

MUM

MAGIC UNITY MIGHT

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS

JANUARY 2014

HOFZINSER
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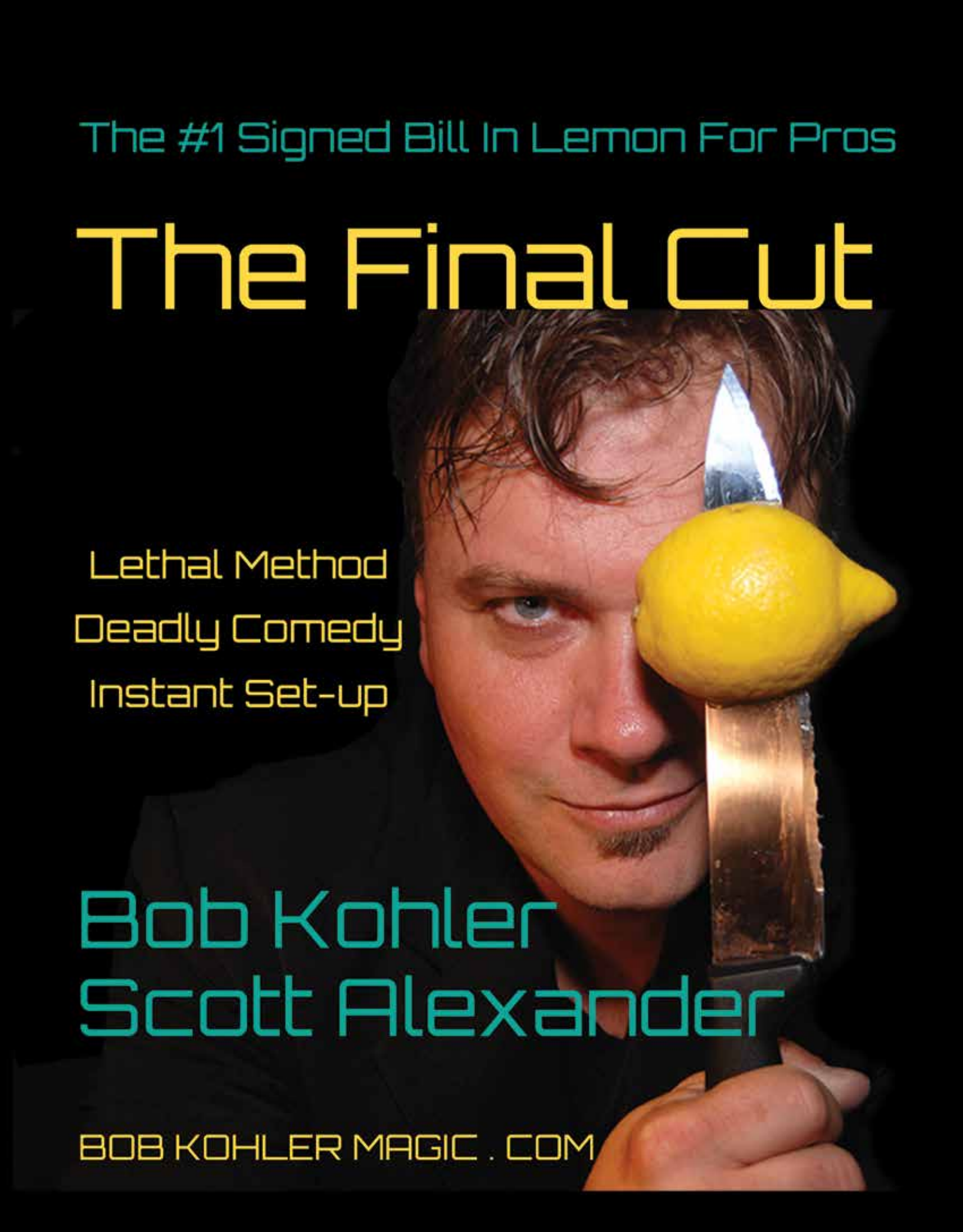
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Editor

Michael Close

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David Goodsell

Associate Editor

W.S. Duncan

Proofreader & Copy Editor

Lindsay Smith

Art Director

Lisa Close

Publisher

Society of American Magicians,
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Manon Rodriguez, National Administrator
P.O. Box 505, Parker, CO 80134
manon@magic.bz
Skype: manonadmin
Phone: 303-362-0575
Fax: 303-362-0424

Send assembly reports to:

assemblyreports@gmail.com

For advertising information, reservations, and placement contact:

Cinde Sanders

M-U-M Advertising Manager

Email: ads@magicsam.com

Telephone: 214-902-9200

Editorial contributions and correspondence concerning all content and advertising should be addressed to the editor:

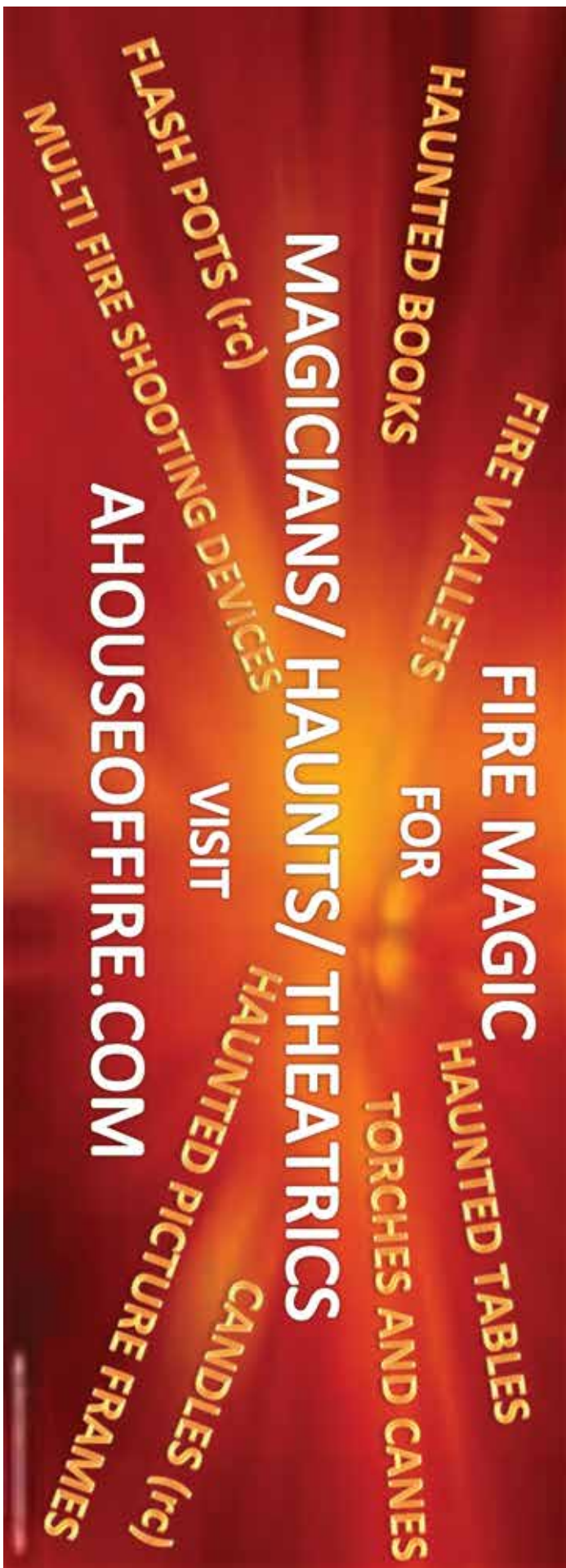
Michael Close - Email: mumeditor@gmail.com
Phone: 317-456-7234

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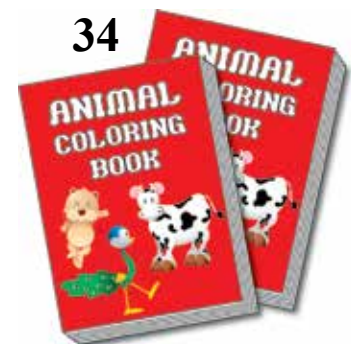
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Editor's Desk

Michael Close

In 1998, Magic Christian released the first of two volumes chronicling the life and magic of the nineteenth-century conjurer Johann Nepomuk Hofzinsler. (The second volume was published in 2004.) Written in German and titled *Non Plus Ultra*, these books, in the words of Hermetic Press publisher Stephen Minch, “filled in huge amounts of information about Hofzinsler and his card magic, exploding myths, correcting misinformation, and presenting everything currently known about his life, sleights, tricks, and presentations.” It has taken nine years for these books to be translated and released in English, and they are magnificent. The design of the books emulates the German editions, and new material uncovered by Magic Christian has been incorporated.

Reviews of the individual volumes by Payne and Tony Cabral can be found in this month's Informed Opinion column. Both are enthusiastically positive, and they will give you an overview of the contents of *Non Plus Ultra*. In addition, our cover story this month consists of four excerpts from the two volumes: Magic Christian's introduction for magicians, an article on Hofzinsler's youth, one on the third of his magic salons, and an explanation of one of his most famous card sleights, the Hofzinsler Top Change. These books were published in a limited edition, so don't wait to get yours. At the time of this writing, a five-payment installment plan was available from the publishers.

This month marks the end of Larry Hass's Building a Show column, which offered an analysis of the shows of some of today's top performers. Larry has been a long-time supporter of the S.A.M., and on behalf of the entire organization, I thank him for his contributions to the magazine.

As is usually the case, January marks the debut of some new columns in *M-U-M*, and there are five of them to kick off your new year. You'll be familiar with at least three of the people joining our monthly contributors, because they have previously written for the magazine: product reviewers Jim Kleefeld and Antonio M. Cabral, and Scott Alexander, author of the On the Shoulders of Giants column.

Jim Kleefeld majored in theater in college, earning a B.A. in Theatrical Arts; he performed at the Eldred Theater and the Lake Erie Opera Theater. He immediately added a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education and became an elementary teacher. His expertise in education led him quickly into a supervisory role with the Cleveland Public Schools, where he spent many years presenting workshops and guiding other teachers. He is currently a highly respected school assembly performer and he continues to perform educational programs regularly at schools and libraries. He travels in and around Ohio, presenting hundreds of shows a year.

Besides performing, Jim has contributed hundreds of articles to almost all of the major trade magazines in the magic field; he has also authored twenty-four books on magic and performing. His new column, Not Just Kid's Stuff, will be of interest to anyone who wants to entertain an audience with magic, whether or not it's an audience of young people.

Antonio M. Cabral is a card expert, performer, writer, and

lecturer from Boston, Massachusetts. He attended Brown University, where he was able to devour the books in the H. Adrian Smith Collection of Conjuring and Magicana. He's subsequently been a student and practitioner of the art of close-up card magic for the past fifteen years. His DVD set, *The Usual Suspect*, is available from The Magic Warehouse. Tony's column, Cheats & Deceptions, will give the intermediate card handler some fresh material to explore. Tony's column this month offers a blackjack-themed presentation for one of Eddie Fechter's classic effects. In addition, Tony's handling eliminates a very touchy moment in many versions of this trick: the need to perform a multiple top palm – a move that I've seen performed badly, even by advanced practitioners.

Scott Alexander is back with a new column that will be of interest if you ever plan on taking your act on the road. The advice from Scott and his collaborators will save you time, money, headaches, and heartbreaks.

As a magician and actor, Don Theo III has been entertaining audiences on stage, film, television, and radio for the past twenty years. In addition to performing, Don also trains salespeople in the hospitality industry. He has written two ebooks and his contributions have been included in a number of other publications both electronic and physical. Don makes his home in Orlando, Florida. His column, The Dotted Line, discusses ways in which the techniques of sales can be applied to magic performance.

George Parker is an internationally successful corporate speaker, storyteller/comedian, and stand-up illusionist who makes his home in The Netherlands. George's performing and teaching is grounded in his lifelong studies of theories of change in such fields as biology, psychology, physics, hermetic philosophy, and organizational management. His performances have taken him around the world. George is the creator of INDEX-terity, a revolutionary and critically acclaimed approach to the venerable billet index. He is also on the faculty of Jeff McBride's Magic & Mystery School. In his column, For Your Consideration, George will offer thought-provoking magic theory ideas and practical real-world effects to add to your repertoires.

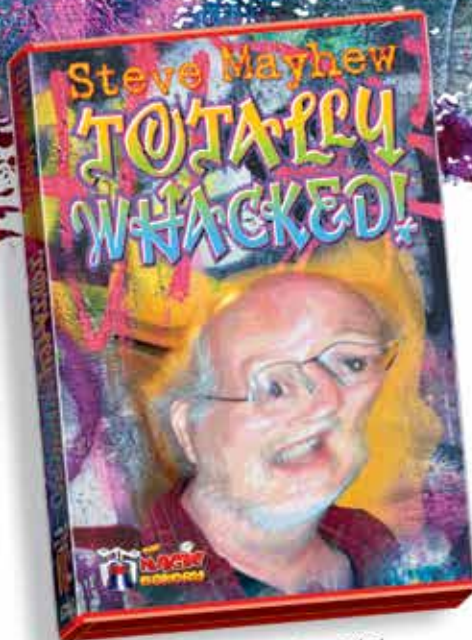
Welcome to all our new columnists, and my thanks for joining the *M-U-M* team. I look forward to your contributions.

I am sad to report that Margy Riser, wife of long-time *M-U-M* columnist Harry Riser, died December 4, 2013; the news of her passing left a big hole in my heart. From the first day I showed up on the Riser's front porch, way back in the early 1970s, Margy always was a gracious hostess, a charming conversationalist, and a willing subject for both magic tricks and jokes. This warm affection was her trademark, as Johnny Thompson, John Railing, and the many other magicians who visited the Riser home will attest. You can read more about her in the cover story I wrote about Harry in the March 2006 issue of *M-U-M*. Aloha, Margy. You will be greatly missed. ♦



Harry doing Quarters Through Hand with Margy

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President's Desk

Dal Sanders

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It's the time of year when everyone makes resolutions and plans to improve their lives. I think it's also a great time to make plans to improve our local assemblies. We need to start by doing an honest assessment of where we are. Is your assembly in a rut or is it thriving? Is it growing or is it losing members? Are you attracting new members? Are you retaining and engaging existing members? If not, I have a few ideas that can make your monthly assembly meetings vital and most of all, fun.

We need to begin by remembering why we are there in the first place. The objective of The Society of American Magicians is to "elevate and advance the art of magic." Obviously, that should also be the objective of your local assembly. In other words, we are there to become better magicians. Thanks to the Internet, video, and other media there are more "magicians" now than there ever have been before. More people are developing an interest in our art and are developing serious skills. Unlike past decades, they are not developing those skills in our assemblies. I believe this is because these new magicians are not getting what they need to improve from the local magic clubs, and when they do visit, they're not having fun. Unfortunately, they aren't getting everything they need from the Internet, either. Magic is an interactive art and it is very difficult to interact with a video screen.

We need to make a positive change in our magic clubs. First, make an honest effort to welcome new magicians who visit the assembly. I have visited magic clubs where everyone was so busy chatting with each other that no one took the time to introduce themselves to me. I did not feel welcome and I did not return, so please pay close attention to the new magicians who come to visit. They feel like they are not a part of the group and they are there in hopes that they might fit in. Do whatever it takes to make them feel welcome. Of course, it is also important to support established members and make them feel appreciated, so we should also make sure that our older members are included in the conversations.

Make a plan to be successful. The first part of that plan requires us to have passion for our art. We need to be enthusiastic about our assembly, the national organization, and about magic in general. Enthusiasm is contagious; it will make a good impression on visitors and potential new members. Enthusiasm and passion for our art will engage and retain our established members. One of the best ways to encourage enthusiasm is by sharing our knowledge with each other. I realize that this concept is going to upset some of our readers. The sheer audacity of older, established magicians having to share their hard earned knowledge with younger magicians is outrageous. I can almost hear the grumbling already: "Why should I teach these kids what I know? They haven't earned the right or paid their dues (virtual dues, not actual club dues). I learned the hard way, and they should too."

If the truth were known, those established club members were taught by their predecessors. Someone in a magic club before

them or in a magic shop somewhere took them under their wings and trained them. I believe that it now falls to us; we should teach those new people. In fact, we should take those people and mentor them, too. That will make them better magicians, more enthusiastic, and more respectful of our art. The payoff for us will be that we will also become more enthusiastic and our local assembly meetings will become more interesting. Watching novices develop new skills and learn to create interesting plots and routines will invigorate the local club and bring the members together. As you are mentoring those new members, please do your best to keep the criticism and drama to a minimum. Most people don't want to be part of a group that is filled with negativity. Remember, there are ways to disagree without being disagreeable. There are ways to criticize without being demeaning.

Don't be afraid that you are creating your own competition. More qualified magicians with better skills will grow the audience for magic. Good magicians in a market will keep magic "top of mind" with potential buyers. However, inept magicians who have not been mentored can very easily kill a layman's interest in the art. Remember, magic does not need to be competitive. Instead, it should be collaborative.

As people develop and grow as magicians, find ways to recognize them within the club. This could be with certificates of appreciation, special plaques and awards, and even special gifts to outgoing officers or those who have achieved special status in the world of magic. Another way to recognize members is to award them a spot on a local assembly community show. Of course, they wouldn't automatically get a spot on the program; they could work up to it. The first year they might usher the show and the next work back stage until they finally progress to a performer status. Try to avoid using the same people over and over. Give all assembly members a chance to participate. The more established acts will understand the need to develop younger talent and may relish a different role, like director or producer.

As we recognize the achievements of our members, it is important to remember that everyone will be at different skill levels. The mastering of a Professor's Nightmare routine by a novice may be as much of a milestone for him as Chicago Opener by one who has been performing magic for years. The recognition of this is important or else the club can become divided and drive assembly members away.

Finally, it is imperative that internal magic club politics be avoided. Most magicians have strong egos; anytime we start recognizing or even awarding some of the members of our organization, politics are likely to become involved. The strife that occurs when strong personalities collide can tear an assembly apart. If you have well planned objectives with well defined awards (that everyone understands), you can avoid divisiveness. A board of directors or executive committee that is voted on by the members of the club can be instrumental in making those plans. The committee works better the more democratic it is. If the club members don't like the job the committee is doing, they can vote for new people when the term is completed.

So in summary, maintaining enthusiasm and pride in the local magic club, creating a group identity by working together towards a goal, encouraging participation and mentoring all members regardless of their skill level, and showing proper appreciation for their efforts can revitalize your club. The various members of the organization will have more fun and most likely, your magic club will grow. Your assembly will be elevating and advancing the art of magic.

As always, this is just my opinion...I could be wrong. ♦

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South Atlantic: FL AL GA MS NC SC
Debbie Leifer (404) 630-1120
rpsouthatlantic@MagicSam.com

Central Plains: KY TN OH IN MI
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Midwest: IL MN WI MO ND NE KS SD IA
Shaun Rivera, (618) 781-8621
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South Central States: TX AR OK NM LA
Michael Tallon, (210) 341-6959
rpsouthcentral@MagicSam.com

Southwest: CA AZ NV HI
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1

MAYOR BLOOMBERG PRAISES PA 1

NEW YORK, NY—In November, magician Andrew Gressett again visited The Magic Table from the Big Easy. We all talked magic and about his journey to bury his friend David Bendix. Saving Bendix from a pauper's grave in New Orleans, Gressett, with the help of his wife and others, honored him and laid him to rest with his fellow magicians in the Lakeside Cemetery in Colon, MI. A great story of one man's action to honor a fellow compeer. Max Droge was there as well, sharing magic, as well as Richard Bossong and Rene Clement. Jerry Oppenheimer and Lee were also at the Table this month, which meets at the Edison Café on 47th Street in Times Square. We start around 12:30 sharing magic.

Later in the month Kozmo lectured. It was great to see pros like Silly Billy and Mark Mitton at the lecture. Kozmo explained the real conditions performing on the streets with added funny anecdotes and told how to build and hold a crowd. With over 30 PA 1 members at the lecture he held a good crowd that night.

On Friday evening November 15 Doug Edwards presented a wonderful Workshop at the Gemini Dinner. The topic of the workshop was "Gimmicks, Gadgets, and Gaffs". He performed several effects with the apparatus and then taught. His workshops are terrific.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg praised the Parent Assembly in a proclamation for Magic Week, October 25 to 31. It was up on the S.A.M. website to be read. Many members of the Parent Assembly gathered at the Houdini gravesite to do the annual Broken Wand Ceremony in Queens. Rabbi Noach Valley read a prayer, Dean George Schindler read the words of the Broken Wand Ceremony, and PA 1 President Throwdini broke the wand. It was well attended. There were several shows, but the one in Chinatown in Manhattan with Paul Hsiao and Rene Clement was the biggest. It was a great month. —Tom Klem

The Parent Assembly meetings are on the first Friday of the month at Mount Sinai on Madison Avenue in Manhattan Contact tom Klem sampa1nyc@gmail.com (212) 725-5258 www.sampal.com for more details.



NYC Magic Week Proclamation

Our monthly meeting occurred on November 1. The business meeting was called at 7:15 by PA 1 President Throwdini. The meeting went well and went right to the after-meeting event at 8 p.m. We had a great lecturer, Chris Capehart. He lectured about how a "Master Magician" works to the delight of the crowd. He stayed for an extra hour after his lecture answering questions and teaching some of his effects in greater detail.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Mages and their guests gathered for the November meeting paying homage to the Muse of Mirth. The night's theme centered on routines that were much less than serious masterpieces of magic but rather were droll displays of wit fitting for the autumn season. Corky LaVallee opened the evening's performances with two penetrations effects and finished with the Gypsy Curse, a four-card Monte routine. For the first effect, Corky pushed a feather

through a quarter, piercing the eagle's breast. Then he caused a ring to go through a selected card, vanish, and be discovered in the card box. With the Gypsy Curse, Corky humorously explained his aversion to gambling.

Rob Shapiro presented balloon mentalism. Channeling his psychic power, he predicted the balloon which was not chosen from four different colored balloons displayed in a wood stand. Tamaka playfully demonstrated Karrell Fox's rope through body, an amusing effect that has numerous variations. Inspired by Tamaka's spectacle, Rob grabbed one of his balloons and pulled it through different sections of his body.

John Caris, with the able assistance of Rob and Corky, revealed a mystery hidden within an ESP deck by staging Howard Adam's Celebrithree. Mary Caris and Hippo Lau enjoyed the night's magical delights and did their part in the cookie-vanishing routine. The lesson we learned at tonight's meeting is that the mage's presentation is the most important ingredient of the magical arts. —John Caris

Golden Gate Assembly 2 will meet the second Wednesday of January 2014, the 8th, at 7:30 p.m. at Community Room of Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Avenue, San Francisco, CA. Contact Tamaka Tamaka3715@aol.com (415) 531-9332 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/249018441875771/> for more details.

4

NATIONAL MAGIC WEEK & STAGE CONTEST

PHILADELPHIA, PA— Our November meeting began with a brief business meeting during which we publicly thanked Michael Bonacci for once again successfully spearheading Assembly 4's community outreach efforts during National Magic Week. We then recognized the unprecedented number of members who gave of their time and talent to enchant audiences at Shriner's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, Sacred Heart Home, Jefferson Hospital, Silver Springs Martin Luther School,

and Veteran's Hospital of Philadelphia during National Magic Week: Al Angelo, Anthony Antonelly, Steve Black, Michael Bonacci, Ed Cohen, Martin Dembitzer, Morton Feldman, Bobbie Festa, Joe Festa, Jim Fiorentino, Donna Horn, Larry Horn, Eric Johnson, Bill McElvenney, Sue McElvenney, Rob Malissa, James MacElroy, Rich Pressel, Stuart Rudnick, Ed Schmitt, David Sharlin, Andrew Stillwell, and Reba Strong. Many thanks to these wonderful performers, some of whom performed at more than one venue, for a job well done.

After the business meeting, we were treated to a mini-lecture by Jeff Carson on "How to Enhance Your Performance" as well as a mini-lecture by Eric Johnson on "Card Effects Utilizing Sleights." Both presentations were exceptional. Following the mini-lectures, we held our annual stage contest, which featured four very strong performances. Tom Ewing started things off with a very funny routine comprised of comical Irish toasts while repeatedly filling his own whiskey glass and that of a spectator from the same small flask that appeared to have a never-ending supply of spirits. After Tom, Bill and Sue McElvenney executed a miraculous double cut and restored tie effect to the astonishment of everyone. Next, contest winner Ralph Armstrong performed a beautiful silk act set to music during which plain white silks passed through an empty tube, changed color, and then transformed into a lovely multi-color silk. Finally, Joe Festa enlisted the aid of audience member Charles Murter to execute an unbelievable card prediction effect. All in all, it was a great contest. As has become our custom, a fairly large group went to our favorite local diner following the meeting where the fun continued. —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 Information: www.sam4.org/ for more details.

6

CARDS, COINS, AND RINGS...OH, MY!

BALTIMORE, MD— Despite cold weather and early sundown we had a large turnout for our November meeting. Even before the meeting began, Dean Joe Bruno demonstrated his improved Oil-and-Water and Follow-the-Leader card effects, and then generously tipped them.

Howard Katz, whose Magic Warehouse provides our meeting place, kicked things off with a sealed card prediction, the cards lined up in wood stands. The selected/predicted card was the Four of Clubs, which prompted Howie Schwarzman to regale us with how the Four of Clubs became (at age sixteen) “his card.” Joe Bruno was next onstage, performing some effects he hasn’t done since the early ‘80s. First was a card assembly inspired by (and improving on) Al Goshman’s Meeting at the Summit. He followed with his improved version of Collins Aces, which looked simply miraculous. He tipped both. Oneil Banks was next with some amazing ring and shoelace magic using, allegedly, Denny Haney’s famous checkered shoelaces. Does Denny know they are missing? Mike Schirmer had a card selected by a spectator who was holding a facedown photograph of the magi skydiving. Upon turning the photo over it showed the magi in mid-descent actually holding the chosen card. Well, almost! Gotta get those glasses checked, Mike; you were off by one Heart.

Eric Hoffman, still celebrating Halloween in November, had a card selected, shuffled back into the deck, and the deck wrapped in a silk. Mysteriously, the chosen card rose up from within the silk (Daryl’s version of J. C. Wagner’s Spectral Silk). Craig Feinstein performed a whole routine of sponge ball magic and then demonstrated David Roth’s Retention Vanish and took a shot at Roth’s famous Hanging Coins. Joe Harsanyi continued the coin magic with some mighty impressive sleights followed by predicting the contents of an entire handful of selected cards. Jay Silverman had a spectator divide a deck into four packets; he then shuffled them together. He then quickly “memorized” the entire face-up spread and had the spectator move the chosen card to a new position while Jay’s back was turned. A quick glance at the spread and he instantly found the selected card. Jeff Eline wrapped things up by using the Queen of Hearts (“the

Queen is my helper”), merely peeping her eyes out of the deck, to find selected cards under three ever more difficult conditions. Another fine evening jam-packed with 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 www.baltimoresam.com for more details.

7

MEMORIES OF WARREN MATTES

OMAHA, NE— On November 18 the Omaha Magical Society attended a brief presentation by Carmen Mattes, widow of Warren Mattes, a magician known throughout the community for performing for his family and perhaps infrequent stage shows. Warren had left a legacy of magic paraphernalia collected over the many years while he was performing, and Carmen saw an opportunity to enrich the community by leaving his “tools of the trade” with a group of people who could continue in Warren’s footsteps by entertaining those who would allow his magic to enter their lives. Under the direction of Past President Larry Brodahl, a special sale was arranged for this night: over 1,500 individual items comprising effects, books, and collectibles. There were card tricks, coins, and many items that defied categorizing. The organization was impeccable; the attendees were rather well-behaved; and the sale called a success. There are items left over for future plans. If one was missing a link he might find it here, or pick up an item for which he had no current use, but looked like something that could be part of something bigger.

This was a magical evening and inflated our treasury nicely. I’m looking forward to expanding my capabilities. Larry identified the items where possible, checked to see if the package was complete, and then scavenged the Internet to see what might be considered a fair



President Bob Gehringer with Carmen Mattes and Secretary Jerry Golmanavich

price and lead to a purchase. Last but not least, he arranged the sales room for easy shopping. Thanks to Larry and all of the folks supporting this endeavor. Thanks (obrigado!) to Carmen Mattes for thinking of us as the beneficiaries of these treasures! (The shopping lasted about three hours.)

Several members from our recently organized S.Y.M. group also had the privilege of picking up early Christmas gifts and could be seen smiling as they carried their new-found projects. Maybe we’ll see some of them in action at our next event: our annual Christmas party. —Jerry Golmanavich

The Omaha Magical Society meets 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 (402) 390-9834 www.omahamagicalsociety.com for more details.

8

WAY TO GO, HARRY MONTI!

ST. LOUIS, MO— Randy Kalin taught a classic 16-cell Magic Square force for one of a long list of prizes. Robert Campbell performed a comical mentalism effect that was truly amazing. Paul Rygelski performed a classic mental effect that he got from Bob Starks. PNP John Apperson showed Sandy Weis how to pass one solid object through another. John also treated us to one of his many color-changing knives. Dan Todd performed Cue the Magic by Angelo Carbone, assisted by Ron Jackson and Rodger Linden.

We are all very proud of PNP Harry Monti for being invited to perform at the Magic Castle for his fiftieth consecutive year! Way to go Harry! —Dan Todd



Harry Monti

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

13

MAGIC FLEA MARKET

DALLAS, TX— The November meeting of the Dallas Magic Clubs featured a magic flea market that took over Theater 166 in Carrollton, Texas. The market featured new and “gently used” magical wares from the members of the club, and was a perfect opportunity to both clean house and acquire some new stocking-stuffers before the holidays. After browsing and shopping for a while, the members eventually settled down for the meeting.

President Derrel Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting; visitors for the night included Mark Wade. Vice-president Frank Seltzer discussed a benefit for Muscular Dystrophy occurring in December. He then announced the newest member of the club, and newest local member of The Society of American Magicians, Caleb Walstead. Caleb was presented his certificate and pin by none other than the President of the S.A.M., Dal Sanders.



New S.A.M. member Caleb Walstead with Dal Sanders

Mica Calfee performed an effect with a Chinese paper balloon. After blowing up the balloon he showed that, if treated just right, the balloon would appear to float in mid air.

Ian Richards was assisted by Diamond Jim Tyler with a trick involving three handkerchiefs (two white and one red) that Ian had received in the mail through the subscription service “NetTrix.” Jim was asked to place the two white handkerchiefs in the NetTrix envelope, and Ian was supposed to load the red one into a magical tube. Unfortunately, the tube was not supplied. Ian improvised by folding the instruction sheet into a tube, placing the red handkerchief inside. When he unfolded the instructions to continue reading, he discovered that the handkerchief had vanished! Jim then reached into the NetTrix envelope, showing that somehow the red handkerchief was now firmly tied between

the two white ones! Following the performance, Ian and the club deconstructed the trick and looked for areas of strength and improvement. Overall, everyone agreed it was a great piece.

The month of November also included a lecture by Eugene Burger, focusing on failure in magic – why it happens, and what to do when it does. Finally, the December meeting will be the annual holiday party, hosted by Dal and Cinde Sanders.

The Dallas Magic Clubs meet at Crosspointe Community Center (Theater 166) in Carrollton, Texas the third Tuesday of the month. Go to www.dallasmagic.org for directions. Contact Reade Quinton reade.quinton@gmail.com (972) 4000195 www.dallasmagic.org for more details.

17

LAI D BACK NOVEMBER

SPRINGFIELD, MA— Our November meeting was a quiet one in terms of performers. We had a brief business meeting, ate some pizza, and enjoyed two performances before simply breaking off and chatting.

We discussed the recent trip to Fantasma Magic in NYC that some of our members took, which sounds like it was amazing! A big thank you to the folks at Fantasma for welcoming us to their shop!

Also, we talked about the comedy magic show put on by our very own Bob Carroll, Pj Pinsonnault, and Rich Gilbert. Most of our members went to the show to show their support, which is always appreciated. A very fun night both from the stage and from the seats!

We had two guests in the magic shop, Verne and Pat Towle, who were offering some of their magic for sale as they scale back their performing schedule. Thank you both for coming and for letting us all stab Bob Carroll in the head!

Our first performer, Tom Gentile, created some shock and awe by forgoing any and all silks and doing a card trick! This was a big moment, one of those “where were you when...?” moments. A moment the members couldn’t wait to run home and tell their wives, children, grandchildren, and pets about! Tom Gentile. Performing a card trick. Mind. Blown.

