic and contest this past August. There was a hot dog barbecue, flea market, great deals, and magic done by some great students of our art. Camp Evergreen was open to all members, family, and guests with swimming and ten acres of fun available to the members by S.Y.M. adult leader Jim Loscut-off's Camp Evergreen in Andover, Maine. Assembly 104 hosted a wonderful stage competition on Camp Evergreen's permanent stage with beautiful curtains and backdrop built by Jim Loscutoff and volunteers for the S.Y.M. members to rehearse and perform.

On October 1, Assembly 104 experimented with a new location for its meeting. Gathering together at our unofficial clubhouse, Diamond's Magic in Peabody, Massachusetts, were a goodly number of compeers, and even S.Y.M. 124 President Derek DuBois, who was duly welcomed by all. When this report appears in print, SAMCON 2014 will have taken place and should remain a pleasant memory for attendees. On this night, plans for the arrival of Jay Sankey, Oscar Munoz, and Christian Painter and Katalina were being finalized. In the wake of 104's recent version of *Wizard Wars*, Derek DuBois reported on the coming October S.Y.M. meeting, during which he and his young crew planned on presenting their own version of the TV game show.

For this night's 104 meeting, the relief at the end of our business was the funny business offered by Eddie Gardner, Jay Fraser, and Diamond's Magic owner, Vince DeAngelis. What could be more logical than a dealer's show in our host's dealer showroom? With tongue in cheek and props on table, some of the more interesting items on display were demonstrated. These included colored ropes performed by Jay Fraser, out of his own routine that results in their becoming linked in a change bag, instead of the usual mis-made flag; Fiedler's Flier, the wonderful, impossible location effect using a Joker to help a spectator select a card from a fanned deck, only to have it disappear from the fan and



**S.Y.M. 124 Treasurer Nate Nagem's team wins first round of Wizard Wars with his cups and balls**

pop up anywhere else; and a tour-de-force demonstration of dueling props conducted by Eddie Gardner and our host Vince. The latter was a hilarious closer. Using wooden holiday versions of the Stoplight effect, Eddie's Christmas Santa segments and Vince's three Halloween skeleton pieces fell through the wooden tubes just fine, coming up properly out of order. When it was time for the two magicians to correct the chaos, it wasn't going to happen. The room roared and the meeting came to a happy close. —Bob Forrest

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

## 110

### CONTEST NIGHT

**HARRISBURG, PA**— Before our contest of the evening Mike Thomas wanted to show us a prediction routine he devised, which has a working title of Voodoo Mike—a very nice effect. Our first contestant of the evening was Al Bienstock, who had brought with him an Aladdin's Lamp. Al had a card chosen, signed, and returned to the center of the deck which was set aside. Al showed a written prediction of two cards, but neither was correct. Both the prediction and the deck were heated over the lamp and magically the prediction of one of the cards changed to the correct card. When that card was located in the deck not only was it signed, but it was next to the other predicted card.

John Segott brought us a puzzle—a child's twelve-piece puzzle and an empty duplicate puzzle. The pieces were in a clear bag. Rose was to select a piece from the bag (she could only see the gray backs of the pieces) while John removed a piece from the whole puzzle he held. The pieces matched! Next, John removed a piece from the

puzzle and put it into the bag. Once again Rose removed the piece that fit the puzzle.

Joe Noll told us about his friend who liked whiskey and gambling and thought that Joe could do real magic. The friend took Joe to a private gambling hall and began to play blackjack. The friend said he needed to win big to pay off his debts. The friend's hand showed two Nines and Joe turned them into two Queens; not good enough said his friend. Joe turned one Queen to an Ace and the other to a black Jack! Only two cards remained in Joe's hands, the Ace and Jack.

Lou Abbotiello told us the story of the ghost of "Jenny" Wade of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the only civilian killed during that momentous battle. It seems Virginia Wade had a music box and when the moon is right the music can be heard in response to questions asked of "Jenny," a corruption of Ginny. Jenny did respond as requested in a most magical manor.

The contest ended in a double tie! Al Bienstock and Lou Abbotiello were tied for first and John Sergott and Joe Noll were tied for second. Joe Homecheck, SAM Assembly 110, meets 2nd Thursdays, 7:00pm, at John's Diner, 146 Sheraton Drive New Cumberland, PA 17070. Email: Secretary@sam110.com

## 112

### FLEA MARKET

**PLEASANT HILL, CA**— September is the time for our assembly's annual flea market. This year there was plenty of magic to be found on the tables, and we all had a great time examining the wares and deciding just which items we could no longer live without. Seventeen members and a dozen guests showed up for the sale.

Half a dozen or more tables were set up with literally hundreds of items. Bruce Jordan in particular had a huge array of magic tricks for sale, most of them going back several years. Thumbing through



**Roy Porfido and James Lind show off their wares at the Flea Market**

his many boxes, I found a large number of items I recognized from my earlier days.

Past National President Loren Lind and his son, James, arrived just as the happenings started to happen and produced a large box filled with great stuff. Other sellers included Jerry Barrilleaux, Larry "Zappo" Wright, John Gyllenhaal, and guest Timothy James. Timothy had a really cool-looking prop duck for sale.

There was a bunch of great stuff for sale, and it was difficult to keep from buying a lot of it. I ended up with just a couple of items to add to the shelves at home. I just could not resist another Jay Sankey DVD to add to my collection. I believe some of the sellers bought as much stuff as they sold (right, John?), but it was all fun.

At any rate, the evening was over all too soon, but it was great to mingle with the magicians and guests and talk about the good old days and the great days to come.

—Bill Marquardt

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

## 127

### HALLOWEEN MAGIC AND THEN SOME!

**WALLINGFORD, CT**— The business meeting was rather quick this month, but the worked got done. We discussed all the workshops that took place in libraries, mostly in October for magic month; we just can't do it all on Magic Week. We prepared for our show for the church that hosts our monthly meetings. A NEMCON update was given, entertainers were set, and everything is falling into place.

After-meeting activities were of a Halloween theme for the most part. Jeff Doskos performed a card trick with a box and a voodoo doll that rose out of his hand when his hand was over the selected face-down card. Then the voodoo doll told him what the card was, too! Mike Gagne opened his mini-casket and took our some haunted wooden matches and they danced in his hands. Of course, no ghost magic would be complete without a Glorpy, so Mike did that for us, too.

David Wyskiel did a really cool ribbon through body with the help of Ray Lorenzo as helper. As Jeff and Bill pulled the ropes attached to the ribbon tied around Ray, they seemed to slip right through his body. Bill Hoagland didn't really

do a Halloween trick but decided to show us a work in progress with Shear Luck from Shawn Farquhar. The show was over and everyone was packing up...or was it over?



**Jeff and his voodoo Card Magic**

Bill Hernandez decided to show us a new app on his cell phone with a spider walking across it; he put the phone on David's hand, waved his hand, and the spider walked across the screen. Nice and fun, until he asked Dave to wave his hand over the phone and a real (fake) spider was on the back of Dave's hand. I think the scream was heard upstairs in the church and down the street; I so wish I videoed the trick with my phone. That was our Halloween meeting. —Bill Hoagland  
**Assembly 127 meet at the First United Methodist Church (Downstairs). 941 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT 3rd Tuesday of Every Month Contact Bill Hoagland whoagland@billhmagic.com (203) 877-0157 magicsam127.org for more details.**

### 131

#### HALLOWEEN OCTOBER MEETING

**DANBURY, CT—** Our annual fall church fest was excellent this year, with record attendance for our two magic shows. Thanks to magicians Tom Demouth, President Bob Abel, Mike Bochar, and all the volunteers for two great Shows.

Halloween magic for this evening: Tony Spiro told a story of his youth. Walked through a Spooky forest to an old abandon house with friends. We all entered the house. A closed door with a key inside its lock. Tony tried to turn the key in the door. A noise was heard and Tony and his friends all ran out and back into the woods. It was then Tony realized that he had the key and every year around Halloween the key would turn by itself, when held in the palm of his hand.

Des Desmond demoed a turning key and also told of his magic presentation, to a Middlebury, Connecticut Scout Troop. Des was

very impressed with the Scouts' respect and interest.



**Danbury Top Hatters Fall Festival DES**

Past Pres Magic Marty demoed a pinched coin effect shooting it into his open shirt or jacket, Toppit style. He then gave the great Bob Fitch a plug on his lecture to Assembly 35 in Poughkeepsie, focusing on stage presence.

January 19, 2015, will be our annual holiday banquet at Chucks Steak House, Danbury CT. —Magic Marty Steinberg  
**Assembly 131 meets at the Methodist Church in Back Parking Area #5 Clapboard Ridge Rd, Danbury, CT. Contact Martin Steinberg magicmarty@aol.com (845) 797-8363 for more details.**

### 141

#### MONEY AND A MOVIE

**COLUMBIA, MD—** After a short business meeting focused on initial planning for a community show in December and a lecture in February, the Columbia Conjurors enjoyed magic with the theme "Take the Money and Run: Tricks with Coins and Currency." Jacques Severe opened by completely disregarding the theme to perform a mathematical prediction using Tarot cards. Matt Neufeld performed a neat transposition of a Kennedy half-dollar and a Mexican centavo using a small box and a deck of cards. Bob Clayton then did a classic Coins Across, followed by Eric Hoffman who managed to transpose a Kennedy half-dollar and a Chinese coin using a windowed envelope. John Gazmen entertained with a humorous ripped bill trick, and finally Rob Niccolini did a brief routine with an Okito coin box. Performances were intentionally kept short so that the conjurers could enjoy a movie night featuring *Desperate Acts of Magic*, a fun comedy about magicians in love! Special thanks to Brent Morris and Peter Wood for making arrangements for the movie, and to Pat and Ralph Fowler for the popcorn!

**Assembly 141, the Columbia Conjurors, meet on the second Monday of each month at 8:00**

**pm in the basement of the Parish House (on top of the hill) at Christ Episcopal Church in Columbia, Maryland. For more information or to contact an officer, visit [www.sam141.org](http://www.sam141.org). Contact for more details.**

### 157

#### PICNIC, NEW EVENTS, WEDDING

**BEAVER, PA—** The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (Assembly 157) participated in the GPMN picnic with lots of good food, magic, flea market, and fun. Events upcoming are Christmas dinner for club, several lectures, and shows in the area. One of our members, John Hromada, made the trip down the aisle to wedded bliss.

Doug Ries did a Teach and Learn on dice. He showed the effects he sells as well as other he uses. Several members joined in with their versions and ideas. Ray Lucas led the performers as emcee and performer. He produced a Frankenstein bag and several scarves with body parts on them. Scarves put in bag, waves hand over bag, says magic word, removes scarf, monster is misshapen. States he needs a wand, removes scarf with monster.

Don Zmoody handed a helper a pack of forty-eight cards with all different words. Participant chose a card. Don asked a few questions and was able to guess chosen card. He then presented Cinema Trick. He placed twelve cinema poster cards on table and put one aside as prediction. Helper placed marker on one, all cards in that line, up/down and side to side, removed. Does this two more times. The numbers on the remaining cards are added up. Are the amount on the prediction. Doug Ries showed a picture of Lizzie Borden and recites a poem. Has helper pick a card from the deck he is riffing, placed in deck, shuffled, deals one. Not chosen one. Checks deck and finds one cut in half, opens Lizzie's picture, there is chosen one. Bob Mullins had a piece of



**Congratulations John**

rope. He had a helper check it and tie it around his thumbs very tight. Bob turns around and is out of the rope. Jim Weyand presents three Aces, two red, one black. Turns over the black one, threads through the Aces. Dick Recktenwald tore some tissue paper down, curls around into a ball, opens it up, it is restored into a hat which he presented to our guest. —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**

### 160

#### OPEN HOUSE & FLEA MARKET

**SCRANTON/WILKES BARRE, PA—** For our October meeting we held our annual "Open House & Flea Market." I would like to thank everyone in attendance for making the night a complete success. Several guests showed an interest in joining the S.A.M. I would like to thank everyone who performed. I would also like to thank our Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President, Arlen Solomon, and our National Treasurer, Eric Lampert, for their attendance and support. —Burt Ebel

**Assembly 160 meets the first Thursday of every month at the Iron Skillet Restaurant located inside the Petro Stopping Center, 98 Grove St, Dupont, PA. 7:00PM Contact Burt Ebel ebel717@msn.com (570) 894-8089 <http://nepamagic.8m.com/> for more details.**

### 181

#### ROCC-TOBER

**HIGHTSTOWN, NJ—** When it comes to bizarre magic, there is no one stranger than our Rocco. Therefore, it seemed quite appropriate for Rocco to conduct October's workshop on magic themed for the Halloween month. Taking time off from building illusions for a local Halloween store, Rocco presented the dropping head illusion. It is a quite stunning effect, watching a person's head fall off their shoulders. As I looked around the room, which was filled with magicians, I heard gasps and genuine expressions of true astonishment. We have all seen many card tricks, and I have never seen a card effect get this kind of audience response. There is nothing like seeing a head falling off up close and personal.

After the presentation, Rocco went on to explain how to construct this effect. With a couple of items that you can pick up from the hardware store for under ten dollars, Rocco built his working model.

Our meeting is not only about the workshops. We always have plenty of time for performances by attendees. Mitch Geier started with an electronic effect called Cobra Light, which he modified and improved. Following was Hank Strasser, who did a psychological effect with spinning discs.

Fred Walker was there, who with his wife and magical stage partner Heather, have been performing together for twenty-five years as the Magicwalkers. Fred performed the Fortune Teller's Book of Days. The Book of Days contains 366 short paragraphs and a playing card for each day of the year. When a spectator chooses a card, the profile that appears on his birth date and the card he chooses amazingly match.

Reba started her routine with a talking tennis ball gag and then went into a BOGO coupon effect from the supermarket. She continued her paper magic routine with a paper money effect, stretching a dollar and finishing with Extreme Burn.



**Rocco Losing His Head**

Rocco came back for an encore, performing his versions of a card at any number and invisible cards. Magic Mike finished the performances with a dice stacking demonstration and a card counting effect that revealed the selected card.

Our poker chip performer of the month went to Rocco for his efforts. A close second place went to Reba for her multiple effect routine.

Later on in October, our assembly met for a second time at Tommy's Inn at Millstone for a night with the original Wild Man of Magic, Bob Little of Guaranteed Magic. One assembly, two meetings a month, which is what we do at Assembly 181, and why not, magic is fun. —David Zboray

Assembly 181 of Hightstown

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

## 200 "HATOWEEN"

**SEATTLE, WA**— What a great week of magic in the Pacific Northwest! The week started on Sunday with the Emerald City Wizards' dinner show, where we got to showcase our skills to friends and family members. We were joined by young magicians from the Ring of Smoke, who also amazed our audience. Special thanks to Brian Cook for setting up our stage and managing the production.

Later in the same week we had our October meeting. The theme was Hatoween. JR Russel started the fun by having five different colored poker chips placed in his hat. After shaking them up and holding the hat above his head he retrieved the colored chip that was selected. Dan Kennedy revealed his Dracula cards and performed Victim of the Vampire by Peter Marucci.

John Cameron performed David Harkey's Faces in the Crowd while wearing a wizard's hat almost as tall as him. Michael Jacobs performed a Two Card Monte with the help of his hat. Ben Eskenazi showed us five cards that magically turned blank and then ended up in his hat.

Larry Dimmitt kept it spooky by showing us how the shadow can alter reality by keeping the same cards in four volunteers' hands even though the deck kept being mixed. Who knows? Gilbreath knows. Tom Payne shared his gaffed top hat and told us the thinking behind it and how it works.

Chuck Kleiner, in a hat, had good wishes written on a piece of paper and placed in an ashtray.



**Emerald City Wizards' Hatoween**

There was a burst of flame and when the paper was opened the good wishes had vanished and emanated out into the universe. Roger Sylwester performed a feat from Barrie Richardson's *Theater of the Mind* by remembering where every card in the deck was located. Reymarx Gereda showed us an Aldo Colombini card effect where the selected card is found in a waterfall shuffle.

Jim Earnshaw performed a smooth three coin routine set to music in which he kept placing coins in a hat only to have them reappear in his hands. Mark Paulson predicted the selection of a small skull by revealing a large skull under his hat. He also performed Being There, by Christopher Taylor, in which he predicted what a spectator simply imagined.

Happy Hatoween from the Wizards in the Emerald City!

—Chuck Kleiner  
Assembly 200 meets 1st Thu. 7:00 PM each month at a branch of the King County Library. Check website for locations: [www.emeraldcitywizards.org](http://www.emeraldcitywizards.org) Contact Chuck Kleiner [chuckkleiner@yahoo.com](mailto:chuckkleiner@yahoo.com) (206) 236-0608 [www.emeraldcitywizards.org](http://www.emeraldcitywizards.org) for more details.

## 215

### SHOWS AND LECTURES

**LOUISVILLE, KY**— This summer and early fall have been busy months for the LMC. Our annual picnic was held on August 23 at the riverfront home of Sherrell Nunnelley. The rain mostly held off for the afternoon flea market and close-up show as well as for the evening show, featuring Magic Adams, Sean McClure, Brad Lowe, Grace Lowe, and Reed and Ashton Masterson.

September 12 was our annual fundraising show, *It's Magic*, featuring David Garrard, James Hargrave, Dennis Alm, Cody Comet, Graham Maupin, and emcee Jim Harris. The show was so good that many attendees thought the club didn't charge enough for the tickets!

October 20 Richard Osterlind lectured to a smaller-than-normal-but-very-appreciative audience. Steve Spence, the S.A.M. territorial vice president, and Don Miller, both from Indianapolis Assembly 31, were special visitors.

Osterlind started off with Hands Off, a trick in *The Sapphire Collection* DVD in which a spectator cuts the cards several times, looks at the top card, and places it in the middle of the deck. Without having watched,

Osterlind named the card and told how far down it was from the top of the deck. He then did some incredible spoon bending and shared his techniques. Stating that magic is not deception but rather the creation of mystery, he mentally bent a borrowed penny and left us to ponder that mystery. He next performed some mental mysteries using his "perfected center tear" and taught us the technique. Then he performed his versions of several effects from *Anemann's Practical Mental Magic*: a book test called 40,000 Words; Magic vs. Mentalism, a mental effect with cards; The Ultra Slate Message; and his much improved version of Numbers. He closed with two tricks from his Breakthrough Card System and the Poor Man's Book Test from his *Sapphire Collection* DVD. Osterlind was professional, entertaining, and very personable. —Roger L. Omanson

The LMC usually meets at the Kosair Community Center on Eastern Parkway. Contact Roger L. Omanson [rlomanson@gmail.com](mailto:rlomanson@gmail.com) (502) 296-6577 [www.lmcmagic.com](http://www.lmcmagic.com) for more details.

## 226

### HALLOWEEN MAGIC

**WILLAMSBURG, VA**— Michael Heckenberger opened with a magic trick using the paperback book *The Exorcist* by William Peter Blatty in which a page in the book is randomly selected, a blank piece of paper is put into an envelope and sealed, then an exorcism is done on the book; when the book is opened the selected page is gone with only burn marks as the clue. When the envelope is opened the selected page is in it! Michael Heckenberger may have bought it in the late '70s, but it still works.

Our next performer was Vice President Alexander Goldberg, who performed a trick from Jim Baker's *Halloween Magic*, which I did know Jim wrote! The trick was called Aces to the Top; the four Aces are lost in the deck and then jump to the top of the deck! Wonderful!

Next up was Bill Baber who performed Enigmatic Tarot or Tossed Out Tarot by Jim Steinmeyer and Christopher Borer in which five spectators are guaranteed a fortunate future; five selected Tarot cards are divined by the magician! Bill also did a trick with the word "web" in the title in which by the end of the trick a plastic spider is on the back of the volunteer's hand which produced a very nice scream! Good job Bill!

Last but not least was Scott Fridinger who performed Perfor-



**Scott Fridinger--Performed Spineless by Chad Long**

mance of Spineless by Chad Long, which is a slightly different book test (namely the spine of the book is gone) with a failed mind reading which manifests physically. Scott also did an amazing Ambitious Card routine that is very good! — Michael Heckenberger  
**Assembly 226 meets the fourth Wednesday of each month (except for August and December) at the Williamsburg Library, Room B, 515 Scotland Street, Williamsburg, VA. Meetings start at 7:00PM. Contact Michael Heckenberger heck\_mike@verizon.net (757) 812-3299 <https://sites.google.com/site/samassembly226/Home> for more details.**

**252**

**SPOOKY MAGIC**

**FAIRFAX, VA—** Skeletons and ghosts made an appearance at Assembly 252's October meeting.

Bob Malinchock opened the evening's magic performances with a recorded spooky voice that correctly identified a previously selected card. He followed that up with a "residual ghost" themed trick using information from the current *M-U-M* article on Martin Gardner. He used the information on Gardner's book *Mathematics, Magic and Mystery* to find a predicted word in the actual book. Bob ended his performance with a most effective demonstration of clairvoyance that involved a deck of Tarot cards and a pair of dice.

President Keith Pass was next with a clever combo of Glorpy the ghost hank, a piece of chalk,



**Keith Pass sees a ghost!**

and a pair of miniature slates. The name of the selected card was written on the slates after Glorpy did his act. Keith also demonstrated his amazing finger chopper and a brass die box that told which side of the die was facing up even though the box was completely closed.

Richie Klein threw out a crumpled paper ball, and then had a card selected from a group of photos of individual cards. When the crumpled paper was unfolded, it revealed the name of the selected card. He followed that with a demonstration of the classic Skeleton in the Closet effect he had hand crafted. The skeleton's three parts reassembled themselves in unusual order several times.

Greg Clements closed the evening with a demonstration of his version of Six-Card Repeat and then demonstrated his prowess at juggling. Greg recommended the sport as a means of warding off memory loss and stimulating the brain. —Alan Wheeler

**Assembly 252 meets at the Knights of Columbus Hall behind St. Leo's Catholic Church, 3700 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA. Contact Tom Bohacek bohacek@gmail.com (703) 754-2005 [www.sam252.com](http://www.sam252.com) for more details.**

**266**

**SPOOKY TRICKS MAKE OCTOBER MEETING SHINE!**

**LAKELAND, FL—** With an uncharacteristically crisp nip in the Florida air, the Lakeland magi had a spooky filled October meeting. President Jerry Kardos ran us through another quick business meeting and then kicked off the festivities with a trio of spine-tlingling goodies. Jerry showed us a mysterious spirit box in which noises came from an empty container. Then he showed what the spirits can do as they invisibly untied silks off of a rope, and then unlocked a lock with a spooky key placed on his palm. Scribe Al D'Alfonso demonstrated his mental connection with a trip to Las Vegas with the help of Max Maven.

Beverly Kenemuth showed how she magically picked out her Halloween costume. The gang made all the decisions, yet Beverly had already chosen her costume before hand and it matched our selection.

Our closing act was card wizard Ed McGowan, who reworked a Ricky Jay effect and demonstrated a no-Jonah poker deal, which in this reporter's humble opinion seemed even fairer than the original.

Another night with plenty of

*tricks* that were all *treats* when the Lakeland wizards get together. Come visit us when your plans bring you to Central Florida. —Al D'Alfonso

**Jim Zachary Assembly 266 meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7PM at the Lakeland I-HOP, I-4 & US 98 Contact Al D'Alfonso keeper0499@embarqmail.com (321) 437-3814 for more details.**

**277**

**WE WAVED OUR WANDS**

**STROUDSBURG, PA—** The Pocono Mountains Magic Club met again in October for some fun and tons of magic. We welcomed back a guest who has been away from the club for many years. Mark Carbonaro stopped in to say hi and hopefully will become a full-time member again.

Before the business portion got underway, we did some close-up magic. S. Patrick started off with a story of his great-grandmother who was interested in magic. He showed two old matchboxes that contained two different colored ribbons. With a snap of the fingers the ribbon changed boxes, then vanished.

Wabu Djambe (Odes Odhner) was up next with the "Ritual of the Body Parts," an excellent routine in which a spectator and Wabu choose body parts to eliminate until only one is left. Wabu then ate the body part. Wabus prediction that he wrote beforehand matched perfectly.

Jay Kraft was up next with a great card effect in which a game of Monte was played with the Kings and the Jacks constantly switching places. Great job! Our guest Mark Carbonaro was up next with a Monte routine of his own called Find The Vegas Queen." The queen kept jumping all over the place. Joseph Raven was up next with his dancing wand routine. This is a nice little version of the dancing cane using a regular sized magic wand. The gimmick allowed for a smoother handling and a greater flexibility in the floating.

Wabu Djambe (Odes Odhner) was up next with a few spooky routines for the upcoming Halloween season. The first was Blood from a Stone. Odes showed a stone that he passed around for everyone to see. He then squeezed the stone and it began dripping blood, proving that you can get blood from a stone. Wabu then performed his Voodoo Coffin, in which he showed a voodoo doll with four places to pierce, but only three needles. A volunteer chose which three places to pierce



**The Voo Doo Magician Wabu Djambe**

the doll. Wabu then revealed that he predicted the place left un-pierced. His last effect was his classic dingle-dangle wands, which is the Wabus version of the Chinese Sticks.

Our own S. Patrick was up last. S. performed his Cleansing Ritual, in which he was able to draw out the blood, disease, and toxins out of a spectator and place it harmlessly into an egg. When S. broke open the egg, you could see to blood dripping out.

Thanks for Jay Kraft for emceeding the evening and keeping the flow going for the performance! —S. Patrick

**Assembly 277 meets each 3rd Friday - "Art Space Gallery" 18 N. 7th St. Stroudsburg, PA 18360. Contact S. Patrick damagician@verizon.net (570) 242-6821 [www.pmmc.webs.com](http://www.pmmc.webs.com) for more details.**

**291**

**YOUR FAVORITE TRICK FROM LESSONS IN MAGIC BY TARBELL**

**LOS ANGELES, CA—** We will start the article with the wonderful interruption to our meeting. S.A.M. National President Kendrick "ICE" McDonald joined us to present to our founding father – Les Cooper – a Presidential Citation. This is the highest honor issued to any S.A.M. member because it espouses the virtues and his "extraordinary support and promoting the goals and values of SAM." Les has many, many accomplishments in his resume for magic. "He was the founder of Assembly 291 in 2009, founder of S.Y.M. Y141, the founding director of Project Magic, his service as a national council member, and is the current S.A.M. new assembly coordinator." Thank you Mr. McDonald for your wonderful honor in acknowledging our crown jewel! Dear Les, the Westside Wizards all congratulate you in being who you are and there for us.

We welcomed a new member into our fold, Dan Cray. Welcome to our family! We hope you enjoy yourself as much as we do.

Tonight was your favorite trick from *The Tarbell Course in Magic*. Raul started off the meeting by



**President Kendrick "ICE" McDonald with Les Cooper**

being our in-house comedian emcee, and proceeded to do magic with silks. "Mr. Always Carry Rubber Bands" Egbok performed his favorite rubber bands and money trick. Our magnificent Heather performed her favorite card trick. Our card specialist Christopher followed Heather with another card trick. Wonderful Stephanie did some of her favorite money magic. Our "Get out of My Plate" Phil, dazzled us with his favorite card tricks. Alex, "No Gravity" entertained us with another card trick. Our S.Y.M. member Eddy closed out the evening by performing our final card trick. As we adjourned our

meeting, we looked forward to next month's lecture by Shoot Ogawa, and our evening snack at Norms. What did we take away tonight? We have an amazing founder and an all-around good friend for life. And always bring a deck of cards, some rubber bands, silks, some money, and a good sense of humor. —William Dow Jr.

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

## 292

### ENJOYING TERRIFIC TRICKS

**GREELEY, CO—** Great performances characterized our October meeting. During a business meeting over lunch, we created a slate of officer nominees for 2015, and planned a December 13 holiday luncheon party in Estes Park. Rich Nakata, Paul Noffsinger, and Lew Wymisner all shared tales from their recent adventures in Las Vegas at MINDvention.