Tom performed Jerry Somerdin’s Perfect Monte, a Three Card Monte routine in which the money card (a red Queen) also had an odd-colored back, making it very easy to follow. However, when the odd-backed card was chosen, the Queen was shown to now be a Joker. The Queen was found

tucked away in an envelope Tom had set on the table earlier. Nicely done, Tom!

Rich Pinsonnault was next with a four-Ace production by Herb Zarrow that is a card-man’s fooler. Four helpers told Rich where to cut the deck, and the cards above the cut were turned over to mark the cut. Rich would then place the cut-to card down, and all four were shown to be Aces. Very clean, concise card magic. —PJ Pinsonnault

Assembly 17 meets the first Friday of the month at Pinsonnault’s Moto - X and Magic Shop, 69 East Street, Ludlow, MA. 01056. Meetings start at 7:00 pm. Contact Rich Gilbert rgilbertmagic@yahoo.com (413) 2105725 www.assembly17.org for more details.

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HOUSTON PREPARES FOR THE HOLIDAYS WITH MAGIC

HOUSTON, TX— It’s November, and the magic of the holidays is right around the corner.

Scott Hollingsworth continued with his final installment in his series of lectures on restaurant magic. Scott has many years of great experience as a restaurant performer and his expertise in this area was shared with all of us. Thanks, Scott, for sharing a part of your magic!

Scott Wells had several cards freely chosen by members of the club. Five of the six cards were then revealed in a variety of ways after being returned to the deck, with the sixth card plucked from Scott’s mouth.

Johan McElroy shared a nice box penetration effect whereby a solid die is caused to pass through a metal plate placed in the center of a wooden tube. Marti Stein folded a newspaper and then proceeded to cut out sections with a pair of scissors. When the newspaper was unfolded we were greeted with a Happy Hanukkah figure cut into the paper.

Gene Protas used three large coins to do some handy manipulations. A half dollar, a rickshaw token, and a Pakistani coin moved about from hand to hand to pocket in a most intriguing manner. Kyle Ryan shared some effects with a shoelace and some knots. He then added a ring and performed some very nice ring and rope moves in a most entertaining manner.

David Rangel had a chosen card’s back change from blue to red, and then proceeded to change the entire deck to red-backed cards. A thumbprint placed onto one of the cards was carefully examined with a hilarious pair of glasses,

and finally located. The backs of the cards then changed colors again with a nice rainbow effect ending.

Chris Alonzo had any four of a kind chosen, which happened to be Eights. Jerry Paul then chose a card that was used in the effect. Jerry’s Queen of Diamonds was shown to jump around from packet to pocket time and again, even when the effect was “explained” to us. For a nice finale the four Eights ended up in Chris’ pocket, leaving him holding Jerry’s card.

Shane Wilson had a quarter signed and then proceeded to tear open a previously examined sugar packet. Inside was seen the signed quarter. Everyone at the meeting had a great time in both sharing and watching the magic presented. Thanks to all who participated during our November meeting. —Miles Root

Assembly 19 meets the first Monday of every month at the IATSE Local 51 Meeting Hall, 3030 North Freeway, Houston, TX. A teaching lecture begins at 7:30 pm with the meeting beginning at 8:00 pm. Contact Miles Root milesroot@aol.com (281) 334-7508 houstonmagic.com for more details.

21

TEACH-A-TRICK

HARTFORD, CT— Our theme captain for the night, Henry Andrzejczyk, asked us to teach everybody a trick. Dan Sclare distributed rubber bands and did a variation of Crazy Man’s Handcuffs to release a finger ring from the band. Steve Wronker showed us the silks used in his new marketed effect Reindeer Roundup.



Steve’s finale

Bob Killian told a tale of shopping and the perils of buyer’s remorse. He had Dana Ring up to select a card and let him know that even if he suffered from remorse, and could and did change his mind often, his choice was ordained. His final choice did, in fact, match Bob’s prediction.

Dave Garrity showed us a collection of cue-cards, each with a different word. Walt Umberfield chose one and Dave proved he had

predicted that choice. A nice mathematical fake-out. Brian Scully had Steve choose a card suit, and then Brian showed that his packet of four cards was blank except for Steve’s choice. Brian could have shown that the choice was the only card face up, the only card with a blue back, or the only card with a face at all.

Soll Levine shuffled a deck and offered Henry a choice. It matched a bookmark in a bag. He then explained several simple card forces. —Dana T. Ring

Assembly 21 meets at Angelo’s on Main, 289 South Main Street West Hartford Connecticut on the second Monday except December Contact Dana T. Ring dana@danarign.com (860) 523-9888 www.ctmagic.org for more details.

22

WOODY PITTMAN LECTURE

LOS ANGELES, CA— The November meeting of the Southern California Assembly 22 featured a most enjoyable lecture by Woody Pittman. A frequent Magic Castle performer, Woody Pittman has had a long career as a cruise ship magician and as a headliner at major comedy clubs. Mentioning some of his current physical limitations due to a serious health situation, Woody spent the next two-and-a-half hours giving a very entertaining and informative lecture to an especially large gathering of members and guests.

All of the material presented and then fully explained came from his performing repertoire and, as Woody told us, all of it is available at a well-stocked magic shop. Most of his magic would be classified as standard apparatus, some of it classic. The Anderson Torn & Restored Newspaper, the Mutilated Parasol, the Mis-made Flag, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Twentieth Century Silks, and the Chinese Sticks are but a few of the items presented. The unique performance style and personality of Woody Pittman and his particular twist on each trick, however, made for a very entertaining show. Woody told us that despite the fact that magicians recognize these tricks as standard stuff, lay audiences likely have never seen these tricks before. To demonstrate his skill with a deck of cards, Woody did a manipulative routine producing a steady stream of card fans.

His lecture demonstrated the fact that the standards and classics of magic can be extremely entertaining for an audience. It’s all in the presentation. More than a few of our group of magicians were fooled by some of the old magic

they had never witnessed before. A great lecture by a professional performer and a very nice person. The Southern California Assembly has Woody Pittman in our thoughts and wishes for his return to good health. —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 magicfred@earthlink.net (213) 382 8504 for more details.

24

A FALL OF LECTURES

LATHAM, NY— This fall has brought a cavalcade of lectures to educate and inspire our members. First up, in August, was Dan Garrett, who brought a full evening of professional, commercial routines. October brought the elegant, visual magic of Jay Scott Berry, presenting a greatest hits lecture of his beautiful material. November was all about street magic with Michael Bradshaw. December will be our annual Holiday party! —Cory Haines
Assembly 24 meet at the S.W. Pitts Hose Company, 226 Old Loudon Road, Latham, New York, 12110. Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. Contact Joseph Goode joe@magicmelvin.com for more details.

31

THE GIFT OF MAGIC

INDIANAPOLIS, IN— Assembly 31 has enjoyed another fun-filled month. On October 26, in celebration of National Magic week, a group from Assembly 31 entertained approximately one hundred veterans and their families at the Soldiers Home in West Lafayette. David Kirby and Joe (Irish) Fuller organized and co-headlined the show with our illustrious President, Taylor Martin, acting as emcee. Phil Dubbs and RVP Steve Spence warmed up the crowd with some walk-around magic. To see the looks of appreciation on the faces of these brave warriors was worth its weight in gold.

November's meeting theme was "Gift Magic." Don Miller started things off by presenting a mini-lecture based upon an article he wrote on just this very subject. Don related how he watched Harry Blackstone Jr. take the time after his show to sign each and every spectator's program. Harry told

Don that he considered that his responsibility to the audience for the gift of their time that they had given him by coming to the show. Don explained that the goal of giving a gift is to "be memorable" and that the most memorable magic is tied to emotion.

Following Don's inspiring talk numerous of our compeers shared their gift of magic with us. Jim Croop shared his version of Scotty York's Candy Machine. Jack Weigel described an effect from his early days when he had a debit route and how he let the spectator perform the magic and let them keep a magic coin, a penny. Mike Root performed with Silly Billy's jumbo magic wands. He cautioned us, never give the wand directly to the child during the performance or else you can expect mayhem to reign. Always give the gift to the parent or give it to the child after the show.



David Kirby lights up the lives of veterans

Robert Sode performed/previewed his "vanishing thumb tip" lecture utilizing many cutting edge techniques such as the "nesting thumb tip." Robert had us rolling in the aisles with this lecture spoof.

Your humble scribe shared his Chex magic kit that he received through the mail for only six box tops. He then really heated things up (literally) when he performed Joshua Jay's newly released Inferno. Daniel Lee performed a card-to-wallet routine with a borrowed wallet.

Next was visiting compeer Chris Wagers who found a freely selected card that was seared by a flame. Jim Croop, our emcee for the evening, concluded with a coin trick with the spectator keeping the coin. —Steven A. Spence

Assembly 31 meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Irvington United Methodist Church, 30 Audubon Rd., on the east side of the City unless otherwise announced. If the first Monday conflicts with a holiday weekend, we postpone the meeting one week. Contact Taylor Martin kazoo23@aol.com (317) 432-1320 sam31.com for more details.

35 POINTS TO PONDER

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY— Though a fall chill was in the air, the news that next month's meeting will be a holiday party at the president's house, made glad men's hearts. After a bit of business was mentioned, the evening's entertainment and learning began with a lecture by Peter Samelson.

He began with telling us a little about his background; from working on cruise ships, to a solo show, to working on commercials, and being a producer of Monday Night Magic in New York City. Throughout the evening, he gave us quotes to ponder, the first being "small changes can make a big difference." He demonstrated this point by making flowers suddenly appear. By utilizing a small technical change, the flowers now seemed to "pop" out of thin air, rather than just appearing – a small change that made for a big visceral difference.

He performed a disappearing/appearing coin effect, explaining that for continuity, there is a purpose of motion, rather than simply superfluous gestures. He showed us a card change effect called Invasion of the Body Snatchers. What added to the trick was the story that went with it. He once showed this to the gentleman that actually wrote the movie of the same name as the trick! For those too young to know the movie, Google it.

He posited that humans share common experiences and ideas, and as such, that to make magic for your audience, you should find real substance for your stories, and not use clichés. This was demonstrated by a Gypsy Thread routine, in which the destruction and restoration was a metaphor for the way that relationships sometimes work.

It was an evening of good magic, which was not only visual, but which also made you think. Thank you Mr. Samelson! —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 Joel Zaritsky jizdds@optonline.net (845) 546-1559 www.sam35.com for more details.

51 OCTOBER MAGIC!

PEORIA, IL— Vice President Rodney Nordstrom opened our October meeting with a brief bit of business before going right to the magic for the night. Our theme was "Animal Magic."

Grant Golden was our lead-off magician and showed various examples of both rubber and sponge doves. This included some anecdotes to keep us smiling. He then discussed spring animals, multiplying bananas for a talkative pig, a moo cow device, and a large artificial fish...or would that be arti-FISH-al??

Mike Tate was next with his amazing ventriloquism. Through the magic of sound, he made a dove "appear" in a box. Then he made a cat appear in the box. Well, a fight ensued and all that was left of the poor bird were a few white feathers. The cat then changed into a large banner that said CAT (for Caterpillar, our local industry).

Jay Zentko brought his darker side as he first killed one poor little wiener dog and impaled another. Thank goodness these were balloon doggies! Still, the first doggie didn't fair so well. POP! Michael Baker followed with the biggest epic fail of the night. He elected to go with Halloween as a theme by producing eyeballs and dropping them in a box. Then the eyes were released and should have gone hopping across the table. One or two did, but the rest just stood there looking at the audience. Stage fright, I suppose...

Kyle Basset showed his version of Hot Shot. A dollar bill visibly changed to a selected card. Very visual, and Kyle had added some of his own bits to make the bill reappear within the deck. —Michael Baker

Assembly 51 meets the third Monday of the month, beginning at 7:00pm at Schnucks Grocery in the Metro Center, University and Glen. Contact Michael Baker themagiccompany@aol.com (205)612-3696 http://peoriamagicians.com for more details.

52

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME AND VETERANS DAY

SAN ANTONIO, TX— November 7, 2013, Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 held its monthly meeting at LaMadeleine Restaurant. President Don Moravits welcomed members, wives, and guest Ted Derringer, Jr. Tonight's theme was Daylight

Savings Time and/or Veterans Day. Starting off the performances was Joe Libby, who performed the Post Toasties promotional magic trick from the 1940s. President Don Moravits did the effect Now is the Hour with assistance from Barbara Adams, and John Murphy entertained us with a rope routine. Ray Adams did a gospel effect with a color-changing flower and Ed Solomon performed a card trick about Angels and Devils. Michael Tallon entertained with a clock trick with a triple prediction and Doug Gorman memorized half a deck of cards, then told who had what cards.

Sal Manfredo was at the teaching table this month. He treated us to a very informative and practical presentation on the Linking Ropes. He also tricked us with a little sword swallowing. Thanks, Sal, for an entertaining and interesting teaching table.

Door prize winners were Joe Libby, Doug Gorman, and John Murphy. Joe won Size Surprise by Toyohisa Saikawa, Doug won the DVD *Midnight Show* by Scott Alexander, and John won the book *Mysterio's Encyclopedia of Magic and Conjuring*. Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month at La Madeleine Restaurant, located at 722 N.W. Loop 410. The restaurant is inside Loop 410 on the access road between Blanco Rd. and San Pedro. For more information, contact douggorman@att.net.

59 CLOSE-UP

PORTLAND, OR— October is the month our annual Desmond Close-up Contest is held. This year we had five contestants stand before the judges.

The first act was Glen Bledsoe aka "Satie, Your Guide to the Mysteries of the Human Mind." Yes, you can have close-up mentalism. Satie performed an effect in which he identified thirteen randomly selected cards. Next came one of our newest members, Jay Fredericks, who performed a Monte effect. Following Jay came the perennial Tom Waldrop performing a short series of his trademark effects. This was followed by our vice president Mel Anderson in his crisp tux performing sponge balls and a routine with an Okito box. Last to perform was John Edsall, who did a series of ring and string effects. The judges selected John as the winner.

Satie took his thirteen-card effect to a rather different audience. On the Saturday following Halloween



John Edsall (left) performs magic for Jay Fredericks

he attended Portland's Body Mind Spirit Expo and openly challenged a room full of psychics to match his miracle of identifying thirteen cards randomly drawn from an unseen deck. He had no takers, but his crowd of onlookers was amazed. The event was recorded by a number of middle-aged women with cell phones. It is hoped that these videos will appear at some point in the future.

Our November meeting will see our S.Y.M. clubs providing entertainment for the adults in their annual Thanksgiving show. —Glen L. Bledsoe

Assembly 59 meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month except Jul/Aug/Dec at The Beaverton Elks, 3500 SW 104th, Beaverton, OR 97005. Contact Glen L. Bledsoe glenbledsoe@mac.com (503) 967-9151 www.sam59portland.org/ for more details.

77 ALL ABOARD THE MAGIC RAILROAD!

MASSAPEQUA, NY— Our meeting was a short one, with one highlight. Long Island Mystic's Vice President Dr. Mitch Goodkin showed his wife's amazing work at designing a beautiful ring shaped in a question mark with a jewel of our choice as the period below it. She has them in silver and gold. It was definitely something for my wish list. After the gavel hit and the raffle was complete, Phil Levy announced that our November meeting was titled "The Magic Railroad." (Insert puns revolving around trains, Phil Levy sure did.)



Mystic's Secretary Lou Johnson and The Benson Bowl Table

If you didn't know, it's a great way for members to experience hands-on training at five different "stations." After the brief meeting, the members got on board and met their conductors at each of the twenty-minute stations.

Bob Weinowitz taught Paleface Pasteboards: after the card selection is found, the entire deck becomes blank. John Lepre taught Jim Steinmeyer's Nine Card Problem. Dr. Mitch taught some Brainwave variations and even gave out some cards for the members to keep. Speaking of keep, he also kept us all on time throughout the journey. PP Steve Rodman tipped one of his own working routines: The Chinese Matrix, which included the production of not one but two jumbo coins. A real stunner! And yours truly taught the basic steps of the Benson Bowl routine. I brought enough bowls to cover everyone. See the picture.

Next month is our annual Holiday Show where many of us perform for families who come and bring food to stock the local food pantries on Long Island. Until then, see you at the diner and have a great Thanksgiving —Lou Johnson

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

88 ANNUAL FLEA MARKET AND MORE

ANN ARBOR/YPSILANTI, MI— Our annual Flea Market on October 27 had the most vendors I've seen in a long time. If any magician needed something new for their act I'm sure they could find it here. Marvin Mathena and Jim Placido did a great job of auctioning some of the selected magic! On the 31st of October a lot of magicians do the Halloween magic shows. I was invited to do something different this year called the Harvest Celebration. Some friends I know run a Bible camp in Cedar Springs, MI. They asked if I'd like to do some gospel magic for the kids in the area. They had games, a petting farm, and me, doing magic, set up in some of the buildings on the property. We gave out candy to over one hundred kids, even in the wet drizzle we had for the night. I'd like to thank the Laflin Magic Store for all of the ideas I used from the many videos on their website! I'll be



Marvin & Jim at Auction

volunteering for this event again next year; it was that much fun! —Randy A. Smith

The Hank Moorehouse Assembly 88 meets on the second Wednesday 7pm at the Faith Lutheran Church, 1255 East Forest Ave, Ypsilanti, Michigan. Contact Randy A. Smith randy.remarkable@gmail.com (313) 562-3875 www.aamagic.org/ for more details.

94 ALL TIED UP

SILICON VALLEY, CA— This night was all about rope routines. For the Learners' Workshop, Kim Silverman taught a simple but entertaining Cut and Restored Rope routine.

To begin the formal meeting, John Signa gave a review of the Los Angeles Conference on Magic History. He also reviewed the play *Play Dead* by Todd Robbins and Teller. John also demonstrated some new Tenyo effects that he purchased on a recent to Japan and that will be available in the U.S. next year.

Continuing the night's theme of Rope Magic, Roy Porfido started with Professor's Nightmare with comedy/kids patter. Roy's routine continued with him taking away one piece, tying the others together, but then taking away one, leaving one long piece, which seemed to get longer and longer. John Signa's routine started with one long rope and included ends tied together, pulled off and pocketed, returned, more tied ends, then back to just one rope, two ends and one middle. Ends traveled from one side of the loop to the other. Anyway lots of stuff and comedy as he went along. Also a Hunter Bow Knot and the Professor's Nightmare done and undone.

Kim Silverman's routine included the Hunter Bow Knot, the Jumping Knot of Oolaroo (based on Daryl's Jumping Knot), and a version of the Professor's Nightmare combined with the Cut and Restored Rope inspired by Whit Haydn's Mongolian Pop-Knot. Then we watched a performance Michael Finney's very funny rope routine.

Non-rope performances included

Guillermo Perez presenting a Finger Ring Routine, and Kim Silverman doing a card matching effect while talking about his memory of magic with his father. Joe Caffall performed Cinema Verite with a basic presentation idea that generated some meaningful discussion of scripting and being concise but not bare-bones. —Joe Caffall

We do not currently have a regular meeting location. Please email jocaff@pacbell.net for information about an upcoming meeting. Contact Joe Caffall jocaff@pacbell.net (408) 578-8387 for more details.

95 PEN MAGIC

VANCOUVER, CANADA—

The November 2013 meeting was held at the home of Jens Henriksen in Crescent Beach, BC. After the snacks courtesy of Jens, the evening of Pen magic began. Rod Chow said that as an insurance broker, if he is “given the pen” by an insurance company, this means that he is free to write up his own terms and conditions of an insurance policy. Therefore, Rod did an insurance policy effect with his own custom Magician’s Insurance Policy, incorporating a prediction effect with Dave Watters & Jens. Lon Mandrake had Henry Tom point to one of three colored cards with a pen, and the result was that the card that Henry chose was the only one with a prediction on back of the card. Lon then had Henry select a card, and Ray Roch read the rotating barrel of Lon’s pen after each click to determine Henry’s card.

Jens balanced two pens on a box and stepped away to cause the pen to move. Jens then went into a dissertation of the stretching and shortening of thermal plastic, which he magically demonstrated with two curved rulers. Dennis Hewson showed a pen with a snow globe type floating card in hat inside that matched Jens chosen



Glen LaBarre manipulates a pen and its cap

card. Ray Roch demonstrated his Finger Chopper by first using a pen, then Glen LaBarre’s finger. Glen LaBarre used his sleight of hand to cause a pen to vanish, and then went into a pen and cap manipulation routine.

Henry Tom made a ring on a pen magically come off a pen and then back onto his finger. Dave Watters used mini apparatus to contact the spirits. After Lon picked a card, Dave burned a piece of paper and revealed a prediction which matched in an effect by Eugene Burger. Anthony Young showed a pen through a yellow board, and then caused the hole to move along board. Anthony then penetrated a \$20 bill with a pen. Anthony ended by gifting everyone with souvenirs of magnets and dice from his recent trip to Shanghai. —Rod Chow

The Carl Hemeon Assembly No. 95 meets the first Tuesday of each month at members’ homes. Contact Rod Chow rod@rodchow.com (604) 669-7777 www.sam95.com for more details.

104

SAMCON RETURNS TO PEABODY AND FILLS THE HOUSE

WITCH CITY, SALEM, MA—

The Wednesday November 6 meeting of Assembly 104 was preceded, as usual, by the Bill Towne School of Magic, for which Len Lazar plans Part Two of Coin Magic for next month. Then the traditional whirlwind of November 104 activities began. Plans for our November convention, SAMCON, only days away, were finalized including last minute, emergency replacement for Stage Manager Derek Raposo being announced.

President Bill Jensen’s daughter, Amanda, a former SAMCON producer herself, generously stepped up to save the show. At the close of business, our guest lecturer Peter Vuono, an experienced, local escape artist (who never sketched a Ford), began a very informative and enjoyable teaching of techniques ranging from straitjackets to thumb ties. On Friday night, November 8, our first ever, pre-convention close-up show featuring Eugene Burger and Andrew Goldenhersh was outstanding. Andrew’s production of a live hare from his hair served as a telling preview of the Saturday magic to come. Eugene’s performance was compelling and pure velvet.

On Saturday, Andrew’s lecture on creativity began by taking the teaching in a musical direction towards new thinking. Bill Abbott

shared highlights of an act that can fit in a pouch. All of which played large and very funny. Finally, it was time for a crowd hungry for a Burger and their appetites couldn’t have been more satisfied. Eugene was a total joy, offering a banquet of ideas and subtleties from envelope switches to Monte and more.



Eugene revives Halloween spookiness at SAMCON 2013

After a dinner break, it was time for the gala show with all three pros. A full house was treated to Abbott’s irrepressible humor and Goldenhersh’s unforgettable style, as he topped his Friday performance by producing two full grown chickens from the straitjacket from which he had just escaped. Wow! Eugene Burger brought the evening to a sublime end as only he could, defining the difference between stunts and magic by example – at the master level. Emcee Bryan Dwyer tied it all together with great humor and original magic. It was a perfect night of wonders, highlighted by Compeer Kayla Drescher’s richly deserved 104 award as “Magician of the Year” and surprised Secretary Bob Forrest’s award as “Unsung Magician of the Year.” (It’s true, he can’t carry a note.) Eugene provided next day’s dessert: his Master Class at Diamond’s Magic on Sunday afternoon. It was a privilege to attend and receive the warm wisdom of a legend over hot coffee. —Bob Forrest

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

108

FUN MAGICAL TIMES

SOMERSET, PA— The October meeting was a dress rehearsal for the S.Y.M. show in November for the Somerset Women’s Welfare League at the

Somerset Country Club. The rehearsals went fairly smoothly as we worked out the bugs with some routines and sound. The show was later in the month and was a rousing success. It was a free show but the Woman’s group gave a check to the assembly as a token of their appreciation. They were amazed at the dedication and performances of our youth. Our SAM assembly is in good hands for the future.

Brandon Benford started the show with his D’lite routine and ended with the Mother of All Diamonds. Aaron Trulick showed an empty box and then removed appearing carrots from the box and went into his Hippy-Hop Rabbits, and ended with his magic wallet routine, divining a thought of number from an audience member.

Addie Best closed out the show showing a McDonald’s menu, folding it then reached in and removed a burger and fries. She then took her napkin and did a torn and restored routine.

In November several of the adults and two from the youth went to the Kutztown Magic Convention and had a wonderful time. It was a new experience for the youth and they learned a lot. —Dan Miller

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

110

EDDIE CLEVER CONTEST

NEW CUMBERLAND, PA—

After the November meeting there were three members competing in the Eddie Clever Contest. This contest is named after a former club member who was the Hocus Pocus Parade editor for the *Linking Ring* magazine for many years in the 1950s and ‘60s. Performers must use and identify an effect published in a Hocus Pocus Parade of any month and year.

The first to perform was our Civil War re-enactor, Marlin Troutman. Marlin was using an October 2013 effect concerning a ghost story. Marlin’s story was about staying in a house used as a hospital at the battle of Antietam. Marlin passed out slips of paper upon which a number of members were to write a four-digit number. The collected slips were added up and the total written on a chalk board. When the board was inverted the numbers spelled ghost.

The next to perform was Frank Bianco doing an effect called No

Hands Doc from the January 2011 Parade. From a shuffled deck the deck is cut and cards turned over revealing the card that is the card to be remembered. Again the cards are cut and turned a few more times, and when the cards are spread the chosen card is the only face-up card in the deck.

The third, and final performer was Al Bienstock who has a collection of old Linking *Ring* magazines. Al was doing the same effect that Eddie Clever himself did at the first Eddie Clever contest. The effect is from the September 1950 Parade and is called You Do It, I Do It. In this two-deck effect the helper shuffles his deck and the magician another. The decks are exchanged and each puts his deck beneath the table and selects one card from anywhere in the deck he is holding. The chosen cards are turned face-up (beneath the table) and inserted into the face down decks. When the decks are spread upon the table it is seen that the chosen cards are the same. A small glitch prevented Al's card matching so he did not win; however, Eddie Cleaver did not win the first Eddie Cleaver contest either.

The winner this year was Frank Bianco with Marlin Troutman second and Al Bienstock third. Thanks for some entertaining routines fellas!

Joe Homecheck, Assembly 110 meets on the second Thursday at 7:00pm at John's Diner, 146 Sheraton Dr., New Cumberland, PA 17070. Contact Secretary@SAM110.com for more information.

112

INFLATED LECTURE

PLEASANT HILL, CA—Our October meeting was a departure from our regular format, the greater part of the meeting being devoted to a lecture on ballooning by our own magician and master balloon artist, Sir Lantz.

Sir Lantz (AKA Lance Snead) began his talk with a description of the tools of the trade and provided advice based on his many years of experience as a "balloon twister." One of the most important items is an air pump, either manually operated or electric, designed for inflating balloons. Not only will a pump spare the performer's lungs from exhaustion, but it is also important for health reasons as well. Also, no good balloonist will perform without an apron with several pockets, a pair of blunt scissors, and several marking pens such as Sharpies.

Lance recommends balloons

made by Qualatex, available in bags of 100 and 250 and in different color assortments. Balloons are also available in various shapes such as the heart and doughnut varieties. Some are printed with simple designs like a smiley face or alien face. The standard balloons are identified by a three-digit number such as 120 or 260. Typically, a 260 balloon will inflate to a diameter of two inches and be sixty inches long if fully inflated, thus the designation.



Sir Lantz with balloon version of dove on perch

The real treat was watching Sir Lantz produce several of the more than ten thousand creations in his repertoire. Audience members called out anything from a butterfly to a giraffe, and Sir Lantz obliged them in short order with the creature of their choice. As further demonstration of his expertise, he produced a balloon teddy bear while blindfolded.

Animal figures are not the only things that can be made from balloons. Sir Lantz also demonstrated how to create a ball inside a balloon and very realistic looking apple, complete with stem.

Of course, it was soon time for audience participation, and all the members grabbed a few balloons to start their own creations, either duplicating Lance's animals or attempting something new. This was not our usual sort of meeting, but it was great fun for everyone who participated. Thank you, Sir Lantz. —Bill Marquardt

Diablo Assembly 112 meets on the third Wednesday of every month at the VFW building in Pleasant Hill, California Contact Doug Kovacich at: douglassthemagicman@hotmail.com (925) 435-4824 <http://sam112.com/> for more details.

115

NATIONAL MAGIC WEEK CELEBRATION

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA—George Buckley, David and Nathan Clauss, Dan and Bethany Hall, and Dan Rowan attended our November meeting. After a relaxing bite to eat at Panera, we accepted nominations of officers

for the coming year. A few names were put forth with elections to be conducted via email. Installation of officers will take place at our December 6th meeting and holiday potluck. The meeting was informal due to the small attendance and restaurant venue.

Dan Rowan shared some offbeat presentations for his Magic Square work, which was entertaining and deceptive. He also showed a ring penetration through silk streamer reminiscent of a thumb tie. George shared some revelation ideas that can be achieved by substance known as Optic Guard. This magical substance can be used on a glass or mirrored surface to reveal predictions or a chosen card.



George Buckley Entertains

We talked about some of the recent movies that had a magic theme as well as cable shows featuring magic. Our first celebration of National Magic Week took place at the Richmond Veterans Hospital just a week before Halloween. George Buckley, David Clauss, David Feng, and Wes Islei all participated in this event. The veterans group enjoyed our performances immensely and our club looks forward to future events for them. Assembly 115 always welcome magic enthusiasts who are traveling through the area, so should you find yourself in Virginia we would love to have you join us for a meeting.

Assembly 115 meets at Forest Lakes North Pavilion Building in the Forest Lakes Subdivision on the first Friday of the month starting at 7PM.

131

NOVEMBER MEETING AND 2014 PLANS

DANBURY, CT—Our Monday meeting started off with an update on President Magic Mo, who is healing up from 4½ hours of Surgery on his ankle. Mo is looking at a lot of bed rest in the months to come; we all wish him well.

The business meeting got underway. We finally set our Christmas party date of January

20 at Chucks Steak House, here in Danbury. We talked about a date to be set for our Chinese Buffet/Third Annual Magicians Gathering and lectures for our 2014 year.

A brief review of products was presented by V.P. Magic Marty, member Joe Lantieri, and Magic Des. This led us into our monthly magic by members. Magic Marty presented his work in progress on a four coin production followed up with a four coin routine. Next up was Joe Lantieri with a Sterling Rope & Ring Routine, followed by a card effect. Magic Russ presented his personal version of his Okito boxes made in wood and all hand turned by Russ himself our master wood turner. Russ's boxes were inspired by the Joe Lantieri Okito box lecture of October.

Then Gail Alexander did an interesting mind selection of a card, selected by a member and then matched up on a pad that was turned over with the name of the card on it. Our newest member Mark Mitchell performed a time prediction on a closed pocket watch in a closed box. Our final presentation was a four card effect by Magic Tony Spiro.

—Magic Marty Steinberg
Contact Magic Marty Steinberg
Magic_Marty@aol.com (845) 797-8363 for meeting details.

157

UPDATED INFO AND GREAT LECTURE

BEAVER, PA—The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley's meeting had a brief informational meeting and then turned over to lecturer Chuck Caputo. It was announced that the December meeting would be the annual Christmas dinner at the Towne Square Restaurant in Beaver, which would include a Chinese auction for the members' gift exchange. This year there will be a gift exchange for the guests as well. The Daryl lecture has been finalized for April. Jack Greenberg is getting the Kranzo lecture together for a Thursday in June.

The meeting was then turned over to Chuck Caputo. He presented many magical effects, some old and some new. He gave how they were presented, made, and how they worked. His wife was there to help with sales of his books and items. It was a very pleasing and informative production.

—Judy Stead
The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (157) meet the second Thursday of every month at the

Towne Square Restuarant in Beaver, PA. Contact Judy Ssteed heyjudel1943@msn.com (330) 525-5389 for more details.

170 MAGICAL PRODUCTIONS

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO— Dwayne Faux was the emcee as we each demonstrated the type of magical productions that we loved best. The first and most spectacular opening production was Frank Klein's silk production from a fiery box. The production culminated with a fountain of colorful silks.

Tom Paine, with his usual soft spoken eloquence, had a volunteer sign a card; he replaced it in the deck. The signed card was produced from Tom's pocket to utter amazement of us all.

Dick Bowman, our leader for the Society of Young Magicians group, demonstrated and taught our club the Three Way Out effect. Dave Wintermute walked up, hands empty, and immediately produce two bouquets of flowers from nothing. He then showed how his homemade Buddha Papers could change a one-dollar bill into a twenty-dollar bill. Then he advised everyone to buy the commercial version. It is low cost and better than homemade. Dave used a Gypsy Switch to produce a ruby from nothing, change it into an emerald, and then vanished the emerald.

Larry Marsh Scott showed his Crystal Box production of flowers. He twirled the box at first to show it clear on all sides, covered with a cloth, and then poured out the spring flowers. He thought the gaff was too loud and solicited ideas on how to improve the production. Several ideas were discussed, including having someone tap the box with a wand to coincide with gaff release.

Dwayne Faux brought out the cage of the horrifying long yellow Amazon Leech (balloon), which immediately attacked his lips and was gorged until it expanded. It then transformed into the horrifying yellow Amazon snake, with teeth. It then transformed itself into the horrifying yellow Amazon rabbit, with teeth. With a fearless volunteer's help, that horrifying yellow Amazon rabbit (with teeth) produced another (real) fuzzy rabbit in the empty cage that the leech had originally come from.

All this produced more excitement than I can handle, so the meeting was a success. —Dr. Dave Wintermute

SAM Magical Assembly #170 (Pikes Peak Prestidigitators) meets on the 4th Tuesday every month in the Community Room of the Sand Creek Police Station at 4125 Center Park Dr. Colorado Springs, CO 80916 – Come and visit when you can. Contact Dr Dave Wintermute, bWintermute@juno.com, (719) 494-0171, for more details.

181 EXPERT COIN LECTURE

HIGHTSTOWN, NJ— For our November meeting, Assembly 181 had the pleasure of a lecture from one of world's most knowledgeable coin experts, Dr. Michael Rubinstein. Since Hightstown, an exit on the New Jersey Turnpike, is a reasonable drive from Dr. Rubinstein's Manhattan Veterinarian office, our meeting started at the normal 7:30 time.

Michael opened the lecture with Wishing Well, using the nowhere palm. It is a four-coin production with a romantic story. That was followed by Tallahassee Jumping Coins, a non-gaffed Coins Across, with the last coin impossibly traveling to the spectator's closed fist. Michael's methods are more based on timing than knuckle busting moves. Many of Michael's routines can be found on the seminal coin series, *New York Coin Magic Seminar* that he appeared in.



Dr. Michael Rubinstein

Other items in the lecture were Michael's take on the Nest of Boxes and Silver Extraction. He also taught his rendition on the classic Coins through the Table theme. In summing up his philosophy on magic, Michael says "As long as you don't tip your method, there is never a right way or wrong way to do your magic. But there is always a better way. It is the journey you take to find that better way that will make you a better magician".

January's meeting will include a workshop on silk magic by Coco. So if you are nearby, bring along

your silks and your best routine. There's always time to perform at Assembly 181. —David Zboray
Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets the first Thursday of every month, September thru June at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00PM. Contact Stephan Sloan lands10@optonline.net (732) 757-5337 <http://www.magicsam181.com/> for more details.

200 NOVEMBER MAGIC

SEATTLE, WA— Ben Eskenazi started off the evening of magic with a great card prediction effect. He was not only able to show that the card dealt to by the spectator was the same as he predicted, but that in fact the rest of the deck was blank. Ben is really coming along with his magic.

Chuck Kleiner continued the magical evening with a funny routine involving holding a carton of broken eggs over the spectator's head; the eggs magically turned into Hershey's Kisses. This group thought this was a great trick, especially since we all got to eat the chocolate!

Jeff Dial presented a very nice ring on rope routine using a normal rope with many magical links and unlinks. He continued the ring/rope theme by vanishing a spectator's ring and having it appear on the chain around his neck. Mark Paulson performed his baffling mind reading magic under test conditions; he was able to divine a card that was simply thought of. This is a strong effect that Mark has perfected.

J.R. Russell performed Joshua Jay's Inferno and got a very good reaction from the club. It is certainly good magic packed into a small space. Michael Jacobs presented the world's fairest card trick! He had the spectator cut a deck into three piles and he was able to match all three cards using a different deck he cut and dealt.

Roger Sylwester performed a nice card through handkerchief/card transformation using a lovely new Burberry handkerchief that he had just received as a gift. Roger has such a great gift for story telling the magic is always an "extra" gift!

Danny Dragon told the story of Bruno, his scam artist of a cousin. Lucky for Danny he knows a bit of magic and was able to not only get back his money from his cousin, but to outwit him in a game of chance that couldn't be won. Larry Dimmitt continues to amaze with

his mental ability. He was able to divine who would get the most correct guesses of heads or tails in a group of three spectators, with each one spinning a coin on the table.

Bill Murray presented a very nice color changing deck routine that looked quite magical. Bill is always working on presenting unique stories to go with his magic. —Jim Earnshaw

The Emerald City Wizards meets the first Thursday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., at a Branch of the King County Library, WA. Please check website for meeting locations Contact Jim Earnshaw jimearnshaw@live.com (206) 2256715 www.emeraldcitywizards.org for more details.

215 AUTUMN MORNING STAR RISES IN KENTUCKY

LOUISVILLE, KY— On November 5 the Louisville magic club met at 7 p.m. in the St. Matthews Baptist Church for a special night of magic. Between fifty and sixty members came to watch and learn from one of the most entertaining, educated, and inspiring lecturers on the circuit. Autumn Morning Star came in all her radiance to help us learn how to develop a character, an act, and to learn to do our magic in cooperation with our passion.

The first half of the presentation was given on how to improve our magic, our presentations, and ourselves and develop the kind of show we would love to do. Not since Fitzke and Henning have we been given such tools to stir our imagination. In the second half of the presentation we were given a glimpse into her show that has been presented around the world and recently in Las Vegas. Using items we all have in our closet and never used, it has been given new life and new meaning. Storytelling is more than just that, it is truly magic and when teamed with props becomes an inspiration for all who watch. In the closing of her show, Autumn gave a presentation of the Blackfeet winter of 1884 that was outstanding, historical, spell binding, and true. Autumn received a standing ovation because...well, she deserved it. Thank you Autumn Morning Star for bringing us the "light." —Tom Crecelius

The Louisville magic club meets the second Tuesday of the month at the Kosair Headquarters on Eastern Parkway at 7PM. Other nights and meeting places are scheduled as they become available to us. Contact Tom

Crecelius medimagic@cs.com
(812) 633-7684 www.lmcmagic.com for more details.

215

NOVEMBER MEETING OF ASSEMBLY 215

LOUISVILLE, KY— The Louisville Magic Club held its annual close-up contest on November 19. Forty-four members were present to watch eight senior performers and two junior performers. Judges were Brent Braun, Jeff Russ, and David Garrard, all well-known local magicians. Ken Abbott was emcee and time keeper, ensuring that no performer went beyond the allotted ten minutes. The junior winners were Edward Steeter (1st place) and Jesus Moreno (2nd place), winning \$35 and \$25 respectively. Senior winners were Jake Wisdom (1st place), John Hromada (2nd place), and Cody Clark and Steve Haffner (tied for 3rd place). Senior winners won \$50, \$35, and \$25 respectively. The people's choice award went to Graham Maupin. Other performers were Mike Raymer, Ray Tillman, and Carl Loud.

Other LMC activities in December included our annual holiday banquet and show on December 7th, a fund-raising opportunity for members to perform close-up magic at the Kosair Charities Holiday Party on December 8th, and an annual visit from Harry Allen of Daytona Magic on December 9th. —Roger L. Omanson

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

226

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

WILLIAMSBURG, VA— About fifty guests attended this year's Friends and Family Magic Show. Long-time member Harold Wood served as emcee. Harold warmed up the audience by juggling four inflated plastic grocery bags. A volunteer from the audience chose a card from a deck. Harold then balanced an open attaché case over her head. Out came a long string of beads at the end of which was the chosen card. Next up was Alexander Goldberg, who had a variety of effects. They included sponge ball routines, a change bag effect, a cut and restored rope routine, and a magic pitcher in which he poured dry sand and water. He then poured out the sand, which was still dry.

Watt Hyer performed Cocktail by Gustavo Reilley. Watt placed on the table a pail and three bottles of water: one red, one yellow, and one blue. One by one he added the contents of each bottle into the pail. Then he swirled the fluids in the pail to mix them up. Then one by one he took three empty cups and retrieved the fluids: one red, one yellow, one blue. The last color was poured directly from the pail.

Ron Grossman, The Poor Prestidigitator, followed with a very funny act. He began by taking off his jacket with one hand while he recited the alphabet in reverse. With the last struggle from his jacket he pulled out a glass! He asked for a volunteer and a coin. The volunteer examined the quarter and marked it on both sides. Ron poured water in the magic glass and handed it her. She grasped the quarter through a scarf and held it over the glass. She released the quarter and heard the clink in the glass. When Ron removed the scarf, the glass was empty. Michael Heckenberger performed the Malini Egg Bag and the Magician's Insurance Policy card trick.



The Main Attraction!

Harold stepped up to the stage with a stool and a strange device with knobs and dials. He placed the device on the stool and then blew up a balloon. He asked members of the audience to suggest an animal that he could form with the balloon. Unable to shape a rabbit, he inserted the balloon into the front of the device. The balloon exploded and there was Buster Bunny! Buster Bunny took the stage for his classic "Hop of Death"—"leaping" from the stool to his cage. Harold called out all the performers for one more round of applause. The last act was munching on delicious deserts by our own Amy Goldberg. —Phil Thorp

Baker-Temple Assembly 226 meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 4th Wednesday (except December and January) room B at the Williamsburg Regional Library, 515 Scotland Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185. (757) Contact Phil Thorp pthorp@widomaker.com (757) 229-2329 <http://sites.google.com/site/samassembly226gmail.com> for more details.

266

A VIP LECTURE

LAKELAND, FL— President Jerry Kardos ran us thru our November business meeting in record time. We welcomed new member Steve Hoye to the fold in addition to our honored guest.

Tom Craven is one of our club's founding fathers and it's always a great reunion when he comes back to visit. As part of Tom's Columbarium Labyrinth Tour he presented a very special lecture for the group. As always, Tom showed us a selection of practical miracles that are doable for all skill levels.

We learned a use for a Bob Hummer principle, a coin transposition effect, a mini study of the keeper card principle, a great party mind-reading stunt, a very entertaining whodunit that involved a murder and a hangman's noose, and more. There was literally something for everyone in the very responsive group.

Tom gave the Lakeland magicians an early Christmas gift this month. It just goes to show that you never know what kind of magic gifts you'll get when you visit with the Lakeland magi. If your plans bring you to Central Florida be sure to join us. —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.

274

MEMBERS PERFORM

BOCA RATON, FL— At our October meeting our members showed their skills in magic. Herb Arno did a fine job as emcee. Ronnie Reckseit showed his professional experience as emcee. He did several effects including a mental effect, locating a chosen card among a large number of bags. PNP Warren Kaps performed a color changing shoe lace effect. A self-closing knife followed, and then Cutting the Aces. Warren showed his versatility! Gabe Auerback came up with an outstanding rendition of Wild Card. Peter Fox showed us a nice card effect. Simon Carmel, a true professional, demonstrated matching cards and prediction effects.

Next came Al Callas, who always does a nice job. He did an outstanding effect in which cards were mixed and then all faced the same direction! Rachelle Klien offered a penetration through a glass bottle. Marshall Johnson presented

"Pro Control," cutting four Aces. Mel Baskin caused a necklace to disappear and reappear followed by a giant card effect. He had nice patter. Herb Arno closed the show. Herb demonstrated several effects. He performed the Five-card Trick, Face-Up and Face-Down Cards, Rubber Band around a Chosen Card, and Cutting the Aces. — Marshall Johnson

The Sam Schwartz Assembly 274 meets on the 1st Monday at the JCC in Boca Raton, FL. For information call Marshall Johnson (561) 638-0043 marshj4magic@aol.com

291

COMEDY MAGIC WITH TOM OGDEN

VENICE, CA— This month we enjoyed a wonderful lecture by Tom Ogden. He is a twice-voted Parlor Magician of the Year by the world-famous Magic Castle in Hollywood. Tom Ogden brings more than thirty years of comedy and magic experience to the stage. His experience includes opening for such headliners as Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, and The Osmonds.



Tom Ogden

On November 12 the Westside Wizards had the privilege of enjoying Tom's magic and comedy. During the lecture he broadened our horizons on how to improve our performances, how to market and present yourself, and how to get spectators involved in your act. After our meeting we enjoyed furthering our knowledge by going to our hidden gem, lovingly known as "Denny's" with the last of the evening hours spent by Tom entertaining us with his anecdotes. I would highly recommend hiring Tom Ogden for your next guest lecture because it would be an event to remember. —William Dow Jr.

Assembly 291 meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Boys and Girls Club, 2232 Lincoln Blvd., Venice, CA Contact Les Cooper Cooper@ucla.edu (310) 473-1820 www.westsidewizards.org for more details.

**292
TERRIFIC
TRICKS**

GREELEY, CO— Our brief November business meeting over lunch was the last business meeting of the year. President Lloyd Worley installed next year's officers. They are: President, Jim Pope (who gave a hilarious acceptance speech); Vice President, James Lopez; Secretary, Ron Dutton; and Treasurer, Paul Noffsinger. During "Shows Seen," James Lopez and Ron Dutton praised the Magic in the Rockies convention. "Show Reports" opened with Rich Nakata listing a number of bookings. Lloyd Worley the Wizard reported five Halloween library shows back-to-back for fifty children each. The Amazing



President-elect Jim Pope (left) getting installed by Lloyd Worley

James Lopez mentioned his part in those library shows. Then he recounted a challenging walk-around booking for a political party that turned out to want a stage show. James was able to create a stage show on the spot, with a bill-in-pumpkin climax. Alex Acosta described his successful Halloween night show for one hundred people.

The performance theme was "Magic with Food." Worley the Wizard opened by displaying some classic Morrissey Magic Ltd. Rice Bowls and a very nice set of "black cherry soda" Topsy-turvy Bottles by U.F. Grant. Marilyn Dutton made up and performed an unusual mental prediction effect. She gave a choice of large colored spots of pastry-decoration food colors (for which she had multiple outs).

Alex Acosta showed a very realistic full-cola-bottle by George Iglesias from Twister Magic. Alex demonstrated how the terrific "Super Coke" prop lets you both pour liquid and produce a dry silk load. Rich Nakata humorously taught an "oldie but goodie" knot effect. From the same starting hands position, he made a strip of silk come out as called for: either straight or knotted.

The Amazing James performed a terrific zipper Egg Bag routine. He added to the underarm sucker bit by having an orange loaded there

to produce. Rich Nakata closed, showing his ease with the stack by Si Stebbins (AKA William Henry Coffrin). He entertained us with two terrific card effects by Cameron Francis. Rich made up the deck for Convergence from Big Blind Media's DVD *Ultimate Self Working Card Tricks, Volume Two*. For his second effect, he made up another deck from a DVD of The Annihilation Deck. Rich took a failed prediction (made by two cards) and revealed the correct prediction drawn on the backs of the same two cards. —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 Dr. Lloyd Worley lloyd@worleythewizard.com (970) 356-3002 www.SAM292.com for more details.



No Turkey trick for youth member, Jarod Cernousek. Jarod stole the show with his mastery of the quick-draw, five-finger, rubber band twist

them for the club. Club members were encouraged to swap turkey tricks with other magicians after the meeting if they liked. It was fun to watch talented magicians totally bomb while performing their unwanted tricks, as well as listen to stories of failures and embarrassing moments of past performances. It's good to be humble and laugh at ourselves every once in a while. —Vizma Shaeffer
The Lincoln Magic Club Assembly 293 meets the first Saturday of every month from 1:00 – 2:00 at the MagicKits.com Magic shop at 10th & Charleston. The club youth gather an hour prior to the meeting to hang out, learn and perform tricks. For more information go to www.lincolnmagic.com. ♦

**293
NOVEMBER
TURKEY TRICKS**

LINCOLN, NE— What magician doesn't own a trick that simply won't work for them, doesn't fit their personality, or they just plain don't like? Lincoln Magic Club members were asked to bring their "Turkey" tricks to the November meeting and perform

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

Roger Barr
883 B Levepool Circle,
Manchester, NJ 08759

Daniel Cudennec
"Dany Trick"
225, Stang-ar-Veil-
d'an-Traon, Mellac-29300,
Quimperle, France

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

Joseph H. (Ben) Grant
400 Commonwealth Ave, Unit 9
Warwick, RI 02886

Charlie Gross
16745 Gertrude Street,
Omaha, NE 68136-3023

Roy Horn
c/o Siegfried & Roy
1639 N Valley Drive,
Las Vegas, NV 89108

Bob King
304 Suburban Court,
Rochester, NY 14620

Robert D. Knigge
PO Box 5,
Jones Borough, TN 3765

Stanley R. Kramien
11205 SW Summerfield Dr.
Apt 161
Tigard, OR 97224-3391

Richard Laneau
4020 55th St. N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

George Gilbert Lott
1725 Great Hill Rd.
Guilford, CT 06437

Frank J. McNaughton, Sr
1926 Apple Street,
Williamsport, PA 17701

James J. Morrissey
24 Grove St.
Wayland, MA 01788

Anthony Murphy
11 Angel Rd.,
North Reading, MA 01864

Nahmen Nissen
PO Box 1856
Colfax, CA 95713-1856

Allen Okawa
2101 Nuuanu Ave., Tower 1,
#2203
Honolulu, HI 96817

David Oliver
141 Audaubon Rd. #201
Weymouth, MA 02188

Larry Poague
34221 West 90 Circle
Desota, KS 66108

Jim Relyea
241 W. Lakeshore
Rockaway, NJ 07866

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

Pat Ryan
43 Fairbanks Rd.
Churchville, NY 14428

Matt Savin
P.O. Box 7693
Alhambra, CA 91802-7533

Sybill Simons
65 West 95 St. Apt 3A
New York, NY 10025

Mario Susi
6 Bristol Rd.
W. Peabody, MA 01960

Jack White
4288 Arguello St.
San Diego, CA 92103

Jim Zachary
2801 South Creek Drive
Mulberry, FL 33860

NEW MEMBERS

Adams, Samuel Macon, GA	Livingston, Patrick Chicago, IL	Brooklyn, NY	Hershey, Erick Landisville, PA
Auclair, Renee-Claude Quebec, QC Canada	Lopez, Brandon Portland, OR	Starzyk, Kenneth Poplar Grove, IL	Hoff, Seymour San Jose, CA
Bischoff, Lisa Colorado Springs, CO	Mahaney Jr, Ralph E Kensington, MD	Steele, David Guilford, CT	Kenney, Don Pacoima, CA
Carter, Christopher Sleepy Hollow, IL	Mains, Steven Williamsburg, VA	Stuller, Steven Littleton, CO	Kentner, Robert W Ponca, NE
Chase, Stephanie Marina Del Rey, CA	Massanova, John Runnemedede, NJ	Sweet, Harold M Sherman Oaks, CA	Leferovich Jr, John Eastchester, NY
Chayes, Lea Windsor, CT	Mc Crum, Brian Clifton, VA	Tan, Kim Seng Singapore, Singapore	Loud, Carl Thomas Louisville, KY
Checansky, Rick Simi Valley, CA	Mcelroy, Lindy A La Porte, TX	Tsao, Chih Hsien Lewisville, TX	Mauro, David J West Palm Beach, FL
Decarolis, David Las Vegas, NV	Mixell, Max L Chambersburg, PA	Tyner, Roy Tulsa, OK	Melillo, Peter James New Hartford, CT
Dreyfuss, Daniel Boca Raton, FL	Nichols, Philip Houston, TX	Wang, Shiqi Guilin, Guangxi Province China	Miskelly, Wayne Haines City, FL
Dyer, Sofia Austin, TX	Nieves, Hector New York, NY	Wenzel, Kevin Irving, TX	Moore, Jason Kansas City, MO
Ferguson, Harry Seminole, FL	Pacheco, Nelson Sebring, FL	Westeen, Caleb Bedford, TX	Newman, Ira Jay Placentia, CA
Flint, Charles East Bridgewater, MA	Palmer, Christopher Berkeley, CA	Xu, Raymond Saratoga, CA	Parsons, Ryan Reading, PA
Gallagher, Seth Cold Spring, NY	Pinti, Stephen Mechanicsburg, PA	Yermish, Norman Holland, PA	Porter Md, Henry Pensacola, FL
Goodwin, Tommy Camarillo, CA	Ponce, Jacob Plano, TX	Yuspeh, Michael Metairie, LA	Saul, Howard Cherry Hill, NJ
Greenleaf, Dan Manchester, NH	Reid, John East Meadow, NY	REINSTATEMENTS	Spencer, Edward K Happy Valley, OR
Hoff, Harold Reading, PA	Reynolds, Steve Gretna, LA	Alday, Geoff Franklin, TN	Stone, Philip L Toms River, NJ
Isham, Eve Davis, CA	Rivera, Israel Raymore, MO	Chang, Nelson Vancouver, BC Canada	Teraila, Robert Newington, CT
Keyl, Steven Herndon, VA	Rossbach, Mark Weston, FL	Dreyer, Roger New York, NY	Wojewoda, Tim 'Carlson' Bay City, MI
Kroener, James New York, NY	Rubino, John Maple Shade, NJ	Fortune, Timothy Rockaway, NJ	
Leopold, Cheryl Gardiner, NY	Schmill, Robert B Omaha, NE	Frenkel, David Austin, TX	
Lin, Bin Guilin, Guangxi Prov. China	Sinfield, George Brooklyn, NY	Frye, Keith M Linenwood, NJ	
	Spaeth, Michael Pucking, Upper Austria	Gunn, Kent Wesley Chapel, FL	
	Springer, Ashley		

**FRED STORY
(OCTOBER 17, 1931 – NOVEMBER 11, 2013)**



Lifelong illusionist and magical entertainer Fred Arthur Story passed away at the age of eighty-two on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2013. Born in Plainview, Texas, on October 17, 1931, to Robert E. and Nadine Story, Fred became interested in magic tricks at the age of five when his barber in Plainview, Texas, performed sleight-of-hand to get him to sit still in the barber chair.

Fred graduated from Kemper Military School in Booneville, Missouri, in 1951. He married his lifelong sweetheart on August 9, 1952, and the two celebrated their honeymoon at that summer's Abbott's Magic Get-Together. Fred earned a BS degree in history and education from Texas Tech University in 1954, was discharged from the US Air Force in 1956, and later was discharged as a Captain in the Air Force reserves.

Fred and his wife Ann performed professionally for over twenty years throughout the United States with one of the last great touring illusion shows. Fred's career included working with his father in the auto parts supply business and owning The Magic Shop in Lubbock, Texas, and a photography studio in Tulia, Texas. Fred is perhaps most known in magic circles for his finely crafted and highly collectible Camelot Creations magic props. Fred and Ann were honored with the lifetime achievement award at the 2003 Texas Association of Magicians convention in Lubbock.

An avid magic collector and historian, Fred was a member of the West Texas Wizards, the Magic Collectors Association, the Society of American Magicians, and an Order of Merlin Excelsior of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. He was preceded in death by his parents and twin brother Robert C. Story. Fred is survived by his wife Ann, his daughter Carol Allen of Tulia, son Larry in Lubbock, four grandsons, and four great grandchildren. – Bruce Chadwick

**PARKER SWAN
(APRIL 18, 1928 – NOVEMBER 15, 2013)**

Longtime friend, supporter, and mentor to me and so many others, Charles Parker Swan III passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home in Northborough, Massachusetts on November 15, 2013. Parker was a life

member of The Society of American Magicians and had been a member for fifty-three years. He was the Dean of Assembly 16 and was its 1992 Magician of the Year.

Parker was born April 18, 1928, in Somerville, Massachusetts, grew up in Everett, Massachusetts, and graduated from Everett High School in 1946. After serving in the Army, he attended college in California and graduated from Boston University in 1952. He retired from the Burroughs Corporation in 1980 after thirty-seven years of service.

Parker married Claire Miles Swan in 1955 and settled in Northborough, Massachusetts, where they proudly raised a beautiful family. Parker and Claire celebrated their love and marriage by traveling the world, devoting time to their church, St. Rose of Lima, and by giving back to the community that they loved so much. Parker's humor breathed life and joy into each experience they shared, and their memories spanned from the deserts of Egypt to the wonders of China.



His interest in magic began with a Mysto Magic Set. From 1942 to 1946 he worked at Holden's Magic Shop in Boston for Herman Hanson. While there, he learned his performing skills, met many famous magicians, and made many

lasting friendships. For many years he performed in New England and developed his comedy talent. We all remember his hilarious convention routines. For several decades, Parker performed with Claire as the comedy team of "Parker Swan and Claire." A fabulous emcee and comic genius, two of his most memorable effects were the Card in Watermelon and the Parker Swan Dollhouse Production, which was assembled in front of his audience, and from which he would produce endless silks, streamers, flowers, and even a live rabbit. Parker performed at every major magicians convention around the country, and always brought the house down with his comedy antics. I always knew I was in safe hands when I was booked on a show that Parker emceed.

In addition to his sidesplitting magic performances, he spent time as a valuable player in The Society of American Magicians, serving as RVP, on the Convention Site Committees, and as chairman of the Commemorative Stamp Committee. Outside of magic, he was adored by his local friends and neighbors. Parker

enjoyed serving the Northborough community; in 1970, he was elected town moderator and dutifully served the town for thirty-three years. In his position as town moderator, he often used magic, humor, his unbelievable charm, and his expert knowledge of parliamentary law to save many a stressful situation and to lighten the mood when things became heated or uncomfortable at town hall meetings. He and Claire had also been active in many other community activities, including advocacy at the state and local levels for the developmentally disabled population. He often donated his time helping several other local charities, both onstage and off.

He was the former president of both the Massachusetts Moderators' Association and Assembly 16 of The Society of American Magicians. Parker was an active member of the Northborough Historical Society, the Greendale Men's Club, the International Brotherhood of Magicians, New England Magic Collector's Association, Northborough Helping Hands, and the Harmonica Club at the Senior Center. He was also a trustee of the Seven Hills Foundation, a communicant of St. Rose of Lima and

also served as former chairman of the Parish Council.

In 2004, John Bach, president of the Magic Collectors' Association, presented a special certificate to Honorary Lifetime Member Parker Swan. Parker had been a regular member for a long time and emceed the shows at the Yankee Gatherings from the beginning up through its eighth edition in 2000, as well as entertaining and enlightening those in attendance with his personal reminiscences.

Parker had been battling major health issues over the past few years, and while his physical body was losing ground, his mind was as sharp as ever. Parker leaves his wife of 58 years, Claire, a son David, and daughters Karen (John) and Ellen (Timothy). He was a loving grandfather of four granddaughters: Jacqueline, Diana, Ashley, and Tyra. He is also survived by his sister Barbara. A Broken Wand Ceremony was presented by longtime friend and magician, Robert Olsen.

Farewell, my friend. Thank you for everything. I am a better performer and better person for having known you. – David Oliver

S.A.M. SPOTLIGHT

ARTHUR MARTELLO AND THE "MAGIC SHED"

Forty-year S.A.M. associate member Arthur Martello lives in the Catskill Mountains of New York State and is at least ninety minutes from the nearest S.A.M. assembly. His interest in magic is therefore solely relegated to reading, attending conventions when possible, and watching magic videos. Over the years, he has amassed an impressive magic library and apparatus collection.

His magic collection has grown exponentially. He recently read an article in the online magic magazine *Mandala* about how magicians "collect" things and

eventually fill an entire room with "stuff." When he began to run out of room in his house, he built a 10' x 16' shed, complete with electricity and heat to store a portion of his collection.

Arthur plans to continue to perform for local organizations and to donate his time and talents to the community that he loves; he will continue to do so until he is no longer able to lift a Sherwood cup.



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The Nielsen Gallery

The Red Sheik

Dimensions: Half Sheet - 24" x 32" • Lithographer: Ateliers Lalande

Date: 1963 • Nielsen Rating: Available

LE CHEIK ROUGE (THE RED SHEIK)

We start this new year of Nielsen Gallery columns with a look at Channing Pollock, “the most beautiful man in the world,” an appellation most likely provided by his admiring female fans. Much like Cardini and his legendary billiard ball and cigarette production act, this strikingly handsome magician inspired legions of imitators of his dove and card productions before he left magic entirely to become a film actor.

Pollock was born on August 16, 1926, in Sacramento, California. He first became interested in magic in 1947 after watching a pitchman demonstrate the Svengali Deck. At the time, he thought magic had some real possibilities and decided to investigate further the world of conjuring. At some point he also saw the act of Mexican magician A.J. Cantu, who became famous for working with doves.

On November 19, 2000, the Magic Circle honored Pollock by presenting him with their David Devant Award. At that event he told a delighted audience that after deciding he wanted to work with doves, he noticed an advertisement for rabbits and pigeons; he ultimately purchased a pigeon that was about four times the size of a dove and totally unsuitable. The big pigeon was quickly replaced with two doves.

Eventually he also saw an advertisement in *Genii* magazine for the Chavez School of Magic and applied for admission. There, under the tutelage of Neil Foster, Pollock learned the principles of manipulation, showmanship, routining, and stagecraft. Certainly Pollock’s good looks added to his success, but it was his mastery of misdirection, timing, stage deportment, and routining learned at the Chavez School that made the difference.

He struggled at first and performed wherever he could find bookings. While staying in Philadelphia, he traveled to New York and convinced Mark Leddy, the agent who booked the talent for the Ed Sullivan show, to come and see his act. Again, from that Magic Circle interview with noted magician John Fisher, Pollock recalled that after the show Leddy told him, “I like what I saw kid – you got the Sullivan show.” His first Sullivan performance in 1954 resulted in two additional appearances in 1959 and 1960. Leddy also became Pollock’s manager.

Pollock went on to perform at the London Palladium in 1955 and appeared in special shows all over the world, performing for President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Queen Elizabeth II, and at the wedding of Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly in Monaco. At the height of his career he was one of America’s highest-paid performers.

The beginning of the end of his magic career came in 1959, when his act was featured in the film *Europe by Night*. He so enjoyed the experience that the following year he gave up magic and took up acting. Again, owing to his good looks and stage deportment, he appeared in a number of thrillers and dramas including *Rocambole* (1962); *Musketeers of the Sea* (1962), with Aldo Ray and Pier Angeli; Georges Franju’s *Judex* (1963), where he wore a hooded face mask of a gigantic dove and presented



part of his regular act in the setting of a masquerade party; and *Le Cheik Rouge*, the subject of this month’s column. The ninety-minute film premiered in New York on December 11, 1963.

The film takes place in nineteenth century Morocco and features an evil sultan who revels in making his subjects miserable. That is, until the mysterious Red Sheik appears on the scene. Similar to Zorro, the audience knows that the Sheik is actually Ruiz (Channing Pollock), an outwardly meek carpenter. According to the plot, they also know that Ruiz has donned his disguise to avenge his father’s murder. Movie reviewers found *The Red Sheik* short on plot but long on action, a trait not uncommon in Hollywood today.

Pollock did not confine himself only to film, but also went on to appear on popular television shows such as *Bonanza* (1971); *Daniel Boone* (1966); *The Rogues* (1965); *The Great Adventure* (1964), in which he appeared as Kit Carson; and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1963). Then, in 1969, Pollock again changed course dramatically and left show business. He and his wife started an organic farm at Moss Beach, California, overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

On stage Pollock was the epitome of confidence and sophistication. Once asked how he developed his stage image he replied, “Fear made me look sophisticated.” If such was the case, it certainly didn’t show; audiences loved him. Even after leaving magic, Pollock continued to act as a friend and mentor to aspiring magicians. He died in Las Vegas on March 18, 2006, from complications due to cancer. He was seventy-nine years old. ♦

—Tom Ewing

LE COMPTOIR FRANÇAIS DU FILM PRESENTA

CHANNING
POLLOK

DANS



Le Cheik Rouge

AVEC

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ET LA PARTICIPATION DE

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HIT THE ROAD

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

HITTING THE ROAD

Welcome to the road! Jenny, Puck, Adam, and I have done many shows together as a group, and separately as individual artists. We all have miles of road time under our belts, and have lots of great insights on schlepping your stuff either around the corner or around the globe. If you are looking for ways to save a buck or two on traveling with your props, tips and tricks on how to move your show from the basement to the ballroom, or if you are just looking for a few wild and wacky tales from the road, you've come to the right place. This column will feature all these things and more with a few insightful contributions from a few other road weary friends of mine. So let's hit the road this month with my good buddy Puck with some insights on protecting your investments. That magic equipment you spend your hard earned money on has to get from point A to point B and end up arriving intact. Your best bet is investing in some good quality road cases; Puck is the master at packing flat and playing big.