Teagan Brown gave the only

show report, on his first stressful but triumphant experience as a magic emcee. It was for a homecoming show at his large high school, and required coping with several last minute changes.

Show time! We were delighted to have an opening performance by talented eleven-year-old Michael Toews, accompanied by his father Peter. Michael impressed us with two rope effects he had learned from Rich Nakata: tying a knot without letting go of either end of the rope (Knot A Problem) and Ring on Rope.

Reed Barrett, a young pro from Cheyenne, Wyoming, baffled us with his own impossible version of ACAAN. After the meeting, while car-pooling back to Fort Collins, some wise old heads tried to reverse-engineer this miracle, and later one of them at least was still working on it by phone.

With entertaining patter about guillotine history, Brian Hallisey adeptly performed the Mickey Hades version of a Finger Chopper. Then Teagan Brown did the classic Here Then There card transposition made popular by David Blaine. Next, Rich Nakata did a clever Henry Evans card effect, Risky Bet, from his DVD *The Other Side of Illusion, Vol. 2*. In a change of pace, Ron Dutton explained a way to calculate an

advance bid on proxy-bidding Internet magic auctions.

James (The Amazing James) Lopez used personal-reference patter with the classic Corinda mental effect My Word (often called Line, Position, and Number) with both Marilyn Dutton and Ed Hurtubis assisting. James got a lot of mileage out of one easy sleight.

The meeting closed with two effects performed with his customary professionalism by Lew (The Great Loudini) Wymisner. The first was a strong card revelation, Bob Cassidy's diary effect Chronologue, with Brian Hallisey playing spectator. (It is described on Cassidy's DVD *Mental Miracles* so you can make your own prediction date book. An excellent dealer version was created by Collectors' Workshop.) The second effect was an initially humorous book test with a double climax, with Marilyn Dutton assisting: Shawn Farquhar's Sheer Luck. —Ron Dutton

**The Dr. Ronald P. Dutton Assembly 292 usually meets at Kenny's Steak House, 3502 West 10th Street (corner of 35th Avenue) at 11:00 A.M. (lunch optional), on the second Saturday of the month. Contact Jim Pope jlp1616@comcast.net (970) 339-3277 www.SAM292.com for more details. ♦**

# NEWSWORTHY

## UPDATES FROM OUR S.A.M. MEMBERS

### PARENT ASSEMBLY ONE - OCTOBER MAGIC FEST

On October 2, 2014, a fun October Magic Fest show brought over one hundred guests, among them: National President-Elect David Bowers and his wife Judy, RVP Eric Decamps, and National President Kenrick "ICE" McDonald, who thanked us for our hospitality.

Producer and funny emcee, Rene Clement, set the tone of the fun show and introduced our favorite Greek, the amusing Kamarr who, after producing bursts of flame, did a Twentieth Century Silks effect with three spectators and three sets of silks. He followed with multiplying candles and closed with a Bank Night effect, shredding selected envelopes and saving for himself the last one, which contained the \$100 bill. Suave Frank Reyes followed with a musical turn, the Torn and Restored Newspaper, and a Magic Tea Kettle routine. Frank closed with a spectacular silk production and a large Good Night banner and accepted the well-deserved applause.

The team of Bruce and Matthew Lish followed. The father and son team performed a short juggling display with clubs and cigar boxes and then performed some cool magic. Great teamwork brought loads of laughs and applause. The next performer, Harvey Berg, did not disappoint us. He is best known for innovative mental creations and tonight was no exception.

The always exciting Devlin opened his routine with a tribute



**Curtain call**

to Richiardi, doing a fast-paced Rice Bowl segment. Joe then introduced us to a beautiful and original Linking Ring routine, bringing gasps from the magic audience as well as the lay audience. Assisted by the stately Bronwyn, Devlin closed with his version of the classic Razor Blades. Dean George Schindler and Nina delivered segments from their comedy stage act. After a standup joke, George did the baffling Karrell Fox Red Table effect and proceeded to remove the bubbles from a bottle of champagne by passing the liquid through a spectator's body and into a clear pitcher. The final act was Paul Hsaio, who passed a solid bottle through "ICE" McDonald's body before doing some amusing magic, including the production of real fruit selected from photos and the surprise production of a girl from his Victory Cubes illusion. Rene Clement deserves a hand for his extra bits and the production of this show. All the performers were members of PA 1. ♦

**BILL LEE ADAMS**  
**(SEPTEMBER 24, 1928 – SEPTEMBER 29, 2014)**

Bill Lee Adams, beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend, died on Monday, September 29, 2014. He was born on September 24, 1928, in Santa Barbara, California to Mildred J. Adams and Oscar Glen Adams.

Bill graduated from Santa Barbara High School, and was in his second year at Azusa Pacific College when he was drafted to serve in the United States Army in the Korean War. One of Bill's great loves, performing magic, was used to entertain and bring joy to the servicemen during the war. He also loved making films and singing, and used both of the gifts to serve others during his wartime duty.

After returning from his service in the Korean War, Bill married Florence June Knight on May 3, 1953. June has been his faithful companion, magician's assistant, fellow river runner, administrator of church shenanigans and presentations, melon salesperson, and devoted wife for sixty-one years.

Bill had a career as owner of Capitol Roof in Santa Barbara, but had many unique side hobbies as well. He owned Lamp Productions, where he produced an evangelistic film for Youth for Christ called *The Searching Generation* and a documentary about Central America and the ancient Mayans. He also owned a magic shop and produced many fine magic effects under the name Bill Adams's World of Magic.

He belonged to the S.A.M. (life member), the I.B.M., and the PCAM; he hosted three fun and fabulous conventions for the PCAM in Santa Barbara and Page, Arizona. He brought joy and laughter to many as "Ling Lee" the Chinese magician, and through the many magic conventions he hosted. He entertained and introduced many to magic, in places such as Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Canada, and even the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

Bill was a man of great faith; he ministered in Missionary Church of Santa Barbara as choir director, Sunday School leader; he developed unique and crazy events to introduce more people to the church and to a God who is not afraid to have fun! He and June moved to Green River, Utah, in 1991, and served in the Green River Bible church through creative Christmas Programs, Easter Egg hunts that spread out over their sixty-acre ranch, and any fun event that would invite and intrigue people who were searching for meaning in their lives.

Bill also loved the wilderness and landscapes of Utah and took many youth groups and friends on river trips down the Grand Canyon, Green River, San Juan, Cataract, Yukon River, and many more places, often with his longtime friend and river runner, Ken Sleight. He also filmed not only the many canyon lands of Utah, but also the action of the rapids, getting

dunked more than once. He captured unique footage of the Grand Canyon before the destruction brought about by the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam.

Bill is survived by his wife June, his son, Troy, his daughter Crystal Boecker and her husband Brian Boecker, grandchildren Bayley and Isabella Boecker, brother Glen Adams and his wife Eleanor, sister-in-law Marjorie Kiefer, and many wonderful nieces and nephews and their children.

**LARRY WEEKS**  
**(SEPTEMBER 24, 1919 – OCTOBER 13, 2014)**



(Photo courtesy Rene Clement)

Lester Fulton Weeks, best known as Larry Weeks, was born in Salem, Massachusetts; he died at a VA hospital in New York at age ninety-five on October 13, 2014. His family moved to the Bronx, New York, in 1929. When he was ten his father, Aaron, an importer who worked for the Scandinavian Embassy, taught Larry a few magic tricks. Larry performed at P.S. 46 and attended Bronx Boys High School and Brooklyn

College.

Larry learned to juggle and earned the nickname "speedsational" for his amazing balance and rapidly paced act. He developed an act called "Juggling for Fun," which toured in New York, Boston, and Montreal. In the late 1930s, Larry performed magic in New York City parks with Abe Hurwitz and his Peter Pan Magic Club.

In World War II, Larry found himself at Fort Monmouth, where he was seen by Irving Berlin and transferred to Fort Upton in 1942. He joined the *This is the Army* detachment as part of the traveling show that raised funds for the war effort. The show appeared on Broadway and played in twenty-one countries. Corporal Weeks, the baton-twirling juggler, was now juggling knives, forks, potatoes, and apples in an act built around the duties of the "Kitchen Police." It should be noted that Weeks was the originator of apple juggling in which he took a bite of the apple at each turn until he was juggling only the core. In 1943, he repeated his role in the Warner Brothers film of the same name.

Once back in civilian life, he both juggled and did magic, developing a children's show market. He also found a way to make seamless sponge balls and marketed them under the name of "Spongecraft." He booked other performers; in September of 1966 he came up with the idea of producing the first 'All Day Magic Convention' held at the hotel Lexington in

New York City. For a three-dollar registration fee the attendees got a movie, close-up magic, a dealer demo, an auction, a raffle, and a professional evening show. He drew two hundred magicians; it was so successful that he scheduled another one three months later. He produced a total of forty-eight conventions during his lifetime.

Weeks was a friend to many of the famous magicians of our time, including Cardini, Roy and Connie Benson, Frakson, and Paul Rosini; in 1979 and 1980 he produced two of the New York **Salute to Magic** shows featuring his friend Richiardi.

Larry Weeks was a collector of vaudeville props,

books, juggling and magic props, escape tricks, and films featuring Charlie Chaplin, W.C. Fields, and Houdini. Larry always attended the collectors' meetings and was a regular attendee at Sid Radner's Houdini Séances. He was very proud and boasted that his final resting place was a plot at the Machpelah Cemetery a few hundred yards away from the Houdini family graves. He was interred there with a graveside Jewish service, a military honor guard, and The Society of American Magicians Broken Wand ceremony. He was also a longtime member of the I.B.M.

– George Schindler

### Good Cheer List

Please take a minute to 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](mailto:magicforfun60@aol.com)

**Daniel Cudennec**  
**“Dany Trick”**  
 225, Stang-ar-Veil-  
 d’an-Traon, Mellac-29300,  
 Quimperle, France

**Dan A. Dorsey**  
 98 Woodvalley Dr.  
 Fayetteville, GA 30215

**Charlie Gross**  
 16745 Gertrude St.  
 Omaha, NE 68136-3023

**Roy Horn**  
 c/o Siegfried & Roy  
 1639 N Valley Dr.  
 Las Vegas, NV 89108

**Bob King**  
 304 Suburban Ct.  
 Rochester, NY 14620

**Dick Kohlhafer**  
 408 Century Vista Dr.  
 Arnold, MD 21012

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**Harry Riser**  
 11755 N. Michigan Rd. #313  
 Zionsville, IN 46077

**Pat Ryan**  
 43 Fairbanks Rd.  
 Churchville, NY 14428

**Jack White**  
 4288 Arguello St.  
 San Diego, CA 92103

**Jim Zachary**  
 2801 South Creek Dr.  
 Mulberry, FL 33860

## Need to Write an Assembly Report?

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# The Nielsen Gallery

## Okito "Floating Ball"

Dimensions: 1-sheet - 20" X 27" • Lithographer: Unknown

Date: 1924 • Nielsen Rating: Rare

Tobias Leendert Bamberg (known famously as "Okito"), has been covered repeatedly in the Nielsen Gallery over the years and justifiably so. "Theo," as he was called, was the sixth generation of a magical family hailing from Holland and one of the true stars in magic's firmament. Rather than recount the story of his start in magic, origin of his name, and other well-known anecdotes, we devote this column to the illusion featured in the poster, an effect that helped make him famous: the Floating Ball.

Many magicians have presented the Floating Ball, a beautiful illusion in which a seemingly solid metal ball floats about the stage, rising or falling, floating away or back, all at the command of the magician. To prove the absence of wires, threads, or hidden influence, the magician usually passes a hoop over and around the sphere. In the cases of Harry Blackstone Sr. and Jr., a light bulb floated around the stage, down into the audience, and back.

While Okito popularized the illusion, he did not originate it. Around 1917-18, he was touring with the Thurston show as a mechanic and stage manager and was performing shadowgraphs. While in Omaha, Nebraska, Thurston introduced him to David P. Abbott, who performed his amazing Floating Ball routine in the parlor of his home.

Abbott was born in 1864, and in an interesting coincidence, his first exposure to magic was watching a magician perform the Obedient Ball. In this effect "spirits" cause a ball threaded on a rod to rise or fall in response to questions from the audience. Abbott eventually took up magic and traveled around giving stage shows. Over time his tricks centered on the occult, tricks of spirit mediums, and slate writing.

Eventually he became a wealthy businessman, president of one of Omaha's largest banks, and devoted much of his savings to building a "House of Mystery" at 3316 Center Street in Omaha. The home was a handsome Arts-and-Crafts-style model with a fashionable brick exterior and all the wooden moldings and columns that befitted a prosperous business man.

To all appearances, it was a normal home, with the exception of an oversized front parlor. Visitors who came to witness his illusionary miracles did not realize that the room contained hidden microphones, loudspeakers, and a giant electromagnet beneath the carpet with terminals that connected to the legs of furniture. It was also furnished with exotic Japanese screens, an elephant-head table, and ornate decorations.

It was in this setting that Abbott fooled Houdini with his Talking Teakettle. He likewise fooled Ching Ling Foo, who asked the "spirit" in the kettle a question in Chinese. When the spirit answered in Chinese he was astounded. Little did he know that Abbott employed a Chinese cook. Others like Kellar, Horace

Goldin, and Blackstone were equally amazed by creations such as Spirit Paintings, the Talking Skull, and the Linking Rings. But it was his Floating Ball that captured Okito that day; Abbott instructed him in the act and presented him with one of the floating balls.

Dr. E.G. Ervin witnessed Abbott's full-evening presentation and spoke highly of the Floating Ball. In the October 1930 *The Sphinx*, he wrote, "It would be difficult to realize or observe a more beautiful spectacle than the floating ball in Mr. Abbott's hands with its silken background of glistening stars. It seems to transcend human skill. We knew why and how it defied gravitation – and all that, but forgot it, so intensely were we absorbed in watching the many and graceful maneuvers he includes in his presentation."

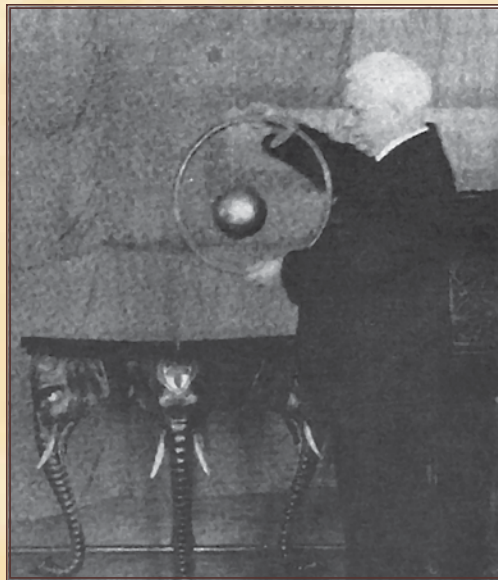
From a purely artistic standpoint, the Floating Ball was probably Abbott's greatest creation and the one most widely desired by magicians who witnessed it. Writing about it Abbott said, "For a long time I intended to keep my particular method of working this illusion from the rest of the world. There are many different balls used, and many methods employed; but the effects that I have evolved are so superior, and the illusion is thus made so beautiful, that I took a certain pride in being the only performer using no assistant and producing it in this manner. However, so many performers admired it so much and urged me so strongly, that I taught it to a few of

them. Mr. Theodore Bamberg was one of these, and I instructed him some hours a day for three days. He mastered it thoroughly and performs it beautifully." What followed then was a move-by-move description (with over thirty photographs) of the illusion. He even provided instructions on creating the ball itself.

While Abbott entered the room with the ball held in his hand, Okito is credited with the wonderful flourish of having the ball brought on stage in a highly decorated and lacquered Chinese box. The lid of the box mysteriously opened and the ball floated out of the box to begin its ethereal journey.

The current master of this illusion is Teller, who performs his own special version of it in Las Vegas. Recently he spoke before a gathering of magic historians and described his years-long research into the illusion and his efforts to present it effectively. In 2005, Teller was instrumental in compiling and co-editing with Todd Karr, a two-volume set, *David P. Abbott's House of Mystery*. Anyone interested in this and other amazing illusions from the creative mind of Abbott is encouraged to obtain a copy. ♦

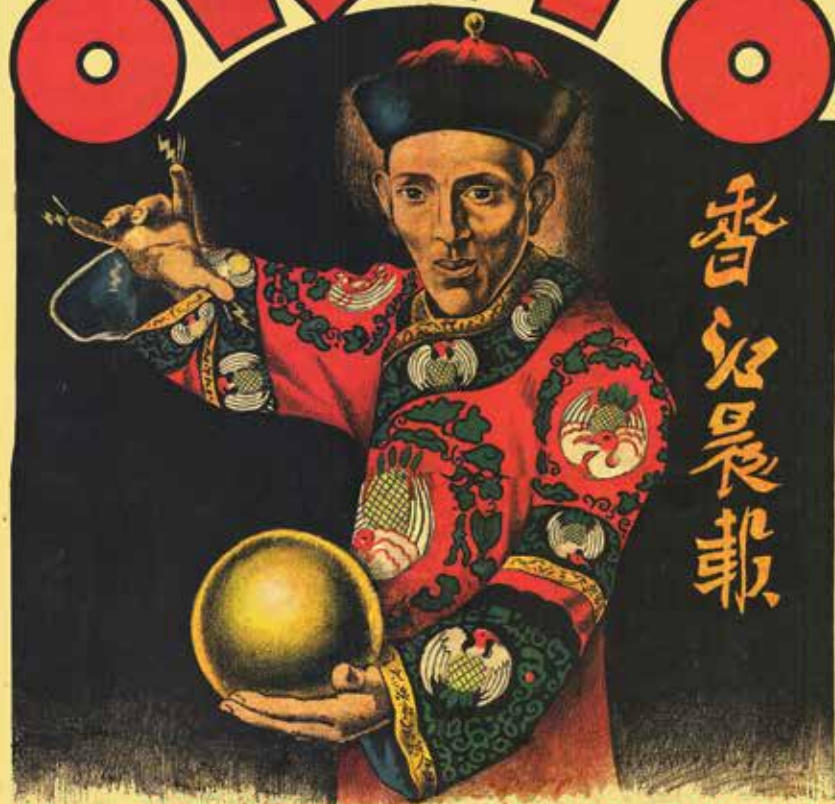
—Tom Ewing



David P. Abbott

8 Uhr Monat November 1924 8 Uhr

# OKITO



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# A TRIBUTE TO JOHN GIORDMAINE (1898-1974)

BY JOHN PELLATT



Photo courtesy of Joseph Giordmaine

In early 2008, I stared once again at the aging cardboard butterfly tacked up over my desk. It had been tacked or taped onto various walls of mine for nearly forty years. If you attach a couple pennies to it, it will suspend in midair at the very end of your fingertips as if by magic. So why did I keep it? And why was it always in such a prominent place?

That cardboard butterfly was a promotional giveaway from the predawn of time: my childhood. It continued to connect me to happy memories of that era and its originator, a wonderfully charismatic children's magician born in Malta named John Giordmaine.

Johnny (as we all knew him) was probably the most popular Toronto-based Canadian children's magician when I was a kid in the late '60s and early '70s. Certainly he was the most beloved, an incontestable accolade since the time he turned pro in the 1930s. He was a member of the S.A.M. from 1927 to his death in 1974. He was also the reason I got into the hobby of magic as a kid. Johnny was a mentor to possibly thousands of us to the day he died, encouraging our interest in magic, and making each of us feel special.

The faded butterfly was obviously still important to me. Long after I had got out of magic as an active hobby, it had stayed up to remind me of Johnny and of my everlasting love for magic. And so it came into focus once again during early 2008 and got me to wondering if there was a website devoted to Johnny.

A quick search revealed no such tribute site. How could this be? Such an oversight was a disgrace! Somebody should put a site up to honor him, I thought. Yeah, somebody really should...

So I did...it's currently at [www.johngiordmaine.com](http://www.johngiordmaine.com)

It was (and still is) a modest, homemade site originally consisting of scans of my old files. But it started to bring the magic of Johnny's generosity of spirit back into my life. I began rereading some of my old magic books and magazines, and even started to develop a newfound interest in mentalism.

But was the site worthy of his memory? I decided to email his family to find out. His only child, Joseph Giordmaine, is

now a well-known physicist and former Princeton University lecturer. How would he respond? Not only did he graciously give the site his approval, he also sent along a collection of family photos. These photos give the site an added dimension it could not have had otherwise. His ongoing encouragement for the site has made my work on it feel exponentially

rewarding.

What follows is an edited recollection of my phone conversation with Joseph about his father.

**John Pellatt:** What is the fundamental attraction of magic?

**Joseph Giordmaine:** Magic is a universal language, a vehicle of communication between people. For a lay audience it is about creating an alternate universe. As Dad often put it, he felt as if he was creating something that people can enjoy because it's so foreign, the rules are so different. And for that reason it's wrong to reveal the secret – not because the magician is losing something, but because the audience is losing something. Because you're suddenly struck by the fact that there is this simple gimmick instead of what you're supposed to receive: an introduction to a new, mysterious world, completely different than our own. In my father's approach he could guide children in this sense of wonder because he would express astonishment himself. His eyes would open wide; he obviously had the sense of wonder himself. This was not acting. The things he could do with his hands were wonderful. His sense of wonder was a sense of thankfulness, of gratitude for having these kinds of skills.

**Pellatt:** Your dad was well known for his joyous sense of humor. How did he start in magic and incorporate that humor into his act?

**Giordmaine:** In an interview years ago, he spoke of seeing his first magician in Malta; he was fascinated. He started to order tricks by mail from London's department store Gamage's. He must've been in his late teens, so he was first exposed to magic in Malta. His first job (after immigrating to Toronto in

1919) was as a glassblower. It was a tough, hot, dangerous job. He found another job as an electrician at the Swift Meat Packing Company. He found he could interact with people through magic. When you normally meet people you make small talk, but if you're from another country you're probably not comfortable with small talk. In his case, he would meet somebody and almost after saying hello, he would pull out some tricks. He did this all of his life. His humor endeared him to people; the joke was always on him. He had that wonderful quote, "When I was *small*; I mean, when I was *young*." I must've heard that a thousand times. He loved that kind of thing and people loved him for it.

**Pellatt:** Once he had turned professional, in addition to his countless live performances, your dad also ran the magic counter at Eaton's department store in Toronto for decades (1930-1960).

**Giordmaine:** Tannen's magic store in New York was famous for twelve-year-old kids coming in every Saturday; I think Dad's counter in Eaton's was a kind of scaled-down, Toronto version of Lou Tannen's magic shop. Both had a strong effect. James Randi came back again and again. Dad used to tell me about him. He was well aware that he was having an influence. It gave him a lot of pleasure.

**Pellatt:** How did he become so successful in magic? What were the key factors?

**Giordmaine:** The first things that made his career in magic possible were his energy and ambition. He didn't wear them on his shoulder; he was just working all the time. He did the real work, the learning of the technical aspects of magic, early on. He learned through the *Tarbell Course*, which came out in 1927 when he was twenty-nine. He subscribed to it; it was a type-script edition at the time. By the early 1930s, he was performing as a featured act at magic conventions. He was no amateur by then; he had really done the work.

**Pellatt:** How is it that he related so well to children?

**Giordmaine:** He got kids' interest by challenging them to figure it out. They loved trying to catch him out – the "gotcha" experience. He had so many effects. The Die Box was a favorite; such a simple trick, but it really set them off, the kids took such delight in it. And he always had a way of turning it around. The Torn & Restored Napkin was another favorite, one of his simplest tricks but I always loved it. You thought you were learning how to do it, but there was more to it than you thought.

**Pellatt:** Your dad was a pioneer of magic on television. Not only was he the first magician ever to appear on television in Canada but he later went on the top North American television shows of his day, like Captain Kangaroo and the Ed Sullivan show.

**Giordmaine:** That first broadcast was a closed-circuit demonstration in 1933 at Eaton's in Toronto. It was very primitive technology. He said there was nothing as hot as the lights for that show. They needed them to get enough light for the cameras. It was viewed on another floor of Eaton's and it did attract a lot of attention. It really was a pioneering thing, but he didn't give a lot of thought to it.

Unfortunately, I don't have a recording of the Ed Sullivan

show, but I did watch it. He had such misgivings about the whole experience, because something went terribly wrong. He came to New York and was waiting in the hotel for a call to tell him when to arrive for the rehearsal. He briefly went out and returned and there was still no call. It turned out that there had been a call but it had never been relayed to him, so he missed the rehearsal. It was a disaster! So he did the show without a rehearsal. When Ed Sullivan looked over to the wing on the show, my father came out from the other wing! Sullivan handled it by saying it was magic, that he'd materialized over there! Everything went well from then on. He pulled Sullivan's famous polka dot handkerchief out from his pocket and made all of the polka dots fall off. He pulled a shiny, red-and-white barber pole out of his pocket; it went twenty feet up into the air! So it went very well but he got off to a shaky start. He got pleasant comments from Sullivan afterwards so he was obviously forgiven for missing the rehearsal.

**Pellatt:** Who were his role models?

**Giordmaine:** People like Dai Vernon, Nelson Downs, Thurston, and Blackstone. Dad also had enormous respect for Tarbell for his course, which is magnificent. His books are so practical, in such simple English. When my father wrote up his effects, his prose was influenced by Tarbell; it was very clear and simple.

**Pellatt:** What do you think is your father's legacy in magic?

**Giordmaine:** His greatest achievements were his persona, his absolute mastery of sleight of hand (which he kept out of view, in the background), and his ability to share with his audience the joy and wonder of what was going on while at the same time making himself the subject of the humor. He did it in such a sincere and smooth way: "Nothing here, nothing here, and nothing here (referring to his head)." There may be greater comedians, there may be greater pure magicians in some absolute sense, but for the combination of humor in children's entertainment and the technical aspects of magic, I think no one could match Dad. I think he would consider that his greatest contribution – the demonstration that that kind of combination of arts was possible.

The now defunct Society of Canadian Magicians was very kind to my mother and me after he died. They staged an auction sale of all of Dad's equipment from his famous magic room in the basement. It was a wonderful tribute. The emcee was Sid Lorraine, who was wonderfully warm and funny; I will never forget it. Sid said at the time, "Magicians throughout the world knew him as the perfect children's entertainer. In a field where competition and comparison often breeds enemies, one never heard a word of criticism or complaint when the Giordmaine name was mentioned. Those of us who knew him and worked closely with him over the past forty years will always remember him as a kindly, considerate human being who enjoyed every moment of his very active life. He was a little fellow with a big heart."

I would like to thank Joseph Giordmaine for sharing his memories about his father. Your memories of Johnny will be very welcome, too. Contact information can be found at [www.johngiordmaine.com](http://www.johngiordmaine.com).





## EMBED EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

Many kid show performers focus almost entirely on birthday parties. If you are a birthday performer, you know that fun rules. Everything should be magical, funny, colorful, and exciting. Kids (and the parents who watch) want to hear laughter and see smiles. But there are many venues available to performers besides birthday parties; most of those require you to Embed Educational Content.

I have been a full-time children's performer for decades, and I rarely do birthday parties. Of course, I will accept one if someone calls (and they do call). But I do not solicit or market birthday party events. My reason is personal: I wanted to reserve weekends for family time. Guys who make a living doing birthdays usually have to spend every Saturday and every Sunday working. I chose non-weekend venues: libraries and school assemblies.

School assemblies and library shows make up a large portion of magic show opportunities for children's entertainers. They pay well and can be very rewarding. You get seen by hundreds of people at a time, tens of thousands of kids get excited by magic, and most of your clients want you to return year after year – if you embed educational content. If not, you may get no repeat bookings and no word-of-mouth referrals.

Educational content may sound dry, but it does not have to be. In fact, your show will benefit most if the content is exciting and interesting. One of the key components is above, lurking mysteriously in the title of this piece. Note the deliberate use of the word "embed." Not "add," or "insert," or "append." Certainly not "toss in" or "stick on." The content must be part and parcel of your presentation. It must come from the core of your effect, or at least from the core of your patter. The best way to embed content is to begin with an intended message and create the effect around it.

Several years ago, I went to see a magician whom I did not know perform at

a school in my home town. Not wanting to call attention to myself, I went incognito and snuck into a chair by the back wall. His show was called "The Magic of Reading" or something similar, so it was obvious that he had tried to book it as an educational program.

First, he presented some stock manipulations – good magic, good visuals, but no content. Then he performed Kevin James's Bowl-A-Rama. He wrote the word "ball" on a large pad, asked the kids to read it, and then added the word "bowling." Then he produced a bowling ball. The kids were amazed. He told them it was magic because they read those two words. Next, he walked into the audience and handed a dictionary to a teacher. He presented a book test, pretty much for her, as the rest of the audience could hardly see what he was up to. After he correctly announced the word she chose, he returned to the stage and told the students that a dictionary is a book and you can find words in it if you want to know the definition of something you read. Then he did some silk magic.

After forty minutes of decent magic, he closed his show by talking about how he had learned some of his magic through books. As the kids began to file out, one teacher walked directly to me, ignoring my ball-cap-and-sunglasses disguise and said, "You are much better than he is." Busted! But in a good way, I guess. For the most part, the kids were entertained and loved the show. But the teachers were not fooled into thinking it had any educational value. His lame attempts to throw in some random catch phrases about reading were not seen as content. The principal called me within a month and hired me to present my show the next fall. She told me they had tried another magician, but were not satisfied.

Likewise in library shows, the idea of incorporating a message about books and reading is considered at least a "plus," and in some cases invaluable by the librarians who book performers. Although you could easily do standard magic tricks and then close by telling kids to read, that kind of half-hearted attempt smacks more of infomercial than valuable advice.

So how do you go about embedding educational content into your show? Begin by writing an objective, a message, or an affirmation. Define exactly what you want your routine to say – what message

you want to impart. It might be "Assertive behavior often thwarts attempts at bullying," or "Classic literature provides continued enjoyment," or "There are four steps to becoming trustworthy." Next, look for a routine in which the effect leads to a suitable culmination. You might present Jack Hughes's Giant and Dwarf trick to demonstrate changes in a bully and his victim. You could magically produce a helper's favorite book, or turn coal into diamonds with patter about how honesty is rewarding. Rather than give a full description of an entire routine, I'll spend my remaining allotted space to describe several examples of ways to embed educational content into effects.

Suppose you have a school assembly show on character and want a routine to teach a lesson about fairness, one of six positive character traits. You could use a Wolf's Magic prop called Blow Yur Stack (Figure 1). A giant box shaped like a wedge of cheese sits on your table. You invite a helper up to engage in a cup-stacking race. You build a pyramid of six cups on top of your side of the box while he builds a cup stack on his side. His cups continue to fall over, so you always win.



Figure 1

After three attempts, the audience sees a small puppet mouse poking up and down on the helper's side of the box. The mouse has been knocking down the helper's cup stack. The moral is that it's no fun to play a game if someone cheats. In the routine, you have fun staging the race, turn accidents into magic, and reveal that there is strong value in playing fair. The key to this effective routine is that the core of the effect – staging a contest where someone cheats – matches the content message.

In another show you might have the objective "Determination is a valuable part of responsibility." You need an effect that demonstrates determination, so try the

Borrowed Ring in Nest of Boxes. Ask to borrow a ring from a girl in the audience. When she gets front and center, borrow her ring and offer to polish it. Vanish it in the polishing cloth you use. This can be a Devil's Hank, but a simpler method is to simply sew a duplicate ring into a corner of a plain handkerchief and steal her ring while she holds the covered duplicate. Offer to reproduce her ring inside a large box. Have her open the box, but her ring is not inside. Instead there is another box. Normally, a magician would just instruct the helper to open the next box, but here, to meet your objective, you behave as if the trick is over. Act apologetic, as if the trick had failed, and tell her to return to her seat. She will refuse to go back without her ring. She will insist that she get to look in the second box. Trust me. She always insists on getting her ring back. Allow her to open the second box, and she will find another box. Try to send her back to her seat again. She will insist on opening the next box, and the next one, until she finds her ring.

You've had success. The magic worked and she gets her ring back. Everyone applauds. But now you do a verbal recap and sell the objective. You tell the audience that the only reason the helper recovered her ring is because of her determination. She did not give up or quit after looking in the first box. She persisted, even when there were more and more boxes without a ring. Her responsibility and determination is what got her ring back. Again, in this example the core effect of opening box after box is also the crux of the objective.

In contrast to these descriptions, there are plenty of bad examples of content tricks. I've seen a magician do a bare-hand salt vanish followed by salt production in a Long Salt Pour. It was nice magic, but he performed it silently to music; after he finished he gave a three-minute monologue about how the salt represented drugs. He said there was so much salt because there is so much drug use in the world. Then he stopped, looked out and said, "So don't do drugs."

In another show I saw a nice performance of the Twentieth Century Silks ruined with terribly vague and irrational patter. The performer held each silk separately and told the audience that the blue one represented a bully, the red one was a victim, and the green one was a teacher. The red one vanished and then reappeared tied between the blue one and the green one. The performer said that this meant that victims of bullying should learn to be friends with bullies and teachers.

These morals and messages, when hap-

hazardly added on to a trick, do not work at all. They are confusing at best, and are often simply wrong. They ruin both the magic entertainment and the educational content message. If you want to succeed in presenting a message with your magic you must Embed Educational Content.

There are many reasons and situations when you may want to integrate content into children's shows. If you do Halloween shows, having a routine about trick-or-treat safety may get you noticed by parents and rebooked. In Christmas shows you may want to leave a memorable impression that the holiday is about family, togetherness, and sharing more than decorating a tree and getting gifts. Birthday party moms might be very impressed to hear that one of your routines teaches the partying youngsters to play well with friends, clean up after themselves, or thank their hostess. Educational content does not make your magic any better, and may not add exponentially to the children's enjoyment, but it will always be noticed and appreciated by the adults in the audience. And those are the people who will book you.

Here is another sample routine description. As you read this, think about how the message or content is embedded in the core of the effect, not just added on as an afterthought. Suppose you are booked to do a show at a library. Wouldn't it be wise to promote books and reading for this client? Bring out seven cloth bags with handles. One has a rabbit-in-a-hat design. The other six each have a character from literature printed on the front. It is easy to find decent character pictures, print them on paper or printable fabric and fasten them to the fronts of seven cloth bags. It may not be legal to use the Cat in the Hat, Skippyjon Jones, the Wimpy Kid, Curious George, Captain Underpants, or others. So for this example let's use non-copyrighted animals and pretend they are all classic characters like Pinocchio or Alice in Wonderland.

Suppose you want to motivate children to read one of several classic books at a library show. Show the rabbit-in-the-hat bag and say that one of your favorite books is inside of it, and that you will show it to the audience in a minute. Bring out the other six bags and tell the audience that they each have a book, but that the books and bags got mixed up. Bring out the other six bags and tell the audience that they

each have a book. Show the bags with the Pig, Turtle, Mouse, Bear, Sheep, and Parrot printed on the outside. Now mention that the books and bags got mixed up. The Pig book might be in the Turtle bag or it might be in the Mouse bag, or the Mouse may be in the Pig bag or it might be in the Sheep bag, or the other way 'round. Mention that you have a duplicate of one of the six books and you put it in the rabbit-in-the-hat bag.

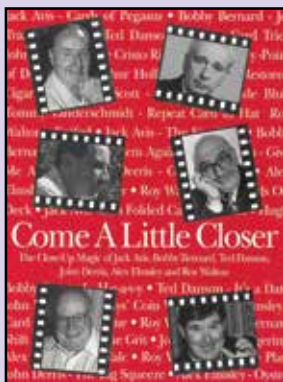
Have six kids come up; each takes a bag. Ask them not to look at the book inside. Stand three on your left and three on your right (Figure 2). Tell them it would be easy to look in the rabbit-in-the-hat bag and then look in all six bags to find the duplicate, but since this is a magic show, perhaps someone in the audience could find the duplicate book by magic. Choose a seventh volunteer to magically find the duplicate book. Using magician's choice have that person choose one bag. Narrow this down in steps, letting the child choose



Figure 2

kids on the left or right side, then taking two of the three bags on that side, and finally handing you one. To close, first have five kids show the books in the bags that were eliminated. Then show the book in the chosen bag, and finally show that the book in the rabbit-in-the-hat bag matches the chosen one. Kids have seen six book characters, they have seen six actual books, and one of them has been magically found to match a prediction book.

Notice how the core element of the magic effect – that of choosing a book – matches the intended message: kids should choose good books to read. This is how you embed your content. Start with a message. Find an effect that simulates the message, and then write a script that makes a clear connection between the message and the effect. Not every effect in every show has to be a learning experience. But the more you add, the better you make your routines. You will enhance your show and increase your worth as a children's entertainer if you Embed Educational Content into your shows. ♦



**Excerpt From:**  
*Come a Little Closer*

**Edited By:**  
John Derris

**Description:**  
Ebook, 106 pages

**Available From:**  
[www.llepub.com](http://www.llepub.com)

I reviewed *Come a Little Closer* in the July 1998 issue of *MAGIC*. Here's what I wrote back then:

"Back in the early 1950s, an enthusiastic group of magic hobbyists would meet on Saturdays in London. They would frequent the magic shops and hang out in nearby cafes, talking magic, swapping moves, and demonstrating their latest creations. This little group published a small booklet in 1953, each member contributing a routine to the publication. This booklet sold quite well, and the members of the group became fairly well known in magic circles. You may recognize a few of the names. The group consisted of Alex Elmsley, Jack Avis, Bobby Bernard, Ted Danson, Roy Walton, Al Koran, John Derris, Arthur Holland, and Tommy Vanderschmidt. L&L Publishing has released an expanded version of the original *Come a Little Closer* booklet that contains new contributions from those in the group who are still involved in magic (which is almost the entire group).

"With a list of contributors that includes some of the cleverest minds in magic, you can well imagine that *Come a Little Closer* contains some fine magic. The emphasis is on close-up magic with cards and coins. I will mention a few of my favorites. Jack Avis offers The Siva Fold, a method for folding a playing card into quarters under the guise of natural actions. He then describes a card to wallet effect using the fold. Ted Danson's Give Me a Ring is a great method for doing the Bank Night effect. Also explained is It's a Date, the trick that started the birthday book/diary craze. I was glad to finally read this effect. The method is a bit cumbersome, but it's a real fooler.

"John Derris contributes some excellent routines. You'll find Alex Elmsley's famous routine Point of Departure here, as well as a diabolical Si Stebbins trick and a funny card counting rhyme. Roy Walton is also represented.

"The final chapter of the book is an essay titled 'What is Wrong with Magic?' The title says it all. You will read this essay and think, 'The author is absolutely right; these are the things that are wrong with magic.' Then you'll get really depressed, because the author of the essay is Oswald Williams, and the essay was written in 1923. In seventy-five [now ninety-one] years almost nothing has changed, and this fact really bums me out."

*Come a Little Closer* is a book that has slipped under the magic radar, and that's a pity. There is fine magic to be found within its pages. For the Ebook Nook excerpts, I've chosen a remarkable ring and shoelace routine by John Derris (based on a prop – Ringo – once sold by Bob McAllister) and a color-changing knives routine by Roy Walton (who is much better known for his exceptional card magic). Both are worth your time. My thanks to L&L Publishing for allowing these excerpts to appear in *M-U-M*. —Michael Close

## STAGGERING BY JOHN DERRIS

This all started with a simple prop sold to me by an American dealer at a British Convention. As he performed it, he just placed a metal ring onto a shoe lace, swung it vigorously to show that it really was on the lace, and then removed it. End of trick!

The method was ingenious: a small, powerful, earth magnet concealed inside the lace, a fake tie onto the lace, and the ring was removed. That was all that was described in the instructions that accompanied the effect.

I played with this for some time and came up with a move whereby the ring could be thrown eighteen inches through the air, only to pass magically onto the lace. The effect was quite stunning. I showed it to Jack Avis who suggested that I publish the item in a magazine, which I did.

Its publication brought a tirade of scorn upon my head from Simon Lovell, who chastised me in print by saying that didn't I realize that the effect was an original put out by Bob McAllister. Firstly – no I didn't, because I've only returned to magic in recent times and had no knowledge of his effect; and secondly – I bought it from the American dealer in good faith without knowing that it was someone else's idea.

However, since that time I developed a full routine with the prop, including the throwing move; it's been big for me when performing close-up in restaurants and at corporate events, as well as puzzling a few magicians. (Ask Piet Forton of Switzerland his reaction when I first showed it to him.)

Anyway, here is the full routine as used by me very successfully now for a couple of years – with apologies to Bob McAllister (and Simon Lovell).

**Required:** I recommend you buy the prop from a dealer advertising the Bob McAllister routine.

I have a striped shoelace of the type used for trainers; they're long and double woven (to allow a magnet to be pushed inside); the striped pattern (mine is a high contrast black and white) conceals any bumps that the magnet hidden inside might reveal.

The magnet is a small, round, earth magnet that is very strong (keep it away from your credit card). This is situated in the center of the lace.

The other requirement is a steel ring (not nickel, which has no magnetic attraction). Mine measures around two inches in diameter and I have had it gold plated. This allows me some byplay and funny lines about being my wife's wedding ring. The other reason for plating it is that being gold, the notion of magnets being used in the routine does not occur to the spectator so readily as if it was silver steel.

**Phase 1:** Ask to have the ring examined and show the lace held at one end by the left hand while the other end is trapped by the left foot and pulled to prove its solidity. The ring is returned.

Place the ring over one end of the lace, which runs between the left first and second fingers with about six inches of the end of the lace hanging down (Figure 1). The right hand goes palm up below the left palm and grasps the lace between the right first and second fingers while the ring is gripped between the right thumb and first finger (Figure 2).

The right hand moves up away from the left hand, gripping the ring tightly and sliding the lace between the fingers. This move causes the short end of the lace to be pulled back through the ring. The right hand continues to move up to the center of the lace, where the magnet can be felt. When you feel that the magnet has

engaged with the ring, open the left fingers and allow the lace to drop, but immediately cover the ring and lace with the open right hand (Figure 3).

The lace is now attached to the ring and can be dropped and swung from side to side by holding the two ends of the lace with the left hand. The magnet will hold the ring in place. This is an adaptation of a move shown to me by Pat Page and published here with his permission, but I believe that the origin of the move goes back to Anverdi.

The ring and lace are now transferred to the right hand and the swinging ring is grasped by the left hand, which is closed into a fist. A magic pass is made, and the ring is removed from the fist, leaving the lace behind.

**Phase 2:** The lace is laid across the open left palm with the magnet resting on the center of the palm. Hold the ring in the right hand, display it, and place the bottom in contact with the magnet inside the lace. Allow the lace to hang between the first and second fingers of the left hand (Figure 4).

Grasp the nearest end of the lace with the right hand, bring it up to the bottom of the ring, and trap it between the left thumb and the ring. With the right fingers pull the end of the lace upwards, retaining the grip with the left thumb and simulating the tying of a knot. In fact, nothing has happened, but it gives the impression of a knot being tied.

Still holding the end of the lace in the right hand, go round the back of the other end of the lace hanging down and bring the end through the loop formed. Now let go of the ring, grasp the two ends of the lace between the left and right fingers and display the ring hanging from the center. Because it is moving, the illusion is of the ring on the lace, knotted

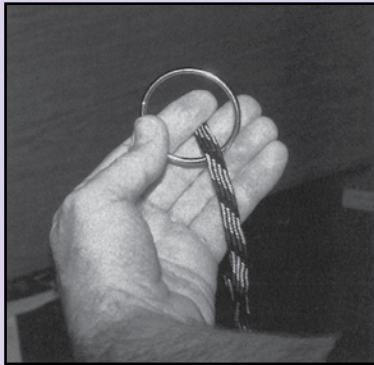


Photo 1

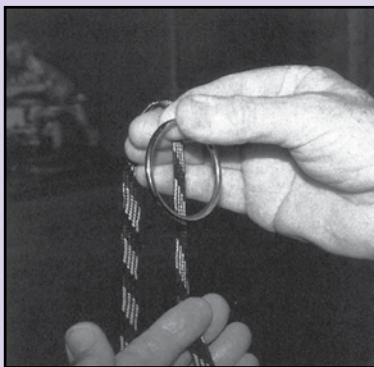


Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

in the center. Pull the ends until a knot is tightened and let go with the left hand, but retain the hold with the right hand. The ring appears to be very fairly knotted on the cord (Figure 5).

Say a magic word, reach up with the right hand, and pluck the ring from the knot, which remains tied in the center of the lace. If you feel this is too obvious, place the ring and lace behind your back with your left hand, then reach behind with your right hand and bring forth the released ring. Either way, you'll get a very positive spectator reaction.

**Phase 3:** Say, "There are three ways to put the ring onto the lace." As you make this remark you drape the lace across your left second finger and thumb with the first finger gripping the lace above so that it doesn't move out of position. The magnet is located in the center between the finger and thumb (Figure 6).

With the right hand, slip the ring over one of the ends of the lace and say, "That's one way." Then slip the ring over the other end saying, "That's the second way." Now say, "There is a third way, hardly worth mentioning." As you say this, you hold the ring in your right hand and strike the lace stretched between your finger and thumb, sliding it along the lace until you feel the magnet (Figure 7). Then pull the ring down with your right hand between your finger and thumb. Grasping the ends of the lace with the left hand, you can let the ring swing freely and even rotate it through 180 degrees to demonstrate that it really is on the lace (Figure 8).

**Phase 4:** This is the final stage in which the ring flies through the air and visibly penetrates the lace held in your left hand – a great finish to a strong piece of magic.

The ring is hung over the right thumb; the lace is displayed

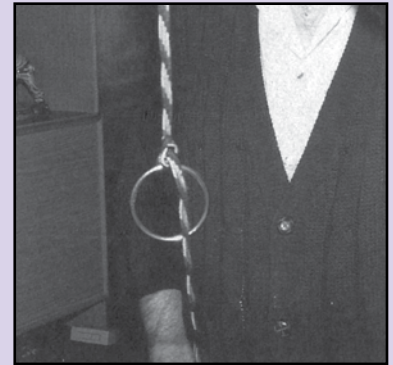


Photo 5



Photo 6

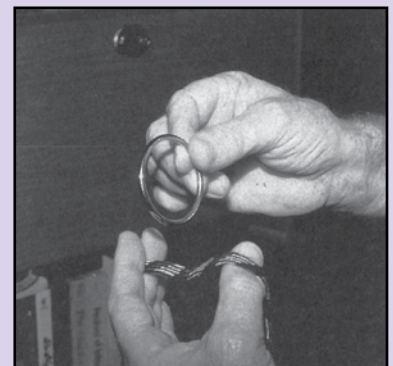


Photo 7

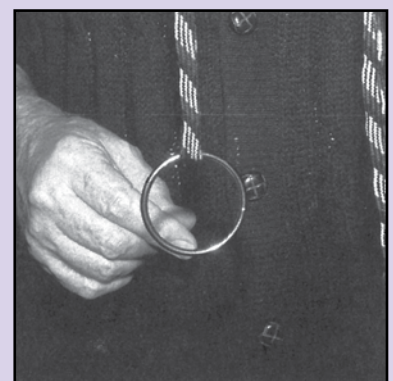


Photo 8

between the fingers of the two hands. The right thumb and first finger grasp the lace where the magnet is located and can be felt inside.

The left hand is outstretched and the cord is laid across the left thumb and between the first and second finger with the right hand, which still grasps the lace and the magnet. The right hand pulls the lace down about twelve inches between the left thumb and first and second fingers to form a loop so that the magnet is located at the bottom of the loop (Figure 9). The left hand holds the loop shoulder high.

The right fingers hold the ring between finger and thumb about fifteen to eighteen inches away from the lace, parallel with the body and level with the bottom of the loop. You now literally throw the ring towards the center of the lace; you aim to hit the loop from above as the ring descends (Figure 10).

The ring hits the lace; the magnet attracts the ring and holds it in position. The lace swings under the impact of the ring, which conceals the fact that the ring is hanging under the lace. The illusion of the ring passing magically onto the lace is perfect (Figure 11).

The right hand grasps the ends of the lace; you allow the ring to fall into the open left hand, which is then closed around it. The right hand now pretends to pull the lace free of the ring with the aid of the left thumb. The lace and ring are now separate. This move is also used after each of the previous phases to separate the ring from the lace just prior to commencing the next phase.

Well, that's Staggering; it has been very good to me. I hope that you will also find success with this quite staggering ring routine.

## KNIFED BY ROY WALTON

**Effect:** Both sides of two knives are shown to be white. The audience is asked to choose one knife; whichever is chosen is taken at the fingertips of the right hand. The chosen knife is rubbed on the back of the open left hand and the color changes to yellow.

The left hand (which holds the white knife) is then closed into



Photo 9

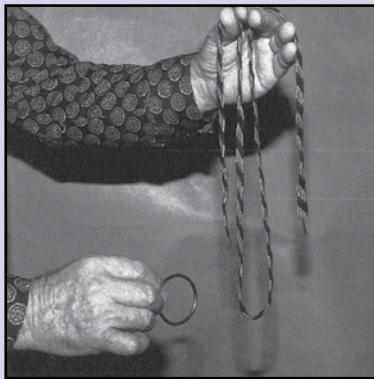


Photo 10



Photo 11

a fist; the yellow knife is pushed into it. The hand is then turned over, opened, and the yellow knife is shown to have changed to red; the other knife is still white.

The red knife is then taken in the right hand and both sides are shown. The left hand (with the white knife) goes to the pocket while the right hand closes into a fist over the red knife. The white knife now travels from the left pocket to the right hand. The right hand is opened and the knife shown to be white. The audience presumes the knife in the left hand to be red but this is shown not to be the case because the knives have again changed places and the white knife is shown to have returned to the left hand and the red knife to the right hand.

Both hands are again closed over the knives and the transposition is repeated. The right hand is opened to reveal the white knife and the audience is asked what color knife is in the left hand. On receiving the reply "Red," the hand is opened and the knife is shown to be green.

The vanish of the red knife is explained by stating that it slipped into the pocket; both hands go to the pockets with the knives. The left hand comes out empty and right hand brings out both the red and white knives.

The white knife is taken in the left hand and the hand closed into a fist. The red knife is then pushed into the lower side of the fist and the white knife is pulled out from the upper side; this is shown white on both sides and is placed in the pocket. The left hand is then opened and the remaining knife also shown to be white; this knife is rolled on the table or given for examination.

**Requirements:** In right trouser pocket – one genuine knife, both sides white; one faked knife, one side white, one side yellow. In left trouser pocket – one faked knife, one side white, one side green; one faked knife, one side white, one side red.

**Routine:** The right and left hands both go to the trouser pockets and bring out a faked knife which is shown to be white on both sides by one of the familiar paddle moves. The white side of each faked knife can be roughened or nicked to make it distinguishable by touch, or the hands can be brought out of the pockets closed, held up with backs to the audience and opened slightly with the knives in the thumb palm position to allow the performer to check that the white sides are to the front (Figure 1) and if necessary to make the necessary reverse while lowering the hands.

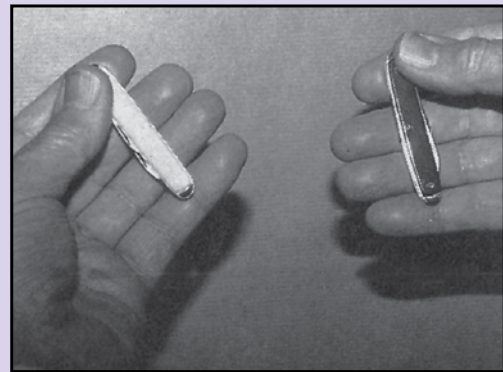


Photo 1

Having shown the knives to be white, ask the audience which shall be used; whichever knife is chosen is taken at the fingertips of the right hand and rubbed on the back of the left hand still held palm up with its knife exposed. When the right hand knife is

hidden by the back of the left hand it is turned over and brought out to show the color has changed to yellow.

While showing the knife to be yellow on both sides, close the left hand at the same time, reversing the knife. The yellow knife is pushed into the left hand behind the knife already there. The right forefinger rubs the back of the left hand, which is then turned over and opened to show that the yellow knife has changed to red.

The red knife is taken at the right fingertips and shown red on both sides; while this is being done the left hand goes to the left pocket and exchanges the white knife for the knife already in the pocket, the hand remaining in the pocket. The performer now states he will make the knife in the pocket change places with the knife in the right hand. The right hand is turned over and opened to reveal the white knife; the hand is then closed again, reversing the knife in the process. The closed left hand is brought out of the pocket and – after checking the color as detailed earlier to ensure the knife will show white when the hand is opened – the spectator is asked what color the knife is in the hand. On receiving the answer “Red,” the performer explains that the knives have again changed places and the knife in the left hand is shown to be white and that the red knife is back in the right hand.

State that you will repeat the transposition; close both hands reversing both knives. The right hand is opened to show a white knife; the spectator asked what color knife is in the left hand. On receiving the reply “Red,” the knife is shown to be green.

Whilst explaining that the vanish of the red knife was accomplished by slipping it secretly into the pocket, both hands go to the pockets. The left hand leaves its knife in the pocket and comes out empty; the right hand reverses its knife and also picks up the genuine knife and is withdrawn from the pocket showing a white and a red knife. The audience believes the red knife has just been removed from the pocket when actually it is the white knife that was removed.

The genuine knife is taken in the left hand; the hand is closed to a fist and turned over. The red knife is shown on both sides and is pushed into the lower side of the left fist. The red knife is reversed in the hand, pulled out from the upper side, and shown as white on both sides and placed in the pocket.

To the audience the effect is that the red knife has been exchanged for the white that was already in the left hand, but the left hand is now opened to show that the white knife is still there. This knife can be rolled on the table for examination. ♦

## The Society of American Magicians CONTEST OF MAGIC

Philadelphia – July 1-4, 2015

Probably Warm – Probably Crowded – Definitely Exciting!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you and good luck!

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

# Illusions of Grandeur

by David Seebach

Awesome!

That's Just Perfect!

(Be sure to read all the way to the end.)

If you believe that the only thing that separates you taking a bow after your solo show and you taking a bow with a lovely partner after executing the Asrah Levitation is the thousands of dollars that any major stage illusion costs today, you would be mistaken. I am of the opinion that any reasonably motivated magician, earning moderate income from performing, can budget and save enough to obtain a big illusion feature.

It's just that the initial cost may be the cheapest aspect of adding illusions to your repertoire. The real cost comes from actually performing with them, moving them from venue to venue, and storing them.

But let's be reasonable; the average fellow probably can store an illusion or two in his garage. The vehicle you already own may be sufficient to transport the modest illusions that disassemble. And, if there is a significant other in your life, you may already have the lady to saw in halves.

However, most magicians who favor illusions quickly run out of garage space, need to own a vehicle that's really a cargo van and not a minivan, and require more than just one onstage assistant.

And, unless you live in Utah and practice polygamy, you likely have only one other significant other.

"You're gonna need a bigger cast."

Like the bigger boat they needed in *Jaws*, some illusions require more than a single assistant. A wife or girlfriend might assist for free, but competent, talented assistants need to be compensated, and that means a payroll and a cost every time you wheel out the Costume Trunk or the Mis-Made Girl.

The moment you write a check to someone who has assisted you, you have become an employer; don't let anyone tell you different. That other person is not an independent contractor (as you are) unless he/she also does the same sort of work for other magicians and sets his or her own fees (as you do). You'll need to comply with both federal and state regulations and file quarterly returns on wages paid and money withheld. (And paying in cash is not an option for avoiding this paperwork, because it's okay to operate that way. But you still have to comply with all the rules.)

If you're committed, though, you'll be able to do all of this fairly easily. Stay current and never think that ignorance of any of these requirements is a defense.