ON THE CASE

The traveling performer must always consider cases. There is always a debate of whether to go with a wood-packing style, ATA, or fiber cases. Puck prefers a wood style case that turns into a table. These are great because they allow you to pack a lot of show in a little bit of space. They also have the benefit of becoming your performing table when you get to the gig. Although we both used tables made by Joe Lefler (now available from Showtime Magic Products), I noticed that Puck's always looked brand new, while mine looked like it had been run over by a semi truck, set on fire, and tossed off a cliff. How could this be?

I used to ship mine worldwide, unprotected and it worked... for a while. But cases like these are made of wood, and over time these cases do get beat to hell.

They work really well from the backseat of your car to the stage. If you do local shows, you can stop here, but if you travel long distances with your gear, read on. Puck really liked the utility and look of the Lefler table as an onstage unit, but not the condition it would arrive in when it flew to the gig unprotected. So, he chose to put his Lefler case inside another case to protect it. This way he could pop the table out of the case and it always looked pristine and new when wheeled out in front of his audiences. He protected his wooden case for flight and managed to keep the piece right at the maximum over-the-counter airline weight limit of fifty pounds.

"I was an assistant in the Denny & Lee Illusion Show for many years," Puck recalls. "Denny traveled with a full illusion show that packed over the counter at the airport. He always used fiber cases for their lightweight construction. These cases, although weighing very little, are very durable. In fact, he rarely had to replace cases in the show; they lasted through his more than thirty year career. Walter Blaney also used fiber cases to cut down on shipping fees. He traveled quite a bit in his career and said the props always arrived in good shape."

Puck followed the advice of these two seasoned pros and opted for the fiber cases. This turned out to be very good advice because as Puck says, "I have traveled extensively and never had a prop damaged in shipping. I have had my cases beat to hell but the props always remained protected. Shipping companies and airports have knocked off latches, rivets, and wheels throughout the years. When this happened I just bought new wheels to attach and some protective straps with plastic connectors to keep the fiber case closed. The pros of low shipping costs always outweighed the cons of minor damage to the cases."

GET YOUR FIBER

What were originally called "fibre" cases were (up until the early '90s) actually made of cotton rag fiber, glue, and wood pulp. They then were coated with a varnish so that they would become waterproof.

Nowadays, the fiber cases are made from a tough high-density polyethylene plastic. We have found a great source for these cases online at www.fibrease.com.

This is the company once known as Fibre Case and Novelty that Denny used for years, and we continue to use them because of their reputation for quality, speed, and customer service.

Puck uses their telescoping, one-inch foam-lined fiber cases with metal castors. The castors are screwed into the case using plywood as a base (Photo 1). He has the cases telescope to give a double wall of protection. In other words, the lid nests over the bottom of the case. Instead of



latches, he now has them made with heavy duty straps that lock shut with thick plastic connectors. If you browse the website they have all kinds of configurations for cases to fit your needs. These cases are custom made to the dimensions of his props. He even has a five-inch deep utility tray made to fit into the top of the case for the smaller props and accessories.

Puck says, "My show has dramatically shrunk through the years; I now travel primarily with one case that weighs in at fifty pounds when fully packed. This case can be shipped over the counter at the airport with no excess weight or dimensional fees. This case is custom made to accommodate my small size Joe Lefler suitcase table. These tables are great, because I can perform with it on stage in a very organized and self contained manner. The case

also can act like a trolley for another suitcase placed on top of it when wheeling through the airport or up the gangplanks of cruise ships. There are two wheels on the case, one placed on each side at the bottom, which resembles a roller board suitcase. I simply grab the handle and roll along. I travel with a small garment bag as well, and I place it in front of the case with the wheels in like position. I have an

additional strap that connects the case to the telescoping extension handle on my garment bag. I roll the garment bag and the case piggybacks and rolls along easily (Photo 2)."

Remember, your props are your livelihood, so make sure you invest in the proper protection for them. They will last longer and remain looking good as the cases take the beatings. ♦



NEWSWORTHY

UPDATES FROM OUR
S.A.M. MEMBERS

THE CONJURING ARTS HOUDINI SÉANCE 2013 BY ERIC DECAMPS

October 31, 1936, on the tenth anniversary of Houdini's death, his widow Beatrice conducted what would be her last attempt to contact her late husband. "Harry, Harry! Are you there?" she cried. "Speak to us, Harry. Give us some sign. We have waited so long." No answer came. "He has not come," sobbed Mrs. Houdini. "I turn out the light."



Through the decades, countless others have tried to contact the spirit of the most famous magician of all times. None have been successful. This year Houdini scholar and the executive director of the Conjuring Arts Research Center, William Kalush, hosted a séance to attempt to contact Mr. Houdini.

On October 31, 2013, more than fifty guests met at the Axis Theater in New York City with the objective of



communicating with the legendary escape artist. The invitation-only event included many of our community's most notable magicians and magic historians. Also attending were film director/film writer Darren Aronofsky, actor Susan Sarandon, and several other luminaries and socialites.

Stepping into the lobby of the theater, you were welcomed by Houdini apparatus and paraphernalia in beautifully lit display cases. These remarkable items were on loan from the Roger Dreyer Collection and the Houdini Museum of New York.

Passing through the lobby and entering the theater itself, felt as if walking through a time portal. The stage was transformed into a Victorian themed setting with a large round table covered with a pristine white linen tablecloth; ten chairs surrounding the table. On the table were a single white candle and an empty, corked wine bottle. In the bottle, suspended on a string, was a handcuff key owned by Houdini. The last item on the table was a pair of prized handcuffs from the Houdini collection. As Mr. Kalush explained, "These handcuffs are the ones used to restrain U.S. President James Garfield's assassin, Charles Guiteau."

The actual séance began just before 1:26 p.m., the time of Houdini's death. The medium called for Houdini to join us and to show us a sign of his presence. The medium repeated her request multiple times. At one point the suspended key in the bottle began to oscillate. Was this a coincidence or a signal from Houdini? I'll let you decide.

For some, after eighty-seven years and countless attempts to contact Houdini, the oscillating handcuff key may have been an indication of contact. Others may conclude that of all the restraints that Houdini successfully escaped in life, death is the only restraint from which he could not escape. ♦

Photos by Herb Scher



One of my favorite magic books of all time is Max Holden's *Programmes of Famous Magicians*. In case you are unfamiliar with it, this slender paperback lists the running orders for shows and acts from over eighty magicians of the 1930s, including great performers such as Al Baker, Annemann, Dunninger, Gwynne, Goldin, Jarrow, Keating, Leipzig, and on and on. (It also includes many delightful illustrations of these performers by the great Nelson Hahne.)

For me, *Programmes* has always been a book of dreams. How exactly did Thurston open his show? How did Blackstone proceed after his bold opening? How did Tommy Martin close after performing his signature Egg on the Fan? The answers to these and countless other questions are in its pages, waiting to be uncovered. Further, Max Holden's write-ups are often so detailed you can visualize the shows unfolding as you read about them. For anyone who loves magic, *Programmes* is an extraordinary treasure. Its only downside is that Holden's record stops in 1937.

Since then, there have been only a few other books in this genre. Notable among them are Arnold Furst's *Famous Magicians of the World* (1957) and *Great Magic Shows* (1968) and Ian Keable's recent *Magic Shows*. Also, one can sometimes glean or find running orders in magic histories or biographies. Even so, to a fairly shocking extent, after 1937 we are left to wonder about what exactly most magicians are doing on most nights. It is shocking to me because show building is the site of so many creative decisions – the place where a great deal of our artistry is exercised. It is the domain where we lift ourselves from a dull sequence of “tricks” to a full-fledged show that creates deep impact and lasting memories.

And so, one motivation for writing this column was to stem the tide of forgetfulness about a foundational

dimension of our field. For while objects of the fine and literary arts – paintings, sculptures, buildings, poems, and novels – all continue to exist in space, theatrical and musical performances are constituted by time. And when that time is over, those performances are gone forever. Unless we write about them and, in doing so, remember.

My other motivation – the one that brought this column to a head – happened in April of 2010 when I read that Lance Burton was going to close his show at the Monte Carlo. I sat there thinking, “That’s it? Lance’s great show just closes and goes away?” I knew that no one had published the show’s running order, and there was no publicly available video record of it. “So this is it?” My answer: “I think not.” And so my research project was launched.

Over this past year, I have provided running orders from ten of today’s greatest magic shows. Please note that I do not consider this an exhaustive list of the great shows of today. There are many other performers and shows that clearly belong in these pages, which may well give rise to further installments. Even so, I have attempted to make a good start on capturing leading shows in this our Second Golden Age of live magic. Again, I have done this so tomorrow’s magicians can dream about today as I have dreamed about yesterday. But I have also done it, as a magic teacher and director, to identify lessons we can put to work to improve our own magic shows.

About the lessons I have drawn, some of them have been idiosyncratic to a particular performer. A few examples: David Copperfield’s dynamic movement between large and intimate illusions, Eugene Burger’s use of monologues, Jeff McBride’s way of energizing an entire audience, Max Maven’s slow-build to an explosive close, and Juan Tamariz’s overflowing, wacky fun.

But alongside the idiosyncratic lessons, in this concluding installment I also want to stress some superior qualities that are present in all the shows we studied. If these qualities are good enough for the masters, then we probably want to get more of them in our own shows. Here, then, is a partial

list of these excellent qualities for better show building:

1. These shows all had a clear dynamic structure; they had a distinctive beginning, an engaging middle, and a powerful end.

2. The magic in these shows was strong and exceptionally deceptive. These magicians never forget that if it doesn’t fool the audience, it isn’t really magic.

3. All of these performers manifest clear, specific, fascinating characters. (That is, they are decidedly not generic.) They are performers you want to spend time with and learn about. You want to see them again.

4. All of them used carefully crafted words, delivered in a fresh, authentic way (no extemporaneous, pointless blather).

5. All of these shows were highly innovative in at least one way. That is, there were one or more things going on in the show that you simply could not see at any other magic show.

6. All of these shows were theatrically sound. That is, careful attention was paid to lights, sound, music, prop management, and blocking.

7. All of these shows had a clear vision or intention of what they wanted the audience to experience, and they delivered on it.

Between the idiosyncratic lessons from each performer and these universal qualities, I sincerely hope that this column has inspired you. Thank you for taking the time to read it and to visualize these great shows of today. Thanks, too, for the many letters of support and appreciation I have received during the past year.

Finally, I want to express my deep thanks to editor Michael Close and to the artists themselves who granted permission for me to write about their shows, discussed their shows with me, and in some cases read drafts to help me get some of the details right. Without fail, they were helpful and generous with their time.

As I sign off, please allow me to remind you of the essential insight that I learned through this project and that I used to launch this column in the first installment: The fundamental unit of magic is the show, not the trick. Everything about what we do as magicians shifts when we make this radical change in perspective. ♦



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FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BY GEORGE PARKER

COMMUNICATION IS PART OF THE METHOD

Paul Watzlawick (1921-2007), a psychologist, therapist, and philosopher, helped develop the way we look at communication. His *Pragmatics of Human Communication* (1967) is a classic. In order to help families communicate in a healthy way, he formulated five axioms derived from the work of Gregory Bateson. The first axiom is: “*One cannot not communicate.*”

That’s a very intriguing statement. He formulated a related insight: “*One cannot not influence.*” As magicians, we need to start paying close attention to these words! This first axiom tells us that we’re *always* influencing the minds, thoughts, emotions, and the decision-making process of our audience – even without a magical prop in our hands.

We used to think that words are the most important part of our communication. Over the course of the twentieth century, we started to see that words only make up five to ten percent of what is perceived as communication. We started to become aware of the fact that non-verbal communication was a much bigger part of the way we communicate. The two major parts of non-verbal communication are body language (gestures, facial expressions) and vocal communication (tone, volume, rhythm, pitch).

But that’s not all. Let’s take a look at information from the audience’s perspective. The audience listens to what you say (or to the music, if you have a silent act) and how you say it. They look at how you’re dressed, how you move, and what your face looks like. But there’s much more information they take in, and that affects the way they perceive your act. The room and the way it feels will influence their mood. Temperature, sounds, other audience members, the way

they’re treated by the waitstaff, how many drinks they’ve had (yes, alcohol is information, too, and it changes your state of mind just like any other kind of information), and what they did before your show are part of the information people take in. We can even consider something like pheromones (chemicals that are released in open air when we perspire; they trigger a social response in members of the same species) information because they evoke responses.

Most of the time we’re not aware of the enormous amount of information we take in, let alone how we’re influenced by it. It’s far too complex (and boring) to analyze every little detail. But if we’re aware of the fact that: 1) information creates our perception of reality and 2) we’re always sending out information, it will help us, as magicians, to expand our toolbox in a big way.

Watzlawick’s second axiom is even more intriguing: “*Every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a meta-communication.*” This axiom teaches us that we affect our audience on two levels. The first one is obvious: what we communicate and how we communicate it will be understood on a cognitive level. We try to choose the right words, images, and structure to help our audience understand the content. But we may be slightly less aware of the fact that we’re also sending out powerful messages about how we want to be perceived. In other words, our communication tells other people how we want to be treated.

The bottom line can be very shocking. When people respond to you in the wrong way, you are a huge part of what caused that behavior. Think about hecklers for example. By positioning yourself as someone who is better and smarter than the audience, you may very well communicate the message: challenge me! And someone may pick up on that.

Communication is not math, so I will never claim that something is a universal law that’s always true for everyone, everywhere. I mean, there are some crazy

people out there who will respond to you in a way that you can’t control. But the two axioms provide us with useful insights to help us to design our communication in a way that makes it an integral part of our method, even when we completely rely on gimmicks or other techniques that do the dirty work for us.

It’s probably clear to everyone but I’d like to stress it anyway before we apply all of this to a magic performance: ***we’re not aware of most of the information we take in.*** We’re even less aware of how it affects us. The information we take in contains “hidden instructions” that tell us how to think and feel. I’m aware that, sometimes, we need to explicitly remind the audience of what happened: “So you shuffled the cards, selected one, and signed it.” Usually, I’m not in favor of describing what can be seen. But it can be useful at times.

Having said that, I think that most of the time, implicit information is much more powerful than explicit information. The reason for that is that implicit information is accepted completely without even thinking about it.

I think that the way Ricky Jay plays a poker game in the BBC documentary *Hustlers, Hoaxsters, Pranksters, Jokesters, and Ricky Jay* is masterful and a great example of the above. You can find a clip on YouTube. If you type in “A correctly structured drama” in the search field you can find it and watch it. The title probably refers to something Ricky Jay’s friend, director and writer David Mamet, once said: “Magic is highly structured drama.” The act is thought through on every level. The words, the structure, and his acting skills help him to define the relationship and evoke emotions that support hiding the method.

David Blaine took close-up effects and performed those on the street. He changed the context and designed a persona that fit that context (“the silent stranger”). By doing that he defined a different type of relationship between him and the audience. That affected the way the content (the script and the trick) was interpreted. He was able to produce different reactions

than the reactions he would get when he would do the same tricks at a party or in a formal close-up setting. All of that is part of communication design.

Of course, I had to try this out, too. I asked my youngest son to film me while I took my regular repertoire out on the streets. After three hours of filming I had fifteen minutes of very usable material and very loud reactions. This is interesting; it was the same content, just a different way of communicating it. But make no mistake; redesigning the way you communicate can be as difficult as learning to do a new sleight perfectly.

Suppose you're doing an Invisible Deck routine. One of the important parts of the method is making the audience believe you're using a regular deck of cards. The weakest way to communicate this is by telling them, explicitly, that "this is a normal deck." That type of information is fed into the conscious, cognitive part of their brain, which invites them to think about what you just said. We don't want that.

A better approach would be to not talk about it and just introduce the deck. If you want to add words, it's better to redirect their attention and not refer to the deck as being "normal" explicitly. You can, for example, tell them about an experience you had yesterday while taking the box out of your pocket: "*I was invited to a family party as a guest yesterday. At the end of the evening I wanted to thank the hosts. Because I didn't have a deck of cards on me, I borrowed theirs to do one of my all time favorite pieces of magic for them.*" Implicitly you've told them to look at the deck as a normal deck. And you've also told them you're a polite and generous person.

We can now think a little bit deeper about how to design our communication. How about adding non-verbal messages? Using the approach given in the previous paragraph, and while delivering the lines, we can take the deck out of the box and shuffle it. (You can easily shuffle a rough-and-smooth deck.) I took that idea a step further. I now add a Joker to the deck. I take the deck out of the box and flash the face and the back of the deck (the back of the Joker) while talking. After shuffling the cards, I reach for the box and start to put the deck back into it. I stop, spread the cards, and take out the Joker, deliver-

ing a line: "*Let's take out the Joker. It's not specific enough.*" This communicates the message "it's a normal deck" in a way that makes them accept that fact without thinking about it.

The Mystery Box by John Kennedy is a wonderful prop that you're all familiar with. You can make any card appear in the box. Usually, you set the box beforehand and put it on the table. You finish your routine by opening the box, dropping the folded card on your hand, and showing the box empty. I thought it would be more powerful to show the box empty beforehand, thereby increasing the impact of the card appearing in the box. But using the above insights I asked this question: "How could I convey the message 'the box is empty' *between the lines*?"

I came up with the idea of putting a small gemstone in the box. When I start the routine, I rattle the box raising attention. "*Do you know what's inside the box?*" I take off the rubber band, open the lid, and tilt the box to slowly show the gemstone to everyone. Then I ask someone to hold up her hand and I drop the gemstone on it, asking, "*Does anyone know what type of gemstone this is?*" I relax my arms, set the box, put the lid on the box, and place it on the table. I ask this person to put the gemstone on the lid and to keep an eye on it at all times.

This structure sends out the same message in a different way than verbally stressing the fact that the box is empty. Saying the box is empty will make the spectators consciously register that information. As a result, their attention is focused on that fact, and chances are they will ask themselves questions about it. But if they hear and see something inside the box, something that is then dropped on someone's hand, they will subconsciously create the idea that the box is empty. And we tend to believe ideas we create ourselves much more than ideas that are presented by others. So the "fact" that the box is empty is accepted without even thinking about it.

You can take any routine that's part of your repertoire and start working on making it more powerful by rethinking the way you communicate (in the Watzlawick sense of the word). I worked on Paul Curry's A Swindle of Sorts recently (in *Paul Curry's Worlds Beyond*, page 245). You fan out the Ace through King of

Clubs so the spectator sees they are in sequential order. Then you move your hands under the table and claim you will switch two pairs. Then you give the stack to the spectator and ask him to put the cards on the table one by one. He can stop twice to switch two cards, putting the two cards on the tabled pile after they have been switched. If his intuition works perfectly, he will have switched back the two cards you switched. The end result is that the cards will be in Ace through King order again, which, remarkably, they are.

The method is very simple. You can try it out right now. Take the Ace through King of any suit. Put them face down in sequential order. Start putting cards on the table. When you arrive at the fourth card, take the fourth and fifth cards and switch them by putting the fourth card under the fifth and then dropping both onto the tabled pile. Do the same with the ninth and tenth cards. Turn over the stack. The cards are still in Ace through King order! Nothing happened.

You want to communicate that making the switch actually makes a difference. And that's just what Curry does by secretly swapping the fourth and fifth cards. Then he counts down seven cards, explicitly switching the fourth and fifth cards. When he turns around the seven cards, indeed the fourth and fifth cards are switched. From the audience's perspective the result of the procedure is clear; switching the cards actually works (while it really doesn't).

I redesigned the routine to remove the fumbling and also to involve the spectator more. In my version the spectator selects the cards and puts them in the right order. When I double check it by fanning the cards, I swap the fourth and fifth cards by using a cull. This all happens on an offbeat moment. I think that communicates an even more innocent picture.

Take any routine you do and try to look at it more deeply. Focus on the method and ask yourself: What do I want my audience to believe? How can I communicate that idea implicitly?

Try to think of what you say, how you say it, and how you structure what you're saying. Think of the types of "circumstantial evidence" that I described in the examples above. I'm sure you will surprise yourself and come up with some simple but highly effective ways to increase the impact of your magic. ♦



In my last column, I talked about the show advice I would give young people who would like to pursue a career in entertainment. In this column I will finish my thoughts with the advice I would give those same young people about the business side of entertainment.

ONE: WHAT YOU CANNOT EXPECT FROM A CAREER IN ENTERTAINMENT

- You will not get a paid medical plan.
- You will not get a paid dental plan.
- You will not get an employer-funded 401k or retirement plan.
- You will not get any paid vacation days.
- You will not get any sick days.
- You will not get a boss or supervisor.

It is easy to forget that a trip to the emergency room for a couple of stitches can mean a couple of thousand dollars. It's the same with dental. A tooth cavity that gets bad could mean a root canal. That will run you another two thousand dollars. What happens when you get a bad winter bug that keeps you in bed for a week? If you have a show booked, you had better suck it up and do the show or you don't get paid.

Are you putting money away for retirement? You don't think about this when you're young. However, there will be a day when you look in the mirror and you notice you're fifty and realize you have put nothing away for those golden years. Do a little research and see how many famous magicians survived their old age through the generosity of others because they had no retirement plan.

I know you are thinking that the last item on the list above about no boss is awesome. This is a good thing. Well, not necessarily. There will be days that you don't feel like working. I know of many talented performers who are starving

because they don't have the intestinal fortitude it takes to perform the mundane business tasks that make one successful. Sometimes, you need a boss who will kick you in the bottom to push you to the top. Not having a boss is a double-edged sword.

TWO: WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM A CAREER IN ENTERTAINMENT

Apathy. That's right; most people don't care about your little magic show. The hidden truth is that magic is great at a party, at the bar, or in a restaurant. The public enjoys the momentary diversion of a clever trick. However, when you want someone to pay for your show, attitudes change.

Like any business, you must learn how to market your product. I have seen so many magicians who believe if they put out a sign that says "Magic Show" or "Mind-reading Show," people will be clamoring to spend their money. It is always a cold day when one comes to the realization that the public is not as excited about magic as the magician.

Fierce competition is another factor you can expect in a career in entertainment. Everyone wants to be the next David Copperfield. After musicians and singers, magicians are the biggest pool of potential entertainers. One talent agent told me he gets at least three submissions from magicians every week. That's a lot of competition.

Also, keep in mind that other magicians are not your only competition. Potential buyers will compare you to jugglers, comedians, ventriloquists, and all other kinds of variety entertainment. Here are some questions for you. Are you really that different from other magicians? Does your promotional material really say you are a professional entertainer?

THREE: FIND A BUSINESS MENTOR

Find someone who understands business. More specifically, find someone who is successful at business and is willing to give you some help and advice.

It is always beneficial to have someone you can consult with to help you make sound business decisions. A while back Katalina and I were offered a very lucrative business opportunity. We pondered on this possibility for a couple of weeks. We just couldn't decide if it was right for us or not. I ended up calling a trusted friend who has a very sharp business mind. He knew exactly the right questions to ask ourselves; within ten minutes we made our decision to pass on the business opportunity.

When you're young and inexperienced, you simply don't have the familiarity to know which opportunities are good and which things are simply going to waste your time and resources. Having someone with knowledge who can help guide you to make more informed and intelligent decisions is invaluable.

Remember, entertainment for profit is business. You will not become successful as an entertainer without some fundamental knowledge of business. In the last twenty years, the business of entertainment has drastically changed.

I have witnessed the change from simple print media kits, to the inclusion of a VHS tape, to having a slick DVD, to now having an impressive website with streaming video.

In the last fifteen years, there have been more changes in the way entertainers have to market themselves than there were in the one hundred years prior. Things are changing fast; keeping up can become a fulltime job.

FOUR: CHOOSE A MARKET

There are many markets that can use a good magic/mentalism act. You can't own them all. In fact, you can't even own most of them. Choose one and concentrate on breaking into that one.

Some markets can take a couple of years of effort before you start getting booked. It took one entertainer I know two years before he was able to get his first booking at a performing arts center; five years later, and he now works almost exclusively at performing arts theaters.

How many markets are there? As many as you can think of: cruise ships, corporate,

colleges, casinos, performing arts centers, street performing, fringe theaters, night clubs, comedy clubs, military, school assemblies, birthday parties, retirement villages, libraries, and on and on. It really is only limited to your imagination.

A major problem I see with young people trying to break into this profession is that they try to attack every market and get nowhere by doing so. Your promotional material, your show, and even your character will not be a good fit for every market. It is better to focus your time and resources on one market and attack it with everything you have.

When Katalina and I started working in the college market, our first year we did about ten shows. We made adjustments to our show and our promotional material to more closely fit the market needs. In our second year we did about fifty shows. By

the time we retired from the college market we were doing about 130 college shows a year. It just takes time and directed effort.

FIVE: HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY

Obviously, not every person who attempts to be a professional performer will make it. So it is good to have some other ability to fall back on. It is best to have a marketable skill or college degree.

Seven years ago, I knew five magicians who all decided that they wanted to become professional entertainers. All five failed. Three of them had an exit strategy. They had either a skill or college degree and went on to become successful in other fields. The other two have not done so well. They got minimum wage jobs, moved into their parent's basement, or rented a room

from a friend. They are still waiting for their big break. Sadly, it's not going to happen.

You might also find you don't like this lifestyle. Traveling all the time, staying in a different hotel every night, and playing in some less than desirable venues can take some shine off the show business star. Can you handle not knowing where your next paycheck might come from or when? Running your own business can be mentally draining, because you can end up thinking about your business 24/7.

I'm not going to tell you it's all roses and sunshine. It's very hard work. There might be months without any gigs coming in. You have to know how to ration your money. You might find out this is not the gig for you. So have a plan "B," just in case magic turns out to be a better mistress than a wife. ♦



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BY JIM KLEEFELD



EVERY AUDIENCE COUNTS

Most magicians who perform do so for children. Yes, there are plenty of restaurants, illusion theaters, festivals, and corporate gigs around. But by far, most paid magic performances are at birthday parties, schools, and libraries with an audience of mainly children. Some children's show workers do so reluctantly. Many feel that their corporate close-up or stage mentalism act is their real passion and performing for children is beneath them – just a quick and easy way to fund their Book Test habit. Well, this column is aimed at those people who take pride in performing kid shows. It is for those who love performing at children and family events, and who work hard to make their show fun, entertaining, and significant.

If you are among the many magicians who love the art as a hobby, but do not do paid shows, you may want to follow along with me for the next year or two. You may not have to put together a forty-five-minute act of magical entertainment to satisfy a paying client. You may even be hesitant to create an entire show. I'll try to persuade you how rewarding magic can be for paid performers. Each month I will try to cover an important kid show topic and give a trick or routine as an example. We will explore some of the basic principles of performing children's shows and examine routines that can help you succeed. There will even be some lessons in structure that will benefit the street performers and the hard-core card mechanics out there. Let's get to it, shall we?

The first tenet of kid show performing is simple: Every Audience Counts. This is a profound principle, and one on which all performance should be based. Say it out loud. Every Audience Counts. Memorize it. Put down this magazine and seriously think about the implications. Every. Audience. Counts. There are no practice shows. No tryout audiences. No take-backs or do-overs. You cannot bring unrehearsed material, new tricks, or half-baked routines. You can never go

into a venue thinking, "I'll toss this one off quickly. After all, it's only kids." You should never leave a show thinking, "Well, that was sloppy, but it looked like they had fun anyway."

There are two main reasons why you should always have a polished professional show. One is that clients – the adults who hired you and the ones in the audience who may hire you later – are watching. They may act distracted or talk to each other, but their minds are absorbing some degree of your act. At every show there will be adults who will see and remember how you treat children, how you engage and entertain them, and what appeal your magic has. Children do not hire magicians; adults do. And adults at every show will notice whether you are worth hiring again. By making your audience count, you are demonstrating a degree of professionalism that will carry over to all your other prospective shows. Many times I have been asked at a children's show if I perform adult shows as well. Numerous times I have been hired to do corporate or adult gigs based on having been seen presenting a children's show. There are people who see the value of a good entertainer and presume it translates across age, cultural, and socio-economic lines. Presenting well to children translates into being able to present well to adults.

The second reason for always doing your best is that children are much smarter and more observant than most adults give them credit for. Sure, they are cute and naive and full of imagination and wonder. But they are neither idiots nor small adults. They may not be able to verbalize as well as adults, but they can recognize incompetence when they see it. Mom will ask how they liked the magic show, and they will answer honestly. Do you want them to tell her, "It was stupid.?"

So, how do you go about making sure that Every Audience Counts? Start by making sure that you have a polished, competent show. Even a beginner with no audience experience can put together a show in which all the tricks are thought out and rehearsed. Before you book a gig, make sure that you have practiced all of your tricks, decided on the mechanics of what goes where, and put them in order. Make sure you have run through the entire show from beginning to end many times so you know what happens next. Have your

case or table in order. Know where the props are coming from and where they go when you are done with them. Your show may not go perfectly for you the first few times out, and you may even have to drop or change some effects. But the audience will give you a lot of credit for trying hard.

One of the worst shows I ever witnessed was done by a friend who invited me to watch a church banquet show. We had talked magic dozens of times. We had shared tricks and routines time and again. He knew a lot about magic, owned a lot of kid show tricks, and booked a lot of shows. But when I went to see him perform, I was appalled. He arrived an hour early and had the performance area to himself. He brought a fold-flat roll-on table and a small trunk. He set up the table and then opened the trunk. For the next twenty minutes he rummaged through it like he was trying to find a marble at the bottom of a toy box. Scattered tricks, props, gimmicks, and paraphernalia flew everywhere. Every few minutes he would bring out a prop, look it all over and say, "I guess I'll do that one. I haven't done it in a long time." When he finally had chosen about ten props, he shut the trunk and randomly stuck all the props in his table. The show was equally scattered and disjointed. He pulled out one prop after the other, used each with dealer-demo, show-and-tell patter, and tossed it aside to search for a different one. He did perform magic. He had not "messed up" any tricks. But his attitude was so cavalier that the show felt like he had thrown it away. He had discarded the importance of the magic, the props, and the audience. After the show, he was beaming about how well it had gone. He told me he usually blows a couple of the effects, but this time all of the tricks worked. He never even realized how much he had disrespected the audience.

I never spoke to him again.

The better part of Every Audience Counts is your attitude. Every show is important, and every audience deserves to have a wonderful time. No matter if you have done this Cub Scout Pack two dozen times, or there are only four kids at the birthday party, or the gig is in a poor section of town, or they talked you into doing it for half-price. Always head in the door thinking about doing a great show, having a fantastic time, and leaving a pleased audience. Treat every client with

respect, whether they are angry, poor, drunk, old, or sullen. Think to yourself, "I love performing here," and "I hope they love the show." Promise yourself that this audience, like every audience, deserves the best show you can give. Because Every Audience Counts.

Here is a routine that helps embrace this principle. Let's call it The Coloring Contest.

Buy two identical commercial coloring books (Figure 1). I suggest you get some from Dover Publications because these are printed on heavy white paper. The cheap newsprint kind will not hold up well and the colors will show through the thin pages.

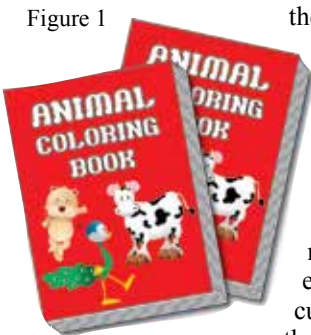


Figure 1

On both books, trim every other page by cutting out a slight curve or indent near the top edge. Next, cut the pages that you did not

already trim using a slight curve about two inches down from the top (Figure 2). As you can guess, this will make the books work like a Svengali deck or a regular commercial Magic Coloring Book. Flipping through the book at the very top will show one set of pages; flipping with your thumb about two inches lower will show the other set of pages. This method of trimming works better than the large slanted cuts used on commercial Magic



Figure 2

Coloring Books. With small notches close together, you need only move your fingers a tiny bit to change pages, not all the way from the top to the bottom.

On both books, you will leave every other two-page spread uncolored (Figure 3). This is so you can show the books plain at the start of the routine. You will need to color the alternate pages in both books with real crayons. On one book, make every page neat (Figure 4). On the

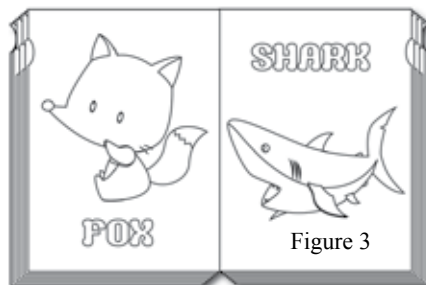


Figure 3



Figure 4

other book, scribble wildly over the pages (Figure 5). Make sure it looks messy, but don't use so much color that you obscure the pictures.