## A Great Novelty Illusion

An illusion that will require multiple onstage assistants (seen and not exactly seen) is Stretching a Woman. Here's another invention of the prolific P.T. Selbit, who called it the Elastic Lady. In its original incarnation this was truly a very big stage illusion. It was a square device with a vertical opening at its middle and four

angled openings that reached the prop's four corners. It resembled a giant "X" plus the added vertical slit. The woman was placed inside after the big front doors were opened. Her head was visible, coming through the vertical opening. Her hands and feet came out through the other four slits.

I'll guess that she had to originally been sitting somehow since, if she wasn't, she'd be levitating at this point, right? I have never seen this version of the act presented.

The magician would then move the assistant's head up and down and extend her hands and feet to the outer limits of the prop. I'm sure many *M-U-M* readers have seen images of this design; it's on magicians' posters of the early twentieth century. The act was accomplished by having two additional assistants concealed at the very edges or sides of the prop; their hands and feet were seen. I have no idea how effective this illusion was. It all looks a bit goofy to me and the size of that prop was anything but deceptive.

About thirty years ago, Owen Magic reinvented this concept with a very clever, and much more practical, prop. The prop is a seven-sided, upright enclosure that's mounted on a deceptive base. It hinges open, exactly in halves (yes, three-and-a-half sides per half!) to allow the assistant to enter. There are vertical openings for her head and her hands. It's then up to the performer to come up with a routine in which these visible – and very real – body parts move in a manner that is anatomically impossible.



Stretching A Woman illusion

This design is practical because the entire prop folds up, almost like a road map, in a way to make it easily transportable. This seven-foot two-inch prop fits in an ATA case measuring fifteen by forty by forty-four inches. It weighs 245 pounds. A neighbor saw me rehearse and pack this unit one time and remarked that he didn't know what was more impressive: the illusion's effect or getting it all in that case!

I think I might have purchased the first one built. As regular readers know, I do not like to merely "shove a gal in a box" for entertainment. I had to justify this bizarre form of torture. We decided it would be an exercise machine that was supplied with one of those ubiquitous aerobic programs. It would be called the

“Magicize Machine.”

When the illusion arrived, my then-future wife Lisa started to figure out what could and couldn't be done with it. A hidden assistant (from the clever base) would provide hands for most of the routine. We decided that it was okay for my wife to not put her hands out at the beginning at all. The other girl would get hers out. But I was insistent that we make a switch during the routine so that at its end when the “heat” was on, we'd be one-hundred-percent clean as the machine opened up.

We figured out a pattern of both hands going down and then the head going up, followed by a reverse in which the hands went up to the top and the head went all the way down (always eliciting a strong reaction). This was followed by the head and hands returning to center and the head being twisted a full 360 degrees (very audible audience response here, too). Finally, the head remained in the center, but one hand went all the way up and the other all the way down. The hands return to the normal position and the machine is opened.

But, we weren't done thinking creatively about this prop. My long-time onstage partner, Peggy Peterson (she calls herself the “Honorary Mrs. Seebach”), provided her voice to the audio track for this effect. Accompanied by some background music with a strong beat, Peggy, as Bunny, directs the onstage assistant in how to use/work the Magicize Machine. Peggy's delivery is over the top and way too energetic: “Lookin' good, fitness fans!” and “Do you feel that stretch in your neck? I knew you would.”

Next, we added some live sound effects. I obtained a slide whistle so that my stage manager could add impact to the head and hands going up or down. Another instrument from the Spike Jones family, a ratchet, was obtained to punch up the head rotation. These live effects add much to the routine.

But, we still weren't done. The assistant interrupts me at the outset of this effect: “David, David, look what I just got!” I try to dismiss her, but she's adamant that we should do the “newest, latest” workout right now. She points out she's dressed for it: leotard tights, athletic shoes, and head and wrist bands.

The big prop is rolled on. So, count with me: There's the assistant who has interrupted me and will perform the routine, the hidden assistant who will provide hands and hidden help for the big surprise, one or two outside assistants who position the prop and open and close it, plus an offstage person with those instruments. Did your mental cash register ring for each person on the payroll? It should have.

This is a funny illusion and it's a novelty. Most people have never seen it. We get several minutes out of it and it's all fast-paced. And that big surprise? Bunny's voice on the recording says, “You're all done with your magicize workout. Open the machine and go out and paint the town red!” When the machine opens up, the assistant is now attired in a long, elegant red dress; she has heels on and is wearing a fur stole around her shoulders!

I originally bought this prop when Alan Zagorsky was operating his Alan & Associates business. Owen Magic Supreme, minus Alan, built it; although it worked perfectly, it was missing the superior Owen craftsmanship, attention to detail, and elegant appearance. When Alan later took over Owen Magic, he immediately produced this prop with his special flair. When I saw one of them, I immediately knew that I wanted one of his models. Within a few months I sold my original prop and bought the one I use today.

At a recent series of October performances we wanted to include this effect, but discovered that its height wouldn't clear a ceiling obstruction on a temporary stage we were on at the

venue. But we'd worked hard on rehearsing it with new ladies in the roles, so we decided to roll it around the stage and perform it on the floor. The front tables saw this grand stage illusion in a close-up format. It worked just fine and the accompanying pictures are from that unusual situation.

The Owen prop uses bristles (like those found on a janitorial push broom) to line both sides of the three vertical openings. It's not an issue for the hands, but it is uncomfortable on

the assistant's neck, especially during repeated rehearsals. Make sure the woman is in a turtleneck garment.



## Several Random Comments

I think that the *Masters of Illusion* program on the CW network has been good for magic. I wish the producers (and I am *not* referring to Gay Blackstone here) didn't have to clip almost every artist's TV time down to seconds. The magicians become interchangeable and the impact is diminished.

Much better is *Penn & Teller's Fool Me*, also on the CW. Each magician is given plenty of time and Penn finds something positive to say about every one of them. I think it's the best magic show I've seen on TV in a long while.

Finally, let's all agree that America's Grand Canyon, the Great Wall of China, and the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean are all awesome. But saying, “Awesome,” when a spectator counts seven cards from a pack for you doesn't really compare. And, when you ask that helper to cut the deck, don't say “Perfect!” You are *not* using these words correctly, and you *are* demonstrating that you really have nothing to say. It's just verbal garbage. Sir Lawrence Olivier was a great actor, but he didn't perform without a script; you shouldn't either. *Write* your patter and listen to yourself (make a recording of your show so you can hear *exactly* what you said onstage). I cringe at most of the patter I hear.

Most of you reading this can execute your magical effects competently. Few of you can actually *present* them and *entertain* a public audience. You don't need more tricks; you need to perform the ones you already have with much greater verbal skills.

And, I feel safe in saying that the above comments are not just my opinion; they're cold, hard facts. ♦

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Photos by Kathy Prince

# MAGIC – TAYLOR'D FOR YOU!

By Deborah Martin



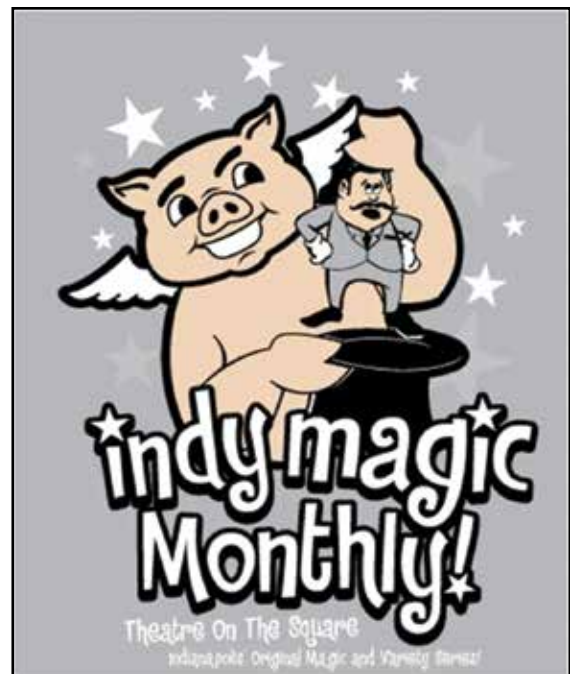
Photo by Spring

“India-noplace” and “Naptown” have both been used to describe Indianapolis, Indiana. Thanks to city planners and cultural benefactors, Indianapolis is no longer the town in the middle of a cornfield. Visitors have found the city teeming with a variety of arts and entertainment, thanks in part to individuals like Taylor Martin; his life’s goal is to make Indianapolis the Midwest Mecca for magical arts. “Taylor Martin is one of those people whom every city should have,” says Tracy Forner, co-host of *Indy Style*, a morning show on Channel 8 in Indianapolis.

Now in its seventh year, Taylor Martin’s *Indy Magic Monthly* is located in the heart of the theatrical district of Massachusetts Avenue in downtown Indy. *IMM* presents local, national, and international magic acts in a 120-seat arena theater. Audiences enjoy local performers such as Dan Dygert, Glamente, Doug Jave, and Patrick Smith. National and international acts have included Eugene Burger, ICE McDonald, Jeff McBride, Jay Scott Berry, and Vincent Hedan. Every month is a different show. Magicians extraordinaire, such as RanDShine or Francis Menotti, may be working on something new. Others may find that Indianapolis is on their route to another show. *IMM*’s mission statement is to bring a variety of entertainment to Indy and to provide a friendly venue in which magicians can perform. It’s a real theater with lights and sound; there are no interruptions from servers during the performance. Patrick Thernes (aka Sir Pat-Trick) has found a home with *IMM*: “Taylor Martin has created a safe place for the performers with *Indy Magic Monthly*. When I was starting out, he allowed me to do my first real stage show there. He gives you the artistic freedom and the support that a performer needs. As I tell Taylor, ‘I’ll work for you anytime.’” But it hasn’t always been the well-oiled machine it appears today. There have been growing pains as Taylor learned how to be a producer.

Excited to have Theatre on the Square (TOTS) agree to rent him their theaters during down periods, Taylor set about promoting the show, printing T-shirts, and buying advertisements for what was then called *Indy Monthly Magic*. Just days before the first show opened on April 1, 2008, he received a

cease-and-desist order. A well-established publication already had the name *Indianapolis Monthly*, and they believed that people would think that the magazine was sponsoring a magic show. The show hadn’t opened and it had already hit a major obstacle. After a simple name change and the absorption of the cost of promotional materials he couldn’t use, *Indy Magic Monthly* launched on April Fool’s Day as planned. If you go to [indymagicmonthly.com](http://indymagicmonthly.com), you’ll see Porcini the magical flying pig as the show’s mascot. Taylor thought that when pigs fly, there would be a show. Pigs do fly, as it turns out.



Years ago there had been Illusions, a magic dinner theater in Carmel, Indiana, that had been well-known and loved for

many years. After it closed, the local magicians wanted performance venues. Taylor believed that someone should arrange for a show at which they could perform. He called on several of them to help open the show. For a few years the audiences were small, but mighty appreciative, and TOTS provided the sixty-three seat cabaret stage for *IMM*. Every month it was a different stage set up: “hotel room” sets, empty stages, and provocative scenery were some of the surprises magicians found themselves performing in and around. The most useful set was a “porch” scene, which provided award-winning Ryan Siebert the opportunity to produce a card on the “outside” of a window. The audiences gasped at that one. One show in the cabaret had three, big-box illusion acts all in one evening. It was a bit claustrophobic, but the show was spectacular. As audiences grew, the main stage at TOTS became, more often than not, the setting for the magicians. Sometimes the stage set was tiered. The performers would use the stairs or the upper tier for appearances, or the set furniture became their tables. These magicians didn’t know exactly what they were in for until they saw the stage, but their impromptu use of the facility was impressive to the audiences.

As a producer, Taylor Martin has learned that no matter how sound the planning, uncontrollable things can occur. Weather in Indiana is iffy at best. A slight snow may keep audiences away. Forget election nights; consequently, *IMM* doesn’t have a program in November, but has shows the first and last Tuesday in October instead. In 2012, Francis Menotti was delayed due to a hurricane that had crippled Philadelphia. Taylor had to cancel *IMM* that night, which had been dubbed the “Halloween” show. Francis had some special magic planned for that night. Francis would eventually do his “Halloween” show the following March. As Taylor rationalized, “If they can have Christmas in July, then we can have Halloween in March.”

He tries to make lemonade out of lemons when possible, but sometimes that’s not possible. Mass Ave (as the street is affectionately called) can be busy with touring companies or nearby sports events. This can affect whether people want to deal with occasional sparse parking. He’s learned that young performers normally travel with their families, so hotel arrangements are definitely a must. Otherwise, a single performer may opt to stay

at Chez Tay (as we like to call home). Because TOTS has the two stages, in the earlier days he would sometimes discover at the last minute that he had the small stage instead of the larger one, which could affect what his performers had planned to do.

(Remember the three, big-box illusion acts?) Francis Menotti offered these thoughts: “Many magicians and lovers of the art dream of producing a weekly or monthly public show, until they realize the thankless, frustrating, grueling mountain of insanity that awaits them at every phone call and behind every black box theater door. Fortunately for those of us who have had the pleasure of working with Taylor and his partner in absurdity, Deb, the experience of bringing unique live performances to unlikely audiences is always a rewarding experience. Magic – good magic – is alive and well in the Midwest, hugely due to the vision, passion, and craziness of Taylor Martin.” Normally self-deprecating, Taylor is grateful for his guests being so appreciative. *IMM* has been fortunate to have such consummate professionals who are willing to improvise and do what it takes to make the evenings truly magical for the audience. When the S.A.M. convention comes to Indianapolis in 2016, *IMM* will celebrate its one-hundredth show.

He’s hoping that compeers will be able to attend the July show prior to the convention, since it will be a very special evening for *IMM*.

Audiences at *IMM* have a lot to do with how the performers feel about the show. Each month it’s a different set of performers. Because of the variety of magical styles, the audience has come to expect things they haven’t seen before. Because there are many repeat patrons, a magician has to respect that he or she can’t do the same out-of-the-package magic tricks. Patrons are accustomed to seeing personally created illusions that haven’t been done at *IMM* previously. Taylor has had to pass on

some magicians who are good in their own right, but who just wouldn’t be unique enough for the show. I remember when we saw a nationally known traveling magic show with some spectacular performers. However, I couldn’t help but think that I had seen that caliber of show before at *IMM*! *IMM* is also a great starting point for appreciative performers getting a start with their show. “The monthly magic show is what jump-started my career...I got to be around other magicians (at Derby City Magic in Louisville) on a regular basis, who like me, wanted to



**Taylor as Rodney the Younger**



**Rice Bowls as Rodney the Younger - 2006 Fringe Fundraiser  
Photo credit: Beverly Roach**

be ‘workers,’” says Cody Clark. “We wanted to practice performing our material in front of a real audience.”

The IMM audience members are welcoming and patient and have high respect for the performer for what he or she is attempting to do. Though they appreciate the highly polished act, they love seeing an illusion that is in its beginning stage of presentation. They are very encouraging that way. Some of the children have never seen a live performance of any kind and one can hear their inability to keep their surprise to themselves as they witness the sleights and illusions within inches of their seats. *IMM* allows the performers an opportunity to get audience feedback, too. There are several Assembly 31 and I.B.M. Ring 10 members who regularly attend *IMM*. One can see their obvious thrill at seeing their favorites perform and to speak to them afterwards. And if you can take your eyes off the stage, you can observe the delight in Taylor’s face from the sidelines as he watches the audience participation in the show.

Taylor makes no secret that *IMM* is a low-dough operation.

It could not exist if it wasn’t for all of the artistic and supportive people behind the scenes. Members of his production team are paid in tickets to the shows as trade-outs for their work. He’s apologetic that he can’t pay his performers as much as they deserve, but he tries to supplement it by providing lodging and a great venue. Every show is videotaped and a copy is available to the performers to use as they wish. His goal is to encourage the I-65 circuit with other producers so that magicians can work

Louisville, Indy, and Chicago, all within a few hours of each other. He also offers the magician the option of presenting a lecture following the show, which can make the stop in Indy more lucrative. “The great thing about having a lecture for the magicians afterwards is that the magician doesn’t have to redo the performance for the sake of the lecture. The attendees have already seen the show; now they’re ready to hear the lecture,” says Taylor.

I’m often asked what it’s like being married to Taylor Martin. I reply that it is a lot like living with Sybil: I never know who he is until he puts his hat or wig on. His voice and demeanor change with the donning of a hat, a wig, a shoe, or heels. The first time I saw Taylor was in an Indiana Central College (now University of Indianapolis) production of *Spoon River Anthology*. He played eleven different characters. Little did we know that much later in his life he would be performing various characters as a career.

Taylor became acquainted with magic through his father, Jack Martin, who had dabbled with a few magical illusions. Taylor’s curiosity rekindled his dad’s interest in magic. Jack had a job with Wurlitzer, which had a store in New York City. He bought Taylor what he calls “real” illusions from Tannen’s

Magic Shop. Taylor performed his first magic show when he was six years old; he continued performing off and on throughout his college years. He graduated with a speech and theatre major. Magic often was part of the theatrical performances he was involved in, but it wasn’t until he found himself unemployed that he threw himself into practicing close-up magic. He was able to work for tips at a local night club and earned his licks that way, performing under some of the least amicable of conditions. I remember him explain, for example, when a drunk vomited into his magic case while he was doing close-up. Meanwhile, he had met Del Close of Chicago’s Second City, who encouraged Taylor to develop his improvisational talent. Del’s coaching made Taylor a stronger, more confident performer.

Having a flair for the theatrical, Taylor accepted a job as magician at the Renaissance Faire in Thorntown, Indiana. This led to a friend inviting him to do magic at a historical fair at Fort Pitt in Pittsburgh. Taylor borrowed pieces of a Colonial era costume from his friend and went to Fort Pitt with some

trepidation – it was a rainy, frigid weekend. Hardly more than forty paying visitors came to the event.

Vowing never to do that again, he unexpectedly met a gentleman from Somerset, Pennsylvania, who said he was in charge of a little fair called Mountain Craft Days. He invited Taylor to perform the next fall. Once again, the weather became his nemesis. It rained before the fair and it rained out the first day of the event. Pre-cell phone days as they were, no one called to let Taylor

know that the first day had been canceled. However, the next two days were dry and the benches made of felled logs and cinder blocks were full. He was a hit. He was able to make some very encouraging new friends and they invited him to return the next year. Mountain Craft Days is where Rodney the Younger was born. To this day, Rodney is one of the strongest of his magic personalities. Donning his tricorne, the Cockney accent pours out; before you know it, you’re learning about the history of magical entertainment in the Colonies.

Twenty-five years at Mountain Craft Days has made Rodney a beloved character at that event. He’s now entertaining the children of the first children who were in his audiences from the beginning. He’s part of the Somerset family. Their joy is his joy; their pain, his pain. When United Airlines Flight 93 crashed at Shanksville, only a few miles from Somerset, the lives of the people in that town were changed forever. The influx of government and media personnel steamrolled over the quiet, innocent lives they had had. One of Rodney’s youngsters told him that he had been the last good thing that had happened to them prior to the crash. Many of the people of the area had been first responders. The bucolic community would thereafter be shrouded by the 9/11 crash.



**Andrea Merlyn at Zydeco’s restaurant - 2013**

**Photo credit: Deborah Martin**

Through Taylor's network of newly found friends at Somerset, he learned of more opportunities for performing magic at historical events. He advertised in *Smoke and Fire*, a magazine for re-enactors and historical event planners. Before long he developed a season of events and fairs from Illinois to New York State, from Hamilton, Ontario, to Wetumpka, Alabama. We often joke at how he plays all the "big" venues: Johnstown, New York, Eton, Ohio... (He "opened" for Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Douglas Debate in Springfield, Illinois. I saw him on C-SPAN's coverage of the debate! You've hit it big when you're on C-SPAN. Take that, *America's Got Talent!*)

Nonetheless, Taylor has carved a niche for himself in the historical arena. No microphones, no auditorium, hay bales for seats, working nearly in the round, and cannons blasting in the background. Weather doesn't stop his performing for those brave enough to attend the fair. At a small local event such as the Mooresville Victorian Christmas, Professor Cecil Rodney strolls the sidewalks entertaining the dedicated audiences who brave the December chill or sleet. Laura Staten of the MVC affirms, "Taylor makes history come to life. His original and delightfully entertaining performance makes our Victorian celebration a bit more authentic."

Rain or snow, oppressive heat, or perfect weather days, he's there, like all the other re-enactors, serving the public with mission-like zeal to bring history alive in an entertaining way. He prides himself on doing only illusions that were done or very possibly done in the historical periods he does: Rodney the Elder (Elizabethan), Rodney the Younger (North American frontier/Colonial), and Professor Cecil Rodney (pre-Civil War). Some of his equipment is irreplaceable. He tirelessly walks miles in the event between performances doing the ballyhoo for his show or for other's shows as well. The occasional visitor begs for a trick since she missed his last show of the day. So he does. He's an avid reader of magic history, and he's discovered



**Alabama Frontier Days in Wetumpka, AL: November 2013**  
**Photo credit: Deborah Martin**

that audiences enjoy his storytelling as much as they enjoy the magic. Consequently, he's become the go-to person locally for historical information. Taylor's the last person to claim he's an expert; in the past he would rather defer to Harry Riser, the late Frank Dailey, or others who've come before him. He has come to realize that the torch is being passed to him, though he's a bit reluctant to accept being the vessel for historical information. Much like his zeal to make Indy the magic capital of the world, Taylor understands that keeping the history of the art alive is necessary.

Taylor is a twenty-eight year active member in Harry Riser Assembly 31. Currently he is president. He's excited that Robert Sode, Steve Spence, and Jack Wiegler have increased membership in the S.Y.M. *Indy Magic Monthly* has been an effective tool in being able to promote the local assembly. Youngsters who are fascinated with magic at the show are very receptive to hearing about the local meetings. Taylor's goal is eventually to have the SYMers "work" the lobby or serve as stagehands in order to apprentice with the *IMM* performers. It's a great "classroom" for young people to see the importance of the performance of the trick over the mechanics of the trick.

As part of his involvement with S.A.M., Taylor has developed a lecture titled "Be Yourselves," a session devoted to creating a stage character and establishing a stage presence. It's his way of putting his college degree to use, but he also sees stagecraft as being an essential part of a magician's performance. The persona is as much of the illusion as the magic is. Mark Presley Hawkins commented that Taylor is "...a wonderful creator in magic and (he) goes out of (his) way to help people and give advice." It's not so much the illusion, but the verve with which it is done. His creation of various characters has stemmed from certain illusions that make better sense if done by a certain character. One of his modern effects is the Pom-Pom Stick. The magician tugs strings and pom-poms move up and down. But what's the purpose? Taylor makes it a baby's toy, puts on his oversized baby bib, and "Baby Taylor" performs the trick. Stage characterization fleshes out his illusions and makes the performance memorable. Mark Sparks of Triangle Talent had booked Rodney the Younger to perform the duration of the Ohio State Fair. Rodney would definitely be unique in a modern venue like that. But as Mark says, "Taylor's an original. He doesn't concern



**Taylor performs Gypsy Cups as Enid Breation (Drunk girl). Photo by Beverley Roach**

himself with the latest trends in magic. Instead, he concentrates on his character development and what works for him. I can't wait to see what...well, 'who' he comes up with next!"

Taylor, to me, is not just the name he goes by; it's also a noun. He's a multi-faceted human being who is difficult to label. Taylor is Taylor. Like a good wine, it has taken years to develop into what he is today. His more controversial side, which very often makes people uneasy, is his proclivity for dressing in women's clothes. I have to admit that my only experience with this prior to my meeting Taylor was with Milton Berle and Corporal Klinger. Had I been exposed to seamier examples, I probably would have run the other direction. I didn't, and I'm glad I didn't. I believe there are others who are glad they didn't as well. I don't think there's a magic convention dealer room where Andrea Merlyn doesn't make an appearance. She's been the life of some of the convention parties. She's outspoken and witty and performs tricks – magic tricks – of her own.

From the personality of Andrea, other characters have sprung: Shammy Bay Fakker, whose magic is based on television scam advertisements; Drunk Girl (every performer's most dreaded audience member); and Esmerelda, Gypsy Queen of Magic. Though Taylor would much rather perform as Andrea, it's Esmerelda who has emerged as his most requested female persona. She was born out of a request to do something a bit different for a king's banquet at one of the Ren Faires Rodney the Elder was doing. Rodney wasn't needed at this banquet, but a gypsy would fit the bill.

A story that Taylor loves to relate concerns Esmerelda's performing a broken and restored necklace for a little volunteer who happened to be the daughter of one of the event's chairpersons. The child was so wrapped up in the performance that the next day she proudly showed everyone the necklace that the gypsy lady had magically presented to her. One of the people she showed it to was Rodney the Elder. Impressed with her delight with the necklace, Rodney asked about how good of a magician this Esmerelda was. The little girl said with great conviction, "Master Magician, you're pretty good. But that gypsy was a lot better!"

Taylor Martin and his cast of characters have performed all over the continent. He's performed magic off-Broadway; he worked with Alan Head and Ryan Siebert in Indianapolis's Super Bowl Village; he's performed illusions in two fetish conventions in Las Vegas and New York City; and he was invited to make a presentation on the history of magic prior to the *Masters of Illusion* performance in Indy. One opportunity that has made a difference in the magic scene in Indy is the magic dinner theater at the Propylaeum, a restored Victorian mansion that is now a small convention space/tea room. Several weekends a month Taylor and several of the local magicians provide table magic before dinner and an hour stage show following dessert.

Taylor is deeply involved in the Indianapolis Theatre Fringe Festival, held the last two weeks of August. Having been captivated by the activities of the original festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, Taylor jumped at the chance to be in the Festival in Indianapolis. For eight of the ten years, Andrea Merlyn, the Queen of Magic (as Penn Jillette dubs her) found her venue with the Fringe. Andrea became a very recognizable face among Fringe performers and audiences. With the zeal of the Rodneys at their fairs, Andrea combed Mass Ave handing out promo postcards and drumming up her show. Never breaking character, she's the social butterfly on the Avenue. Over the years, more magic acts have presented at the Fringe, demonstrating that there's

a hungry audience for magical entertainment. Out of Taylor's participation in the Fringe, the Winter Magic Festival was born. Fringe Executive Director Pauline Moffat asked Taylor to get performers together for the first event. Though small at the onset, it has been steadily finding its audience. Now in its fifth year, the 2015 WMF will welcome FISM participants to the stage. Taylor has been proud to be part of this opportunity over the years to bring high-caliber magic to Indianapolis.

I remember seeing a book about Taylor's hero Frank Zappa, titled *No Commercial Potential*. I often think of that title and how Zappa never really received wider audience acceptance. Much like Zappa's less palatable lyrics hampering his other work from getting air play, Taylor's never pretending to be anything other than who or what he is may have hampered his commercial acceptance. However, those fortunate enough to have seen one of his performances go away having been thoroughly entertained. "If you see Taylor, get to know him!" remarks S.A.M. convention contest chairman Paul Critelli. "You can find him at magic conventions telling jokes, performing, capturing hidden (and not so hidden) glances, and most of all, helping his Brothers and Sisters. He is incapable of saying no when asked for a favor." People who know him appreciate his loyalty and honesty.

Whether it's at *IMM* or during one of his private shows, Taylor makes sure that his audience's magical experience is one for a lifetime. ♦

## PENN JILLETTE ON TAYLOR MARTIN

Someone else will write about Taylor's love of magic. Someone else will write about his love of characters, totally inhabiting his drag character and his various historical characters. But I don't really think much about any of that when I think of Taylor. I've seen only a very small amount of his magic, and although I've socialized with his female alter ego many times, she never talked about herself or magic with me.