Figure 5

Now you have two coloring books that are nearly identical. Both can be shown as plain uncolored books; both can then be shown as fully colored, but one will look neat and the other will look sloppy. You do not need a third set of blank pages like the Magic Coloring Book prop has. Don't worry that the pictures on the plain pages are different than the pictures on the colored pages. The fact that the book has magically changed from plain to colored is so dramatic that no one will recall whether the line drawings were the same. Get a couple of card stands to display the books upright. Here is my routine.

"How many of you would like to try making some magic like you just saw?" Stop and count hands. *"That looks like just about everybody. I'll tell you what - I have a couple of coloring books here. We can have a magic coloring contest."*

Display the two books. Set one down and flip through the other, showing all plain pages. *"These two coloring books are the same. I'll color one by magic and you can color the other one. Okay?"*

Pick up and flip through the second book. *"I'll show you how to do the magic and you try to make a nice colored picture. Mine will probably come out better since I'm a professional, but let's see how well you do. Here is how you color by magic."* Hold up the book with the scribbled pictures. Wiggle your fingers at it, and then wave your hand up and down, while making a dramatic facial expression.

"Okay. My book is all colored. Do you think you can do that as well?" Stand the book up against the card stand in plain view. *"Now just point to your picture and wiggle your fingers like I did."* Hold the nicely-colored book up as they wiggle fingers. *"Well, some of you didn't do this face..."* Show the dramatic facial expression again. *"...but you did okay. Let's see your pictures."*

Flip through their book showing the nicely colored pictures. *"You did it! You colored in the whole book by magic."* Pause for applause. Set their book on a display stand and pick up the scribbled one. *"Of course, I've been doing magic a long time, so mine probably looks better."* Flip through the book showing scribbled pages. Smile broadly, but do not look at the book. Let the kids laugh and point at the scribbles, then turn and look at it and do your best "take." Recover quickly and smile broadly.

"I meant to do that. It looks better with more colors on each page. I think I won, but let's just have an applause check. Clap really loudly if you think my coloring is the best." Hold the book up while they applaud. You'll get a smattering of applause from the very young and the smart alecks.

"I guess I did pretty well." Set your book down and show their book. *"Now clap if you think yours is the best."* The kids will always clap louder and harder for their own book to win. Act a bit dismayed because of the louder applause, but then give a look of polite resignation. *"Well, I guess you won. Maybe I need a little more practice."*

Return the books to your table. *"Give yourselves a big round of applause."*

What this routine does is involve the children in the audience by letting them participate with several interactions. But more important, it lets them "win." It shows them that you are willing to play, but are not out to trick them. The routine winks at the adults since they know full well that it came out exactly as you planned: you made the children the heroes. It shows that in your mind, you respect the audience. And that Every Audience Counts. ♦

HOFZINSER NON PLUS ULTRA

BY MAGIC CHRISTIAN

Translated by Lori Pieper



INTRODUCTION FOR THE PROFESSION

After ninety years of entrenched knowledge, it is no easy task to shake and overturn facts that have been spread as seeming gospel in countless articles, periodicals, books, and other publications. Given this state of affairs, I hope the reader will forgive me the many citations in the following chapters and the notes necessary to support my revision of this history.

Hofzinsler was a man who, in his time, did not have any great card conjurers to follow as role models, like his successors did around the turn of the twentieth century; such figures as the mysterious S.W. Erdnase, "The Professor" Dai Vernon, Nate Leipzig, Max Malini, or Chicagoan Edward Marlo (of whom it was said, with tongue in cheek, that he happily acted as if he had invented practically everything in card magic except the cards themselves).

Hofzinsler was a man who did not have an abundance of relevant literature to draw upon, but he was a visionary, far ahead of his time, who became and remains to this day a model for all parlor magicians who came after him, including today's close-up performers. His significance to card magic in general, as well as to parlor magic in particular, is indisputable.

While today there are discussions at FISM conventions on whether a category of "parlor magic" should be introduced in addition to the tabletop magic categories of close-up magic and card magic, this man knew over one hundred and fifty years ago where, with what, and within what limits it was possible to impress an audience as a magician.



Ottokar Fischer

All this has been known for a long time to those who are familiar with the relevant literature in the field. What is not known, however, is that much of this information is either inaccurate or only partly accurate. Through arbitrarily enhanced or even shortened accounts, a lack of in-depth research, inaccurate transcription of documents, and the desire of some authors to distinguish themselves, many articles appeared about this gifted magic philosopher that simply incorporated the mistakes of earlier ones. Everything written about Hofzinsler by the admirable Ottokar Fischer was taken as the non plus ultra; an expression that, incidentally, Hofzinsler took delight in using.

Yet there is far more in the way of interesting facts, stories, anecdotes, pieces of magical artistry (as Hofzinsler called them), and original manuscripts.

...

In the present book, only authentic sources from Hofzinsler's time will be used. Along with the forty-two personal letters that have been preserved and the rediscovered descriptions of tricks that were enclosed in or added to these letters, there is a huge number of fascinating and informative notes in the literature of the time, replete with references to Hofzinsler. I likewise discovered, as previously mentioned, several hundred hitherto unknown newspaper accounts from the Austrian and foreign press, as well as numerous advertisements for Hofzinsler's performances, that show this genius of the art of magic in a new light.

I want to make it perfectly clear, though, that I highly value Ottokar Fischer's work, for without Fischer, neither my investigation nor this book would have been undertaken.

JOHANN NEPOMUK FIDELIS HOFZINSER – HIS YOUTH

Johann-Nepomuk Fidelis Hofzinsler, the youngest of the four sons of the silk and notions merchant Leopold Hofzinsler, was born in Vienna on June 19, 1806, at Landstrasse 39, in what was then a suburb, but today is the Third Precinct of the city.

Given that summer was approaching and several relatives lived in the neighboring suburbs of Weissgärber and Erdberg – which are also part of the Third Precinct of Vienna today – it is reasonable to conclude that his mother, who was then in the final stage of her pregnancy, went into labor unexpectedly while visiting these relatives on a summer vacation, and that, as was customary, she also had her newborn son baptized the very next day in the parish of St. Rochus.

The family actually lived at Seilergasse 1154 in the city, not far from their business on Graben Square. As the youngest of a band of four boys, Johann Nepomuk, like the youngest child in many families, had the advantage of being the favorite.

Next to nothing is known of the first eight years of his life. The years from 1809 on were dominated by the war between France and Austria. Napoleon suffered his first defeat at Aspern and Essling, but six weeks later vanquished Austria at Wagram. In 1813, Napoleon's power came to an end with his retreat from Russia and his defeat at Leipzig. The Congress of Vienna decided the new political alignment of Europe. Then began the Biedermeier period, a time of new and innovative industrial developments on one hand, and a concentration on family and home, necessitated by the strict censorship imposed, on the other. These historical events in the background certainly had a very strong influence on Hofzinsler's development.

According to the entries in the spa registers, in 1814 the young Johann Nepomuk and his parents visited the nearby summer resort of Baden, about twenty kilometers (twelve miles) from downtown Vienna. Baden, a world-famous spa, is still a favorite residence for the well-to-do people of Vienna today, because of its pleasant location on the slopes of the Viennese woods, its thermal springs and, last but not least, its gambling casino, currently the largest in Europe.

In all probability, that is where he met the engraver Döbler's son, Ludwig Döbler, who later, as a superb conjurer, inspired enthusiasm throughout Europe with his production of bouquets of flowers. After several stays in England, he made a great contribution to the advancement of the art of cinematography, by introducing moving pictures to Europe and further enhancing their development.



Döbler

Up until now, this friendship has always been assumed. That it began so early, however, was not known. Evidence recently uncovered suggests they were most likely cousins, as Hofzinsler's grandmother was born Theresia Sigmund, while Döbler's mother's name was also Sigmund. But from the spa records still available in Baden, and the residential addresses, this relationship can easily be verified. Ludwig, who was five years older, probably sparked young Johann

Nepomuk's love of magic.

Equally decisive, no doubt, in awakening young Hofzinsler's interest was the German translation of the French magic book *Testament de Jérôme Sharp*, by Henri Decremps (1746–1826). Titled *Lesebuch zur gesellschaftlichen Unterhaltung mit Karten- und anderen Kunststücken* (Primer on Social Entertainment with Cards and other Artful Feats) and published in 1812, it contains the fundamental principles, with a great many illustrations, of manipulative magic with cards, as well as detailed instructions on thirteen points that a magician needs to follow or avoid. These points, still valid today, were repeatedly emphasized by Hofzinsler in his letters, and he encouraged his friends to take note of them. Decremps's text was one of the most popular magic books of the time.

After their father's untimely death in 1817, his brothers Leopold and Karl entered his business, which their widowed mother was entitled to carry on. Since his brother Franz-Xaver had joined the military, the possibility existed for Johann either to do the same or to make his way into the civil service.

It can be verified that in 1819 he attended a class in the academic gymnasium (equivalent to a high school in the U.S.) and gained an acquaintance with the humanities. The existing records indicate that he entered with a one florin deposit. According to a communication from the Vienna university archive, records of further payments have so far not been found.

The entry says: "1. gr. cl. in acad." "In acad." can easily be misunderstood as meaning "in the academic degree." The full and true meaning, however, is "First grammar class in the academic gymnasium," as the university has confirmed. (At the time of the Napoleonic wars, between 1809 and 1815, there were no regular school days in Vienna, and many students were taught privately.)

It was no easy matter at that time to enter the civil service, since parents often had to pay a sort of premium for apprenticeship, as well as to provide a letter of recommendation, for their son to obtain a position. Thus, J. N.



Hofzinsler was still listed in the 1823 conscription records for "Stadt 1017" as a shop apprentice in the family business. A year later, he was listed as a trainee in the Tabak-Sigel und Gefällen Administration (Administration of Tobacco, Seals and Custom Duties), for which, according to the conscription form and his first civil-service work record, he took his oath of office on July 4, 1825. For acceptance into the civil service, a birth certificate (or baptismal record) and residency record were required.

The entry in this work record also states that, according to the Lower Austrian General Command, he was able to display knowledge of, and had been tested and approved in

military economy, and in single- and double-entry bookkeeping, as well as in knowledge of "all kinds of script styles." These scripts included Latin, Kurrentschrift, and others, which he was also able to write.

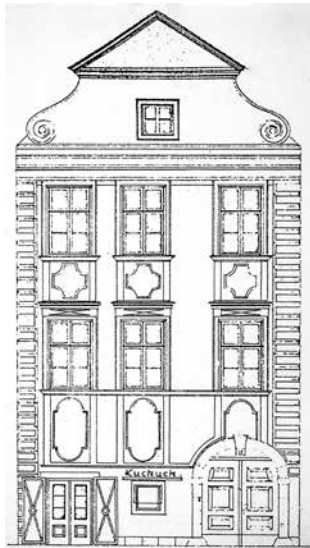
Under languages, the entry lists standard German and Italian; he had learned the latter through contacts he made in the family business.

The written oath of office, which came from the Fischer collection and is today in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., dates from 1839. It was only renewed by Hofzinsler after his transfer to the Allgemeine Hofkammer (General Court Chamber), later the Finanzministerium (Ministry of Finance).

In the entry made by the military authorities on the 1828 conscription form, the young Hofzinsler was described as being of thin, delicate build, and as suffering from “weak chest and slight goiter” in his youth.

**THE NEW SALON
HOFZINSER,
HIMMELPFORTGASSE 953**
(January 1861–April 1862)

After much searching, Hofzinsler found a new place for his salon. The house at Himmelpfortgasse 953 (today 15) still exists, and is very close to what at that time was the Hofkammer, today the Finanzministerium (Ministry of Finance). The contours of the salon are still recognizable, despite many alterations. Until recently, an antique dealer lived there and maintained his shop on the ground floor. A diplomat is now renting the space.



house at Himmelpfortgasse 953

Ads in all the daily newspapers drew attention to the salon. Taking the place of the *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, whose longtime editor, Adolf Bäuerle, died in 1859, was the *Zwischenakt* [Entr’acte], which tried to establish itself as the new theater paper. In January 1861, this paper carried several large ads for the salon.

The respective critics continued seamlessly from where they had left off in the spring of 1859. Hofzinsler’s satirical commentary was given particular mention. The performances

were so good that the scribblers of the newspapers were now becoming annoyed.

The evening edition of the *Wiener Zeitung* of January 10, 1861, says:

“Frau Wilhelmine Hofzinsler did well to open her ‘Hours of Deception’ on the very first days of January. This is like a preparatory school for the coming year, which may bring more unpleasant deceptions than the ones we experience here. Indeed, chance is perhaps the only conjurer greater than Herr Hofzinsler, but as an artist the former is so inconsiderate while the latter is so discreet. In these two, chance and Herr Hofzinsler, there is only one thing we can criticize: namely, that we are always made into fools, and on top of that, at our own expense. How can one trust such characters and feel comfortable around them! Every disappointment is a humiliation. Herr Hofzinsler assures us that everything has a rational explanation, but in vain, for the more we believe his words, the more severely we feel that, however closely we watch his fingers, we are kept in the palm of his hand. What? These things happen by completely natural means and yet I don’t understand them? Every spectator asks himself and becomes annoyed at his own limitations, and solemnly resolves not to applaud the next Kunststück, but to follow it with stern, critically armed eyes and to strip it of all its magic. But this next Kunststück again tricks our learned observer and he – applauds again. That the attentiveness of the spectator, always making a fool of itself, allows itself to be fooled for more than two hours, indeed even finds great pleasure in it, that is Herr Hofzinsler’s greatest Kunststück. We must avow the delight he provides us; however, today we want to get revenge upon him for his supremacy, in which we have not managed to find a weak spot, by not trying to spell out even one of these unbelievable proofs of his fortunate dexterity. Go there, you wise men and you super-wise ones, and see if you feel any smarter than us.”

The new salon was splendid and “left nothing to be desired in its décor.” The performances took place four times a week, and even though out-of-town papers found some experiments short of being “of astonishing novelty,” they nevertheless granted that they provided a pleasant two-and-a-

half hours of entertainment for the audience.

Hofzinsler demonstrated his social conscience and his “patriotic ardor” in the new salon as he had in the old. This time, though, he put on his benefit performances not for the poor, but for the soldiers wounded in Schleswig.

As before, the program was changed in the new salon every few weeks, and the perpetually new feats delighted the audience. Along with the numerous advertisements in the various daily papers, short articles frequently pointed out the high quality of this series of performances. Thanks to his connections and his own literary activity, short articles that today would be printed as paid self-promotion often appeared in the “Letters” section under the title “Sent In.” Typical and one of the best-known of these stories, written in March 1857 by Hofzinsler himself, reads:

“(Wandering teeth) At a very elegant soirée, the beautiful teeth of an attractive lady were being admired. ‘Oh, they’re all false!’ exclaimed their owner, with extreme naïveté. It was taken as a joke, yet the lady requested a saucer, and in an instant thirty-two pearly teeth clinked onto it. The lady held the napkin in front of her mouth, and when the saucer, which was making the rounds through the startled group, arrived at a slender man, the latter took the teeth into his hand and spoke to the toothless lady: ‘I will take the liberty of returning your property to its place’; the lady graciously nodded – a movement of the man’s hand, and immediately the pearly teeth shone again in the small mouth – of his wife, Madam Hofzinsler.”

On March 29, 1857, the *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung* quickly responded to this story:

“Conjuring in the Newspapers. Hofzinsler, the multitalented artist, seems to have let loose his magic in the papers, too, as the numerous Hofzinsler anecdotes in notices and advertisements, which appear daily in the papers, seem to be nothing but bouquets offered by the genial conjurer. Perhaps the clairvoyant Frau Hofzinsler could give some information about this.”

On March 22, 1861, the *Zwischenakt* announced a guest performance by Hofzinsler in the Wallner Theater in Berlin. Here the title “Magician-

Professor" appeared for the first time. Whether the Viennese officials really allowed their "magician civil servant" to make this guest appearance is something neither my friends in Berlin (who kindly gave me the most enthusiastic help in my research) nor I, during my own visits to that city, have thus far been able to establish.

However, during thorough research in the Viennese archives, I found in the manuscripts department a letter from Hofzinsler to Franz Wallner, the director of this highly successful theater, much beloved by the people of Berlin. This letter must have been written as early as 1860, because Hofzinsler had long in advance made plans reaching into May 1861, and hence would have proposed other opening dates than those he mentioned.

The last performances in the salon, in fact, did not take place until May. The *Zwischenakt* wrote on May 5, 1861:

"Herr von Hofzinsler, in order to fulfill the wish of many visitors currently in Vienna, is giving a few more performances under the title 'Hours of Deception.' The last one takes place on Sunday the 12th."

Despite the above, no proof has so far been discovered of the realization of this intended engagement in the Prussian capital of Berlin.

It was only in the autumn, on November 12, 1861, that the salon opened again; the performances were set for Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays, and tickets were purchased – as was generally the case in previous years as well – in the k.k. Haslinger Music Shop. New creations delighted the spectators. These included, among others, "*La pensée forcée quand même*" (Thought Forced All the Same), "*Les monnaies obéissantes*" (The Obedient Coins), "The Art of Dealing with Women," and "A Million – So What!" Also in place was "The Somnambulist," a perennial piece in the repertoire.

Two weeks later, the same paper published a report saying that Hofzinsler "has obtained the newest, spiciest sensations from Paris and London. Indeed, so far he has been able to make his productions more interesting every year."

In Paris, the magic shop of André Voisin was established before 1850; in London, a bit later, there were the shops



of W. H. Cremer and Joseph Bland; and in Hamburg, two shops belonging to Oscar Lischke (1826–1894) and Wilhelm Wille.

Note: This report is of the highest interest to historians, because this close contact of Hofzinsler with other professionals and stores outside the country had always been assumed, but it could never be proven. In contrast to today's frequently vague newspaper accounts, reports in the papers of that time had substance. One could almost always rely on their accuracy. Erroneous reports were frowned on and became the focus of harsh criticism by the competition. This also lends great credence to the newspaper reviews of

Hofzinsler's performances, which were always remarkably flattering. As an example, on November 12, "the piece 'The Rose' caused a sensation." This probably refers to the trick with the rose mirror, known under the title of "Apotheosis of the Rose."

Hofzinsler was so beloved and so famous that even the postponements of some of his performances due to illness (some minor colds) were reported in minute detail by the media. Shortly thereafter, one could read in the *Zwischenakt* about a successful evening at a private soirée on the occasion of a ladies' night at Concordia (an entertainment society), and about

setting up benefit performances, as well as a note saying that Hofzinsner "has returned from a highly successful trip to Graz."

This report is all the more interesting because Ottokar Fischer always mistakenly assumed that "our highly praised master" (as the newspapers heralded him) had made only limited tours around Austria, and these only after his retirement.

The performances scheduled in Graz for the second week of April 1862 naturally interrupted the cycle at the Salon Hofzinsner. On April 1, the "Hofzinsners" were still appearing in Vienna; on April 5 and 6 they were in Graz on a small stage in the Ressource, an assembly hall for select audiences. After the third evening in Graz – where they stayed at the hotel Erzherzog Johann, which is still standing – they returned to Vienna, arriving on April 11; and by April 13, they were again performing in their salon, an incredible accomplishment for one who was working at that time primarily as a civil servant, even considering the regular train service over the Semmering mountains to Graz.

The performances in Graz again met with high praise, except for the somnambulist performance by Frau Wilhelmine Hofzinsner, "for the deception is fairly obvious and has already been performed several times in this fashion." In the *Grazer Morgenblatt*, there appeared a three-part retelling of "The Dying Rose," which had been published in Alexander Patuzzi's 1857 booklet. In contrast to the booklet, the story was rewritten "in the third person" by one C. P., "according to an oral communication by Hofzinsner!"

On April 10, the *Grazer Telegraf* wrote:

"...it is impossible for us to say anything new about the extraordinary accomplishments of Herr Hofzinsner, because these have already been discussed comprehensively in the most honorable terms by the Viennese papers. Here it will only be mentioned that the crème of local society attended the performances, and that carriage after carriage was lined up in the courtyard of the Ressource, waiting for the end of the Hour of Deception..."

One can assume that Hofzinsner traveled rather frequently during his civil service, as did the Austrian poet and director of the archive of the Finanzministerium, Grillparzer. Aside from the cities of Prague, Berlin, and Graz, there had surely been other destinations. As early as May 20, 1844, *Der Wanderer* reported that Hofzinsner "created astonishment in the most distinguished circles of the city of Gratz."

There is a very interesting announcement in the *Wiener Vorstadtzeitung* of April 12, 1862, reporting that a Herr Fr.[anz] Ruprecht would hold a cycle of twelve lectures about the "mysteries of nature" in the Salon Hofzinsner, which was scheduled to be repeated beginning April 30. Apparently, Hofzinsner often rented out the salon to others for "guest performances."

HOFZINSNER'S TOP CHANGE (TRANSLATED BY DAVE SHEPHERD)

Short description: A card is shown to the spectators. Although the performer hardly moves and apparently never comes close to the deck with the card, the card is shown a short time later to be a different one. It has transformed in a wonderful fashion. (The original card is now on top of the

deck.)

Historical notes: The secret exchange of one card for another was described early in magic's literature. The classic Top Change (known in Hofzinsner's time by the French loanword *fliieren*) had entered French magic literature by 1853, but was known to Hofzinsner and was in his repertoire by 1847, and quite probably earlier.

In the best-known handling of the Top Change, the card to be switched out is held between the thumb and index finger. The new card to be switched in is pushed from the top of the deck and taken between the first phalanges of the index and middle fingers. (See Figures 1a and 1b.)

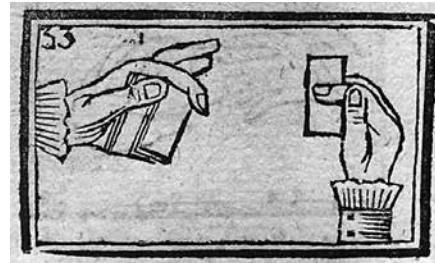


Figure 1a - From the Book of Social Entertainments, 1812



Figure 1b - Old method of positioning the right-hand fingers

Hofzinsner used a refined fingering that had no discrepancy in the right hand's grip before and after the switch. While his knowledge and use of this fingering is not hard evidence that it was his invention, the possibility is certainly open to conjecture. In any event, we do know for certain that the particular sophisticated style of Top Change described here is his.

In the literature of magic that has developed since Hofzinsner's time, this sleight has been frequently described, with a number of variations. (See Figures 2a and 2b.) The renowned Dai Vernon, "The Professor," with his usual careful detail, worked toward the improvement of this wonderful sleight and contributed a great deal toward repopularizing it among magicians during the latter half of the twentieth century. Some essential things, however, remained unnoticed. These will be mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

Preparation: Needed is a deck of cards that is not too worn.

Performance: In contrast to Cy Endfield's description of "The 'Hofzinsner' Top Change," Hofzinsner placed great value on the audience's paying the least amount of attention possible to the actions of the sleight. He repeatedly emphasizes in his manuscripts how important it is to remain still and to hold

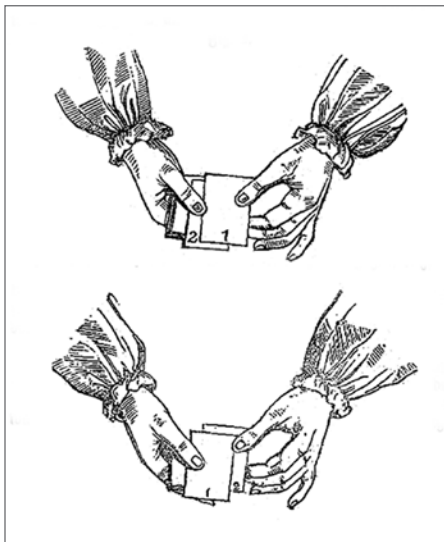


Figure 2a - From Carlo Bosco's Magic, or The Complete Art of Conjuring, 1867

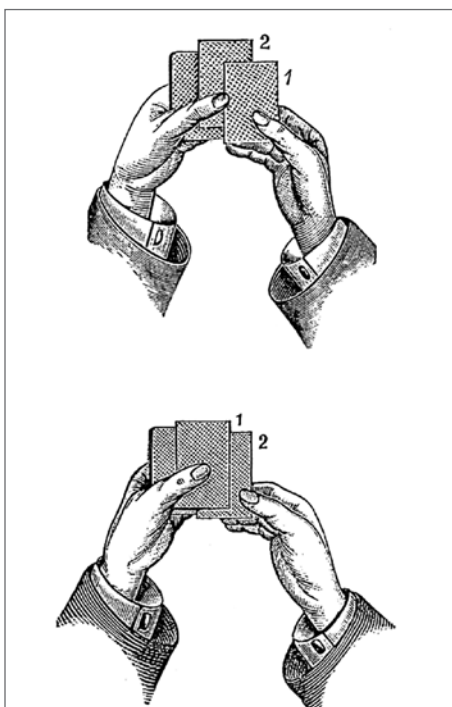


Figure 2b - From the magazine Die Zauberwelt, 1896

the gaze of the audience during its execution. He kept his movements to the minimum permissible to manage the sleight deceptively.

As with all his magical efforts, he paid great attention to detail in the handling of his Top Change. The basic concepts are easy to learn, but the correct handling requires a certain level of experience and natural address that can only be achieved through constant practice and experimentation. It is important that the spectators have the impression that the

exchanged card has never left their sight or been near the deck.

1. Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. Place the left thumb in a casual position diagonally across the left front corner of the top card. The second, third and fourth fingers hold the deck at the right side. The forefinger rests at the front edge. (See Figure 3.) In today's magical parlance this position is called "mechanic's grip." The middle of the fingertips touches the right side and front end of the deck. Any clenching should be avoided. One should apply only enough pressure on the deck to stop it from "drifting" in the hand.



Figure 3

2. Hold the card to be exchanged (the Six of Diamonds, for example) face down and approximately half a finger's width forward of its right inner corner, with your right thumb on top, and the right index and middle fingertips beneath. This position of the fingers is natural and looks relaxed. It is not contrived, and the fingers are not at the extreme inner right corner, as in Cy Endfield's handling. The exact position depends on the size of your hand and the width of your fingers.

Several movements now occur simultaneously. The right hand raises the card a bit to bring it upright and show its face to the audience. With a small audience, you need turn it only slightly to display its face. Return the card to its original position and press your right elbow lightly against your side. From now on, you keep the hand and card still. As the right hand returns its card to its original horizontal position, your left hand moves slightly forward and upward with the deck, apparently to point to a spectator sitting in front of you and somewhat to your left. Half extend the left index finger, slightly separating it from the deck. This gesture and those to follow are not broad. They are executed

in inches, not feet.

Now move the left hand back again and downward. At the same time, direct your gaze toward the spectator to whom you've just pointed, and then in a semicircle, until you can fix your eyes on a spectator at your right. During this movement of your gaze and body, your left hand travels diagonally from your left and forward to your right and back, bringing the deck under the card to be exchanged. The inner right corner of the top card should slide diagonally along the face of the Six of Diamonds, until these cards are nearly aligned with each other. (See Figures 4 and 5.)



Figure 4



Figure 5

3. During this backward movement the left thumb pushes the top card of the deck (for example, the Queen of Hearts) to the right, over the tips of the left middle, ring, and little fingers. A small break forms, into which the right index finger moves to receive the Queen. At the same time the right thumb pushes its card, which it is holding to the right of the deck, diagonally forward and leftward onto the deck, where your left thumb receives it and pulls it into alignment with the pack. Now the right inner corner of the Queen of Hearts is exposed and can be grasped by the right thumb and index finger, which pull it back diagonally to the right. (See Figure 6.)

The left hand moves away from the



Figure 6

exchanged card, traveling a short distance diagonally forward and to the left, while your gaze travels over the right hand to the deck in the left hand and once again fixes on the first spectator.

The right hand lays its card on the table or simply continues to hold it. A short time later you reveal the transformation.

The entire sequence happens "on the offbeat," and must be carried out without clenching or tension, and without exaggerated movement. The left hand does the majority of the work, while the right hand remains almost frozen.

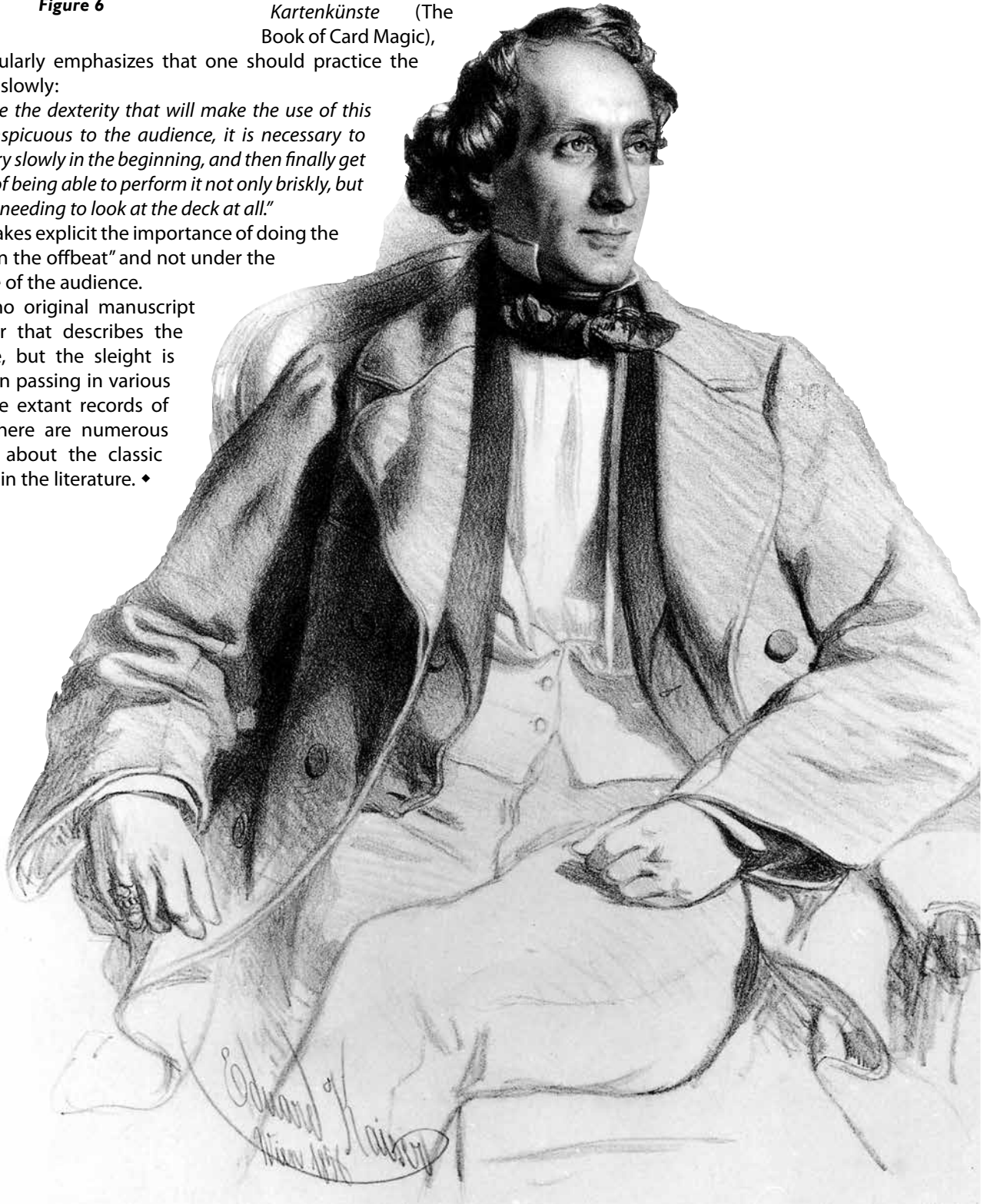
Commentary: Rudolf Marian, in his *Das Buch der Kartenkünste* (The Book of Card Magic),

1890, particularly emphasizes that one should practice the Top Change slowly:

"To achieve the dexterity that will make the use of this sleight inconspicuous to the audience, it is necessary to practice it very slowly in the beginning, and then finally get to the point of being able to perform it not only briskly, but also without needing to look at the deck at all."

He also makes explicit the importance of doing the exchange "on the offbeat" and not under the intense gaze of the audience.

There is no original manuscript by Hofzinsler that describes the Top Change, but the sleight is mentioned in passing in various places in the extant records of his tricks. There are numerous instructions about the classic Top Change in the literature. ♦





"An expert is one who knows the worst mistakes and how to avoid them."

– Werner Heisenberg

A NEW BEGINNING

For the past year, this column has provided information for conjurers who want to add theatrical punch to their acts through effective scripting and character development. Each essay has included relevant effects specifically chosen to support the proposed concepts.

The topics of plot creation, character selection, the development of intimacy, and how to build suspense have all been explored. The gospel of hard work and attention to the details has been preached. In the year ahead, there is more to come, for the work never ends in this business.

Every twelve months, when January kicks off the new calendar, people make resolutions, a promise that seems to go in one year and out the other. No one loses weight, saves money, joins a gym, or changes careers by merely thinking about it. Rather, it is desire, then vision, then action, then discipline and determination that make these goals a reality.

To bring these thoughts around to conjuring, the same attributes are required in this business if any magician hopes to improve his or her conduct on stage and in turn elevate the audience's experience.

Sometimes you will hear an entertainer speak of an evening's performance as the best one ever; the conjurer could do no wrong and the audience responded in all the right places with laughter and gasps of wonder. At the end of the show, they jumped to their feet and crowded the stage to share their enthusiasm and compliments. We all know that reactions like that are rare, but do they have to be?

It is true that an audience's mood can kill a good act. However, it is just as true that emotions are pliable and fleeting. If so, perhaps a conjurer might use a few

theatrical ploys to convert a stalwart audience into willing participants. It may not work every time, but anything that elevates the audience's experience is worth study.

First, consider why an audience is "testy." In resort towns, it isn't uncommon to perform in front of exhausted guests who have spent the entire day on a hot pool deck or who have just arrived after driving through several states. At birthday parties, performers often deal with children hyped up on sweets or distracted by the balloons and presents. In nightclubs or festivals, spectators with a drink or three in their systems are bold and opinionated. The list goes on.

Veteran performers assess the venue, become proactive, and take control. If your guests are weary from travel or too much time in the sun, there's not much you can do for them as individuals, but you can do small things that will keep them more alert. Obviously, switching in material that is more interactive is a start. You can also try rearranging the seating to bring the guests even closer to create a feeling of intimacy and involvement. This is especially important in venues where the seating has been placed by hotel staff who are more accustomed to arranging conference rooms for sales meetings. It isn't uncommon for event coordinators to leave fifteen to twenty feet of empty space between the stage and the front row. This not only isolates the performer, it also gives the audience a feeling of detachment from the entertainment, thereby making it acceptable for a guest to "check out." Arranging the chairs tighter helps eliminate those psychological elements.

Similarly, it is possible to proactively improve any birthday shows you perform. If there is any place you need to be in control, it is while performing for hyperactive children. But how does one accomplish this without coming across like a drill instructor? Often, parents attend these parties with their children, but when the show begins they confine themselves to the kitchen to drink coffee and gossip.

THE HIGH ROAD

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

BY MICK AYRES

This innocent behavior puts you in the role of a well-paid babysitter. To counteract this scenario, have the hostess ask each parent to sit with their child during the show. This simple request means the children will naturally improve their behavior and keep themselves in check. You are now free to do what you do best. But here is the real reason you should employ this tactic: when parents laugh and enjoy the wonders, their kids will happily join in. Let's face it, sometimes it takes psychological warfare to turn a mundane event into a memorable family experience.

Even magicians need a little manipulating now and then. Some years ago, I was booked for the close-up show at a magic convention and was the first in the line-up to take the stage. As the emcee made a few announcements, the performers stood in the wings and studied the audience. We noted the entire first row consisted of older magicians sitting with their arms crossed and a challenging "show me what you got" expression. After being introduced, I walked out and immediately said, *"Thank you. Before we get started I would like to know, are there any non-magicians in the audience? I'm looking for wives, girlfriends, people who showed up out of curiosity, friends that were dragged in. Just hold up your hand. Thank you. Would you please come down here and join me around the table? I'll get some chairs."* The stagehands and I scattered about ten guests around the table, leaving a gap in the center so the audience could still observe easily.

This rearrangement did two things. First, it put the performers squarely back into their comfort zones. In a perfect world, don't we all want an audience that is relaxed and along for the ride rather than psychoanalyzing every move? At a magic convention, this arrangement is the next best thing.

Second, the laypeople were naturally uncomfortable since they were suddenly at the front of the room rather than hiding among the numbers. However, since the bulk of the audience was out

of sight behind this smaller group, they were quickly forgotten. The laypeople soon relaxed, opened up, and began to relish what now felt like a private, more intimate show. Their enjoyment became contagious and spread to the rest of the audience. Remember the birthday party psychologies employed earlier? The same principle was at work here. Each performer focused on our new best friends. Their responses were enthusiastic and honest; their astonishment was palpable. Every person in that auditorium had a blast. The show was a rousing success on all levels because the performers took steps to elevate the audience's experience – and also our own.

To provide an example of how a conjurer can elevate the guest's experience to a new level, here is a baffling display of "controlled serendipity" with an unexpected one-two punch.

SIRENS

Back in the early '90s, David Harkey and I collaborated to create this semi-automatic card effect. I was compiling a dozen simple but strong effects for a booklet on card magic and I needed just one more. David suggested we try to create one long distance; he lived in Eugene, Oregon, and I resided on the other side of the country among the sea-islands of South Carolina. The result was this intimate drama that is one of my favorite you-dos-as-I-do mysteries.

Place a deck of cards on the table and say, *"Have you ever been excitedly talking with a friend about a shared enthusiasm and suddenly find yourself saying the same words at the same time? You're not just sharing a thought; you're sharing the same words! Or you are on a first date with someone you really like and, as you nervously reach out in the hopes of holding their hand, you discover them reaching for yours? Those moments of serendipity go far beyond mere coincidence. I have been conducting a rather off-beat experiment with people to see if those unusual moments can be achieved repeatedly. If you are willing, you will be the thirteenth person I've tested. Four of those times have had startling results. Want to have a go?"*

As you deliver this monologue, pick up the deck and begin cherry-picking cards. Specifically, you will remove the red spot cards and the two black Queens. Do not

remove any red court cards. Keep the identity of the cards secret as you casually toss them face down on the table in a scattered pile. Keep track of the location of the two Queens. Place the balance of the deck to one side. You no longer need it.

Say, *"I have purposely not shown you these cards. The reason why will be obvious at the end of the experiment. Basically, you and I will imitate each other's actions at every step; however, at each step our respective choices will be made freely but blindly, meaning, we will never look at the cards until the very end. At the conclusion, we will examine the results and see if we have created any serendipity at all."*

As you say this, collect the tabled cards and in the process arrange for the pair of Queens to occupy the bottom of the packet. Shuffle this packet of cards in a way that leaves the two Queens on the bottom. I just do a simple overhand shuffle twice. At the end of the first shuffle, run the last few cards singly so the Queens are brought to the top of the packet. When doing the second shuffle, run the first few cards singly so the Queens go back to the bottom. Hold the packet face down on your outstretched palm and say, *"Please remove about half the cards. Let us both agree to not look at the faces of these cards at any time, okay?"*

After the guest cuts off about half the cards say, *"From this point on we will both do the same thing. First, let's mix our cards."* She will imitate you as you give your packet another overhand shuffle. Again, make sure those two Queens remain on the bottom.

Fan out your cards face down. Say, *"Please spread out your cards and slide out any three cards that feel 'special' to you. I wish I could explain what the word 'special' means, but that would defeat the purpose of the experiment. Just trust your gut and take out any three cards."* From your packet remove the second card from the bottom, any card from the middle and finally the bottom card. Put the balance of your packet off to the side, but not on top of the deck. Wait until the guest does the same thing with the balance of her packet.

Pick up your three-card packet and shift the middle card to the top so the two Queens are on the bottom again. Say, *"Mix your cards again."*

Say, *"Now, out of the three cards we each think are special, we have to single out one card we feel is the most special."*

Just fan out your three cards, choose one and move it to the center so it is sticking out from the others, like this." Suit action to words by openly moving the bottom card of your fan to the middle and leaving it jogged forward.

Once your guest has made her choice say, *"Now, we will trade our selections."* Reach over and take her card from the middle of her spread. She takes your middle card as well. Replace the exchanged cards into your own fans and again leave the cards jogged forward.

At this point, you have a fan of face down cards spread from left to right with a Queen on the bottom and a red card protruding from the center. Look up at the guest and say, *"Let's see what card you gave me."* You will now employ Trevor Lewis's clever Monte Move to turn your cards over. To do this, hold your fan in the right hand for a moment. Turn your left hand palm down and take hold of the bottom two cards so your thumb is on the face of the bottom card and your fingers are on the back of the center card. Your right hand remains palm up and is holding the top card in place. Simultaneously revolve both hands over and give a short push with your left thumb to nudge the Queen to the right a little. All the cards are now face up. The right-hand card is placed on the face of the packet so the middle card is still jogged forward. To the guest, you merely turned the cards over; the Queen was in the center all along.

Look back at your cards now and comment, *"You gave me a Queen; it is the only black card and it is the only court card, too. Turn your cards over and let's see what you have."* When she turns her packet over, she will be startled by punch number one – a resulting mirror-image that seems to defy mere coincidence. Exclaim, *"Another success! Five times, now! This is more amazing than you think, though."*

Conclude by saying, *"Especially when you consider our choices were severely limited."* Deliver punch number two by spreading the two discarded packets face up across the table to display the black Queens in a sea of red. ♦

Sirens was previously published in *Self-Working Card Miracles* (c. 1991) and in *Carpe Chartas* (c. 1999).



EL ROBERTO ENIGMATICO THE MAGIC OF BOB FARMER

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

BY R.D. MICHAELS

TOPSY-TURVY AUTOMATIC GAMBLER BY MICHAEL CLOSE

This month we feature a guest contribution from Michael Close. Michael's routine was inspired by Bob Farmer's Automatic Gambler About Face (which will appear in Bob's magnum opus on the Ten-card Poker Deal). Bob's routine was inspired by Nick Trost's Automatic Gambler (*Nick Trost's Subtle Card Creations, Volume 3* pages 680-681), which was in turn inspired by Karl Fulves's Auto Draw (*Charlatan*, No. 2).

The Trost routine uses two sets of cards. Set A consists of the four Aces and the four Kings. Set B consists of three Tens, three Jacks, and three Queens. Set A is handed to one spectator to shuffle; set B is handed to a second spectator to shuffle. After the shuffling, set B (Tens, Jacks, Queens) is placed on top of set A (Kings and Aces); the magician false shuffles this group. Three hands of cards are dealt out. The cards that go to the spectators are dealt normally. The cards that go to the magician are dealt from the bottom of the packet. (This bottom deal may be done openly, or it can be done deceptively.) Each hand gets five cards.

Spectator two will get the first card of set A as his final card. Because of the Ten-card Poker Deal "Jonah" principle, this will cause his hand to be inferior to spectator one's hand. Because the magician's hand comes only from set A, his hand will always beat the other two.

Bob Farmer wanted to avoid the bottom deal and to provide the spectators with the impression that they had greater freedom in assembling their poker hands, so he designed a different "hand-choosing" procedure. However, in both the Trost and the Farmer routines, it may be apparent to the observant spectator that the spectators' cards come from one group of cards and the magician's come from another. Michael Close's method for dispelling that suspicion involves an interesting dealing procedure that would seem to eliminate any possibility for control by the magician. In addition, the cards seem to be genuinely shuffled by everyone before the dealing starts. Here is the routine.

The deck is not gimmicked, but you need to preset any Ten, any Queen, and any Jack at the top. This can be accomplished while chatting between tricks. You'll need two spectators; they should be seated across from you, one to your left and one to your right. If possible, there should be a little distance between them.

Give the deck an overhand shuffle, maintaining the three preset cards on top. (I use an overhand lift shuffle.) Turn the deck face up and cut it in half in preparation for a riffle shuffle. Shuffle normally, but keep the preset cards on the bottom. Before squaring, ribbon spread the deck so the spectators can see that the deck is being genuinely shuffled (Photo 1). Then push the cards together and square up the deck. (You can invite the spectators to help with this action. This will help to sell a lie later in the routine.)

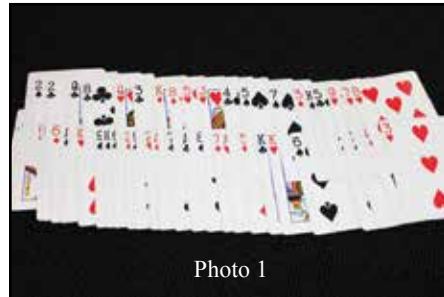


Photo 1

As these shuffles are being done, say, "People who gamble for a living are always on the lookout for games that are 'cheater-proof.' There's a new one that has shown up recently in private games. It's called Topsy-turvy Poker, and it's devilishly hard to cheat at. First of all, the cards really get shuffled."

You will now quickly run through the deck and toss out (into a face-down pile) all the Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks, and Tens, with the exception of the three cards you preset at the back of deck. This can be done casually and without counting how many cards you have removed. (Presetting a Ten, a Jack, and a Queen at the top of

the deck is Bob Farmer's clever idea. This makes the removal of the necessary cards a quick, nonchalant action.)

As you toss the required seventeen cards on the table, say, "Topsy-turvy poker can be played with a lot of people using the full deck, but that takes a little time. For the sake of brevity, we'll just use a few cards and play a three-handed game." Discard the remainder of the deck; pick up the seventeen-card pile and give it a quick shuffle. Say, "I think I have enough cards here. Let me check."

Hold the pile face up in dealing position in the left hand. Count the cards into the right hand, but as you count, perform Lennart Green's Angle Separation (Photo 2 shows the count/separation in action), separating set A (the Aces and the Kings) from set B (the Tens, Jacks, and Queens). Lennart's procedure is not at all



Photo 2

difficult and can be learned with just a few hours of practice. Using only seventeen cards, the separation can be accomplished quite quickly. At the end of it, the cards are in an in-jogged/out-jogged condition. [The Angle Separation was sold by Lennart as an individual booklet. It can also be found on the DVD *Green Magic Volume 1* and in the EMC four-DVD collection *Lennart Green Masterfile*.]

As you perform the Angle Separation, mumble as if counting the cards. As you finish, nod your head and say, "Yeah, this should be fine."

Strip out the in-jogged cards as if beginning a Hindu shuffle. Shuffle this group onto the left-hand cards, but catch a little finger break between the piles (Photo 3). (Set A and set B have now been separated, and one is on top of the other – it



Photo 3

makes no difference what the order is.)

[Note: Don't stop reading just because you don't know the Green Angle Separation. A non-sleight alternative will be offered at the end of this write-up.]

"To make sure no one cheats in Topsy-turvy Poker, everybody shuffles." With the right hand, lift off the cards above the little finger break and drop them in front of spectator two, who is to your right. Drop the remainder in front of spectator one. *"Help me out here; give those cards a good mixing."*

When they have finished shuffling, take back the cards from spectator one and flip them face up into dealing position in the left hand. Make note of whether you see an Ace or a King. If you do, then set A is now face up. If not, set B is face up. Take the cards from spectator two and drop them face down onto the face-up cards.

In a moment, as you patter, you'll be turning over the packet end for end. You'll do this several times. The thing to keep in mind is that at the end of these turnovers, set A (with the Kings and Aces) *must* be on top. Here's the way to do that: If, after you've taken the piles back from the spectators, set A is the lower (face-up) group, turn the pile over an odd number of times. If set A is face-down on top, turn the pile over an even number of times.

The turnover is done in a specific way so that a later false turnover will look copacetic. The right hand comes in front of the left hand, obscuring the pile from the spectators' view (Photo 4). The right hand grasps the far end of the pile, with the thumb on top and the fingers underneath (Photo 5). Lift the pile and swing the back end to the front, revolving the packet 180 degrees (Photo 6). Replace the pile into the left hand. We'll refer to this as the Genuine Turnover.

As you do the turnovers, you say, *"Here's another thing that makes it so hard to cheat at this game: the cards are in an upside-down, face-to-face condition."* (Set A should now be face-down on top.) *"Not only that, every time a card is dealt, the packet is turned over topsy-turvy."*



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

Deal a card to spectator one (who should be seated to your left). Openly turn the pile over (which brings set B to the top), return the pile to the left hand, and deal the top card to spectator two. Openly turn the pile over (which brings set A to the top) and deal the top card to yourself.

"As I deal, you are more than welcome to take a look at your cards." With those words, you will continue to deal out cards. Turn over the pile (which brings set B to the top) and deal the top card to spectator one.

Now the cheating begins. For the remainder of the dealing process, every time you move from spectator one to spectator two, you perform a *fake* turnover of the pile. This is done in a manner similar to the paddle move done with business cards. Here are the details.

The right hand comes in front of left hand, obscuring the pile from view. The instant the right hand is in place, the left little finger pulls down on the right edge of the pile, which levers it to a vertical position (Photo 7). The right thumb grasps the left side of outer end of the vertical pile; the right fingers grasp the right side (Photo 8). The right wrist now moves in a slight counter-clockwise direction as the right

fingers swing the back end of the pile out and forward (Photo 9). The pile is immediately placed back into the left hand. We'll refer to this as the Fake Turnover.

There is a slight knack to this action. Two things are important. Don't lever up the pile until the right hand obscures the left hand. Don't over-exaggerate the swinging out of the back end of the packet. Try to simulate the real action.

The Fake Turnover looks very good, but there is one more important factor that greatly adds to the deceptiveness. Don't start the turnover until both hands begin to move to the right. The turnover happens as you move from spectator one to spectator two. This is a fine example of a larger move hiding a smaller move. In addition, you've suggested to the spectators that



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9

they can check out the cards they've been dealt. This takes their attention away from the dealing action.

At this point in time, you have moved your hands toward spectator two, performing a Fake Turnover. Because of the Fake Turnover, set B is still on top. Deal the top card in front of spectator two.

Perform a Genuine Turnover (set A is on top) and deal the top card to yourself.

Everyone now has two cards in their hand.

To complete the deal, you will perform the following sequence three times: Genuine Turnover (set B on top), deal to spectator one; Fake Turnover (set B on top), deal to spectator two; Genuine Turnover (set A on top), deal to yourself. The dealing can be done with alacrity, and without paying attention to the cards. **Important:** Don't omit any Genuine Turnovers or forget to do any Fake Turnovers. The trick won't work if you do.

As it turns out, after you deal the fifth card to spectator two, you will have only face-up cards in your left hand. As soon as this happens, grab the face-up cards and fan them with the right hand with the backs of the cards to the spectators. Say, "I guess I grabbed too many cards to begin with. I'll tell you what; let me give you a chance to improve your hands. I'll mix up these last three cards. Each of you pick one; I'll take the one nobody wants. If the card you pick improves your hand, keep it and discard a card you don't need. If the card doesn't help, just discard it. Whichever card I get is entirely up to you."

Drop the three cards face down on the table and mix them around. Each spectator picks one; you add the remaining card to

your hand. Since spectator one has the Jonah card (either a King or an Ace), it is possible that the card he picks will improve his hand. Spectator two has a pat hand; the card he picks won't help him.

"Is everybody happy? Fine. Let me remind you how difficult it is to cheat at this game. The cards were shuffled thoroughly – not just by me, by all of us. (As you say this, make a gesture that simulates pushing a ribbon-spread deck of cards together. This will distort the spectators' memory of how the cards were actually shuffled.) The cards were dealt topsy-turvy, which meant it was impossible for me to gain control over any particular card. Finally, you decided what my final card would be, and I gave each of you a chance to improve your hand.

"And yet, I did cheat. Not only did I cheat, I tried to make sure you'd be willing to bet big. How did you do?" Turn over spectator one's hand. His hand can range from a single pair to a full house (if he managed to pair up his Jonah card). Spectator two will also have a strong hand. Pause for dramatic effect and then reveal your winning hand. (You will have either a full house or four of a kind.)

"And that's why you should never play

topsy-turvy poker."

Notes: I think this little trick has a lot going for it. I am aware of nothing similar in the literature. Several factors make it very difficult for anyone to reconstruct its method. For very little work you get a very strong poker deal.

IN LIEU OF THE ANGLE SEPARATION

If you'd prefer not to learn the Angle Separation, you can accomplish the same result by using a stripper deck. Just turn the Kings and Aces the opposite direction from the Tens, Jacks, and Queens. After you remove the seventeen cards (making sure you don't accidentally reverse any of them in the process), give them an overhand shuffle. Then, simulating a Hindu shuffle, strip out the Kings and Aces. Remember to catch a break between the two packets.

[Topsy-turvy Automatic Gambler will appear in Michael Close's new ebook, *The Paradigm Shift (And Other Moves and the Routines that Use Them)*, which will be available at www.michaelclose.com.] ♦

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Excerpt From:
The Charlatan's Handbook
Written By:
Sid Fleischman
Description:
Ebook, 230 pages
Available From:
www.llepub.com

Sid Fleischman was an award-winning author of children's books, adult novels, and screenplays. In 2003, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators inaugurated the Sid Fleischman Award in his honor, and made him the first recipient. The award annually recognizes a writer of humorous fiction for children or young adults. Sid was also an avid magic enthusiast. He hosted monthly magic meetings at his home in Los Angeles and contributed effects to many journals. *The Charlatan's Handbook* is a large compilation of his published and previously unpublished material.

In the Introduction to this book, David Avadon writes: "Sid is a writer with formidable powers of invention. It is eye-opening to see how he creates compelling magic, often using butter-churn technology, by focusing his theatrical imagination only on the effect. Sid says that clothes make the trick, and so much can be learned watching him tailor each of these new feats with comic premise, the language of showmanship, and conceptual artistry. By choice or by chance, you have discovered a magical gold mine. Mining is always hard work, but I know you'll delight in the treasure."

In all of the routines in *The Charlatan's Handbook*, you'll find presentations that are intriguing and entertaining. In the Preface, Sid writes, "The arts cross-pollinate. While I began professional life as a magician, I presto-changed into a novelist and screenwriter. What I had learned as a magician I found to be invaluable in creating fiction. What I had learned as a screenwriter I found to be invaluable in bringing a sense of theater, drama, and whimsy to my magic. As one friend put it, 'You Neil Simonize your tricks.' So this also is a book of trick scenarios – theatrical and whimsical. And more."

The Charlatan's Handbook seems to have slipped under the radar when it was published in 1993, and that's a shame. There is some very clever and practical material here. As an example, the excerpt below shows how Sid takes a slum-magic item and turns it into a baffling, seemingly-impromptu miracle that can be performed in a bar or at a party with friends.

My thanks to L&L Publishing for allowing this excerpt to appear in *M-U-M*. —Michael Close

THE BOTTLE DIABOLIQUE

This is old. This is new. This is diabolique.

You uncap a bottle of Perrier water (if you work elegant) or a bottle of beer (if you work humble). Immediately, you poke the end of a piece of rope into the neck and lift. As if suddenly magnetized, the full bottle clings to the rope. You swing it like a

pendulum. You give the bottle a 360-degree orbit. Withdraw the rope, and the props can be examined to a fare-thee-well.

Clearly, this is an off-spring of the old Chinese Prayer Vase. But the differences in handling are so fresh that magicians who know the old dodge are left bewildered and astounded.

Consider: Unlike the painted Chinese vase, this is done with a clear bottle. Clear! Unlike the painted vase, the bottle is not inverted to set the hidden cork ball in place. The bottle is freshly uncapped, so there cannot be any sly works inside. And the bottle is full of liquid, which is part of the diabolical secret.

Yes, a small cork ball, as in the original version, is effortlessly brought into play. I carve mine out of a common bottle cork, approximately 5/8" in diameter, and sand off the rough edges with emery paper. You want the ball large enough, when wedged against the rope, to support a full bottle of liquid. I'll detail my handling, in a moment.

While most magicians, at one time or another, have fooled around with the Chinese vase, let me review its working and evolution.

It took the magic world by storm when it appeared out of nowhere during the depression. Neither Floyd Thayer (*The Chinese Jug and Rope*) nor Percy Abbott (*The Oriental Vase Mystery*) cites a creator in their catalog listings of the period. Abbott claimed to have brought the trick to this country from the Orient.

A small cork ball was secretly introduced into the vase or jug. The rope was inserted and the whole thing inverted. The cork rolled into the neck. When you tugged slightly on the rope, the cork became wedged and held the rope and bottle together (Figure 1). Naturally, the vase had to be painted, or one would see the workings.

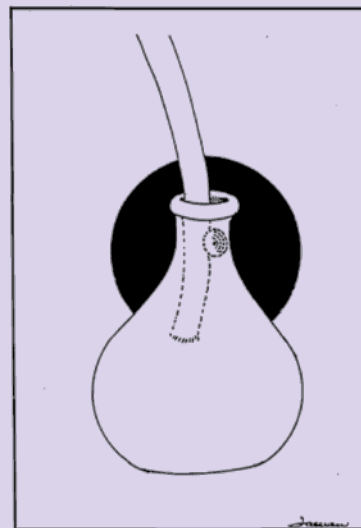


Figure 1

Originally, the cork was small enough to easily roll in and out of the neck. Suddenly there appeared a new twist, credited to Lloyd Enochs, originator of the multiplying candles. You inverted the vase and inserted the rope from below. This confounded magicians, who knew that the cork should have rolled out. Enoch's secret was that he made the cork too large to roll out. But when you pulled out the rope, the cork (having enough give) rolled with it. That enabled you to palm it, and pass everything for examination.

The trick was virtually destroyed by its own success. Then it became a novelty store item, as it still is, and for magicians that was the kiss of death.

Until now, no one seems to have given it another thought. Here's another thought. A thunderbolt!

BEER BOTTLE

Many beer bottles, particularly among the foreign brews, have foil around the neck. How thoughtful! A great gift to us in the sly arts. Drop in a cork ball and it will float, concealed, and exactly in position for the rope lift.

You no longer have to be concerned about the cork ball rattling around the bottom of the vase or bottle and having to be concealed behind a paint job. Except for the foil collar, the bottle can be clear as window glass.

I thumb palm the cork ball before I begin (Figure 2). Your hand will have complete mobility; the ball will not get in your way.

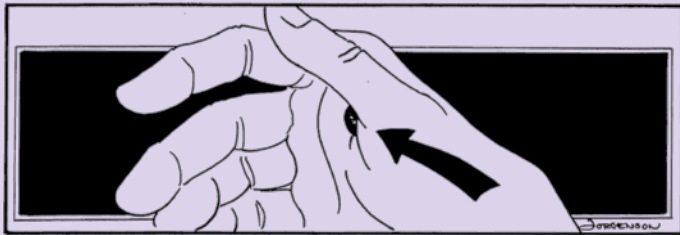


Figure 2

Toss out the rope. Take off the bottle cap. Ask the spectator with the rope to carefully choose either end of it. Load in the cork. Poke the end of the rope into the bottle and slowly lift to set the cork. But hold back for a moment's patter before revealing that the bottle dangles from the rope.

"Magicians do some very strange things in the pursuit of their uncanny art. They bend keys. Why? They saw women in two. How awful. They poke ropes into bottles. How absurd – what would Freud think? Rope with a sex life? No – merely a pleasant little magic trick. Watch!"

It's a quick patter line for a quick trick. When you've got what you can from the suspension, pull out the rope so that the cork ball rolls out into your fingers (Figure 3) and palm it. Exaggerate the pull as if the spirit inside the spirits were hanging on. *"Strong suds!"*

Tip 1. 1 A bottle of beer will usually foam up and overflow when uncapped, particularly when the rope is poked into the suds. Another of the brewer's gifts to the magi! A head on the bottle will conceal the cork. Thus, with careful handling, you can use a perfectly clear bottle without complete coverage at the neck. Miller's High Life is my choice.

In this case, I wait to drop in the cork, first raising a head by poking in the rope for a moment; I wipe up the overflow with a



Figure 3

napkin before proceeding. If the cork is dropped in too soon it will rise out of the bottle with the eruption of foam (you can, of course, hold the ball down with a thumb until the overflow quits).

You want a foamy head with good lasting power, such as Miller's, to keep the cork hidden. Check for foaming characteristics. You will find that not all beers are created equal.

Tip 2. I insert the rope several inches into the bottle before engaging the cork. When using a clear bottle there is an added effectiveness in seeing so much of the submerged end of the rope. But your true purpose has cunning. As before, you finish by appearing to struggle against the pull of the suds, but once the ball is out and into your palm, appear to give up the struggle.

With the rope still submerged, hand the bottle to a spectator to withdraw the rope. This subtly shifts the timing of the ending so that you have the ball palmed before the trick is over. Appear absolutely astonished when the spectator removes the rope so easily.

[If your choice is to use the magnetic theme set up in Perrier Bottle, below, erase the word "magnet" (you write it on the label) before handing the bottle and rope to the spectator. That offers a rationale for the ease with which the spectator removes the rope.]

PERRIER BOTTLE

Because a Perrier bottle is clear at the neck and does not have a collar, you must provide cover – and a completely different patter line. You can wrap the bottle in a napkin or newspaper, as I have done in years past, but a dollar bill is better.

With the cork ball thumb palmed, write the word "magnet" on the bill. Then fold the bill lengthwise and slip one end through the other to make a collar (Figures 4 and 5). Make the collar tight enough that it will be on a level with the end of the bottle, or a little above (Figure 6). This is necessary for full concealment if you are working close.



Figures 4, 5, and 6

"Open Sesame! Hocus Pocus! Abracadabra! Are they mere words? Or are they incantations with well documented powers? Now scientists are experimenting with words as surrogates for the real thing. If you write the word 'motor', will it generate horsepower? If I write the word 'magnet' across this bill, will the bill itself become magnetized? Of course not. But, on the other hand, do you suppose...is it possible...can it be?"

Uncap the bottle, slip the bill over the neck and deposit the cork ball. Or, if you feel the need of shade, say, *"Now, will you choose the positive end of the rope. I realize that it's hard to tell the positive end from the negative end, but I don't think anyone will get electrocuted if a mistake is made. Trust your instinct."*

With the cork now in place, poke the selected end of the rope into the neck of the bottle. Milk the magnetic moment for all it's worth. With the rope taut, slowly earthquake-jiggle the bottle on the table. It's spooky. If not at a table, you can balance the bottle

on a fingertip of the left hand. Finally, lift.

The small 6½-ounce bottle makes a comfortable, easy-to-handle prop, as does the 7-ounce beer bottle. This is a great bar trick.

THE BOTTLE FANTASTIQUE (ALL RIGHTS RESERVED)

While quite similar in effect, this is a different ball game. The pun is apt, for the cork is slyly attached to a monofilament thread. This enables you to work up more than a quickie presentation – and makes a magic-meeting baffler out of the handling.

I use some fourteen inches of invisible thread (available at fabric shops – they, too, call it invisible thread), but you will need to experiment for your own best length. One end is run through the cork with a needle and firmly knotted. The other can be attached to a pen clipped to your pocket. I prefer Frank Herman’s ploy of anchoring the thread around a small piece of cardboard slipped under my belt.

Here, an empty bottle is used. Some beers come in brown bottles that are almost opaque. I have tried decorating the glass with a scattering of colored stickers – stars and half-moons to divert the eye – but it’s more natural to use a bottle with its own collar. Seek and you shall find.

I begin with the cork in the right thumb palm position. The right hand shows the bottle, and then cradles it in both hands to read off the label.

Cradling locates the neck of the bottle in the right hand just below the palmed cork. Drop the ball in. The positioning is natural, and the cover is clean (Figure 7).

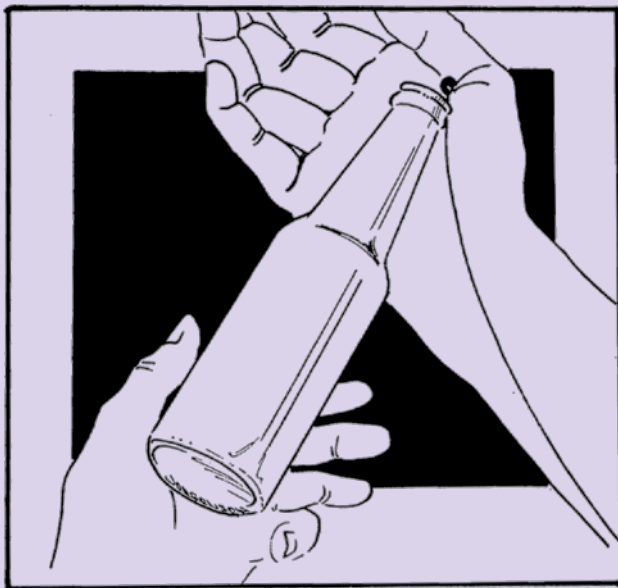


Figure 7

“A Danish beer. Carlsbad. Twelve ounces of spirits. Empty. The spirits have fled. Or have they?” With all fingers shielding the bottle (in the event the glass is not opaque enough), place the bottle on the table. The right hand takes the rope and pokes it inside.