Taylor and I talk about Frank Zappa. Yeah, once in a while politics or art come up in passing, and even a bit of magic and gender politics, but it always seems to come back to Zappa with us. We both love Zappa in all his forms and styles – his music, his philosophy, his comedy, and his importance. I don't care how great and rich Taylor's characters are; the only thing I want to hear him do is his Zappa impersonation. He has the voice and style nailed.

When Taylor does a magic show in the character of Frank Zappa, then, and only then, will Taylor and I really talk magic. I love Taylor, and when you hang with him, make sure you ask him to do his Zappa.

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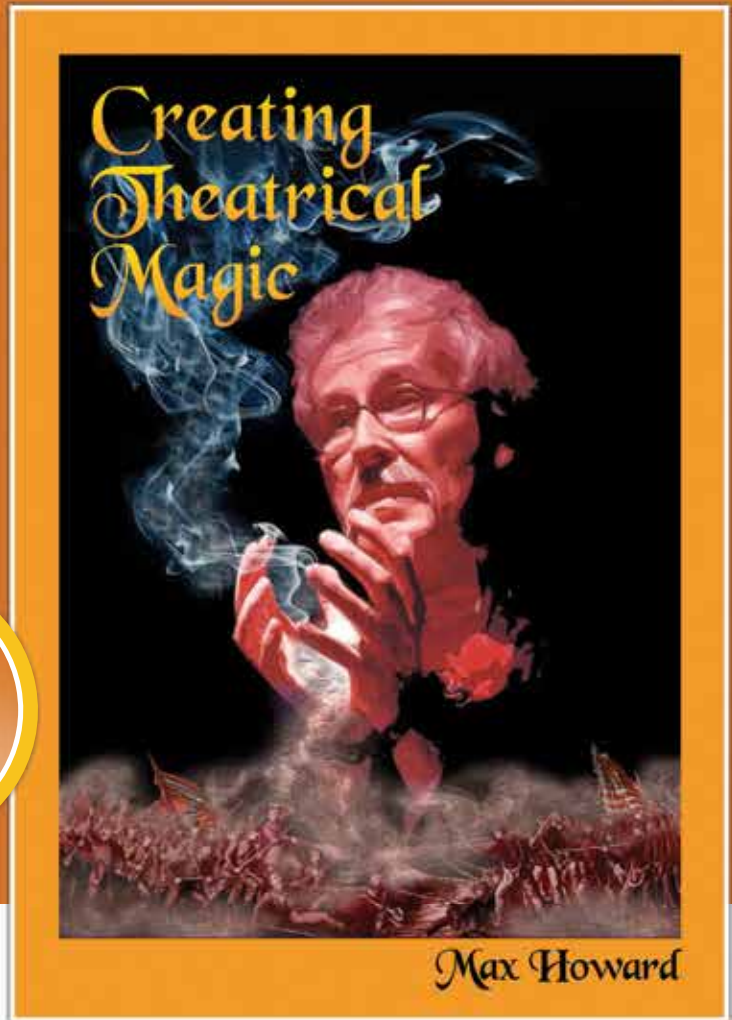
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# HIT THE ROAD

WITH SCOTT ALEXANDER, PUCK,  
JENNY ALEXANDER, AND ADAM ACE

## HITTING THE ROAD

Over the past eleven months, I have given you what I have found to be the ins and outs of hitting the road with your show. We have covered everything from packing smartly, to getting through the airport and customs with ease, effortlessly trouping your sound and equipment, and showing up to the gig looking fresh and feeling good. But even armed with all this knowledge, perhaps you haven't made the decision to actually go for it and take your show on the road. Well, it's time to decide! In fact, the word "decide" comes from Latin and means to "cut off." If you are on the fence about taking your show out there, you have to cut off all the indecision, doubt, and insecurity about not being ready and just go ahead and hit the road. Puck, Adam, Jenny, and I all had a moment in our careers when we decided to go for it. Perhaps you can find some inspiration in our "Hit the Road" moments.

## THE MAGIC OF PUCK – HOPEFULLY

As Puck relates, his "Hit the Road" moment went down like this: "I finally thought I'd made it when I was asked to headline at a brand new theater in Orlando, Florida – Magic & Mischief. I had to make a choice whether to stay at my steady job as a professional waiter or take the plunge to become a full-time entertainer. This would mean relocating from Maryland and leaving all job security behind. It started out great and was everything I expected it would be. My poster was in the light box, the dressing room was perfect, I had a full tech crew at my disposal, and everything was going my way, so I thought.

"Unfortunately, I was soon to learn a valuable lesson in the realities of show business. Only one day after our opening night, Central Florida was hit with its worst hurricane ever, Hurricane Charley. Two more storms immediately followed and tourism crashed in Orlando. This ulti-

mately led to the end of our theater, as well as my dream of having a permanent place to perform.

"I found myself with no work, in a new home, and not really sure what to do. I started thinking about my days as an assistant to Denny Haney in the Denny & Lee touring show. I recalled how he made a successful career performing on the road. I used all the experience I learned over those years with the show to put together my own 'pack small, play big' illusion show. I had learned how to pack the show, find agents and event planners, and even bought a van like Denny to troupe the show.

"Once I made the decision to take my act on the road, I never looked back. There's a lot of work out there if you're willing to travel; it's been a great career that's still going strong."

## ADAM ACE – COMEDY ISN'T PRETTY

As a budding comedian, Adam was doing some juggling and physical comedy routines; he longed to get out there and take it on the road. He had graduated from college and was performing local shows at nearby fairs and festivals. At one of the fairs, he met an agent who booked comedy clubs. "After the show he asked if I would be interested in doing a middle spot at a comedy club in Atlanta." This was a long haul from his home in Virginia. "I was pretty excited, so that day I just decided to go for it. I loaded up the minivan and headed out there. I called a few other comedy clubs that were on the way there and back and was able to line up a few gigs based on the one I had just booked. I never looked back. It all began to snowball from making that one decision. I remember a quote by Steve Martin about making the decision to pursue comedy and try to make it big that guided my ambition to go on the road. Martin said, 'Well, I just figured somebody had to be next, so why not me!'" Adam never approached it thinking he wouldn't be successful. He had a positive attitude and he thought to himself, "I'm gonna do this; this is how I am going to make a living."

## SCOTT AND JENNY ALEXANDER – MAKING AN ILLUSION REALITY

During the spring of 1997, I was working at Malone's Magic Bar in Boca Raton, Florida, doing close-up magic. At the time, Jenny and I had been working on our illusion act in hopes of taking it on the road. My goal for a very long time was to have our name in lights on the Las Vegas Strip. While I would do close-up by night, Jenny and I were doing illusion and stand-up shows at colleges and corporate events during the day. At the time, I didn't realize that diversifying by doing both close-up and stage magic would pay off in just a few months.

In March of 1997, one of our clients in South Florida was producing a franchise meeting for the TCBY company in Las Vegas. Jenny and I flew to Las Vegas and did the show, but we had two days to take in the sights of Las Vegas. It was our first time there and we could feel the energy and excitement in the streets. Our first night off, we walked the strip looking at every magic showroom and theater we could sneak our way into. It is amazing how many places you can get into if you look like you know where you are going! We even helped ourselves to a backstage tour of the Siegfried and Roy Theater! But it wasn't until we wandered into the newly opened Caesar's Magical Empire at Caesar's Palace that we really caught the Vegas bug. We walked into this place and I immediately turned to Jenny and told her *we have to work here!*

At the time, Jeff McBride was the headliner. I was able to contact Tobias Beckwith, Jeff's manager, and offered to take him to lunch. Over coffee and a tuna sandwich, he was kind enough to give me the contact information for the booker of the venue.

After sending my VHS tape to the booker (yes, I said VHS), they informed us that they really liked the show and that they were looking for someone to fill in for the Pendragons on the main stage one day a week, and Michael Ammar and Daryl two days a week in their parlor room. Since I



was a double threat and did both styles of magic, they were interested. The only snag was that although they liked our video, before they hired us they wanted to see a live performance. However by that time, I

was back in Florida and the bookers were in Los Angeles.

I was *not* going to let that stop me. I had a goal in mind to take this show to Vegas and I was determined. I called the Magic

Castle and was able to talk them into letting me do a Sunday Brunch show. My intention was to invite the booker to the Castle to see me that Sunday. We bought plane tickets to L.A., did the audition, and then four weeks later we were booked for one month as a fill-in act. That one month booking was enough to pay for rent and living expenses for six months, so we packed up and moved to Vegas. One month as a fill-in act led to a seven-year headlining engagement and our names up in lights at Caesar's Palace on the Las Vegas Strip!

It *is* possible to take your show on the road and be a success with it. You are now armed with our technical, nuts-and-bolts knowledge of how to troupe your show successfully. You've heard tips, tricks, and stories from my closest partners in crime that will save you countless hours of frustration. Now, you just have to make the decision to go for it! If luck, preparation, and timing are on your side, you may just "Hit the Road" running and never look back. ♦



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# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BY GEORGE PARKER

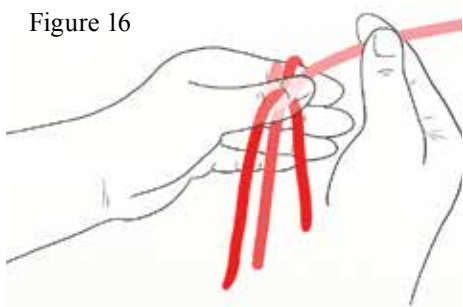
## VERSATILE OPENERS (PART 2)

This is the continuation of last month's column about my 12321 rope routine, which I use as a "versatile opener." I'm publishing it for the first time and only now I realize how complex the routine is (for the magician). For the audience it's a very clear, flowing, multiple-magical-moments type of routine.

## COUNTING THREE UNEQUAL PARTS

In Part 1 we started with one red rope, cut it into three equal pieces and counted them one by one, fair and square. Then we shrunk one piece and stretched another one. The audience sees a short piece, a middle-length piece, and a long piece. We're now ready to count these three unequal pieces.

Figure 16 shows you how you pretend to pull out what the audience perceives as the short piece. You take the top part of the short rope and pull it out, counting to one. When you pull it out, move your right hand up and to the right. Follow it with



your eyes and head, leading the attention of the audience while you count to one. At the same time you lower your left hand ten inches or so. While you separate your two hands and focus on the short rope, your left thumb repositions the top end of the long

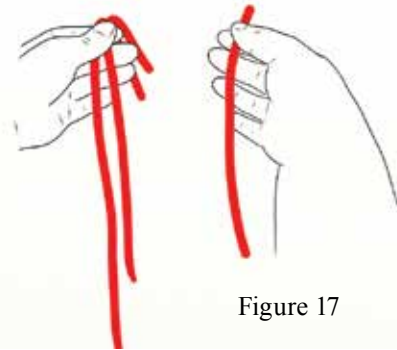


Figure 17

rope (Figure 17). Turn your attention to your left hand while bringing it up again. The audience sees what they expect to see: a middle-length rope and a long rope. Pull out the middle-length rope in the same way you counted the three equal parts. That is, give it a little tug when the rope almost leaves your left hand. Do the same with the last, long rope. Since you count three ropes at three different moments in the routine, you want the gestures to look alike; that helps to hide the sneaky parts.

## PREPARING TO RETURN TO THREE EQUAL PIECES

You will be visually transforming the three unequal ropes into three equal ropes. The technique I use was published by James Lewis in the late '90s on a VHS tape, *Million Dollar Mysteries*. The tape hasn't been available for a long time and has never been published on DVD as far as I know. It's an incredibly elegant, open, yet deceptive move.

Take the long rope and put one end between your left second and third fingers. One end of the middle-length rope goes between your left first and second finger. One end of the short rope goes into your thumb crotch (Figure 18). Open the gap between the second and third fingers of your right hand. Put the other end of the long rope between those two fingers. The other end of the middle-length rope goes between the first and second fingers of your right hand. Finally put the other end of the short rope into your right hand thumb crotch. Take your time doing this to allow the audience to follow what you're doing. Open your hands towards the audience to lock in this very fair picture (Figure 19).

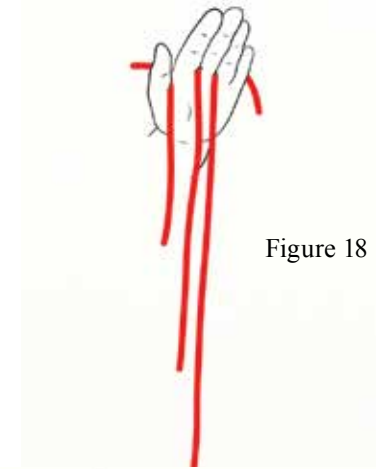


Figure 18

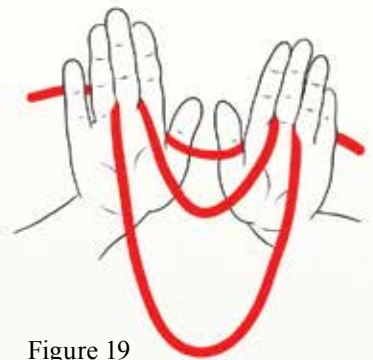


Figure 19

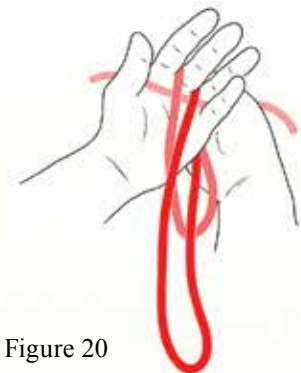


Figure 20

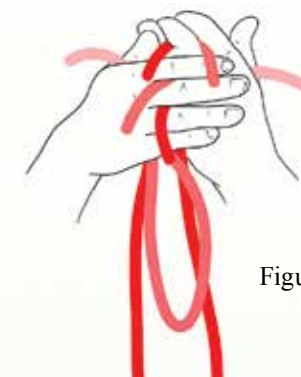


Figure 21

The next gestures will help to camouflage the switch that's about to happen. Pivot both hands, showing the back of your hands while you turn to the audience on your right side. Position your right hand behind your left hand (Figure 21). Again, do this very slowly and deliberately. While you return to center position you open your hands again until they are in the position that's shown in figure 19.

Repeat this for the audience to your left. It appears like you're doing the same thing. But this time you will switch the ends of the long and the short rope. Because you've already proven the fairness of what you're doing the audience will be more relaxed. It seems like a bold move but it's almost automatic and it happens while you're moving resulting in the audience missing the switch.

So turn to your left while pivoting your hands. This time, while moving your right hand behind your left hand, you secretly put the end of the short rope (clipped in your right thumb crotch) between the third finger and the pinky of your left hand (Figure 20). Just open the gap between your third finger and pinky slightly and the end of the short piece will automatically fall into place. Your right thumb and first finger are in a perfect position to grab the end of the long rope that's protruding from between the second and third fingers of your left hand. When you open your hands while turning back to center position you've invisibly switched two ends. The audience sees the picture they expect (Figure 22) and won't notice the slight discrepancy (one end is no longer clipped between the second and third fingers where it's supposed to be).

Figure 22



Position check (Figure 22; I used three different shades of red). Your right hand now holds one end of the long rope between your second and third fingers and the other end in your thumb crotch. Your right hand also holds one end of the middle-length

rope between your first and second fingers. Your left hand holds the other end of the middle-length rope between its first and second fingers. It also holds the two ends of the short rope. One end is still in your thumb crotch. The other end lies between your third finger and pinky. The long rope runs behind it.

## VISUAL RETURN TO THREE EQUAL PIECES

Slowly move your hands apart, palms towards you. It's a very visual effect to see the ropes transforming into three equal pieces. Allow that moment sink in. Stress it by letting go of the three ends in your right hand one by one after you've reached the end. Reposition the three ropes in your left hand so your left thumb covers the "dirty" part. You can flash the palm of your hand so the audience sees that nothing fishy is going on. Start counting the three "equal" pieces as you did the first time. After you're done, put the dirty side on the palm of your left hand (Figure 23, exposed view). Put your right thumb over the dirty part so you can clearly show three equal ropes.

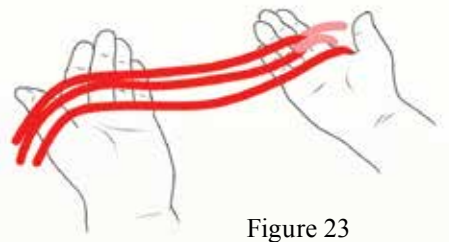


Figure 23

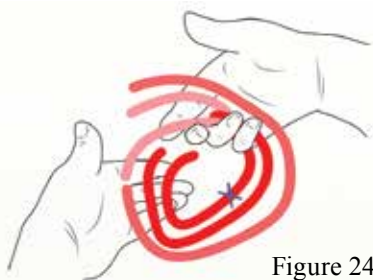


Figure 24

## TWO EQUAL PIECES

You're going to create the illusion of changing three equal pieces into two equal pieces. You will do that by adding the middle-length piece to the short piece. Refer to Figure 24 to see how you do that. This

is an exposed view and I tried to draw the situation as clearly as possible. In reality, the ropes are not quite as neatly organized.

The left and right hands come together. Feed one end of the short piece into your left hand. Your left thumb will cover the gap and hold the pieces together. Your right thumb and first finger grab the long piece at the blue "X" mark. Once your hands are

Figure 25



in position, you quickly move your hands apart. Figure 25 shows you how you seem to hold two solid pieces of rope in your hands. Again, you can show this from all angles. As with any rope work, I feel that I should hold joints as loosely as possible. If you hold those types of joints with a whole fist, you almost destroy the illusion. But if you practice enough, it's possible to hide the joint with your thumb and hold the rope with your fingertips, raising no suspicion at all.

## ONE ROPE

Next you will tie the ropes and make that knot vanish so you will finish with one rope in your hands. At least that's what the audience believes happens. You will switch two ends, tie the short rope around the long rope, and then steal it. Start by putting the small rope that extends from your left hand on top of the end of the long rope in your right hand (Figure 26). The blue arrows show you what's going to happen.

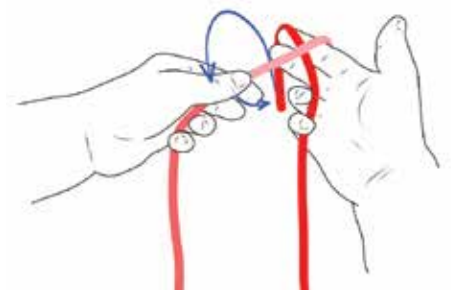


Figure 26

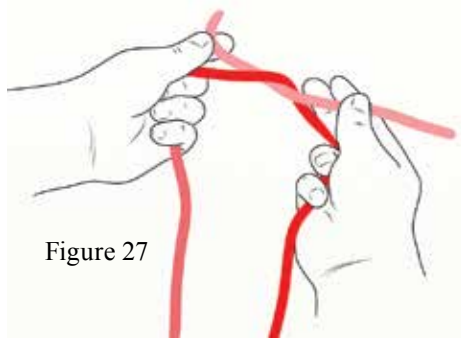


Figure 27

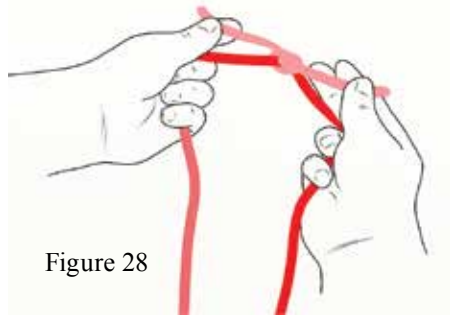


Figure 28

You turn the palm of your right hand down while opening your left hand just a little bit. Two things happen when you do that. The big blue arrow shows how the top end of the long rope will move into the palm of your left hand. The little blue arrow shows how the lower end of the short rope automatically swings forward, if you let go of it. You will end up holding the short rope between the thumb and first finger of your hands (Figure 27). It looks like the ends of the two ropes are intertwined in preparation to finish the knot. Tie the short end around the long rope (Figure 28).

Next you're going to create the illusion that you're pushing the knot into the rope. We'll make use of the fact that the joint between the two ropes is off center. This allows us to show the "restored" middle of the rope very clearly. Let your hands "crawl" to the middle. In the process your left hand steals three or four inches of rope. Your hands end up in the middle covering the knot. You're going to move your hands apart, slowly, while making a rubbing motion, as if you're rubbing the knot into the rope. Figure 29 shows how your right hand takes the knot with it on its way to the right. The left hand lets go of the slack you picked up. The audience starts to see that the knot has dissolved in the middle of the rope. When the joint in your left hand almost leaves your left hand, stop. Tug the rope with both hands to prove it now has a solid middle. Put the rope in your left hand (Figure 30). Move your right hand to the ends of the rope stealing away the knot.

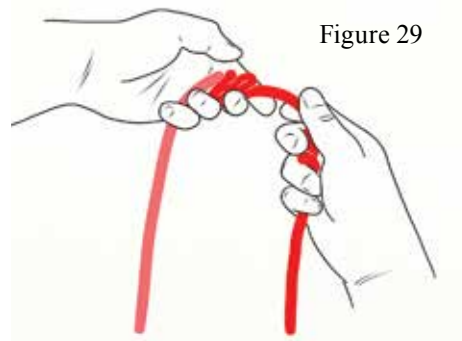


Figure 29

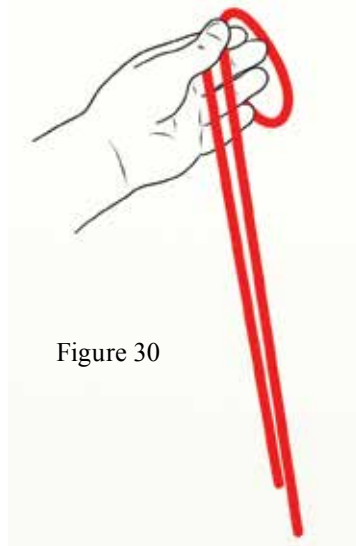


Figure 30

Take your applause while bowing. It's very natural to move your hands behind your back at this point. Put the knot into your left hand. When you stand up, take an applause position swinging out your arms. Your right hand can be open now.

## SCRIPTS

My definition of magic is: "When imagination touches reality, magic is created." The following script is based on that.

*"Some people think that the real story line in life consists of the reality around us (one rope). Things we can see and touch. Other people think there's a second part (fold rope). Things we can't see or touch such as our thoughts, subconscious mind, and imagination. I think there's a third part (cut). There's our outer world and our inner world, but also what happens between our outer and our inner worlds, between imagination and reality...the magical world (count). Some people diminish that world (shrink one rope), and stretch the importance of either the tangible world or our imagination (unequal parts).*

*"Is this an illusion? Of course it is! But*

*illusions tend to become reality, once you give them lots of attention (count unequal parts). So if you want to experience magic, you need to acknowledge that all three parts play an equal role (stretch). The outer world, our inner world, and what happens between them (count). Still, we need to be reminded of this every day. Before we know it we are stuck in either the tangible world or in the world of our own imagination (two ropes). We need to connect them every day (knot) and we will see that the real nature of life is magical (one rope)."*

The premise of the second script is about cooperation/teamwork.

*"Some people think everything in life is about them (one rope). Other people think it's about other people as well (fold rope). Personally, I think it's about what happens between people (cut). I'm more interested in what can happen between a sperm and an egg cell if they meld (start counting two ropes) than I am interested in them separately. They create something they couldn't have created on their own (show third rope). Don't allow yourself to lose focus by diminishing that part (shrink one rope) in favor of focusing too much on yourself or another person. Your life will become unbalanced (count unequal parts). Just acknowledge that there is this invisible force field between people that balances us (three equal parts): you, me and what happens between us (count). Unfortunately, negative stress causes us to separate ourselves from others (two ropes). And although it provides a lovely livelihood for lawyers and generals, I'm personally much more interested in what happens when I connect with another person. I start to see that what happens between us helps us to rise above ourselves (one rope)."*

Postscript: When I joined the *M-U-M* team as a columnist in January this year I expected to be contributing much longer than just a year. But my new business accelerated in a way that I didn't anticipate. I had to drop every project that wasn't directly related to it. I'm sorry to have to say goodbye in this issue. I can honestly, and with a little sadness now, say that contributing to *M-U-M* was the best time I ever had writing a column – creative freedom, two pages, doing my own illustrations, being supported in an easy and wonderful way. You can't ask for more. Thank you Michael and Lisa; I'm grateful for your support and for the opportunity. Thank you readers! I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. ♦

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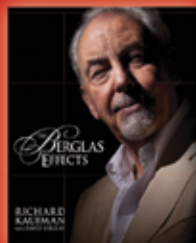
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## EVERYDAY I'M SHUFFLIN'

I'm fond of saying "Ya can't beat the classics." One of those classics is *The Expert at the Card Table*. In the entry titled "Primary Accomplishments," Erdnase writes:

"Perfection in performing the 'blind' shuffle [...] makes it impossible for the smartest card handler living to determine whether the procedure is true or 'blind.' This ability once acquired gives the expert ease and assurance in any kind of company, and enables him to lull into a state of absolute serenity the minds of many players who may be naturally suspicious. Nothing so completely satisfies the average card player as a belief that the deck has been thoroughly shuffled and genuinely cut."

Erdnase was talking about players around a card table, who typically have very little reason to suspect any shenanigans. A magician's audience, on the other hand, knows they're up against someone who's going to try to "do something." Erdnase's words still hold up.

I had the privilege of being part of an online discussion during which some very knowledgeable and successful magicians made the point that it takes very little effort to convince an audience of normal people that the cards are shuffled. I won't disagree with that. For many audiences, it's as simple as spreading the cards face up to show some kind of random order. (Of course, you'd point out that there are no duplicates or some other element tangential to the fact that the cards are in your memorized stack.)

The real question is: what does "thoroughly shuffled and genuinely cut" really mean to a card performer? Unless your audience has taken post-graduate courses with Persi Diaconis, they're not interested in the full seven shuffles it takes to create statistically significant randomness in the deck. Your audience wants to know that the cards are out of your control, if only for the moment.

# CHEATS & DECEPTIONS (FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY)

BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL

If you're the kind of performer who emphasizes otherworldly abilities instead of a gambler's skill at manipulating cards, then you'll probably have an easier time downplaying what happens when you handle the cards. If you're more like me, a performer who has "*Card Cheating*" in big red capital letters on his business cards, then you have to work a little harder. The only way that getting cards in your control is interesting to an audience – let alone impressive – is if they truly believe those cards are out of your control.

Luckily, it does take very little effort on your part to convince an audience that the cards are "thoroughly shuffled and genuinely cut." The best way to do it is to let someone else actually shuffle thoroughly and genuinely cut the cards. As Ascanio said, in one of my favorites of his quotes, "There's nothing more overwhelming than the truth." If your audience is wary of you handling the cards, let someone else handle the cards.

What happens when you can't let someone else shuffle or it's not the most efficient approach? It follows that, if you can't let someone else shuffle, then you the performer should shuffle as genuinely as possible. If there is a certain portion of the deck that you need to maintain to make the trick work, then you should shuffle the rest of the deck as genuinely as you can.

Early in my card magic studies, I would come across descriptions of tricks wherein a single card or a small stock of four or five cards needed to be maintained on top of the deck during a shuffle. The suggestion was usually to do a push-through or Zarrow shuffle. While these are both fine techniques when done well, they're working too hard towards the desired effect. Even if you're trying to control a stock of a dozen cards, you're better off shuffling the bejeezus out of the remaining forty cards in the deck if you want to convince your audience that the cards are really mixed. (Search YouTube for any performance of Lennart Green's for proof of this concept.)

## TAKING STOCK

So, let's say you have four Aces or a royal flush on top of the deck and you want to appear to shuffle the deck. For most of

the readers of this column, it's a no-brainer. You do a short shuffle. Basically, you split the cards for a riffle shuffle, keeping track of the top half, and you riffle shuffle such that the four or five cards that were originally on top end up back on top.

That's a ton more convincing because the cards are actually being shuffled – except for the top few. If you want to be even more convincing, you want observers to see the top of the deck being lost during the shuffle.

## THE STRIP CONTROL

One of the more accessible techniques that made a huge difference in my table shuffles is a control from the blackjack table called "the strip." It's a variation of the standard strip cut or running cut, and works essentially like an overhand jog shuffle done on the table. And subsequently, it's very convincing.

Place the deck in front of you in position for a tabled riffle shuffle. Lift off about half of the cards with your left hand as your right hand moves forward with the bottom half in a short motion.

Bring the right hand back above the tabled half, and take around ten cards or so and drop them onto the tabled half, jogged to the right about a half an inch. Continue by taking small packets of cards from the top of the right hand pile and dropping them onto the tabled pile without disturbing the jogged portion (Photo 1). Continue until you run out of cards.

The first group of cards you placed side-jogged is directly above your stock, and is acting as a "brief" to mark it off (Photo 2). If in the act of squaring the cards, you hit the outer corners of the deck with your two ring fingers, that brief will pivot and pop out the rear of the deck towards you, at the opposite inside corner. It's a very easy action to acquire; you'll likely hit it your first try (Photo 3).

Once the brief pops out the back, lift up on it with your left thumb and take a break underneath it. You can now split for a riffle shuffle and shuffle the stock from the middle back to the top. Taken all together, it's a very disarming and convincing sequence, and requires very little effort.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

## HEAVIER LIFTING

I mentioned that learning the strip control made a huge difference in my shuffle work, and it really did, particularly once I realized I could combine it with a push-through shuffle or a Zarrow shuffle and do some serious shuffling.

Typically, full-deck shuffle controls are combined with some kind of false running cut, usually the Up the Ladder cut (*Expert Card Technique*, page 78). Again, if you have a full fifty-two-card stock to maintain, it's a fine technique. But if you're only maintaining twenty to thirty cards, you have a whole portion of the deck that can be genuinely shuffled using the strip

control instead.

Say, for example, you're performing a version of the classic Gardner-Marlo Poker Deal; the Lorayne Poker Deal from *Close-Up Card Magic* is a good example. After the first round of dealing, once you've gathered up the cards, you have a twenty-five card stock waiting to go. You can very easily appear to shuffle and cut the cards by performing an overhand jog shuffle. Undercut less than half the deck and shuffle, jogging the first card or cards. Finish by getting a break under the jog and genuinely cutting to the break.

However, if you've spent time working up a decent push-through, strip-out, or Zarrow shuffle, you can essentially do the same thing while appearing to shuffle all the cards.

Try this, if you do a decent push-through: cut the top half of the deck to the right and riffle shuffle the left-hand cards (the original bottom portion) into the right hand cards (the stock). Push the two halves through one another, and as you strip out the original bottom cards with your right hand, go into a strip control. Now, once you've gotten the break under the brief at the back, you can do a genuine cut.

If you prefer a Zarrow shuffle, try this: cut the top half to the right and Zarrow shuffle under three cards. As you square up, get a break between the two portions and go into a strip control using the cards beneath the break. Once you've gotten the break under the brief at the back, cut the cards above that break to the right and do another Zarrow under three cards. Get a break between the two portions like before, and give the cards a genuine cut.

This has other applications beyond poker deals. These sequences make very convincing ways to maintain a divided deck set-up (red/black, odd/even). And if you do memorized deck work, you can check out either *Mnemonic* or *Expert Card Technique* for some very powerful ideas and tricks that use only half of a memorized stack.

## CARDS ON (AND OFF) THE TABLE

I should point out a fact that magicians tend to forget: only magicians handle playing cards in complete absence of some kind of surface to place them on. Normal people use playing cards to play games, and those games typically need a place for the cards to rest. For those times when

I don't have a table to work on (strolling situations, for example), I still have similar options available to me. The good news is those options are just as convincing and are just as accessible (if not more so).

I mentioned before that the strip control is essentially an overhand jog shuffle, performed flat on the table. It's also very easy to do an in-the-hands riffle shuffle and maintain a small stock on top of the deck. I discovered a neat way to combine the two ideas using an idea of Dai Vernon's.

The key is Vernon's method of shuffling a card to the top after a peek (*Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic*, page 131). Start with, say, four Aces on top of the deck. Start an overhand shuffle, undercutting half the cards, but before you start the shuffle, in-jog the top card of the left-hand portion slightly with your left thumb. Now shuffle off the right-hand cards and let the deck settle into dealing position.

At this point, you should have a card in-jogged. Take the deck by the ends with the right hand, and as you do, push in on the inner left corner of that in-jogged card with your right thumb. That's going to work much the same as moving the brief in the strip control, only here the card should pop out the side of the deck under your right hand.

Now Vernon's idea comes into play; riffle the cards off the right thumb just as you would to split for an in-the-hands riffle shuffle. When you hit the side-jogged card, you're going to hear a "click," just as if it were a short card. That's the original top of the deck. Split for the shuffle and shuffle those cards back to the top of the deck.

## SAME TIME, NEXT YEAR

With that, I've come to the last column of my first year writing for *M-U-M*. I'd like to publicly thank Michael Close for asking me to be a bigger part of a terrific publication. I also want to thank everyone who's read my ramblings this past year. I look forward to providing another year's worth of ideas, tips, and routines for lovers of card magic – for entertainment purposes *only*, of course. ♦

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



# PARANORMAL HAPPENINGS

BY CHARLES SIEBERT, MD

## WHAT IS A OUIJA BOARD?

By the time you are read this, the new Universal movie based on the Hasbro-licensed Ouija board has hit the theaters, vanished, and reappeared on DVD. I thought this would be a great time to look at the phenomena of talking boards, spirit boards, mystery boards, oracle boards, witch boards, or as they are more commonly known, Ouija boards, and to touch on the some of the many myths about its origins and abilities.

*The Encyclopedia of Psychic Science* states that such devices were in use in the days of Pythagoras, about 540 BCE. According to a French historical account of the philosopher's life, his sect held frequent séances, or circles, at which a mystic table, moving on wheels, moved towards signs, which the philosopher and his pupil, Philolaus, interpreted to the audience as being revelations supposedly from the unseen world. Unfortunately for the story, Philolaus was not even born at the time of Pythagoras and this doesn't fit as a talking board. But we do know from other sources that "Ouija like" devices were being used in ancient times. These would include pendulums, dowsing rods, and writing instruments similar to planchettes. While not truly talking boards, they do all have in common the method of facilitated messaging. One of the first mentions of these automatic writing methods is found in China around 1100 CE (or as early as 550 BCE depending on your source), in historical documents of the Song Dynasty. The method was known as fuji or "planchette writing."

As relationships go, the talking boards

of today grew out of the use of the alphabet and alphabetic pasteboards during nineteenth-century spiritualistic séances and not from pendulum oracles or other devices used many centuries earlier. In 1848, the Fox sisters realized that calling out individual letters and having the spirits knock accordingly was easier than asking lengthy yes-no questions. The use of alphabet pasteboards became common among table-tippers, who came to the same conclusion. The medium and attending sitters would rest their fingers lightly on a table and wait for spiritual contact. Soon, the table would tilt and move, and knock on the floor to letters called from the alphabet. Entire messages from the spirits were spelled out in this way.



It wasn't long before this, too, became tedious, and mediums soon relied on "divine intuition" instead. "During a communication between the medium and the supposed spirit, the former passed his hand over the alphabet until he found his finger sensibly and irresistibly rested at a certain letter, and so on, until the word, the sentence, was completed." – *The Rappers* (1854).

Also tried, and more popular in Europe, were alphabetical dial plates or psychographs, which typically were contraptions in which a round dial with a pointer would spin and stop at different letters that were

marked around the base of the plate or had moveable letter wheels. This fell out of favor quickly and evolved to a form of spirit writing using a small basket with a pencil attached to one end. The medium simply had to establish contact with the basket and the spirit would take control, writing the message. Others did away with the basket altogether and performed what came to be known as trance writing. The pencil basket evolved into a heart-shaped planchette, with two rotating wheeled casters underneath and a pencil at the tip, which formed a third leg. It was very quickly discovered that in addition to writing messages, the planchette could perform as a pointer. Planchette is a French word meaning "little board." It is also claimed to have

been first used by a party of French monks in the early 1800s in one of their monasteries. A Dr. Henry Francis Gardner in 1859 brought one home from Paris to Boston, where it soon became the craze.

*The New York Daily Tribune*, March 28, 1886, had an article titled, "The New 'Planchette.' A Mysterious Talking Board and Table Over Which Northern Ohio Is Agitated," which talked about this method being used at Spiritualist camps throughout Ohio. About the same time, W.S.

Reed Toy Company of Massachusetts put out a device strikingly similar to the new planchette. Named the "witch board," it was described like this: "Upon the four corners of the board are respectively 'Yes,' 'No,' 'Good-by' and 'Good-day,' while the alphabet occupies the center of the board. A miniature standard, which rests upon four legs, stands upon the 'witch board,' upon which the hands are placed, and then the spirits begin their work. Should an answer be 'Yes' or 'No,' the small table will travel to the respective corner, et cetera. Communications are spelled out by the diminutive table resting over such

letters as may be wanted to spell out the message.” *Boston Globe*, June 5, 1886.

William Fuld has most often been cited as the inventor and father of the Ouija board. Actually, the first patent on the talking board (No. 446,054) was granted to Elijah Bond on February 10, 1891, and assigned to Charles Kennard and William H. A. Maupin, two of the founders of the Kennard Novelty Company of Baltimore, Maryland. The trademark on the word Ouija (No. 18,919) was granted to the Kennard Novelty Company on February 3, 1891. The name Ouija is often falsely attributed to Fuld to be a combination of the French *oui* and the German *ja* meaning yes. Charles Kennard stated that he named the new board after a session with Miss Peters, Elijah Bond’s sister-in-law. The story according to Kennard is; “I remarked that we had not yet settled upon a name, and as the board had helped us in other ways, we would ask it to propose one. It spelled out O-U-I-J-A. When I asked the meaning of the word it said ‘Good Luck.’”

William Fuld filed for his own patent (No. 479,266), which made improvements to the talking board; it was granted on July

19, 1892. Over the years the manufacture of the Ouija board moved from Kennard Novelty Company to multiple iterations with William Fuld at the helm, all with tremendous success. The Fuld dynasty over the Ouija board ended in 1966 with the sale of the manufacturing rights and trademark to Parker Brothers and then to Hasbro in 1991.

How do Ouija boards work? There are two leading contradictory theories. One is the Spiritualist theory as quoted in this response from Catholic Answers: “The fact of the matter is, the Ouija board really does work, and the only ‘spirits’ that will be contacted through it are evil ones...The Ouija board has an objective reality that exists apart from a person’s perception of it. In other words, it’s real even if you don’t believe in it. And we know this because God himself tells us so.”

The other theory relies on the ideomotor effect. In 1852, physician and physiologist William Benjamin Carpenter published a report for the Royal Institution of Great Britain, examining these automatic muscular movements that take place without the conscious will or volition

of the individual. In 1853, chemist and physicist Michael Faraday, intrigued by table-turning, conducted a series of experiments that proved to him (though not to most spiritualists) that the table’s motion was due to the ideomotor actions of the participants. Planchettes, in particular, are well-suited for their task – either constructed of a lightweight wooden board with small casters or the modern plastic with felt feet; they slide over the board easily. With Ouija, not only does the individual give up some conscious control to participate – so it can’t be me, people think – but also, in a group, no one person can take credit for the planchette’s movements, making it seem like the answers must be coming from an otherworldly source. Moreover, in most situations, there is an expectation or suggestion that the board is somehow mystical or magical. “Once the idea has been implanted there, there’s almost a readiness to happen.”

So I’ll end with this famous quote: “If there really is an afterlife, I’ll bet the best way to contact it is through a plastic, mass-produced board game from Milton Bradley!” – *Mad Magazine* ♦

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# THE HIGH ROAD

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

BY MICK AYRES

As the year 2014 comes to a close, please accept my annual gift of scripted conjuring. The following drama is derived from a popular plot in card magic and offers many opportunities to employ the theatrical principles and concepts one learns when traveling the High Road.

Happy Holidays to you all.

### THE WILD ROVERS

Over time, the Wild Card plot has become a classic of card magic – right up there with Curry's Out Of This World and Vernon's Triumph – so there are a multitude of variations to consider. Thirty years ago I created The Wild Rovers to meet the quick-turnaround needs of trade show and hospitality suite work. This presentation involves no specially printed or gimmicked cards, offers plenty of audience participation, and resets with a cut of the packet.

You will need to assemble a seven-card Wild Rovers packet: four duplicates of one card and three duplicates of another card. The packet I use consists of four Jacks of Diamonds and three Aces of Clubs. The backs must be of one design and color.

Using my cards as a working example, your packet is assembled face up from top to bottom in this order: Jack, Ace, Ace, Ace, Jack, Jack, Jack. Turn the packet face down in your left hand (so the single Jack is now on the bottom) and you are ready to begin.

Say, *"Do you know where magicians get a lot of their secrets? We keep up with current events – particularly in the fields of science and technology. Think about it. If a magician can exploit some new invention and create a trick around it long before most people know it even exists, then he can baffle quite a few audiences while the rest of the world catches up. Want to see an example?"*

Look side-to-side as if checking the room in a conspiratorial manner. Now lean forward and, in a stage whisper, say, *"Cloning."*

Continue by saying, *"You have*

*probably heard in the news that scientists are cloning sheep, dogs, and mice. Since anything organic can be cloned, magicians have jumped right on that concept and have already applied it to playing cards. Sounds incredible, doesn't it? Since cards are really paper made from trees, the science still works. Now, I won't tell you how we do it because that is still a trade secret. But I'll certainly demonstrate it for you. Watch."*

Spread the packet face down for a moment; then close the spread and turn the packet face up in your left hand. Spread the top three cards to the right. Say, *"Of the seven cards, I have here, all are duplicates – except this one."* Freely display the top Jack of Diamonds. Place it face up on the table to the right as you say, *"And this card is the important one."*

You now perform a deal that will cleanly show the remaining six cards as all Aces. This deal is a variation of Val-larino's Rumba count. Say, *"There are several Aces."* Grip the right side of the top Ace with your right thumb on top and your fingers on the bottom. Pull this card slightly to your right. Lift the Ace straight up, but as you do, your middle finger also lifts up the right edge of the packet and levers it face down into your left hand. The Ace is now dropped face down on the table. Say, *"One."*

Now your right hand grips the side of the face-down packet and lifts the top card straight up a few inches. Your middle finger again levers the packet so it falls face up in your left hand. Without showing its face, your right hand places the card face down onto the table. Say, *"Two."*

You are holding the packet just as you were in the beginning. Repeat the procedure described above as you count *"Three"* and *"Four"*. When complete, you will have four face-down cards piled on the table and two face-up cards (with an Ace on top) held square in your left hand.

Now you will do the Rumba count to display the last two cards. Turn your right hand palm down and grip the packet along the right edge – this time with the fingers above and the thumb below. Revolve your right hand palm up so the packet is now

face down.

With your thumb, draw the top card slightly to the right and lift straight up while your middle finger levers the bottom card over and face up into your left hand. Your right hand slides the card it is holding underneath the tabled pile of cards and uses it as a scoop to pick them up from the table. Say, *"Five."*

To finish the display sequence, just look at the remaining Ace in your left hand and turn it face down. Cleanly drop it on top of the packet in your right hand. Say, *"Six. No more, no less."*

Pick up the Jack of Diamonds from the table. As you display it, say, *"To hide the idea that we're using the science of cloning to create a trick, magicians use the term wildcarding. It comes from the game of poker. You know – where a wildcard can become any card in the deck? So, using this Jack of Diamonds I will now give a brief demonstration of clon – I mean, wild-carding."* Say this with a wink.

Rub the back of the Jack against the top card of the packet as you say, *"Just a little contact on the molecular level – I mean, a little magical rub and look..."* Put the Jack aside and do a double turnover to reveal the packet's top card has turned into a Jack. *"See? It's nearly identical to the real Jack of Diamonds. Once they are 'wildcarded,' these things have to be handled as little as possible. Temperature is important; you don't want to overheat them."* Turn the double card face down and deal the top card face down in front of the guest. Say, *"Are you in good health? Then cover this Jack with your left hand for a few minutes and I'll show you what I mean. Don't move until I tell you, because the card needs to reach 98.6 degrees."*

Once the card is safely ensconced under the guest's hand, count the packet from one hand to the other to reverse the order of the cards. Say, *"That's one down, but I have five more volunteers here."* Again, pick up the Jack of Diamonds and rub the back of it against the top card of the packet. Put the Jack aside and then honestly turn over the top card of the packet to show it has also changed into a Jack. *"Fortunately, clon – I mean, 'wildcarding' gets easier as*

you go.” Deal this new card face down to a new spot on the table.

Reverse the order of the cards by counting them from one hand to another again. Pick up the Jack of Diamonds and rub the top card of the packet. Again, honestly turn over the top card to reveal another Jack. Deal this card face down on top of the other card. *“I bet scientists can do this in their sleep.”*

Once more, reverse count the remaining three cards but, just before you drop the last card on top of the other two, revolve both hands palm down and flash the faces for an instant. The guest will see Aces in both hands. Say, *“Just a few more to go.”* Revolve your hands back to position and drop the single card on top of the packet. Pick up the Jack of Diamonds and rub its back against the top card. Perform a double-turnover to show another Jack. Say, *“I wish the magician’s code of secrecy would allow me to tell you more – but I will say that once you understand it, it almost happens by itself.”* Turn the double cards over and deal the top one onto the tabled pile.

You are now holding two cards in your left hand. This time, do not reverse their order. Just take one card in each hand to show their singularity and simply restack them in the same order. Say, *“No extra cards. Just two more volunteers.”* Revolve your left hand and reach over to innocently hike your sleeve back on your right arm. This flashes the bottom Ace of the packet. Pick up the Jack of Diamonds and rub the back of the top card. Say, *“You’d think it would wear off after a while.”* Turn the top card over to reveal the fifth Jack. *“But apparently, it doesn’t.”* Turn this card face down and deal it on top of the tabled pile.

Turn the remaining Ace face up and table it just to the left of the tabled pile. Say, *“This last one I’ll use to demonstrate another aspect of wildcarding.”* Pick

up the tabled packet and turn it face up. Perform an Elmsley count to show four Jacks as you say, *“The detail is amazing, isn’t it?”* Turn the packet face down and reverse deal the cards into a pile on the table. Say, *“I only need a few of them for this next demonstration.”* Pick up the top three cards from the tabled packet. Turn them face up and spread them in a fan.

Point to the Jack of Diamonds on the table and say, *“Up until now, I’ve been using this card to clo – uh, ‘wildcard’ the other cards. However, once a duplicate has been made, those duplicates can then be used to ‘wildcard’ as well. Watch.”* Pick up the Ace and insert it face up into the spread just above the bottom card. Close the spread and immediately do another Elmsley Count to show four Jacks. *“See? These Jack-copies are just as efficient as the original. That Ace is history!”* Turn the packet face down in your left hand.

Pick up the Jack of Diamonds and drop it face down on top of the single card you left behind a moment ago. Now pick up those two together and drop them on top of the packet in your left hand. Say, *“I believe that’s the last of the Aces.”*

You will now show all the cards in your hand as Jacks using a variation on the Hamman count. Turn the packet face up and hold it from above with your right hand. Specifically, your right thumb and middle fingertip will grip the packet at the lower and upper right corners, respectively. You are going to use your left thumb to peel the cards off the top and into your left hand. However, as your left hand comes over to get the first card, use the pad of your left index fingertip to push the bottom card of the packet to the right at a slight angle. The upper right corner of this jogged card is held secure by your right middle fingertip.

Your left thumb slides the first card off the packet and into your left hand.

Now your thumb comes back and does the same thing with the second card. However, when your thumb comes back to obtain the third card, a switch takes place. The packet remaining in your right hand is really a block of three followed by a jogged card on the bottom. As your left hand comes in contact with the packet, the first two cards are secretly added back to the bottom of the packet while the three-card-block is taken away into your left hand. The angle-jogged card makes this switch considerably easier to perform smoothly.

This leaves three cards in your right hand. Your left thumb peels them off one at a time into your left hand. Do this without breaking rhythm and you will cleanly display all six cards as Jacks. Leave the packet face up in your hand and say, *“At the end, it’s best to leave one card different from the rest. You know – so you can perform it again on demand.”*

Your guest is still hiding a card under her hand. Look at it and say, *“Hey, wait a second; it’s been long enough, hasn’t it? I’m sure that card has warmed up plenty by now. Is it still a Jack or did it change back? Take a look.”* All that remains is to smile generously as the guest looks at the card under her hand and sees that it has indeed changed back to an Ace. Take the Ace and drop it face up on top of the packet. Act relieved as you say, *“Man, I’m glad that worked out; now I can do this again later. Thanks!”*

The presentation is over. To reset, just cut the bottom three cards to the top. If you are strolling, you are ready to perform The Wild Rovers at the next table a few steps away. ♦

The Wild Rovers copyright 1984 by Mick Ayres. Mick is a conjurer, tunesmith and tale swapper. He welcomes opinions and dialogue. He can be reached at: [mick@mickayreswares.com](mailto:mick@mickayreswares.com).

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# MESSING WITH YOUR MIND

BY CHRISTOPHER CARTER

## THE CHOICES WE MAKE

I'm looking at an old promotional photo of myself. Like many old photos, the emotion it evokes is less nostalgia and more a pang of embarrassment. If you didn't know the clichés of mentalism, you would assume I had a migraine when it was taken, because I have my fingers up to my forehead in the universal body language symbol for "mind-reader." As for the expression on my face, you might charitably call it "mysterious." A more objective description would be "constipated." It's a photo I would un-take, if such a thing could be done.

In contemporary jargon, the photo is an "epic fail." But I don't mind, because it served as a life lesson, and helped shape who I am as a performer today. Indeed, it's impossible to look back on your life without seeing a few changes you wish you had made, or at least a few choices you wish you had made sooner. I'd like to explore a few of those choices that directly pertain to the performance of mentalism. I hope they'll provide food for thought about your own work.

For me, the most significant choice I wish I had made sooner is the decision to never use a stock line or joke again.

I would imagine most of us have, at one time or another, asked to see "the clean hand," or joked about the way someone shuffled the invisible deck. How many of us have asked a volunteer if he's "happy with the mind he has?" Surely each of us has had some occasion to drop in a standard "bit."

When you're young, your reasoning is simple and logical. What each of these stock lines has in common is that it's generally successful. Building an act is difficult, and failure onstage means you don't get repeat bookings. Why not go with the tried and true?

Why not? Simple! Every stock line

is a missed opportunity to authentically connect with the audience. If you use stock lines, the audience may like your show and they may like your material, but they'll never like *you*. How can they? You're not even there to start with.

This discovery didn't come in single moment. Rather, it came from a growing dissatisfaction with my shows, and the vague feeling that I wished I could share more of myself with my audiences. This feeling reached an intensity I could no longer ignore. But it wasn't until I made the decision to use *only* my own lines and jokes that I really discovered who I was onstage.

A related decision was the choice to avoid, as much as possible, doing effects that are featured by other performers in my market. For several reasons, this choice is particularly difficult for mentalists to make. First, there are relatively few plots for us to choose from, so doing effects that are truly distinctive is very challenging. After all, in the eyes of the layperson, one book test is like another, and one blindfold routine is like another. Just by choosing to perform in the genre of "mentalism," we're necessarily making ourselves at least somewhat similar to our competitors.

In addition to scarcity of plots, there is also the fact that new mentalists are encouraged to study and perfect the classics. This is excellent advice – until you confront the possibility of dozens of performers chasing the same clients with essentially the same material.

Let us not kid ourselves, this has already happened. If you are thinking to yourself, "Really? What are the odds of an audience seeing multiple mentalists in their lifetimes?" the answer is "quite high, actually."

I've had more than one corporate meeting planner ask me, worriedly, "You're not going to do that trick where the numbers add up in every direction, are you?" Or, "You're not going to do that one where you predict what phone number they're going to select from a phone book, are you?" The situation among the buyers of campus events is pretty much the same. There exists a more or less "standard repertoire" buyers can recite from memory.

This standardization could one day be the death of our craft.

So how do we respond to this issue? One way is by looking at what everybody else is doing and resolving we will do anything else but that. When I began in the campus market, the most successful mentalist made a feature of the Floating Table. It was amazing how many newcomers to the market did (and still do) that effect. My resolution was to find my own signature piece nobody else was doing, but that would create a similarly memorable visual image.

Within the last several years I've had to drop several pieces I had long relied on because they have become too common in the acts of other performers. Do I like having to change like that? Certainly not. But in the long run, I think it's worth it.

Don't misunderstand; I'm not suggesting we never ever tackle classic effects. I can think of many mentalists whose work I respect hugely who've had success with the classics. I do, however, think each of us should constantly strive to develop a core of material that is uniquely our own. I believe when an audience member or buyer describes what it is you do, he should be able to describe something *nobody else* does.

The final choice I wish I had made earlier was the decision to always eat with the client at a corporate banquet show.

I don't know where I picked it up, but it seemed to be common advice during my youth to never eat with the client before the show. The idea was that eating with them humanized the performer and he lost his mystique in the eyes of the client. Since I was a mentalist, this made sense to me. After all, didn't I want to be perceived as a "man of mystery?"

One day I was listening to a radio interview of a woman who was an expert on relationships, and she mentioned how, in most cultures, relationships are cemented around food. Unlike my previous choices, this really was a "lightbulb above the head" moment. I realized immediately that when a client asked if I would join them for dinner before a show, the answer they wanted to hear was, "yes." They wanted to develop a relationship with me, and if I

cared at all about my career, I should want to develop a relationship with them.

Since that time, not only do I always eat with the client, I specify exactly where I want to be seated: next to the boss or other important decision maker. I have my store of funny stories and answers to questions they always ask, and I bring these out when needed. But mostly I listen. I ask about their kids and their hobbies, because I actually like these people and I want to get to know them better.

Of course, I also ask about their business. And when they describe some need I can fill, I happen to casually mention how I might be able to fill it. This process has been responsible for easily fifty percent of my corporate bookings. It's also been responsible for some long friendships.

These days whenever I hear someone say, "I never eat with them before a show," I find myself mentally responding with, "Then you don't really want to work."

Looking at these three choices, and looking at the old promo photo, I find myself searching for a through line, some single piece of advice that can be distilled from all of them. It seems to me what the first two have in common is they emphasize the singular importance of being *uncommon*. And why not? Our business as mystery performers is to demonstrate the extraordinary. But the last choice speaks to the importance of being human and relatable.

Are these things reconcilable? I believe they are. Taken together, they amount to one simple piece of advice. Whatever you do, don't become a cliché. ♦

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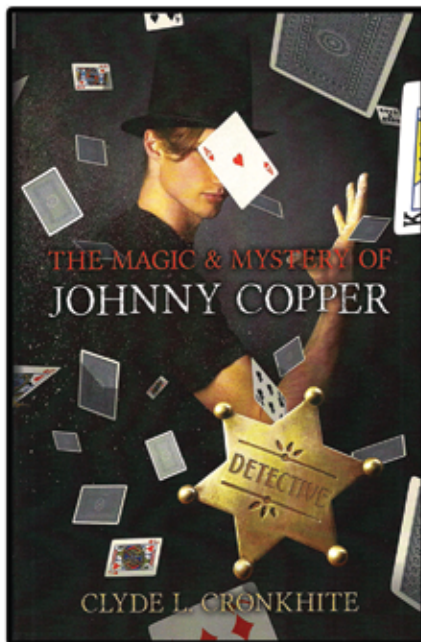
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***The Magic & Mystery of Johnny Copper***  
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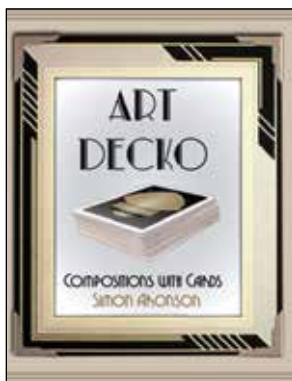
# INFORMED OPINION

## LATEST PRODUCT REVIEWS Compiled and Edited by W. S. Duncan

### ART DECKO BOOK BY SIMON ARONSON

Available from: [www.simonaronson.com](http://www.simonaronson.com)  
Price \$50.00

#### REVIEW BY MICHAEL CLOSE



In the interest of full disclosure, I want to let you know that I have used Simon Aronson's routines to fool and entertain laymen and magicians in both professional and casual performances for almost forty years. Before I ever met Simon, my performances of his great trick, Red See Passover, helped sell copies of his first book, *The Card Ideas of Simon Aronson*. Simon and his wife Ginny are old friends, and I've spent time visiting them in their beautiful condo overlooking Lake Michigan

and the Chicago Loop. But our friendship does not influence my opinion of his new book, *Art Decko*, in the same way that Simon's friendship with his Chicago-session cohorts, David Solomon and John Bannon, does not influence their critical examinations of each other's effects. Simon knows that if I didn't like something about his book, I wouldn't hide it. And there is exactly one thing I don't like about *Art Decko*; but I'll mention that at the end.