By slight body movement, the thread is gently stretched out, lifting the cork completely out of sight into the neck. A small upward tug on the rope binds the cork in place.

“Hang on, spirits!” Lift the rope and the bottle will rise with

it. How can that be? To a magician, that’s not how the trick is supposed to work!

When you finish the suspension, return the bottle to the table. A slight, downward poke of the rope releases the cork. Lift out the rope, tossing it to the suspicious. Here again you fool the knowledgeable. Catch a thumb (your choice) under the thread, lift the cork into the thumb palm position, and shove the bottle forward for examination. What? No tugging of the rope to get out the gimmick? How’d you do that!

It hardly needs saying that the ball-and-thread gimmick can be used with a full bottle of beer, as explained above, making for an effortless removal of the cork at the end.

Tip. As long as you have some coverage at the neck, you can use a virtually clear bottle, particularly with the 7-ounce size. Since you are at risk only if the cork flashes around the bottom of the bottle, you can avoid this entirely by controlling the cork to remain in the neck. And with the bottle fitting so naturally in the palm of the hand, you may cut the risk further by your concealing grip.

DO AS I DO

Many years ago, I began doing the old version of the Chinese Prayer Vase built around a You-Do as I Do theme. With two bottles and two ropes you have a comedy plot to work with.

“I’ll let you in on a secret. Some tricks that look difficult are easy as pie, and some that look easy as pie are tough as can be. Take vanishing an elephant. Nothing to it. All you need is an elephant. But a simple trick like sticking a rope into a bottle takes years of practice.”

You do so. *“Voila! How simple that looks. But you try it.”*

Let the spectator choose either of the ropes and either of the bottles and try it. Of course, he can do it. You are struck with amazement, but attempt to shrug it off.

“Beginners luck! Let’s magnetize the rope with some static electricity. Rub the end of the rope on your arm and jam it into the bottle. Like this. Just do as I do.”

Finally, you lift the rope and the bottle clings; his doesn’t. *“Maybe my rope is better for magnetizing. Here, you take it and I’ll take yours. Rub it on your sleeve and jam it into the bottle.”*

Again, he fails. So you trade bottles. Once more, it will only work for you. You suggest a final try, allowing the spectator a choice of bottle and rope. Meanwhile, ditch the gimmick.

The trick doesn’t work for him, but it doesn’t work for you either. *“As I said before, sometimes the easiest looking tricks are the toughest. I seem to have lost the knack. Would you like to see me vanish an elephant? Who has an elephant?”*

I published the You-Do-as-I-Do presentation in one of Lloyd Jones’s mailings, where Frank Herman picked up on it. Frank, who originated the Cut and Restored Necktie, among other tricks, immediately made a classy change. Instead of using a piece of rope, he rang in two Atomic Light Bulbs. This, you’ll recall, is a bulb on a short electrical cord; pull the chain and the light lights.

So, rub the cord for static electricity and pull the chain. The lit bulb suggests that the cord is sufficiently charged; poke the end into the bottle and the bottle hangs from the cord.

This treatise on the old Chinese vase wouldn’t be complete without mentioning that not only can a pencil or bar swizzle stick be substituted for the rope, but in the empty bottle version a dollar bill may be used. Roll it lengthwise like a straw. Very effective.

THE THIRTY-ONE-DAY COIN TRICK

Suitable only for the magic club venue, this is part gag and part elegant sleight-of-hand presentation.

You fling a coin toward the ceiling. It vanishes. And it stays vanished. You announce that you will have to continue the coin trick at the next meeting. A month later, holding a goblet, you coax the coin down. It clinks into the goblet.

The sleight involved is basic and classic – the common coin palm, regarded by Professor Hoffman as “the first faculty” of coin magic. But the handling of both the vanish and the reappearance of the coin are uncommon.

THE FIRST MAGIC MEETING: THE VANISH

Squarely facing the crowd, toss the coin to be vanished from the right to the left hand, horizontally at about waist level (Figure 1).

To establish a triangular pattern, the left hand (which had closed around the coin) tosses it about eighteen inches into the air. It is caught by the right hand (Figure 2). To establish this juggling pattern, for therein lies the misdirection, repeat the toss a couple of times. The hands always close around the coin as it is caught.

“The textbooks warn us,” you say, “not to tell what we are going to do before we do it. But since we are magicians gathered here, it will do no harm to tell you in advance that I am going to vanish this coin. Not only that, I am going to tell you the very instant it will decamp. I will even alert you to the very mid-air spot where the coin will beat it into the unknown.”

Toss the coin around the triangle. As it makes this second trip, say, “When the coin reaches the apex, the top – here (point with left index finger) – it will depart. Quickly. Here we go.”

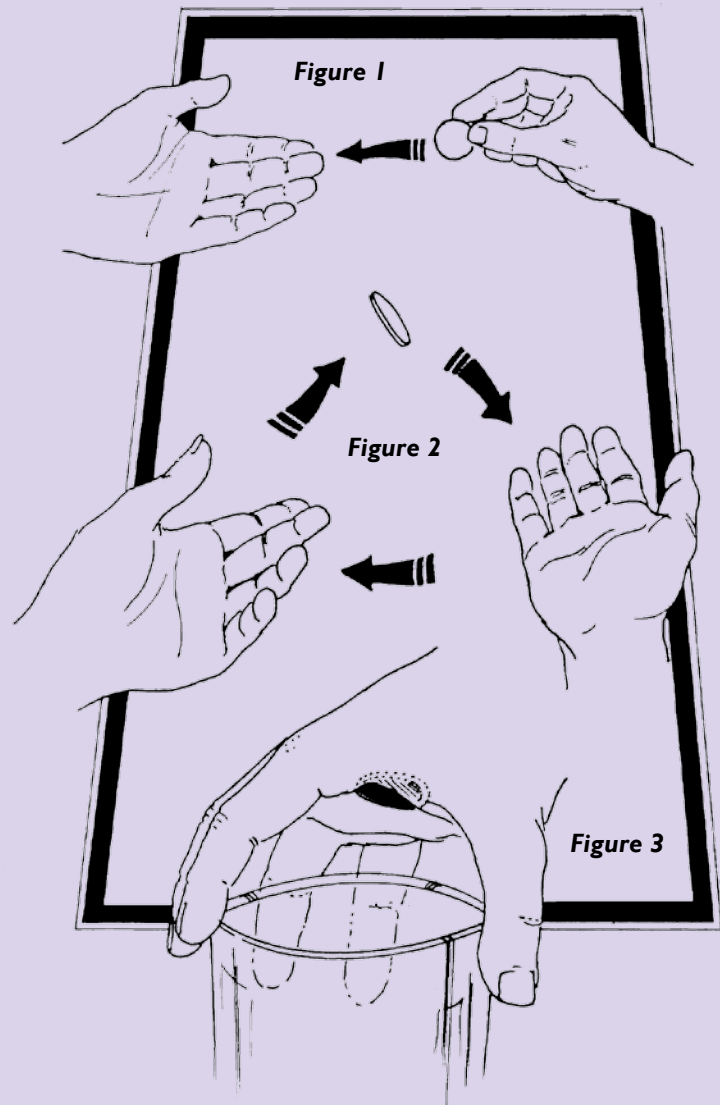
Run through the triangle again. The next time, however, the right hand palms the coin in the toss to the left hand, which closes as if it received the coin, as before.

Take a beat of time. Then give the left hand an upward toss, springing open the fingers; the coin appears to have vanished in mid-air. Your right hand conceals the coin; ignore it and let the hand drop naturally to the side.

“But, wait! What is this passion magicians have for vanishing coins? It goes against human nature. If they chose to be useful members of society, wizard’s would vanish crabgrass and anyone caught doing Zombie without a license. And isn’t the audience always ahead of us? They know we’ll bring the coin back. But back from where? Where does a coin flee to when it vanishes? Never-Never Land. Outer space? Cucamonga?”

“The coin you just saw is, to be truthful, hovering invisibly near the ceiling. (Address the imaginary coin.) Stay! I will attempt a world record here – the longest disappearance of a coin in magical history. (Address the imaginary coin.) Stay! Move not! **This coin trick will be continued at the next meeting. Stay! I shall return!**”

And sit down.



SECOND MAGIC MEETING: THE RETURN

Bring a goblet with you. Classic palm the coin even before you step up to do your stuff.

Bring everyone up to speed by saying, “At the last meeting I threw a coin toward the ceiling and it obediently vanished. The question is, can I now coax it down thirty-one days later for a world record?”

With the coin palmed, the fingers lift the glass by its rim (Figure 3).

All looks perfectly normal. Nevertheless, the palmed coin is concealed directly over the mouth of the glass.

As you look up to spy out the vanished coin, move the glass, floating it around as if to position it under the about-to-be-reproduced silver piece. “Heigh-ho silver! Banger! Clinker! Pocket jingler! Almighty half-dollar. Where are you? Still up there, aren’t you? I trust none of the magic crowd light-fingered you away. Silverware! Doubloon! Mint drop! Let’s have a look at you.”

When you feel the moment is ripe, relax the hand to release the palmed coin. It will clink and ring in the glass, as if it had fallen from aloft, through the hand, and into view. It’s a very pretty magical moment. ♦

THE DOTTED LINE

BY DON THEO III



SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Have you ever stopped to think how certain sales techniques can crossover to be useful to us as mystery performers and vice versa?

If you think about it, as magicians we are essentially salespeople. Not only do we need to sell our services as entertainers to our clients, but we also must sell the illusion or the moment of a miracle to our audiences.

Having split my career between performances as a magician and an actor along with various sales positions over the years, I think about this quite often. Over the next few paragraphs, I will give you an example of a crossover sales and performance technique.

There is an unspoken rule in sales that “he who speaks first loses.” To explain that further, the salesperson has presented his or her offer. The contract with the “dotted line” is slid across the table. A pen is uncapped and laid across the contract. If the salesperson is any good, he or she has noticed which hand the client writes with and has placed down the pen accordingly. A closing question is asked. (For example, “Which credit card would you like to use for the deposit?”) Then the salesperson remains silent until the client either answers the question and signs, or presents the salesperson with an objection that perhaps can be overcome with a closing technique in the arsenal.

From the salesperson’s point of view, these moments of silence can be excruciating. Sales professionals with little experience will often find the need to cover the awkward silence by jumping in and reiterating the features and benefits of his or her offer, or even worse, by making small talk that takes the focus away from the offer on the table.

Why do inexperienced salespeople do this? It’s called “talking over the close” and many a sale has been lost because of it. It’s human nature to try to deflate awk-

wardness in an exchange with someone we barely know, yet if the salesman would remain silent after extending the offer, he would exude much more confidence in what he has presented.

We see the same thing happening with magic and mystery performances. Much like the moment when the pen and paper are slid across the table for the client’s offering, as performers we also have that magic moment when nothing should be said, allowing the guest to swim in the moment of astonishment in an effort to piece back her reality. This is a moment that shouldn’t be stepped on, but rather should be allowed to breathe. Often we see a nervous or inexperienced performer muddy up this very special moment by throwing in a silly joke or some throwaway line like “Pretty neat, right?” When we do this, are we not robbing our spectator of a little slice of amazement that she may never get to experience again?

It’s not easy to embrace that moment of silence, but if we can get over the awkwardness, is it possible that we could actually be enhancing the moment? I can’t help but think that when your participant plays back the effect in her mind, she will remember that moment or two of silence and how she stood there quite paralyzed with the question of how to compartmentalize what she had experienced.

I’ll tell you an interesting story about the “silence rule” from the trenches of the sales floor. About ten years ago, I was selling timeshares in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, at the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A rather new and young salesperson was sitting across the table from a hulk of a man in bib overalls. The salesperson had spent over two hours walking the older gentleman around the grounds of the resort and going over all the benefits of being an owner of the product. The time then came for the salesperson to put some numbers on the offer and slide the contract over to the client for signing.

The salesperson had just come out of two weeks of intensive sales training where it had been ingrained in his head not to speak first, according to the golden sales rule. After sliding the offer over to the big farmer guy, they both sat there in

silence for about five minutes; neither of them had spoken a word. The green salesperson started getting uncomfortable, but instead of talking, he got up from the table and went over to his manager.

“I did what I was taught,” he told the manager, “but that guy hasn’t budged or said a word in over five minutes.”

The sales manager looked at the kid, beaming with pride at his student’s perseverance and told him to sit back down at the table and keep his mouth shut. So he did. After another five minutes of silence, he got up again and went back to his manager. “He still hasn’t said a thing or moved a muscle,” said the young salesperson. The manager decided it might be time to wander over and try to engage the silent farmer. Well, long story short, it turns out the man had suffered a mini-stroke. He wasn’t playing hardball, he was just incapacitated. We got an ambulance in there and had him taken to the hospital. Fortunately, it was not serious and the gentleman made a full recovery. He also came back a few days later and bought that timeshare.

Now this is an extreme case, and if you ever do find yourself in a similar situation, asking a simple, “Are you okay, sir?” will probably not lose the sale for you and would probably be a good idea. By the way, that gentleman came back once a year to stay at his timeshare, and he would always swing by the sales office to say hi. The managers would always ask him to tell his story to any of the new salespeople. He would ham it up and have a blast with the story; by the time he was done, he would have everyone present eating out of his hand.

A couple of years ago, “Farmer Mac” passed away. And on the wall, above the table where the story happened is a plaque thanking “Mac” for all the fun he brought to that sales floor over the years.

WRITER’S BLOCK

The magician reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small envelope that is given to a guest for safekeeping.

“I’m sure we are all familiar with the concept of ‘writer’s block.’ A friend of mine is a very accomplished author; once I asked him how he dealt with being at a

dead end, creatively speaking.

"He reached into his pocket and pulled out a stack of his business cards. He started turning them over to show that he had written different words on the back of each of them – nouns, verbs, adjectives, a little bit of everything all mixed up.

"My writer friend called these 'prompt words.' After mixing them blindly, he would try to construct a story out of the new order."

The performer suits action to words, taking out a stack of business cards and dealing them one at a time face up on the table, showing words like "helicopter," "transparent," and "kicked," etc. He then gathers them up and hands half of the cards to the spectator and instructs him or her to mix them up while the performer does the same with his half of the cards.

The two piles are put back together, cut, and further mixed. A pile of cards are then dealt from the top of the pile onto the table, writing side down, into a singular, tabled pile.

The tabled pile is then picked up by the magician and rested in his left hand.

The guest is told that she has complete control over the pile in the magician's hand. The guest instructs the magician to either deal each card or switch it with the next, and in this manner the cards are dealt onto the table. Once this process is done and no cards are left in the magician's hands, the envelope from before is asked for. The person holding it opens it up and pulls a folded paper out of the envelope. This same participant is asked to open the paper and read it out loud.

At the same time, the guest that decided the order of the cards is instructed to turn over a card from the pile she created each time the magician snaps his fingers.

The guest with the envelope starts

reading the paper aloud. The passage reads, "There once was a mermaid." (Snap.) The guest with the cards turns over the one on top to show the word "mermaid" and places the card aside. "This mermaid was named Stan," continues the guest reading the prediction. (Snap.) The next card turned over bears the word "Stan."

The guest with the prediction continues: "Stan was popular for riding around town on a Vespa." (Snap.) You guessed it; the word on the next card is "Vespa."

This continues until the final card is turned over. On the reverse of the final card are the words "The End."

The story cards will match up with the prediction from the envelope because you use Paul Curry's Swindle of Sorts. Briefly put for this effect, choose eleven words in order to fit your story. It's best to have your prediction printed on what looks like a torn out and folded page of a paperback novel. To save some time and to add authenticity, you could just take a page from a book lying around the house and fill out the cards accordingly.

Use about twenty cards and stack the ones with your story words in order on the top. Keeping them in order, turn them word-side up and spread through to show a few of the words on the cards. It's best to make sure you show a handful from the bottom half for the finish.

Turn them word-side down and hand the bottom half of the cards to your guest. Have her mix them up as you do the same with your half. (As far as the shuffling, you give your guest the half you don't need, which is the bottom half. If you trim a little off of the edge of the twelfth card – making it a short card – you can easily riffle to it.) False shuffle the cards in your hand, put the two halves back together by placing the spectator's cards under yours,

and throw in another false shuffle if you like. Deal the top eleven cards in a pile to the table (reversing the order) with the words face down while remarking, "That seems like a fair enough mix; but we don't need all of them, so let's just use these."

Now for Curry's Swindle: you need to have the guest tell you either to deal or to switch the cards. Pick up the dealt pile. If she says "deal," you do just that, dealing the top card down to the table. If she says "switch," then you place the top card under the card beneath it and drop both cards onto the first dealt card. Continue doing this until you get to the end, either dealing the top card or switching the top two based on what your guest says.

You don't need to know how this works, just know that it does. You will end up with your eleven-card stack in the order in which it began. All that remains is to have the story read and the cards deal out.

This is a good effect to practice your silence skills, because after your guest has dealt the cards there is a moment when she is comparing the fact that what has just been read has matched. Don't step on it; let everyone swim around with it for a minute. Gently lay the prediction paper down by the dealt cards. Let it breathe.

A great thing about this routine is that you can tailor the cards to fit whatever story you want to tell; you can design the predicted passage around a theme if needed. And if you want to know what story I use for this, I'll give you a hint. You just read it. My story cards contain the words "Bib Overalls," "Farmer Mac," "Gatlinburg," and "Plaque." ♦

(Paul Curry's A Swindle of Sorts can be found in the book *Paul Curry's Worlds Beyond*, Hermetic Press, 2001, page 245.)





CARD CHEATING – FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY

The title of this particular column is what's written on my business cards. I sell myself to the lay public as "less of a magician and more of a card shark... who has been known to do the occasional impossible thing." Among magicians I've developed a reputation for my gambling material and for using gambling techniques – false deals, riffle stacking, and shuffle work. However, I'm far from a gambling expert. Sure, I know more about gambling-related things than the average magician, and certainly more than the average Joe or Jane on the street. But I'm really just a performer who uses gambling techniques and gambling-related themes to entertain normal folk.

It's really easy to assume that presenting gambling material is all about exhibiting technique. Difficult moves executed beautifully are the reason many of us have spent many hours watching videos like Steve Forte's *Gambling Protection Series* or Richard Turner's *The Cheat*. As magicians, we know how hard these moves actually are. If you're going to present this material in front of normal humans, you face a dilemma. You want people to appreciate the moves, but unless the moves are invisible you're not doing them right.

I was recently involved in an online discussion about a gambling demonstration (not mine) of switching cards in blackjack. Someone commented that the required move looked like a move, but if the intent was to demonstrate this kind of skill, why would you want it to look like you "did something?" They'll know it is skill, because *you tell them* that's what it is. You want it to look like you did nothing, same as anything else. Gambling techniques are meant to blend in with the regular outward actions of shuffling, dealing, and picking up your cards in the context of a card game. That's all they're supposed to look like.

CHEATS & DECEPTIONS (FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY)

BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL

On the other hand, let's say that you can execute these techniques on the same level as a Steve Forte or even close to that. You wouldn't futz about trying to make things look like "moves," because people would be struggling to see the ones you're already doing. If on the other hand you're in the category of selling a really loud sizzle coming from a really small steak, telling people you're dealing bottoms when the cards are clearly coming off the top won't fly. In that case, maybe you do want to dirty up your deals and moves to make the bull-puckey you're slinging a little more believable. It's worth it to know the difference between something that's going to come off as an obvious lie and something that will appear plausible to laymen.

There are a handful of routines in the literature that are easily adaptable to gambling presentations and that will provide strong results using techniques you already know. The following is the combination of a couple of standard routines that I've put a blackjack spin on. Separately they play very strongly with laymen, and as it turns out they go well together.

BE HONEST – IS IT BLACKJACK?

Your setup on top of the deck is going to be from the top down: the Ace of Spades followed by a red Six and a red Ten of mixed suits, the other red Six, the Jack of Spades, and the remaining red Ten (Photo 1).



Photo 1

Shuffle, keeping your stock on top, as you introduce the subject of

cheating at blackjack and the concept of hand-mucking – switching cards in play. I usually start in by saying, "Let's talk about blackjack. I wasn't going to talk about blackjack, but since you brought it up..." (This is my standard line whenever I want to make a hard segue into a topic.)

Spread over the top five cards and re-square them, getting a left little-finger break underneath them. "If you don't know anything about blackjack, don't worry, I'll explain the basics. For example, it's always a good idea to know where to find an Ace..." Turn over the top single card to show the Ace of Spades. After the preceding shuffles this should appear mildly impressive.

"And if I can find a Jack to go with it, even better!" Take the Ace face up in your right hand and, still holding it, flip over the quadruple card above your break. The single card will help disguise the thickness



Photo 2

of the block (Photo 2). Retain a break under the face-up block of four cards. You're now displaying a natural blackjack. "This is the best hand you can receive in blackjack, because it pays off 3 to 2. And if it doesn't, find another casino. I don't put up with any 6 to 5 nonsense!" This line might sound technical, but I find it typically gets a chuckle from people regardless of their experience. "Of course, in the casino I don't get to deal myself a hand like this, which is why I like to keep one on me for emergencies. Wouldn't you?" Place the Ace on the face of the Jack (Photo 3) and flip all five cards above the break face down. Immediately spread off the top two cards face down and place them somewhere isolated, but still in view. I usually perform



Photo 3

while wearing a jacket and tie, so I place the cards sticking out of my breast pocket or, if I'm feeling jaunty, in my tie clip. The audience believes this is still the blackjack; the cards are actually the red Six and Ten.

Turn over the top single card to show a red Six. This conveniently cools out the two-card switch you just did. You're now going to perform the moves of Eddie Fechter's classic trick, *Be Honest, What Is It?* "If I can't get the cards I want, I just have to switch them in. I'll show you what I mean. Say I get dealt a Six. That's a weak card for a blackjack hand. Would you hold your hand out for me? You're going to be the table in this demonstration...no offense!" Place the Six face up onto the spectator's palm. Once she has the Six, do a very brief overhand shuffle control to maintain the three-card stock on top. (I use an overhand lift shuffle.)

You must now do a triple turnover, revealing a red Ten. An easy way to prepare for this is to drop the left hand to the side of your body as the right hand turns the red Six the spectator is holding face down. This gives you time to pinky count three cards with the left hand. The left hand moves back to the center of the body. The right hand meets it and immediately turns over the triple. The fluidity of this action helps disguise the thickness of the turned-over packet. Catch a break under the three cards as they are turned over. (A reminder: the Ten and the Six in play happen to be the pseudo-mates of the cards sticking out of your pocket, which is convenient.)

The patter continues as you turn over the triple: "Ah, a Ten! That's a much better card. If I were going to switch your Six for this Ten, I'd have to be very fast. I'll show you the basic technique, but it's going to seem obvious and you're going to feel it." Turn the triple down, take the top single card face down, and openly switch it with one hand for the Six. Take the Six in a grip ready for a top change. "In an actual

casino setting you wouldn't feel that happen, but you did feel it. Do you know why? Because you're not a table!" Under cover of that dopey joke, top change the Six in your hand for the card on top of the deck (Photo 4). "And in a game, I'd have a two-card hand to deal with, which camouflages the move." Place the card in your hand underneath the face-down card in your participant's hand, and mix the two around a bit. Have your participant place her other hand on top, trapping the two cards. She thinks she has the red cards adding to sixteen; she actually already has the blackjack.



Photo 4

Take the supposed blackjack from your pocket (or wherever you squirreled it). "I'm going to try to steal out that Six for either the Jack or the Ace." Pause for a beat. "Or I could just get them both. Time is money, after all!" Reveal that you have the Six and the Ten. (The fact that they have changed suits will not be noticed.) Have the participant show the cards in her hands to reveal that she now has the blackjack.

You can stop right here, or if you like you can barrel ahead with another classic effect dressed up in a gambling chicken costume.

DR. DALEY'S LAST BLACKJACK

Place the deck away and call attention to the Ten and the Six you are holding. "Let me try that again. These two cards are actually the worst hand you could get in blackjack. Not good enough to stick with, terrible to hit to." Flip the two cards face down into dealing position in your left hand. Take the blackjack from your participant. "This hand, you remember, is an automatic payoff." Flip the blackjack face down onto the other two cards. You're now in position to go into a slight handling variation of The Last Trick of Dr. Jacob Daley (*The Dai Vernon Book of Magic*,

page 210.

"So let's say I've been dealt this terrible hand..." Perform the first two moves of Bro. John Hamman's Gemini Count (*The Secrets of Brother John Hamman*, page 93) to show the two red cards, dealing each of them into your participant's hand. "...and I've got a really good hand hidden on my person." Tuck the remaining two cards halfway into your sleeve. Reach over and peek briefly at the cards in the participant's hand, then remove the cards from your sleeve and show that you now have the Ten and the Six. Again have her show the cards in her hand to reveal the blackjack.

It's very hard to overcome the shame, guilt, and general filthiness that come from saying "I'm going to show you how gamblers switch cards" and then doing a double lift. I've been performing Daley's Last Trick as a blackjack demo for years (and I know others who've done the same); the reactions it has received have only exacerbated the guilt. If you're in front of a police department or similar group talking about the realities of card cheating, you owe it to your audience to be as genuine as possible. In regular performance, the truth lies somewhere in the middle. In regular performance you're going to get much better results thinking like a magician. The real techniques are meant to be performed when attention is relaxed. Magicians design their routines to happen under direct, albeit guided, attention. This means that as a magician you're always going to get better results if the method happens any time *other* than when you say it does or the audience expects it to.

That's not an invitation to throw technique out the window. Darwin Ortiz has said that in order to convince an audience you possess great skill, it's best to actually start out with great skill. Martin Nash said that if you make any kind of claim along these lines, you'd best be able to back it up. So keep working on your hole-card switches and blackjack mucks. If you're going to present this kind of material, you need to know what you're talking about. But the best way to deal with the throbbing ball of guilt that settles at the base of your skull as you double lift your way through a hand-mucking demo is to quietly take it out into an alley and beat it to death with a shovel. Technique is one thing; your audience's perception is another. ♦

INFORMED OPINION

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

NON PLUS ULTRA VOLUMES 1 AND 2 BOOKS
BY MAGIC CHRISTIAN, TRANSLATED BY LORI PIEPER

Available from: www.hermeticpress.com and
www.conjuringarts.org
Price \$249.00 (two-volume set)

**REVIEW BY PAYNE (VOLUME 1) AND
ANTONIO M. CABRAL (VOLUME 2)**



I was given the task to read and review volume 1 (*Magic of the 19th Century*) of this impressive two-volume set. Being that this tome is devoted to the life and times of the nineteenth-century magician Johann Hofzinsner, it was an assignment that I was pleased to receive. I am a fan and self-taught student of magic history and am particularly interested in the performance and practice of conjuring before its so-called “Golden Age.” I was eager to delve into what I had heard was the seminal work on this influential performer.

Hofzinsner is something of an enigma. Before the release of these books, little was known about his life or his magic. Thus, he was relegated to being little more than a footnote in the history of magic. When discussing the influential magicians of the mid-nineteenth century (a topic that rarely comes up in casual conversation these days), Hofzinsner’s name is often overshadowed by those of his contemporaries. Both Christopher’s *The Illustrated History of Magic* and Clarke’s *Annals of Conjuring* boast multiple entries in their indexes for the likes of Robert-Houdin, Bosco, and Herrmann, yet each contains but a single listing for Hofzinsner. There are many reasons for this omission. Chief among them is that Hofzinsner himself penned no books on the subject of magic, nor ever wrote a fanciful biography that would eventually capture the imagination of a young Eric Weiss. We’re lucky to know anything about him at all. Were it not for a chance meeting between Georg Heubeck, a former student of Hofzinsner’s, and the then amateur magician Ottokar Fischer, Hofzinsner might be an even more obscure footnote in the magic literature – remaining virtually unknown outside of his homeland of Austria. It is because of this meeting, and the tutelage and friendship that followed, that we know anything at all about him.

For decades Fischer’s *J.N. Hofzinsner Kartenkünste* and *J.N. Hofzinsner Zauberkünste* were the two definitive works on the life and magic of Hofzinsner; most everything that was written elsewhere about him was taken from these volumes. Unfortunately, it now looks as if much of that information was incomplete, misinterpreted, or just outright wrong. Even the date of his birth given in Mr. Fischer’s books is in error.

But fortunately for us, and the memory of Hofzinsner, Magic Christian’s exhaustive and comprehensive biography sets about the task of correcting these mistakes and omissions. What

emerges from his painstaking research is a portrait of a man whose name should be on par with (if not above) his contemporaries. Robert-Houdin might have secured the title of “The Father of Modern Magic,” but it becomes clear after reading this volume that magic, as it is practiced today, especially when it concerns tricks involving playing cards, would have been a completely different entity without Hofzinsner’s innovative and groundbreaking contributions to the craft. In fact, it could be argued that far more magic effects being performed today owe their lineage to the work of Hofzinsner than his better known Parisian counterpart.

This is why this book is an important scholarly work and should be in the library of any serious student of magic history.

But be forewarned: this book is more academic in nature than your average magic book or biography. *Non Plus Ultra* is not so much a biography as it is a compendium of biographical data; a dossier on the life and times of Johann Nepomuk Hofzinsner. There is an intriguing story to be found within these pages. But it is up to the reader to create it for themselves from the multitude of facts and figures provided. After reading the book, one is left with the feeling that they know every detail there is to know about Herr Hofzinsner, but with no understanding of who he really was. Having been dead for a century and a half, there are very few anecdotal or personal recollections to be found in the book. It is like trying to piece together an accurate representation of the life of Doug Henning through press releases and reviews alone.

So at times, it can be a challenge to read your way through the (what can sometimes feel to be seemingly endless) chapters. But however difficult it might be at times to get through it, it is well worth the effort. Magic Christian has scoured untold numbers of archives and has extracted from them every bit of information on Hofzinsner that he could find. He even managed to secure, thanks to that famed Austrian efficiency, Hofzinsner’s employment records.

Within the covers of this book you will find reviews of many of his famous salon performances, which he dubbed “An Hour of Deception.” There are clippings from newspapers detailing appearances he made at soirees and other social functions throughout his career. For the first time we are able to capture the essence of his salon shows and how they were received by the general public at the time.

Perhaps of greater interest are Hofzinsner’s own writings and critiques. These cover a wide variety of subjects. As well as being a skilled prestidigitator, Hofzinsner was also a skilled musician and well regarded music critic. Of particular note was his review of Johann Strauss, who he found to be a competent composer of “dance-music,” but in no way should be regarded as a serious composer. Fortunately for us, Hofzinsner also turned his critical eye to the performances of Bosco, Herrmann, and Dobler (to name just a few), giving us tremendous insight to the state of affairs in the world of magic in nineteenth-century Austria.

This book is a veritable treasure trove of information. Anything one would care to know about the life and times of Johann Nepomuk Hofzinsner can be found somewhere in the pages of this volume, even his poetry, which might be more than anyone would have ever wanted to know. There are letters, diaries, and bi-

ographies of his students, friends, and compatriots. There is even a tantalizing theory of his rather sudden demise, which the author attributes to the mishandling of one of his magic effects.

The volume is beautifully produced, well laid out, and profusely illustrated with numerous portraits, playbills, photographs, maps, letters, and diagrams. *Non Plus Ultra* is a stellar work that will hold a place of honor in anyone's magic library. – Payne

NON PLUS ULTRA VOLUME 2 – HOFZINSER'S CARD ARTISTRY – TRANSLATED BY DAVE SHEPHERD



Hofzinsler hasn't quite attained the same foothold in the minds of modern card magicians as, say, the mysterious S.W. Erdnase. While scads of young and old card workers pontificate and quote chapter and verse from the lessons of a person who exists as little more than a pseudonym, J.N. Hofzinsler – a real person, with a real reputation, in the real public record – seems to be more of a vague inspiration for card workers in this country. The main difference is, Erdnase (whoever he was) wrote a book, a solid primary source document detailing a number of powerful and

still relevant ideas in the realm of card magic. What we've known of Hofzinsler's tricks and methods, on the other hand, has come second-, third- and fourth-hand via hearsay and Sharpe's rough translation. The primary English language source on Hofzinsler, S.H. Sharpe's translation of Ottokar Fischer's *Hofzinsler Kartenkünste*, is not only notoriously clumsy with errors but also long out of print and hard to find. With the long-awaited English-language release of Magic Christian's *Non Plus Ultra*, that may start to change.