It has been thirteen years since Simon has released a big book of his magic, so the publication of *Art Decko* is a happy event for his many fans. I could save a lot of words by simply saying that if you've enjoyed Simon's previous efforts, you'll enjoy *Art Decko*. Everything you've come to expect from an Aronson book is here: a variety of effects, using a variety of methods – including, but not limited to, stacks, easy-to-intermediate sleight of hand, gaffs, math, and a small bit of mental gymnastics; clear, thorough, *thoughtful* explanations; and well-reasoned essays.

Those of you who are unfamiliar with Simon Aronson's style should check out the March 2012 issue of *M-U-M* and a trick called Triple Play. This trick exemplifies Simon's penchant for combining a variety of methods to produce a baffling mystery. (This effect appears in *Art Decko* under its new title, Not a Chance.) A few of the other effects in *Art Decko* have also appeared in publications, so check out back issues of *MAGIC* and *Genii*. If you need further persuasion, here's a brief rundown of what you'll find:

*Art Decko* kicks off with chapter of techniques, including some ideas for the Bedwell Control, a bluff version of Karl Fulves's Oracle procedure, a nifty four-for-four switch by Simon's friend(?) Mergel Funskey, and an updated handling of the Aronson Strip-out Shuffle. The next chapter, On the Spot, offers impromptu effects; none of these are difficult, and they all pack a punch.

The next chapter, Two-Faced, features three tricks using double-faced cards. (You can find the gaffs for the tricks in *Art Decko* on Simon's website.) As is well established by effects like Red See Passover and Sideswiped, Simon is a master of the subtle

and intelligent use of gaffed cards, and the effects he presents in this chapter are no exception. The four tricks in the chapter titled Totals require stacks, and for that reason will probably be performed less often. But if you don't mind going to a little extra trouble, you'll find some inexplicable effects here.

The next two chapters (Birthdays and Memorized Decks) contain the items of most interest to me. If you have been avoiding Birthday Book/Datebook effects because the best versions require a memorized deck, you'll appreciate No-Stack Datebook, a calculation method for preparing a datebook so you know what card appears on each day of the year. Simon has figured out a method that creates a random-looking arrangement of cards, with the added bonus that the same date in different months (i.e. January 15 and March 15) are different cards. John Bannon swears by this method. Also in the Birthdays chapter is a commercial idea for those of you who already perform a datebook routine.

The Memorized Decks chapter has four great items, and I'm going to add all four of them to my repertoire. And that's all I'm going to say about them. Nothing else to see here – move along.

The final two chapters contain some exceptional routines. My favorites are Square Deal (which requires a large stack and some table real estate – but wow what an ending; the two-person card location Medium, Well Done; Random Sample Shuffle-bored, a very commercial version of Simon's famous trick; and Two by Two, in which two freely selected cards are found at two freely selected numbers. The latter routine requires a special something (available from Simon's website), but it is worth the extra expense. This trick will fool anybody.

Reading through *Art Decko* was a joy and a refreshing change from the products currently flooding the marketplace; it was like being offered a steak dinner after having to survive on junk food. Like all of Simon's books it is deep and will reward repeated, thoughtful study. And believe me; if you don't learn these tricks, someone who has is going to fool the crap out of you. Highly recommended.

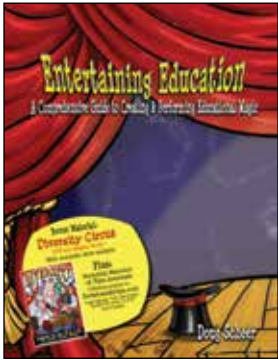
(Oh, yeah. I said there was something about the book I didn't care for: Why in the world would you use the Comic Sans font for the back cover text? I can only assume this was Mergel Funskey's choice.)

### ENTERTAINING EDUCATION: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO CREATING & PERFORMING EDUCATIONAL MAGIC BOOK AND DVD BY DOUG SCHEER

Available from: [www.DougScheer.com](http://www.DougScheer.com)  
Price \$75.00

#### REVIEW BY PAYNE

Doug Scheer is a performer from the Detroit area who is well versed in the art of children's entertainment. These days, however, he focuses mainly on school assembly programs; he has eleven different shows from which to choose from. He is a man after my own heart; all of these shows are thematic, character-driven programs with an extraordinary attention to detail and superb scripting. I have heard it said that no one can wrap a presentation



around a message the way that Doug Scheer can, and after seeing this book and DVD combo pack I have to agree.

A few years back, regarding Mr. Scheer's book/DVD combo *Diversity Circus* I wrote, "Now before you get too excited by thinking that Mr. Scheer has finally released one of his excellent programs to the magic community at large, you should be made aware that this is definitely not the case." Well, unlike then, you can allow yourself to get excited, because

in *Entertaining Education* Mr. Scheer has released many of his well-thought-out routines.

Not that you should perform any of them, of course. After all, they are Mr. Scheer's routines and not yours. He has only graciously included them in this volume as examples of how to convert standard routines and effects into custom routines and effects to be included in an educational-based magic show.

As many assembly and school show performers know, the era of the standard magic show is pretty much over. Schools now require that the programs they book have an educational element or theme. These can vary from drug awareness programs to anti-bullying shows. This, of course, leaves many a magician in a quandary. How does one put together a magic show with an educational theme? [Editor's Note: See Jim Kleefeld's column this month for some excellent advice.] Fortunately for the perplexed prestidigitator, Mr. Scheer shows you how, though I wouldn't call it a comprehensive guide. After all, there is only so much material one can cover in ninety-four pages. Still it is a good start, and will get you on your way.

The volume is divided into three sections. Part One concerns the whys and wherefores of performing an educational magic show: the nature of the show, and how to create routines and structure a program. He covers the Five Types of Educational Magicians, and the importance of having a clear message to deliver by having a concise beginning, middle, and end for your routines, and your overall show. It's a lot of material to cover in the scant eleven pages that he has devoted to the subject, but it is more than enough to get you on your way.

Part Two is the meat of the book. This section contains a smattering of Mr. Scheer's routines from his various programs. Here you can see in great detail how he is able to take standard props and routines and convert them into magic with a message. For me this was the most interesting portion of the book because I am always interested in the creative process of others. Even though Mr. Scheer doesn't delve too deeply into his process in the pages of this book, you can still study and admire the end results.

Section Three deals with the so-called meat and potatoes of the educational magic market: marketing. Here Mr. Scheer points out the importance of building one's brand and establishing relationships with one's client base. Granted he does this in less than ten pages. But he pads it out by including with the book a sampling of his promotional material so you can see firsthand the importance of having Grade-A, high-level postcards and mailers that have all been professionally produced and printed.

This section of the book also contains a very informative and important chapter on performing for and with children who have special needs. This portion alone should be read by anyone who performs regularly for children, because sooner or later you are going to find yourself in a situation where this essay could have helped you out.

Purchasing *Entertaining Education* also allows you access to an online forum that currently contains eighteen video downloads, as well as access to the original *Clips and Scripts* routines.

If you are interested in getting into the educational magic show field, I would recommend investing in this book. If you are going to learn the trade from anyone it might as well be the best. And Mr. Scheer is one of the best currently in the business.

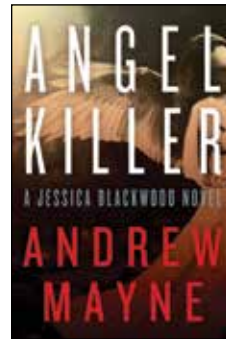
### ANGEL KILLER BOOK

BY ANDREW MAYNE

Available from: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

Price \$15.00

### REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



Many magicians like to read fiction, and mystery stories rank high among the most popular genres. When I come across a good mystery that involves a magician I take notice. Those that are written by magicians garner even more attention. So I was first in line to get a copy of Andrew Mayne's *Angel Killer: A Jessica Blackwood Novel*. I loved it.

Jessica Blackstone, pardon me, I mean *Blackwood* is a third-generation magician, her grandfather being famous for big stage shows and her father being semi-famous

for smaller stage shows. After spending her childhood and teenage years working as a walk-on assistant, then box-jumper, then an award-winning performer in her own right, she left entertainment to become an FBI agent. Now the feds have a serial killer on their hands who creates puzzling tableaux with each murder. They call in Blackwood as an agent and analyst to explain the mysterious circumstances of each death, and (they hope) to catch the killer.

Mayne's novel joins a checkered catalog of magic-themed fiction books. In 1937, Walter Gibson, writing under his shadowy pseudonym Maxwell Grant, had a short story published in *Crime Busters Magazine* called "Norgil – Magician." It was the first in a series of detective tales featuring a magician as the main character. Norgil was a stage magician and amateur detective who solved crimes that baffled the police. Gibson went on to write numerous fictional mystery stories that revolved around Harry Blackstone Sr. and were published in the comic magazine *SuperMagician*. Since then, many books have been written with magic as a theme or with a magician as the central character. No doubt many of you have read some of James Swain's series that began with *Grift Sense*, Jeffery Deaver's masterful novel *The Vanished Man*, or Glen David Gold's *Carter Beats the Devil*. Magic fiction is almost a full-blown genre of its own, going back as far as Robert-Houdin's autobiography, *King of the Conjurers*. I have collected and cataloged 1,100 magic-themed fiction books. Although half of them are children's books, of the adult fiction, I can only recommend a couple of dozen as great reading. *Angel Killer* makes the upper echelon of that small collection.

This is a modern murder mystery novel in the tradition of James Patterson, Patricia Corwell, or Lee Child. There is a modicum of personality profiling, but it is mostly police procedural, with descriptions of the events of each murder, and the investigation. In many instances the killer has used some secretive actions to make the deaths appear mysterious or unbelievable. The first body, for example, is found half-buried in a cemetery, extruded from the ground as if the dead body had woken and crawled up through

the dirt and out of the grave. The second body found is that of a pilot sitting in his WWII airplane, which had mysteriously disappeared while flying over the ocean seventy-five years ago. Agent Blackwood uses her background in magic to determine that those deaths were staged like magic illusions.

In many cases Mayne cites magic illusions and principles to explain how events occurred in the mystery. Very few actual secrets are exposed, because he often cites trick titles but does not go into detail about how those tricks would work. For example, when explaining how a body dropped from the sky without buildings or aircraft in the vicinity, Jessica simply states that it's like the old magic trick of baking a cake in a hat. She then goes into detail of how the killer accomplished the body drop but never actually tips the cake in hat routine. The facts and procedures ring true, perhaps because the author's father and brother are both FBI agents.

Mayne's writing is surprisingly fresh and clear. His text moves the plot constantly forward and wraps all the events together. Thankfully, he has avoided the current trend of writing a novel in crisscrossing patches of varying locations and timelines. His descriptions are clear and readable, but not flowery. He spends just enough time giving personal details that we begin to know the characters, but not so much that we have to empathize with their past interpersonal relationships.

*Angel Killer* is a fun read that goes quickly, holds your interest, and spices up your week with both a great story and some solid magic. And, yes, it is a legitimate book, published in trade paperback by Harper Collins, not self-published at a vanity press. The book's subtitle leads me to believe that there will be sequels, and I'm up for any more that Andrew Mayne wants to write.

### THE ART OF PLAY THREE-DVD SET BY TERRY WARD

Available from: [www.TheMagicEstate.com](http://www.TheMagicEstate.com)

Price \$60.00

#### REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



These three DVDs showcase the magic of longtime professional performer, magic instructor, and mentor, Terry Ward. I was not familiar with him prior to this, but I did recognize many of the people, including

Giovanni Livera and Jon Armstrong, who do call Terry Ward teacher, mentor, and friend. And after viewing the set, I think you'll understand why they do.

The discs give us a good sense of the man's style and material. To be precise, Disc One shows, explains, and discusses just two card tricks: Ward's take on the Chicago Opener/Red Hot Mama, and his three-selection variation of the (Carlyle) Homing Card/51 Cards to Pocket combination that has become almost standard. These tricks are familiar to most readers, and if you perform table-to-table, or strolling magic on any regular basis, you probably have your own versions of one or both of these already. Disc Two is entirely concerned with Ward's routine for the venerable Three Shell Game. We see him perform it multiple times in different settings, and then alone in the studio he performs the routine again and explains every bit of it. Disc Three gives us more performances before live audiences in different settings, and then

Giovanni Livera interviews Mr. Ward, asking mostly about his career in magic, choice of material, and his approach to performing. The production values are very good, and the discs are quite watchable. Giovanni is an energetic and enthusiastic interviewer who seems to really know and enjoy his subject.

So will you find value in this? I think so. There is always much to learn from the small, yet important changes a working pro makes to routines that you already do. To the Chicago Opener, for instance, Ward has added a third beat. Although I've often thought about satisfying the "Rule of Three" in this way, the third effect that Ward adds is not one I would have chosen. In fact, it seems that it would force the routine to end on a smaller effect that's not easily appreciated by the audience. (It involves reading the fine print on the Guarantee Joker) However, the reactions that Ward gets from this ending are surprisingly strong, and do seem to provide a climax to the trick. And therein lies an uncommon value in these discs: we see several shows filmed before different audiences, showing us what we would be seeing if we were there, on the street with our kids in a Disney theme park, or at the Magic Mansion Theater in Orlando, or the more intimate parlor setting of the Magic Estate. It is from these shows that I am able to say that the reaction to this trick is consistently better than I expected.

I don't know who the first person was to combine Francis Carlyle's Homing Card from *Stars of Magic* (aka the repeat card to pocket) with David Williamson's 51 Cards to Pocket. Perhaps it was Terry Ward? I'm willing to say it was everyone at the same time, and Terry Ward was among them. His approach is, again, to add a third beat; this time by performing the trick with three selections rather than just one. This is a substantial routine that could close a set, and it appears to serve that function when Ward performs it. The handling is not overly difficult, but you will have to palm the entire deck under the cover of broad misdirection. The explanations are clear and complete, and the discussion introduces the concept of playing with the audience.

The second disc is entirely dedicated to Ward's handling of the Three Shell Game. As with the card material, if you perform this trick already, you'll not find much drastically different here. However, you might find a touch or two that will improve what you're already doing. I know I did. His use of the bell is interesting, and his handling of the sucker phase, where the audience sees the pea sneak from one shell to the other, is superior. The routine itself is solid and reliable. It's not as audacious as Phil Cass's routine, not as funny or charming as Pop Hayden's, nor is it as much fun as Bob Sheets's. It is however, better than most. So unless you're one of the three guys I just mentioned, I think this is worth your attention.

The last disc shows a number of performances. Ward is excellent in front of audiences of adults. He is comfortable and loose, and I got the feeling that these tricks were designed for performance in these venues, for these audiences. In front of children in the street, and in character as a New Jersey Wise Guy, he is less facile. In the long interview section on the third disc, he talks about changing characters without changing material. This explains why he's doing adult card tricks for children aged three or four. He does as well as could be expected with that, however, one has to wonder how much better he'd be if he were working with material that was tailored to the age and attention span of the audience. During the performances, it is clear that some of the children don't have any idea what the point of the Three Shell Game is. Many barely have the motor skills necessary to select a card and show it to the audience, and some don't have any idea what card they've selected. Accordingly, I would not recommend this if you are looking specifically for street magic to perform

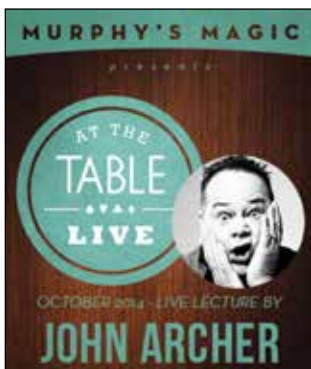
for really young children. However, if you work for adults in any setting where you can interact with the audience, there are lessons here that were obviously gleaned from years in the trenches. You'd be foolish to ignore that sort of resource, even if you don't adopt his changes.

I have to admit that at the end of it all, I have only a vague sense for Ward's performing philosophy – the "Art of Play" – and I'm not able to put it into words. I don't think he ever really did explain it, at least, not to any length. Certainly, he encourages us to follow his example and interact with the crowd. You see him do this in the live performances. He gets to know them by asking where they're from, and riffing off of that. I suspect there's more to it than that, but I can't really say.

**AT THE TABLE: JOHN ARCHER LIVE LECTURE**  
**AVAILABLE AT VANISHING INC. AND OTHER ONLINE SITES**

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
*Price \$24.95*

**REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFLED**



Spend an afternoon with John Archer; you will be very glad you did. In this downloadable video, British comedy icon Archer teaches several tricks, adlibs through some funny bits, shares tips on performance, and generally speaks to you via the camera as if he was hanging out in your den. Andi Gladwin quietly and modestly hosts Archer, wisely staying clear of the wit and interjecting only occasionally with comments or suggestions.

Archer begins by swallowing a fully blown 260-balloon, slowly, a bit at a time, until it is completely gone. He has too small of a studio audience to get much of a response, so it comes across as mildly funny and somewhat wondrous. I get the impression that with a larger studio audience it would have gone over much bigger. He teaches the technique and then goes into his version of Anniversary Waltz. The tricks are good, but the post-explanation discussion is great. Archer discusses not just the mechanics of the trick, but also the nuances of setup, table usage, and spectator management. There is also some very important advice about creating visual reveals.

Archer then talks about billet handling and teaches a great utility move, though without a specific polished routine. Next he presents a stand-up card and mentalism routine based on Kenton Knepper's Kolossal Killer, the prediction of which he has narrowed down to one card in a wallet. He sits to discuss theory with Gladwin, and tips some great advice and ideas in a wonderful informal session. Archer talks about the value of committing to a gag to get more out of it, the nuances of comedy writing, and how writing differs for magic shows and television. He next presents a routine with ESP cards in which the spectator matches several face-up cards to several face-down cards. It is a very nice routine, but to present it you will need a table with a fair amount of space.

Blank Night is next. This is Archer's commercial routine with which he fooled Penn and Teller on British National Television. It is a commercial product (sold by Vanishing Inc.), but with some time and attention to detail you could conceivably make it up yourself from his instructions here. He also spends some time

talking (very positively) about being on the *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* TV show and the aftermath of "winning" the right to perform in Las Vegas.

His next teaching trick is very strong. Using red and blue decks, he and a spectator each shuffle their deck and deal down the top cards. They match. Again they shuffle and deal; the top cards match again. For the third time, they trade decks and the top cards still match. For a finale, the spectator chooses one of the three cards and Archer shows he had predicted that card would be selected. Not only is the trick strong, the story line that precedes it is remarkably memorable. Archer closes the lecture with a demonstration of Streets, his commercial book test. It is a great test (that we reviewed in March), but you cannot do it without buying the gaffed books, so this bit becomes nothing more than a dealer demo.

The video and audio are of the very best quality, and Archer is in top form, showing and teaching some memorable magic and comedy. Gladwin interjects a few times during the session to bring forth comments and questions sent in to the original live lecture via texts and emails. These are mostly praise and do not really add anything significant to the lecture, especially since you will be watching it after the fact. That aside, there is a lot to like about this almost-three-hour-long video session with John Archer. It is well worth the modest cost. If you aren't hooked yet, I'll just tease you with this: My favorite item was a card prediction with a very free selection and an impossible hand-written revelation. It's near the end of the session, and I won't say anything more about it because it is too good.

**REVOLUTION OF JUMBO CARD MANIPULATION DVD**  
**BY LEE ANG HSUAN**

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
*Price \$39.95*

**REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA**



This is the second DVD on the subject of card manipulation by the splendid Korean magician Lee Ang Hsuan, aka Anson Lee. This disc contains material of an advanced nature, as compared with his first release. Although the title says "Jumbo Cards," the first two techniques taught are for normal-size cards with colored faces. The remaining techniques and sequences are performed with special-size jumbo cards. These are not the standard jumbo cards we are accustomed to. They are much smaller than a deck of Bicycle jumbo cards. They are of a similar size to what are sold as jumbo cards in a dollar store. Hsuan has actually produced for sale a very high quality version of that size card; each deck contains cards with regular faces as well as colored faces. The backs are black, allowing for some of the black art techniques to be used (and some are shown on the disc). Although manipulation of standard jumbo cards has been performed for many years by such magicians as Zina Bennett, Earl Ray Wilcox, Toyosane Sanada, Takamitsu Uchida, and Mahka Tendo, these techniques are quite difficult and not always deceptive. The size of the cards used in this product and the techniques associated with them make the addition of this material to an act attainable to the dedicated magician with average size hands.

Produced by Magic Soul, this disc has fine video quality. The audio track is appropriate music; there are no vocals contained herein. All of the teaching is done via visual demonstration of the techniques and subtitles. These combine to teach the material in a very clear manner. Again, I must commend the producers for supplying superb crediting for the moves and their history. The explanations often make use of a mirror to provide simultaneous front and back view of the moves. The disc begins with a section on the preparation of the cards and moves into the Cross Color Fan Production, done with regular size cards. Here Hsuan details the method used to accurately separate stocks of cards into individual colors. This is a core system that will be used throughout the remainder of the disc. The sequence is simultaneously done with both hands. First a single production of four different color cards with a display in square formation is explained, and then productions of color fans follow. The next sequence also uses regular size cards and is titled the Waterfall Production. This is a very pretty interlocked production of singles followed by cascades of cards divided into separate colors.

The first jumbo production technique is called Normal Production. This is based on Jahn Gallo's Osaka Bills. Single Production combines back palm technique with the Tenkai palm technique to produce single jumbo cards in each hand, followed by double fans. The Perfect Production is a technique Hsuan uses often to produce jumbo cards singly with both hands. The position used allows for a quicker and easier production than Tenkai palm, but it is a bit angle sensitive. Not such an issue if you work more upstage, as favored by most Korean performers. The crossed arm position seems to hide many of the angles well, but there are no details given concerning stealing the stacks of cards and getting into that position without flashing. This seems to be an issue with many of the teaching videos of this nature; I am not singling Hsuan out, but I think that type of information is crucial in performing material of this nature.

Dual Production covers producing jumbos in singles and pairs with both hands. This combines a variant of Perfect Production in the right hand, with the cards held in more of a back palm position, with the Perfect Production in the left hand. The idea of producing a card and holding it in position while producing a second card is a lovely visual conceit; it makes this sequence look very different. Again, I wonder how you can convincingly get into this position without flashing. Multi Production uses the Perfect Production to produce and vanish cards, creating the illusion of cards jumping from hand to hand. The technique section finishes out with Jumbo Color Fan. This is a single-hand production of four different color card fans from a back palm position. He uses the system shown earlier on the disc to produce the separate colors. He also uses a fan held in the left hand for additional cover. This is a great sequence.

The final section of the disc teaches an entire routine using some techniques that differ from those already taught. He begins by showing the pockets and holders he uses to conceal the cards, and then goes through the full setup of the routine, as well teaching these other techniques. He finishes by teaching the full performance of the entire routine. The steals and blocking are fully covered here. There is some great teaching, with excellent attention to detail.

If you have any interest in the subject of card manipulation for the stage, you will want to purchase this disc and study its contents. The majority of this material is challenging, but certainly not beyond the capabilities of the average magician who will diligently pursue this study. Highly recommended.

## COLLISION V2 DVD

By RAVI MAYAR

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$25.00

### REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS



Variety is the spice of life. This DVD has a variety of effects. Ravi Mayar has compiled a series of impromptu-looking effects for the close-up, street performer, and party-strolling magician. Each effect uses common objects that you will already have or are readily available.

Ravi is a good teacher and covers both the performance and explanation portions well. Included on the DVD are routines using bills, coins, business cards, matches, bottles, cans, Smart phones, finger rings, chewing gum, and Tic Tacs. All of the routines have an impromptu feel.

I felt that several of the routines looked somewhat unnatural, and even awkward, in the handling and presentation. There are a few good items included here. The single match routine looks good and there is a match and coin routine that is simple and direct. The routine with a finger ring vanishing and jumping from finger to finger can sometimes be confusing.

While there are a few items that are good (not great), most of you may want to pass on this offering. If you are looking for some impromptu magic and you have never performed a finger ring routine, you may want to invest in this DVD, but if you are looking for performance material for your paid performances, you will probably want to look elsewhere.

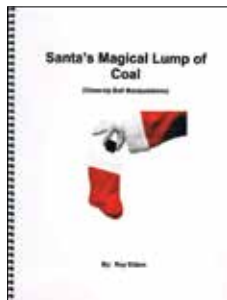
## SANTA'S MAGICAL LUMP OF COAL MANUSCRIPT

By ROY EIDEM

Available from: <http://happy4magic.com>

Price \$25.00

### REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



Roy Eidem is a serious student of sleight of hand, as evidenced by his presentations at the invitation-only Fechter's event. His routines are always carefully structured and theatrical. He previously released *Coins by Roy*, a large book with plenty of great routines. I own it and recommend it. This latest is a manuscript of twenty-one pages that delineates a single close-up routine themed for Christmas parties; but it is certainly doable any time of the year.

In the routine, you first show a magic wand, and then vanish and reproduce it. Tapping your hand with the wand makes a lump of coal appear. The coal vanishes, reappears, and then transforms into two and then three lumps of coal. Two are put away and the third magically changes into a diamond, which is given to the lady spectator as a gift.

This is a simply structured routine with many magical changes, reasonably easy to do, and fairly straightforward. It is written up in succinct steps and fully illustrated with photographs showing hand positions and exposed views. One nice feature is Eidem's constant crediting of various segments, including vanishes and

productions based on work by Cellini, Roy Benson, David Williamson, and Al Schneider. He gives enough of a patter outline that you can get the gist of the presentation, but leaves the full script up to the reader to develop. This is not for the novice, but is well within the grasp of anyone who has performed cups and balls or similar routines. I particularly like that he has outlined the presentation as a three-act play. Not only has he structured the set correctly, he also describes it as such and explains why.

The booklet is short but nicely home-produced with wire spiral binding and stiff covers. Grab your magic wand, round up a few lumps of coal and some fake diamonds, and you will have a fine piece of magic to show off this holiday season. If you like the routine, check out *And His Name Was...Houdini*, another of Roy's fine products, where you even get great props along with the routine.

### HEIRLOOM DELUXE: EMILY'S REVENGE TRICK BY JAMIE BADMAN AND COLIN MILLER

Available from: [www.alakazammagic.co.uk](http://www.alakazammagic.co.uk)

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$50.00

#### REVIEW BY PAYNE



Magic, like a fine wine with time can mature and acquire a depth and richness it may have lacked at its inception. Or it can just go completely off and turn into vinegar. Fortunately for us, Heirloom Deluxe: Emily's Revenge achieves the former status instead of the latter.

The original Heirloom came out a dozen years ago or so and quickly became a magic classic, especially among those who perform bizarre magic. For those who might be unaware of this effect the routine is as follows. The magician tells the story of his great, or great, great uncle Charlie: a rogue, scoundrel, and raconteur. He was the very reason you became a magician. You tell the story about his involvement in a game of cards, how everything came to a head, and its ultimate outcome, which was dependent on the final card of the draw being his lucky card. The spectator is asked what they think the identity of this card might be. After the card is named the magician opens his billfold, which has been sitting in plain view throughout the entire presentation, and removes from it his family heirloom: a photograph of his Uncle Charlie holding the card he drew in that fateful final hand. This is placed face down on the table. Next a letter from Charlie is taken from the wallet and read aloud, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt, once the photograph is turned face up, that the spectator has indeed named your uncle's lucky card.

This, of course, is Kenton Knepper's Kolossal Killer with a lot of window dressing to give it atmospheric charm, all of which is retained in Heirloom Deluxe. Not only is Uncle Charlie back, but for the first time we get to see Emily. The routine also has a darker, more sinister bent to it, perfect for the Halloween season.

The storyline for this deluxe version is basically the same. All is dependent on the turn of a card. However in this version Uncle Charlie is both a gambler and a philanderer; he has a squeeze on the side. Emily, of course, knows all about his extramarital affair. In the end, seeing the writing on the wall, she bids her beloved Charlie adieu and in her farewell letter provides tickets to the

Americas for him and his new flame Lucy aboard the luxury liner Titanic, thus giving the story a more macabre finale as well as (for all those who own a copy) the perfect segue into the trick White Star. If you don't wish such a downer ending for your presentation, the letters used in the original Heirloom are provided to use instead.

When they say Heirloom Deluxe, they truly mean deluxe because everything you need has been provided. You get two sets of letters (the original and the new ones with the Titanic twist), a new set of photographs featuring Emily and Charlie holding the lucky card, and a detailed DVD that not only contains all of the video instructions and tips one would need but also PDFs of the original instruction manual, as well as many other manuals and instruction sheets teaching alternative handlings and routines that have been developed for the Heirloom cards over the years. There are also PDFs of the original Charlie cards and letters as well as the new letters and Charlie and Emily cards. I can't really think of anything else one would need that hasn't been included on the DVD.

I would use a wallet devoted to this trick; I know people who keep the setup in their day-to-day wallet, ready to go at a moment's notice. So as you may already have determined there is no setup for this trick. One simply has to throw one's wallet on the table and begin the story. Reset is instant; you just put the picture and letter back where they came from and you're set to perform it again. It will take a bit of practice so you can pull the correct picture out of your wallet with no fumbling or pausing to think exactly where it might be. But once you learn the indexing system and become familiar with this, it should become second nature.

My only complaint about this new version is that the producers were a little heavy handed on the patina. So the playing card isn't as clear as it was in the original set. If you are thinking of performing this in dim light, you might want to have a secondary light source and a magnifying glass on hand. But apart from that minor issue, this is a great atmospheric piece of magic that you will be tempted to keep on your person at all times.

### FAIR & SQUARE TRICK BY JEFF ALAN AND THE ROYAL MINT

Distributed by Fun Incorporated

Price \$19.95

#### REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



Picture this: You show the audience a half dollar sitting on the palm of your hand. You say, "This might look like a half dollar, but it might be counterfeit. The only way to tell is to bring the coin to the US mint." You open your other hand, revealing a roll of breath mints. Pause for the laugh. The wrapper of the roll does say, in fine print, "manufactured by the US mint," which you might point out if nobody gets the joke. (Performance note: if people aren't laughing, it doesn't mean they didn't get the joke.) Regardless of the reaction, you continue, "Yup, the mint is the only way to tell if the coin is fair and square." At this point, you tap the half dollar with the candy roll, and the coin visibly changes to a square coin. Pause for laughter and surprise.

That's it; that's what this does. If you share Jeff Alan's fondness

for puns, this might be for you. If not, I've probably already lost you. For those on the fence, a few observations: 1) The half dollar doesn't change to a square version of a half dollar. It's more like someone cut a square section out of a regular half dollar. In fact, that's it exactly. 2) A little bit of tape, judiciously applied to the inside of the gaff, will eliminate the mechanical clinking sound at the moment of the change. I'm not sure this will improve the overall effect, but it can't hurt. 3) This is a comedy reworking of a familiar effect. Like that effect, this one could probably be done on the spectator's hand, which, as we all know, always, always increases the impact at least a bazillion times. 4) The instructions are adequate, but a photo or a line drawing would have been helpful. 5) The gimmick that you're provided with is pretty nice, and could be used in other routines. It won't fit over a half dollar, but there are several other applications.

### THE ANSWER ONE-TRICK DVD

By RON SALAMANGKERO

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$30.00

### REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



According to the ad copy, The Answer is the answer to the question, "Want the ultimate torn and restored card routine?" And sure, let's say I do. Is this it? I suppose that depends. If you have no other experience with torn and restored card routines, this will be "the ultimate," as far as you know. Those who have been paying attention to the piece-by-piece restoration ever since David Copperfield

did it on television (more than two decades ago) would probably rephrase the question to be, "Can you do Yves Doumergue's Ripped and Restored, or Garcia's variant, Torn, but end clean and immediately hand out the signed, restored card?" And those same people would be interested in The Answer, because it would be pretty amazing if you could do that.

The good news is that even if you're inclined to be that picky about the question, the answer is yes, this solution does that. A card is selected and signed across the face (not just in the margin). It is convincingly torn into four pieces, which are shown separately. Two are pocketed, leaving your hands free to cleanly put the first two pieces back together. You get the third piece and restore this to the other two. You then reattach the last piece. To this point, the effect looks pretty much like Doumergue's original handling. However, as soon as you have restored the last piece in The Answer, all you're holding is the signed, restored card. And Mr. Salamangkero says that you can hand the card out for examination, and the spectator can take the card home and examine it later.

I'm not saying I don't believe him; I just want to be clear that I haven't tested this myself. I do have some experience with the "adhesive technology" involved (I assume most magicians do) and although I know of performers who use this principle regularly, I don't, because my own results have been hit-or-miss.

What I don't believe is the claim that this restoration is "unlike any that have come before" and "a totally new method," when in fact, it, like most handlings, seems to be based on Doumergue's routine. But there is no mention of that here. This is hard to excuse, since World Magic Shop, the producers of this item, stock and sell

Yves's DVD, and have for some time. There are, in fact, no credits at all, which prompts another question: how can this handling be "the ultimate" if nothing came before it?

So the good news is that this does what it says, assuming it works. There are also considerations that you might call bad news. The part of The Answer that is new requires a fair bit of preparation, and while you could do most of it well in advance of performance, there's another part you'd probably want to do closer to show time. (Again, I don't speak from extensive experience.) This work is not too difficult for anyone who has ever made his own double face or double back cards. Each time you perform the effect, you will use two prepared cards, and these cannot be used again. With a lot of thought, I suppose you could work out a way to carry these gaffs and use them in a strolling or restaurant environment. That doesn't sound like a good time to me, but it's entirely possible that you're not as lazy as I am. Finally, there are angle considerations here that are comparable to those of any of the piece-by-piece restorations developed so far. Basically, you want everyone in front of you, and no one to the sides. The handling requires a delicate touch, but is not beyond the average card handler.

Bottom line: practice and preparation are required, consideration of prop and audience management is advised, but this is potentially a very strong mystery. But there is a shocking lack of credits.

### FLATLINE TRICK

By JAY SANKEY

Available from: [www.jaysankey.com](http://www.jaysankey.com)

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

### REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



Flatline is a prop plus DVD release from the prolific magic creator Jay Sankey. It includes a fifty-six-minute instructional video, a special Sharpie marker (each hand-crafted by Roy Kueppers), and a matching Sharpie marker.

The video, sound, and disc navigation are all fine, with the usual one-camera shoot and style (some cursing) that are Jay's trademarks. The basic effect is that a Sharpie marker, which has been used in another effect, is magically

smashed and flattened. The spectator can examine the flattened marker. Jay starts out by showing a very easy method of switching the regular marker for the gimmicked one – a method anyone can do. Then he moves on to a basic handling in which a lighter is held under the marker when it is held between the palms. Jay shows other handlings using a napkin and a bill to effect the change.

He teaches a way to use it with the classic change of an incorrect card into a selection using a double lift. It adds another strong moment into an already strong effect. Next he incorporates the gimmick into the Leipzig Card Stab routine. Jay is a solid performer and shares some moves, gags, tips, and advice as he explains the various routines and effects.

The Sobriety Test challenges a spectator to pass his ring over the marker. The Paddle Move is explained and used in a mentalism application of the gimmicked marker. Jay leaves no

stone unturned as he shows many uses for this unique prop. You may come with your own ideas, but if you don't you will still have plenty to choose from.

There are five bonus effects taught; some of which have nothing to do with the markers. Captain Crunch allows you to eat a toothpick and Magnetic is an update of the old Snapper idea applied to the cap of the marker. Remarkable allows you to take a single Sharpie and split it into three separate markers. (This needs a jacket, but it saves time if you have to have multiple cards signed.) In I.Q. Test you draw a black dot onto a playing card with the marker. For a moment the dot becomes a real hole and the performer slips the marker through the hole! To finish, the hole transforms back into a drawn black dot.

To sum up, the marker and the included routines will give you many possible uses; there may be more that you will come up with using this unusual prop. Altering an item and leaving it in its changed state is strong magic and Flatline fits the bill.

**ROUGHING STICK UTILITY PRODUCT**  
**By HARRY ROBSON & LARRY TURNER**

Available from: [www.vanishinginmagic.com](http://www.vanishinginmagic.com)  
Price \$14.99

**REVIEW BY PAYNE**



This is a nifty little item. I regretted not purchasing one at the last convention I attended. So I was thrilled to find one in my box of things to review. If you do any sort of trick that uses a rough/smooth deck, you're going to want to have one of these in your kit. If you use any sort

of trick, or have been thinking of trying out a trick, that uses partially roughed cards, then you are going to want to pick up one of these. If you've ever needed to rough cards on the fly or touch up an already roughed deck that isn't working as well as it once was, you're going to want to pick up one, or maybe even two of these.

While far from being a complete replacement for the classic spray-on treatments, this roughing stick does things the spray can't. For instance, you can make a very serviceable Brainwave or Invisible Deck on the fly. The online instructional video shows a guy making up a Brainwave from a new deck in less than two minutes. There's no muss, no fuss, and no toxic smell.

It does leave a noticeable and somewhat uneven sheen on the cards, which is particularly noticeable on low number cards that have a lot of white surface showing. So I wouldn't recommend this stick for a full-face coating. But for a partial roughing this stuff is hard to beat. You simply rub the stick down the middle of the face on one card and the middle of the back of the card below it and you have a rough/smooth pair. Best of all you have a rough/smooth pair that sticks when handled by the middle but separates freely when handled by the corners; this gives you a much more natural appearance when handling the deck.

How many times have you taken out a rough/smooth deck only to discover it's not sticking together as well as it should? You'd have to handle the deck gingerly or leave it out of your set all together. But now, with one of these in your emergency fix-it pack, you can touch up that troublesome deck in a minute or two and keep that routine in your set.

The online tutorial says you can get a hundred decks or so out of a single stick. I have no way to verify this, because I'm not going to sit down and make up a hundred decks. But the stick showed little wear after making up a single deck, so I have no reason to doubt their claims. If you use a rough/smooth deck in any of your shows, you really should keep one of these on hand.

**BLIND DATE ONE-TRICK DVD AND PROPS**  
**By STEPHEN LEATHWAITE**

Distributed by *Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
Price \$35.00

**REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT**



The male performer shows a female spectator a dozen or so "dating" game cards (included), about the size and feel of Trivial Pursuit cards. One is placed aside as a prediction; the spectator chooses one of the other cards through a "random process." The eliminated cards are shown to be photos and statistics on potential dates, similar to what can be found on an Internet dating site. The woman sees all the guys she didn't choose – a wide variety of types. The chosen date is found to match the prediction, but there is a bonus surprise.

Who is *not* likely to perform Blind Date? Female magicians will not. Married guys (ahem) probably won't. Magicians with chops perhaps will not. Magicians at trade shows or high-class venues likely will not. Young magicians (minors) shouldn't, but I wouldn't put it past them. The trick is a thinly veiled attempt to pick up or get a date with a member of the opposite sex.

Blind Date, as you may have guessed, uses a force to lead the female participant to a particular card. The "choice" matches the prediction, and the surprise is that those two cards contain a photo of the performer, implying she has found a "perfect match."

The main force uses three dice (not included). The odds of success with this force are not favorable, so Leathwaite has a backup force that is almost sure fire, allowing for the axiom in magic that nothing is fully certain. He describes his own force, which parallels the thinking of a Jerry Sadowitz technique. A glide force is also described. This is weak, in my opinion. There are better ways.

Leathwaite prefers the routine using dice. One of the reasons cited is that it "almost always works." Stephen must be luckier than the rest of us, because I did a little math. You need to hit one of two totals with three dice for this force to work. There are "six cubed" or 216 combinations of the numbers on three dice. Twenty-five percent of those permutations will yield the desired result. The probability of success on any of three rolls is just over forty-two percent. So, nearly six times out of ten performances this approach will fail. Then you go to the backup force, but you are in the awkward position of having to explain why you were rolling the dice in the first place.

There have been worse "pick-up tricks" put on the market in the past. Blind Date does have a lighthearted approach and could be a great ice breaker and laugh-getter in the right hands. It is clean, and performed correctly, does not demean the spectator. There are no gimmicks to hide and it is easy to perform.

On the other hand, Leathwaite admits that he does have risqué lines for certain settings. During the closing credits, it is

suggested that if you do score with Blind Date you should practice safe sex. Unfortunately, I can envision this routine presented by lounge lizard magicians who will bring to it all the qualities that makes the public image of magicians slip to the negative.

My apologies to Stephen for having the doubtful luck of drawing an old fuddy-duddy like me to review his trick. This one is not for me.

### DOMINO EFFECT TRICK

BY ALEX PANDREA

Available from: [www.thebluecrown.com](http://www.thebluecrown.com)

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

#### REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



Here is the basic effect as experienced by the spectator on this half-hour DVD from Blue Crown. Alex displays two packets of artificial sweetener, one pink and one yellow. The spectator holds one in her closed fist, while he holds the other. Visibly, the packet in his hand changes from yellow to pink; the spectator is now holding the yellow packet in her hand. The same effect has been popular for

many years using silver and copper coins.

After the live performance, Alex shows you how to construct the gimmick and how to perform the routine (the DVD includes one handmade gimmick). The change is very visible, but after the change the packet cannot be examined. Alex provides several additional tips and bonus ideas (with the change happening in a coffee cup and a card box). He also teaches a completely impromptu and ungimmicked transposition of sugar packets (rolled into balls).

Picture, sound, and navigation are all up to par. I played with the included gimmick; you must take care to not flash it after the change has occurred. Angles will need to be carefully considered. He explains, but does not really demonstrate, how to switch the packets after the change.

I will keep this short and sweet. It's a neat idea but it has angle problems. I would have been happy to have learned this in a set of lecture notes or on a longer compilation DVD. For thirty-five bucks this left me sour, not sweet.

### MAGNETIC DECK PROP

BY GERONIMO GRANELL

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$29.95

#### REVIEW BY PAYNE



Magnetic Deck is a gaff that consists of four small card packets that are hinged together accordion style on their long sides and which can be locked together as a single packet when folded up. If you can think of a use for a gimmick of this nature, then rush right out and buy yourself one. As for the rest of us, we shall sit and ponder what such a device might be used

for, and what wonderful effects could be accomplished with it. If you sit and think long and hard enough you might be able to come up with something to do with it. But don't hold your breath. Even after watching all twenty-three effects on the included DVD, which show everything its creator has concocted with this unusual contraption, I am still at a loss for what one can do with this thing, or a reason as to why anyone would want to.

Granell shows us that as a block of sixteen cards it can be used as a locator card. Why one would want to use a clunky stack of sixteen cards as a locator when such classic methods as a corner short, a marked card, or a crimp can do the same thing with a lot less effort? There are some card revelations shown on the DVD, most of which, with a modicum of practice can be done with a regular deck of cards. There are also some juggling feats involving the tossing, kicking, and catching of the sixteen-card packet shown on the DVD. Again most of these can be accomplished with a bit of practice without the aid of the device. There is a clumsy coin routine and a strange card stab routine, as well as a completely unexplained resting of a packet of cards atop a bottle while you shuffle the rest of the deck; this utilizes the magnetic qualities of this device. But oddly, most of the effects taught on the DVD don't use the hinged or magnetic properties of the Magnetic Deck and could all be accomplished simply by gluing a stack of sixteen cards or so into a block with a glue stick.

The tricks that employ the hinging nature of this device are mostly used to replicate (badly) some of those fancy flourishes made so popular recently by the Buck Twins. I suppose that makes the Magnetic Deck a modern day equivalent of the old Electric Deck. Except for the fact that there are things one can do with an Electric Deck that are either funny or magical.

The only useful things I can think of for this gimmick are to use it as a document holder or to stick notes to your refrigerator. All right, in all honesty it could be used as a magnetic holdout that you could put in your back pocket. But the magnet isn't that strong, so it even falls short on that front. So the only use I can think of for this device is if you need to fill a playing-card-shaped hole in the bottom of your disused-magic drawer. ♦

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# TREASURES FROM THE SALON DE MAGIE

BY KEN KLOSTERMAN



## DR. JAKS'S BOOK OF MYSTERIES



This will be the last column from the Salon de Magie. It has been my pleasure to open the Salon visually to the readers of *M-U-M*. For this column, we focus on the fabulous Stanley Jaks. At one time in his early cabaret work, Jaks carried his tricks from table to table in a leather pouch and the pockets of his suit. He found, however, that carrying his props in an oversized book – one that looked like a large rare volume – was more appropriate in “high-class” venues and aroused the curiosity of his spectators. Here are a few details surrounding the origin of his Book of Mysteries, from the transcript of a talk Jaks presented to the Magician’s Guild on October 17, 1951, in New York City.

“Close-up magic has always been a favorite of mine, but I never dreamed of doing small effects professionally. While playing the Palace Hotel at St. Moritz, a swanky mountain resort in Switzer-

land, the fabulous Aga Khan invited me to entertain his guests at his table after my show. Later he gave me and the hotel manager the idea to entertain as a table magician, which I did with very good results for very good money.

“Suddenly, I was faced with problems I had never had to think about before. How to bring my materials to the table, what routines to use, and how to stage and present my effects? First, how to bring the little miniature cups, balls, magic wand, and cards to a table? First I used a zippered case. I didn’t like that, so I changed to a little suitcase; but going through a hotel hall or a dining room in a tuxedo or tails with a suitcase looked even sillier. Then came the idea of a book – a big red book, divided into compartments for each trick. In addition, this constituted excellent publicity. Who wouldn’t wonder about a well-dressed gentleman (that’s me!) walking through a room with a big bible? Naturally, they would ask the Captain and he would explain: ‘That’s Dr. Jaks and his Book of Mysteries.’ I would introduce myself, sit down at the table, and after a little speech of introduction, I would open my Book of Mysteries, and voila – about ten or fifteen minutes of close-up magic would begin.”

The book, fourteen by eleven by four inches and bound in red leather, not only attracted attention to Jaks, it held that attention by being a finely crafted item, an object of distinction. The cover is tooled with a large East Indian motif and two seals at the end of the mysterious word “PACABA.” Lifting the seals reveals the letters CO and NA on each end, making the word “Copacabana,” the name of one of the best-known nightclubs in Manhattan. That suggests this may be a replacement version of the prop, because Jaks had created his original Book of Mysteries before he came to New York.

The book was full of mysterious and unfamiliar props. For the Cups and Balls, he had a meticulously crafted set of pure silver cups. And in lieu of balls of paper or cork, Jaks used small skulls, carved from ivory, to work his magic. When he had finished one trick and was replacing the props in their place in the book, someone was almost sure to point at something and ask, “What’s that?” or “What do you do with this?” Jaks let this kind of interest determine the sequence of effects he presented – by far the most effective kind of audience involvement.

Unfortunately, not all the items originally contained in the Book of Mysteries have survived along with it. Gone are several pages of celebrity autographs originally bound inside the front cover. At one time, these pages included the signatures of Al Jolson, Harry Truman, Lana Turner, and many other well-known individuals for whom Jaks had occasion to perform. But much of the old master’s repertoire is still represented inside its thick covers.

Upon Jaks’s death his Book of Mysteries went to Ed Mellon, who had published and marketed some of Jaks’s effects. The subsequent line of provenance includes Felix Greenfield, Sam Schwartz, and Robert Bluemle. It was purchased from Bluemle for the Salon de Magie. ♦

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**POP QUIZ**

I don't like tests. I don't like to study for tests or to take tests. I *do* like to give tests. In the past couple of weeks, three groups of people have come to Dallas in an attempt to get my company to buy into a project. For some reason, I was put in charge of dealing with the incoming salespeople.

My rule is very simple: I want to eat with you before I do business with you. In an office environment, people are at their best. In a crowded eatery, that is not always the case. My first salesperson raised a red flag for me early on when she told me, "I will email you my flight information in ten minutes." I received it three days later. Did it matter when I got it? No. Did it matter that she did not do what she said she would do? Yes. Was the fact that this happened a deal breaker? No. Not everybody is as anal about time and doing exactly what they say as I am.

Now let me tell you about dinner. We had reservations at 7:30 p.m. I was early and she was on time. This was a good thing. She had asked that I meet her for dinner, block out the entire next day for her, and block out any other people I work with and for as well. All of this was fine, because my company is interested in what she is selling.

Dallas has many places to eat, but this was no ordinary meal; we needed a good place, with good service and we needed to be left alone to talk business. The place that was picked was Stephen Pyles. I eat at SP a great deal and they know me. The food was great, the service was perfect, and we were left alone. The meeting went well; I liked everything she had to say. During the course of the meeting it was clear I knew a great deal more about her than she knew about me. One of us had studied for the test and one had not.

My dinner companion flunked when they brought the check. The waiter, Bejone, handed the check to me; he brought it to me because I always pay. He did not know that this time I was the one being wined and dined. The saleslady asked me if I wanted to split it. I told her no; I was happy to pay for dinner. That was a lie. I was not happy to pay for dinner. I was the *customer*; she was trying to sell *me*. In that case, the customer does not pay.

I told a friend of mine about it the next day and he told me, "You should have thanked her." He is right. From the way she handled the check, I learned early on that she was not someone that I wanted to work with. That night I got an email that she needed to push back the next day's meeting by an hour so she could make some phone calls. That hour turned into being late by ninety minutes.

In many ways, this was like a first date. Going into the meeting, we both knew that this could turn into a long-term relationship. Both of our companies stood to make a great deal of money. But my thought was, "If she acts this way on the first date, what will it be like on down the road?" I am about to send her a nice email to let her know that we will not be moving forward with her company and to thank her for her time. I will never tell her that the reason the deal fell through was that she flunked her test. Telling her would serve no purpose; she won't be back in my class any time soon. ♦

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## A FEW FRIENDS

My cousins Milt and Ditte (Dee-teh) moved from their longtime home in Venice, California, to an independent adult residence in Camden, Maine, to be closer to their daughter. As with many retired and aging citizens, as Milt and Ditte got older, the families living so far apart presented difficulties in extra care. In the area known as Quarry Hill, there are small cottage homes, apartments for retired seniors, and an assisted-living facility for those who need medical care. Anderson Hall, where Milt and Ditte live, has a large dining



Anderson Hall at Quarry Hill

room, a library, an exercise room, lounges, and a bar; it reminded me of life aboard a luxury cruise ship. No small children are seen anywhere, but there are many canes and walkers.

The transition from the West Coast to the East was a great one. When I work at the Magic Castle in the evenings, Nina and I spend the early part of the days in Venice. This year we were at the Castle and missed seeing my cousins. One Sunday in June, I called Milt to tell him that we were driving up to Maine to visit on the following Friday. He was delighted and asked for a small favor. Would I be able to do a few tricks for a few of his friends? Of course I would!

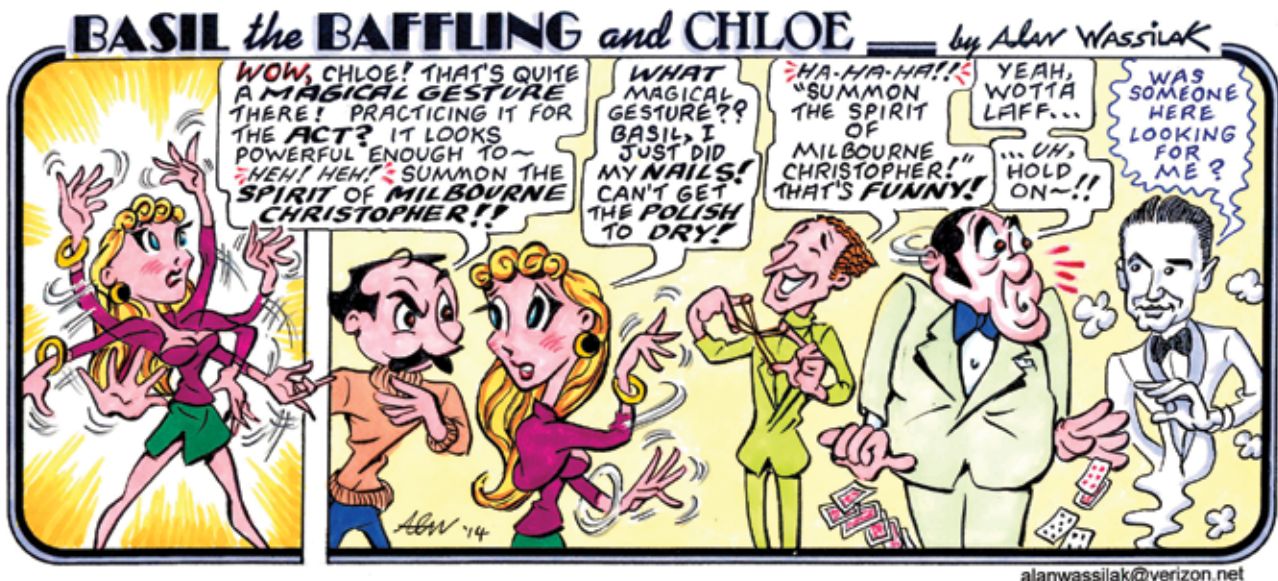
The following Wednesday, I received a phone call from a woman who introduced herself as the recreation director of Anderson Hall. "Mr. Schindler, I understand you are doing a show for us Saturday; would 2:00 p.m. be okay?" And so I put away my sponges and a deck of cards and threw some rope, a few props, and my Harbin Table in a bag along with my suit and tie. When we arrived on Friday evening and walked into the lobby, there was a sign at the elevator announcing the upcoming magic show. The elevator door opened and facing me was my PR photo. It's amazing what people can steal from a

website nowadays.

Milt must be pretty popular; his "few friends" numbered at least sixty. I was happily surprised to find a grateful audience of healthy men and women retirees, not the usual group one finds at senior citizen shows. Earlier that morning I had been at the harbor area, where a few tourists from Vermont spotted the emblem on my S.A.M. hoodie. "Are you a magician? My son loves magic; is there a show in town?" So, I invited them and they showed up.

I would have had a great time, except everything seemed to go awry. The loop slipped on the cut and restored rope, one spot remained on the table when I picked up the What's Next panel, and the mic I borrowed came undone. I had no idea it was hanging loosely at my side. Nina sat cringing in the audience, but it seems we were the only ones who knew. The audience loved every minute and Milt's friends still talk to him about the great, funny show they had seen. The tourists from Vermont promised to buy my book.

The guy whose mic I borrowed was a videographer who taped the whole show (some of which had no sound). He promised to send me the tape; I assure you it will never be seen on YouTube! ♦





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If you look at the cover, the featured poster is Kellar's "Collage" poster, which displays the various effects he did in his show, plus his "Book of Life". Notice the table upon which that book sits. Magician Eugene Burger made a brilliant observation: "The book cover tells you how to display the book!"

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