Magic Christian has done – and continues to do – a staggering amount of research in an attempt at a proper forensic reconstruction of Hofzinsler's effects and techniques. He's scoured the original letters, Hofzinsler's own surviving documents, theatrical programs and reviews, anything that might provide an insight into how this man managed to captivate Victorian Vienna with card tricks. It turns out that many of the techniques uncovered by Magic Christian are amazingly modern in much the same way that Erdnase was ahead of his time. As Hofzinsler himself said in his letters, "It is just as impossible to play a concert piece without the necessary technical skills as to perform such a card piece without the required techniques and method of deception."

Magic Christian has done his best to extract those required techniques and methods of deception out of Hofzinsler's personal correspondence and contemporary theatrical reviews. He covers everything from the moves, to the philosophies, to the nature of the playing cards of the time and just how Hofzinsler took advantage of it.

Thankfully, given the enormous effort that has gone into this research, the results are tremendously satisfying. The portrait that emerges of Hofzinsler's work is one that's almost astoundingly ahead of its time. Much of Hofzinsler's effect construction and psychology will appear familiar to fans of Ascanio, Tamariz, and the Escorial school of thought. Many of Hofzinsler's feature items weren't individual tricks, but full multi-phase routines whose constructions are as worth study as the individual effects. Many card students will be surprised at how charming and thorough Hofzinsler's scripts are in proper translation. Hofzinsler made a point

to relate his experiments to well known topics or news items of the day, and at the very least made his experiments about people in his audience as opposed to just the cards. It's an eye-opening lesson in the performance of modern card magic from over one hundred years ago.

Also eye-opening are the descriptions of the specific sleight-of-hand techniques that Hofzinsler preferred. Card workers familiar with the Hofzinsler Bottom Palm and the Hofzinsler Top Change will be surprised to learn that everything they know is wrong. His top change featured more modern and refined technique than that of his contemporaries, but in the end is more of a standard top change than the deliberate slappy-snappy move popularized by Cy Enfield. His bottom palm is a lot closer to the description in Erdnase that Dai Vernon preferred than the move described in Vernon's own *Travelers* from *Stars of Magic*. Where these erroneous variant handlings actually came from is left as an exercise to the reader. Also of interest are Hofzinsler's approaches to forcing, both psychological and mechanical. The Hofzinsler Cull, of course, has enjoyed an incredible renaissance over the past couple of decades, producing effects the Doctor himself could only have dreamt of.

This volume also contains some very fascinating insight into the legendary gaffs Hofzinsler employed. Many of them are commonplace now, but in Hofzinsler's time requesting double-faced cards that were indistinguishable from ordinary playing cards was a prime example of Teller's maxim of "making the secret seem more trouble than the trick is worth." Picture a time when only three magicians in the world possessed a good quality set of what we now call MacDonald's Aces and you'll start to feel spoiled by that Ellusionist gaffed card deck you bought, but never used. The proper construction and handling of his double-ended cards will likely spark some long-overdue creativity, as will his combination of both principles into some ingenious trick decks. As for his legendary transparent cards, well...the illustration on page 72 is by my reckoning worth the price of the book.

This is an amazing achievement regarding an amazing magician, and if you're a serious card student you're already excited about this project. However, despite the phenomenal job that Magic Christian has done in his reconstructions, the original problem still nags at the text, as thorough as it is. The best sources on these routines and techniques are Hofzinsler's letters to his friends and students, but as Magic Christian admits, "His written records and the various transcriptions of his tricks were at best frameworks of thought meant to keep them from being forgotten. Most of the time, he waited for personal meetings to convey the fine points of his presentation to his friends." Those primary sources, while valuable, are still looser than if Hofzinsler had actually recorded his methods for the benefit of the many instead of the few. So we're left with an extraordinary undertaking that's still second- and third-hand (through no fault of the author, of course). In that sense, Hofzinsler is very much like an Erdnase: the more we learn and attempt to understand, the more tantalizing and frustrating that remaining unknown information becomes.

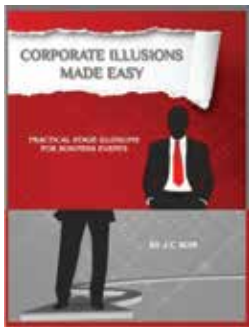
To that end, I'd make a case for this information being too valuable to the education of every English-speaking magician to limit its audience to those who can afford a \$249 two-volume set. I understand that this information, given the Herculean amount of research and analysis involved, isn't the kind of thing you just give away on the street corner, and the physical product from Hermetic Press and the Conjuring Arts Research Center is worth every penny. But another significant difference between Hofzinsler and Erdnase is that *The Expert at the Card Table* has, by comparison, been readily available and extremely affordable. You can

tell some up-and-coming young card punk to “Read Erdnase!” and if they can’t lay hands on any of the many under \$10 editions available, the fault is completely theirs and their work will suffer for it. It would be nice if there were a similar way to point the same card punks at a proper examination of Hofzinger’s work. Until that happens, the serious card student with the means (or a generous family member) will absolutely want this on their shelf. Very highly recommended. – Antonio M. Cabral

CORPORATE ILLUSIONS MADE EASY BOOK
By J.C. SUM

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies
Price \$60.00

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



Most magicians would like this book. It is a quick and easy read with clear illustrations and directions that describe ten illusion designs. Sum, most of whose illusion projects I have reviewed here before, does his usual decent job of creating clever ideas for illusions within stipulated parameters. In this eighty-page volume he discusses the concept of creating specialty illusions for (mostly) one-time corporate work. If you have a high-paying event where a

company wants you to produce the CEO, roll out a new product, or showcase a new design, this book might be just what you need.

The first ten pages give you an overview of corporate illusion work, explaining how it differs from regular stage shows or television work. Sum briefly discusses different types of corporate events and the different venues you will encounter. Making an illusion act work on a hotel ballroom floor with no proscenium, backdrop, or wings is a lot different than making it work on your own stage. He also gives helpful tips for building these mostly one-off illusions. While the information has not much depth, it does cover the basics. You might want to consider it an outline from which you and your illusion builder can begin work.

The bulk of the book shares ten illusion plans. The Arrival is first and purports to produce a CEO from thin air in a small cabinet. While the design certainly seems like it would produce the desired outcome, I found it flawed in concept, since you must assure that the CEO will curl up in a small hidden space. Fine for your own limber assistant and several rehearsals, but I doubt many executives would want to put a \$6,000 suit through those contortions, let alone their aging paunches. Maybe I’m wrong in stereotyping executives as mature men. Maybe the under-thirty Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook would contort for you.

Other of the illusions seem much more viable, such as Showcase, which uses a clear acrylic box to produce a smaller product like the latest smart phone, or Rising Identity, which magically displays a new company graphic or logo. Global Crossing and Corporate Restraint are different illusions, but both appear to have your corporate assistant escape from restraints. They do not require any undignified contortions, but you should consider the personality of your helper before you even ask if they would participate in such an exercise. Jeweled Revelation is a very nice idea, but it seems a little out of place here, because it is clearly a small parlor trick and not an illusion. The Conference and The Big Reveal are both major illusions that will magically produce very large items such as a motorcycle or the company’s board of

trustees. These are nice ideas, but would take a major investment to create.

Sum’s experience in both the illusion world and corporate entertainment are evident in this work. His ideas and tips are sound. The book is a well produced soft cover with fine illustrations (not blueprints) on heavy glossy paper. Like most illusion books, it carries a rather weighty price tag. If you want to build an illusion for a corporate event, you will need a lot more time, money, and advice than this includes, but it is a good place to start. If you just want to add to your own knowledge base in magic, this has plenty of decent information that is difficult to find anywhere else.

THE COLLECTION VOLUME ONE BOOK
By KENTON KNEPPER AND LUCA VOLPE

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies
Price \$60.00

REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSSELL



Hmm...first the facts: six by nine inches, soft cover, perfect bound, seventy-six pages. *The Collection Volume 1* is divided into four sections. The first two, written by Volpe with notations by Knepper, are Headline Prediction and Psychic Vision. They are the purpose of the book, and taken together cover the first sixty-four pages. They are followed by Knepper’s Divinatory Message, his explanation of how he uses divination cards to “advise” the spectator about a general or specific issue (a combination of cold reading and forcing card)

and Symbol Cubes, another method of cold reading based on the use of Rory’s Story Cubes. In Story Cubes, nine dice that have symbols on them, such as a lightning bolt, a dollar sign, the earth, etc., are rolled and the skilled performer weaves a plausible story, divination, or suggested action. Both of these effects hold good promise for an entertaining session in the hands of the skillful performer – great for storytelling or bizarre magick. As is always the case with Kenton Knepper, extreme care is given to scripting. The master of “Wonder Words,” Knepper understand the suggestive power of a carefully crafted script.

Italian mentalist Luca Volpe acknowledges Knepper as his teacher and mentor. There is clearly a bond between them, and Volpe’s writing, with its emphasis on scripting, shows his skill with his master’s methods. The headline prediction is bold, but careful reading will convince most readers that this will work and be quite effective. Assuming this is to be done for a banquet, a week before the event the performer asks the toastmaster to write his signatures over the front and back of a sealed envelope. At the event, the performer has the toastmaster randomly select four or five words from that day’s newspaper. Then the envelope is opened, inside of which is a DVD or CD. When this is played, the performer is seen and/or heard making a prediction of the words that were just selected, as well as the headline of that day’s newspaper. The psychology behind the use of two predictions, one anticipated (the headline prediction) and one not (the five words) is really quite clever, so much so that, as Volpe asserts, no one will remember the correct order of events. This is probably true, and magicians and mentalists would do well to consider this prediction effect.

As we consider Psychic Vision we wander into murky waters. Volpe and Knepper acknowledge that this will not be for everyone,

for it suggests that the performer really does have supernatural powers, despite disclaimers, and that the cold reader can use readings to make predictions. We can see that such a prediction once fulfilled could have a great impression on a client, bringing the client back again and again. Knepper considers this “very realistic mentalism.” Indeed it would be for the right recipient. There are two parts to this concept. The performer sends a Psychic Vision, which is essentially a reading in the form of a letter, to the client and requests a meeting a week later so that he performer can give something special to the client. The hook set, the performer does meet with the client and intrigues the client with a gift of an eclectic collection of materials: a “mojo bag,” that just might have supernatural powers. This leads, of course, to further sessions. And so it goes.

Fraud? The skeptic might think so. But there are many who believe, as did Carl Jung, that “I will not commit the fashionable stupidity of regarding everything I cannot explain as fraud.” Volpe and Knepper are not alone in believing that a psychic performer can help people change their futures for the better. This is not for everyone, as the author and his mentor make clear. But, it does make for very interesting reading and the headline prediction is very, very good.

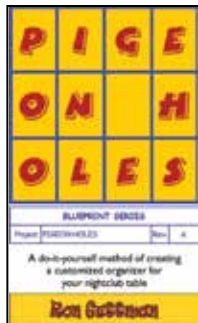
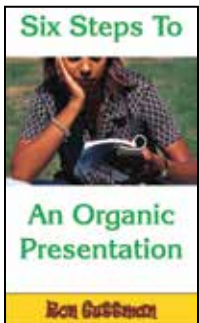
SIX STEPS TO AN ORGANIC PRESENTATION & PIGEON HOLES BOOKLETS

By Ron Guttman

Available from: www.BlackDerbyEntertainment.com

Price Six Steps – \$9.00 Pigeon Holes – \$18.00

REVIEW BY MICHAEL CLOSE



Canadian professional magician Ron Guttman offers two booklets on two very diverse subjects. *Six Steps to an Organic Presentation* will be of use to any performer who, as Mr. Guttman states, “gets paid for what comes out of your mouth.” Mr. Guttman discusses: how

to analyze your script and how to make appropriate and meaningful personal choices; understanding the structure of your character and the subtext of your presentation; memory techniques; going off book; breathing exercises; improvising around your script; becoming involved in the moment and listening to your audience; and putting it all together in front of an audience.

This sounds like a lot of material to cover in nineteen pages, and it is. This booklet is meant to be an introduction to the subject, and to that extent it does a good job. Of particular usefulness are the four books suggested in the “Resources” section. For the newcomer looking to improve his presentational skills, *Six Steps to an Organic Presentation* will get you on the right path.

Pigeon Holes is geared toward the do-it-yourself magic handyman. In its twenty pages, Mr. Guttman explains (in general steps rather than in a specific blueprint) how to build a cubbyhole organizer for your nightclub table, suitcase table, or suitcase. Mr. Guttman lists the tools you will need, the materials involved, the design steps, and the construction techniques. Concerning the skill level involved, he states, “If you’ve ever built a model car or airplane from one of those plastic kits, you probably have most of

the tools and all the skills you need to complete this project.”

Obviously, only you know what props you need to store in your case for your particular show, so only a general schematic layout is offered. But if you find yourself rummaging through your case during a show trying to find that set of ropes that has gotten buried at the bottom, you may want to invest in this useful booklet.

HUNGRY DVD By MATHIEU BICH

Available from: www.MathieuBich.com

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies

Price \$29.00

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



Mathieu Bich has been acknowledged as one of the top magical inventors around today. He won the Invention Award from FISM for his remarkable Spreadwave, which also fooled Penn & Teller on their TV Show. He has released many other great close-up effects.

On this new DVD, called *Hungry*, he attempts to teach you some of his ways of thinking creatively by exploring new methods for a neo-classic card effect. Along the way, you will learn twelve methods and/or handlings for the Sandwich effect. This is a wonderful way to take a glimpse inside a great creative mind and explore with him his process for “inventing” new magic.

Some of the methods are superb, and some just average. Some of them are groundbreaking, others merely variations on his earlier methods. The real value of *Hungry* is in the examination of the process: looking at the pluses and minuses of specific methods and ruminating over them. It is a journey of discovery. One of the real key points is that there is no right or wrong – no perfect method. The best method depends on the conditions you, as the performer, set. Mathieu gives you a number of tips on how to achieve this type of creativity, but there are no hard and fast rules. I wish he had spent more time discussing the actual creative process; there is no “magic method.” It takes work, but by applying Mathieu’s suggestions, you can only improve your own creative process and your magic.

If you are just looking for some new card tricks, this DVD will satisfy you. If you want to get maximum benefit from this DVD, you want to listen to Mathieu discuss what he went through to get to each one of these handlings. It is worth watching several times to digest what is really going on in his head. It is a great trip and I heartily suggest that all of you spend some time with this unique individual, even if, for most of us, it can only be on products like this. Recommended.

VARIANCE DVD By KEVIN SCHALLER

Available from: www.BalconyProductions.com

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies

Price \$29.99

REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER

This DVD by Kevin Schaller teaches six effects. It begins with a trick called Break. Here you show a card with a crease running



along the bottom. Move your hand over the card and the crease now runs through the middle of the card. Then the crease returns to its original position. The gimmick is easy to make, and Kevin shows some alternate uses of the gimmick for effects like a moving hole and a torn and restored card.

Bust a Cap is a routine with a soda bottle and a coin. A cap is removed from a bottle and placed into your fist along with a coin. The hand is opened; the cap is gone and reappears screwed onto the bottle. The second phase seems the same, but this time the coin vanishes and reappears on top of the bottle. Audience management skills are critical here.

Cards make their appearance in Drunken Sandwich. A card is selected and lost in the deck; two mates are removed and held in the right hand. The selection appears face down behind the two cards. The idea for this was interesting (and similar to a Lee Asher move), but I think the handling is too cozy and there are better, and easier, sandwich effects.

In Edgy, a blue card folded in quarters is paper clipped to the box. A card is selected from a red deck and lost in the pack. The selected card is named and the corner of the prediction card is folded back; it does not match the selection. The performer shakes the card and it visibly changes to a red-backed card; the face now matches the selection. The gimmick is easy to make and the change looks good. If desired, the changed card can be handed out for inspection (after you palm off the gimmick).

PWP is a triple prediction of three cards. After the cards have been selected, the first card's name is found written on the bottom of the box, the second card is found inside the box, and the written name of the first card is seen to have changed into the name of the third selection. Again some easy prep allows you to make the necessary gimmick, and with a little work the box can be examined. A neat idea, but again I think the handling is bit too cozy, in this case when the box comes in contact with the deck.

Tabbed has the performer tear off one of the tabs on a card box, which vanishes and is found in the deck on top of the selected card. The tab is returned to the box, but not where it usually is found but fused onto the back of the box. Again this is an interesting visual idea, but why was the tab fused onto the box and why should I care?

This is a homemade project; the sound and video were good but I thought the DVD navigation could have been better. Each trick has an introduction, then a performance, then an explanation, sometime more ideas, followed by the credits...all accompanied by the same driving music and murky graphics.

I believe that Kevin is a young man who thinks a lot about his magic. I reviewed another of his DVDs (called *Sticky*) that had effects that all dealt with chewing gum and the packaging the gum came in. Some of his ideas are very clever, but some of the handlings were either a little too cozy, too angle-ly, or too much work to get into or to clean up. If you are looking for some interesting visual effects to play around with and possibly spark your imagination, I think you will find them in *Variance*. If you are looking for material for paid performing situations, I think you should keep looking. There is a big difference between something neat to show to your friends and material for working, paid situations. That being said, I look forward to seeing more magic from Mr. Schaller.

ANIMA PROPS AND DVD

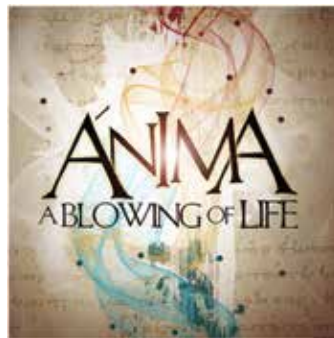
By MICHEL AND GRECO

Available from: www.VernetMagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$80.00

REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



Anima is an attempt to make two of the best tricks that rely on thread – Al Baker's The Pack That Cuts Itself (aka The Haunted Pack) and the Acrobatic matchbox – easier to perform. Whether it does that or not is a matter of some debate on the Magic Cafe and elsewhere, and we'll get into that. But first, here's what you get when you plunk down your \$80: a plastic device that looks

like a rather large car remote (it's as thick and as long as a deck of cards, and about half as wide) on a keychain, a subtly gaffed drawer matchbox, and a DVD explaining the workings of the device, the history of its development, and how it is applied to the two effects named above. As an added bonus, when you open the box, do take the time to read the title of the DVD, which is supposed to be "A Breath of Life," but is slightly and hilariously mistranslated.

The Anima device itself conceals a reel that dispenses clear monofilament – essentially light fishing line – that's much thicker than "invisible" thread, and even thicker than the clear thread sold for sewing. At the end of the thread is a simple device that allows you to temporarily anchor the line in a deck of cards, or the matchbox, without the use of adhesives or wax. This temporary anchor, being the independent conception of both Ed Marlo and Tommy Wonder, is above reproach and performs its part admirably.

The device is large, the inventor explains, on purpose. Since the device remains in your pocket during the effects, the thickness prevents tighter pants pockets from dragging on the line. And, since the device serves to anchor the thread, the larger size helps keep it in your pocket.

The reason for disguising the device as a keychain remote is largely not stated. If you are often asked to empty your pockets before performing, I suppose it's a benefit. But that's a level of scrutiny I seldom invite. However, there is a satisfying feeling of sneakiness that it engenders, and it has to look like something, so why not? Apparently, Vernet previously marketed this same method, only with the reel hidden in a small purse, which to my mind would be equally inconspicuous, but whatever.

My two concerns when using thread (and I'm not alone here) are: 1) Will the thread be seen, and 2) Will the thread get tangled or break? The reel nicely answers that second concern, and for that reason alone, I like this solution. The thread comes out of your pocket when you need it, and returns there when its work is done. That beats having a loose thread hanging off your belt loop, which, although it never did present any problems, always made me nervous.

The first concern is mostly addressed in the design of the effects. In other words, what these two effects have in common is that although thread is used, it is almost entirely hidden from the spectator's view. Unlike recent methods for the self-cutting deck

(e.g. Spooked, etc.) the thread is not out in the open, but rather under your arm and your hand. This means that the thread does not need to be “invisible.” It can be thicker, stronger thread, and lighting conditions are less important. Further, the thread is less likely to break in the hands of an intoxicated magician, which is also a nagging concern.

All that said, I have to say that the thread provided is thicker than it needs to be, and being smooth, synthetic line, it shines like crazy. While the line is almost entirely hidden during the effect, the part that’s not hidden is right where the spectators are likely to be looking. So, a thinner, less reflective thread would be an improvement to my mind. Finn John’s Esoteric thread, for instance.

This prompts the question, can you replace the thread? I think so, but I don’t know. With any thread reel, the owner needs to know how to replace the thread if it breaks and how to repair the other parts of the reel. While there is section of the DVD addressing the working of the device, I was surprised to see that the instructions only cover how to open the device, exposing the reel inside. That was it. No suggestions as to proper maintenance, no hints on how you can replace the thread, and in fact, no indication that you even can do that. Repair is a real consideration, since what you find inside is not a mechanical spring-driven or motor-driven reel, but rather something that appears to be a standard invisible thread reel (driven by elastic string) loaded with visible (rather than invisible) thread. I have no idea whether this use has been authorized by the manufacturer of the ITR, but the fact that the very existence of the device in Anima is completely glossed over is suspicious.

The lack of information on this point is worrisome for another reason. If you’ve performed this effect with the traditional method, you know that the thread must be extended to its full length before it can be used to move the deck. The presence of a reel (which is non-locking) does not change this. Vernet supplies enough thread to perform the routine with two selections. This requires the performer to extend his hand pretty far from his body in order to get the second selection to reveal itself. Since it’s arguable whether the second selection adds anything to the effect, you might ask whether you could shorten the thread and just use one selection. But, as I mentioned, the DVD offers no answers.

Also, the use of the Marlo/Wonder anchor means you lose one subtlety that some feel is important with Anima: at the end of the effect, you have to set the deck down, or place it in a spectator’s hand. With other methods, the spectator can take the deck from your hand, arguably adding additional fairness to the proceedings.

As to the matchbox effect, which I’m equally fond of, the DVD teaches you how to construct a matchbox of your own. This is useful, since matchboxes wear quickly, and the one supplied features text entirely in Spanish, which might be suspicious here in the US. The matchbox should sustain examination, and is gaffed only so that it will work with Anima without any change to the anchoring device. When it’s set up, Anima and the matchbox sit together in your pocket and they’re ready to go.

The DVD shows several performances of both effects by Michel, the developer of Anima. He’s an animated, casual performer, and in that context, the necessary moves are well covered. More sedate or deliberate performers will have to find their own way, but I suspect they’re used to that. The thread does flash a couple of times during one performance, but I suppose that’s more instructive than a perfect performance.

In spite of these considerations, I’m still planning on trying this out, assuming I can replace and shorten the thread. While I’m at it, I might just install the reel in a smaller remote, too. That’s a

fair bit of craft work, but both effects are very strong, and Anima does make it more likely that I’ll perform them. Whether Anima is worth the rather hefty price to you is up to you.

VANISHING PEN TRICK By SANSMINDS

*Available from: www.SansMinds.com
Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies
Price \$30.00*

REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



Will Tsai is the host and performer on this DVD from SansMinds. A ballpoint pen is suspended from a paper napkin folded in half so that the point and end are in view. The performer shows his hands empty and suddenly claps them together crushing the napkin into a ball. The pen is gone; it can be reproduced from your pocket or other location that you determine. The effect is a quickie and may be best used when added to a routine that already uses a pen.

The DVD is very well produced and everything is crystal clear. Included with the DVD are a regular pen and the matching gimmicked pen. The nicely made gimmicked pen will actually write and the cap on the end is real, but the body of the pen is gimmicked. Will shows another handling in which the pen can be examined by the spectator and then vanishes as before. This will require a little more work on your part.

It’s a short effect and so I’ll keep the review short as well. If I needed to make a pen vanish I would be happy using this method. The effect is a bit pricey, and I don’t need to make a pen vanish as described above, so I think I will pass.

SHOW BIZ CARD PROMOTIONAL ITEM By GUY BAVLI

*Available from: www.pro-magic.com
Price \$20.00*

REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



Famed mentalist Guy Bavli made a brief stop in Hawaii on his way to a cruise ship engagement and surprised us with a selection from the extensive line of magical products he produces and sells through his company, Pro-Magic. He allowed me to review one of those products for our readers, so let me tell you about Show Biz Card.

Simply put, Guy has figured out how to use the flip book animation seen in Dan Harlan’s Card-Toon (and in children’s textbooks everywhere) to give away your business card. It’s also a good way to give away sales literature or your client’s business card. So if you have a business card or if you work trade shows, you could use this. If, on the other

hand, you have no desire to be noticed or remembered, don't get this, because "noticed" and "remembered" is what this item is all about.

Let's say you want to get your business card into a likely prospect's hands. You ask Ms. Prospect to pick a card, assuming you have already been introduced as a magician. (Otherwise, this is a sorry way to approach people.) The chosen card is placed aside and a stack of your business cards is introduced. These cards are held together at one short end by a binder clip. There is full color artwork on the backs of the cards that shows a pair of gloved magician's hands. The clip allows the cards to be flipped through, as in the trick Card-Toon, and the hands appear to animate. They produce a deck of cards, fan it, and remove one card, which they turn around, revealing it to be the "freely chosen" card. This last card, being the only one with the selection showing, is given to your prospect with your contact information on the back.

You are supplied with the stack of business-card-sized cards that does the animation. Assuming your business card is of normal size, all you need do is affix a specially printed label (showing the last frame of the animation) to the back of your business card and add that card to the bottom of the stack. Guy supplies a large number of these labels (which show three different cards) with the set, and refills are available.

Of course, you will have to force a card, and Guy's instructions along these lines are quite good. The artwork is attractive and professionally done. It does show a traditional top-hat-and tails sort of magician, so this product would be better suited to your conventional family entertainers than, say, your Criss Angels.

Bottom line: it's fun, practical, and audiences are likely to find the flip book animation much more interesting than magicians do. More important, the effect is quick. Too many of the effects usually suggested for giving away your card take too long, and end up not being used. You can see the artwork in action at www.pro-magic.com. If this fits your style, it's well worth checking out.

UNWRITTEN TRICK By LYNDON JUGALBOT

Available from: www.sansminds.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$30.00

REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



This effect is over in a second or two. A deck of cards is dropped into the hands of a spectator and a written message appears written on one of the long sides of the pack (as in Paul Gertner's Unshuffled). The appearance of the writing is instantaneous and looks great.

The message could be the name of a card, a personal message to the spectator (Happy Birthday), or anything that fits your style and your venue. The

effect is the creation of Lyndon Jugalbot and the host and presenter on the DVD is Will Tsai.

This DVD plus gimmick (available in red or blue Bicycle stock), allows you to perform the effect with almost no moves or sleights. Will shows several methods to clean up after the performance for different skill levels.

The camera work, audio, and disc navigation are very well

done. Even if you are a beginner, they show you everything that you will need to know to perform the effect. More experienced performers will have their own ideas and methods to do what needs to be done. If the gimmick breaks, they show you how to make another one (refills are also available). Once the writing has appeared, the deck can be handed out and even left with the spectator if desired.

This would look great if performed on TV, and the next time I am on, I may just present this. The deck can be used to do a simple trick before you go into Unwritten, but since the deck ends up with writing all over it, you will need to carry another deck if you plan to do more card magic. There was no discussion on switching decks or audience management to prevent the writing from being seen prematurely (though the angles are actually pretty good) and that is something I would have liked to have seen addressed.

I always have to consider the effect-to-hassle ratio when choosing new material. The effect here is very strong, but carrying an extra deck in a strolling situation for a two-second effect is more than I can bear. I can see this being used in a parlor show (or on TV), with great results and I will recommend Unwritten for those occasions.

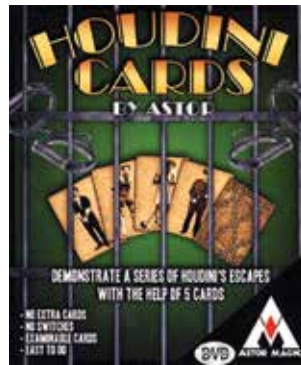
HOUDINI CARDS TRICK By ASTOR

Available from: www.astormagic.com

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$24.99

REVIEW BY PAYNE



Astor's Houdini Cards is a packet trick well within the technical grasp of even novice magicians; the only sleights required to perform this effect are a double lift and the Flushration count. This is good, because those new to the world of magic will most likely be the only ones who will be interested in this trick.

My mother always told me that "if you haven't anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." However

since I am required to say something about this trick I am going to have to disregard my dear mum's advice. But I suppose I could acquiesce to her bidding for a moment by beginning this review by saying something positive.

The cards are nice. There are five of them. Three of them show Houdini in various types of attire as well as restraint. One features him in tuxedo and handcuffs. The second shows him in a bathing costume and chains. The third shows him in trunks and even more chains. Two cards featuring identical policemen round off the set of five cards. All of the cards are done in sepia tones and feature a tasteful diamond pattern back design made up of chains. I found the cards to be a little sticky, which helped with the double lifts but was something of a hindrance for the all important Flushration count.

Unfortunately, the quality of the cards is about the only thing going for this effect. It has often been said that there is no such thing as a bad trick. Perhaps this is true, but Houdini Cards will certainly go far in making you reassess the validity of this saying. To me it seems to be a trick that one might expect to find in a beginner's magic kit than the type of routine one would see in a

worker's repertoire. The routine that is provided and explained on the well-produced instructional DVD is deeply flawed. The basic effect is this. The three Houdini cards are placed in a row face-up on your close-up mat. One at a time these cards are placed between the two policeman cards. Each time, however, the Houdini card manages to escape. When I say escape, it doesn't mean that the card has vanished from between the two policeman cards only to appear triumphant in an unlikely and impossible location. No, in this case "escape" means that the Houdini card rises to the top of the three-card packet. So basically what you have here is an Ambitious Card routine done with only three cards, which in and of itself is possibly not a bad effect. The problem with this routine is that each segment of the three phases is done three times. Even though a three-phase routine is perhaps the strongest sort of routine theatrically, in this case doing each segment of the routine three times works against it.

There is an old adage, a superstition really, that it is bad luck to light three cigarettes with the same match. This belief is thought to have arisen in the trenches of World War I. The light from the match used to light the first cigarette would garner the attention of a sniper. Lighting the second cigarette would allow him to zero in on his target. The third cigarette would allow him to achieve his ultimate task. With Houdini Cards, the first escape takes the spectator by surprise. The second time you perform the exact same sequence the spectator is allowed to form a theory as to how the previous escape was accomplished. The third repeat of the same sequence of moves verifies the spectator's theory.

The effect would have been much stronger and possibly more entertaining if a single Houdini card managed to escape the clutches of the two policeman cards three times, something a clever and skilled card worker no doubt could figure out how to accomplish with the provided cards. There is possibly a good routine in here somewhere. It's just not the one provided with the trick.

Here are the details. What you receive for your \$24.99 are the five cards, a traditional plastic packet card wallet, and the well-produced and clearly laid out instructional DVD. The instructions only lead one through the moves and sequences. No script or presentational tips are provided. So you're on your own to come up with a reason as to why there are three different Houdinis used in the routine. Reset is instantaneous and can be done in full view of the audience. The cards are also completely examinable. Not that I think anyone will ask to examine them, because they most likely have already figured out how the trick is accomplished through the repetitive phases.

MOONSHINE POKER PLAYING CARDS
NY LLOYD THOMAS BARNES

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$7.50

REVIEW BY W.S. DUNCAN

I usually hate it when we receive decks of playing cards for review, but this new pack, designed by UK-based Lloyd



Thomas Barnes, got my attention in a good way. There is a substantial desire for new/cool/different playing cards in the extreme card manipulation and street magic markets, but there is little to review about a pack of cards. Most are manufactured by U. S. Playing Card Co., so the quality is well known. Custom packs tend to be on good

stock and the small runs seem to receive better than average (if average is Costco Rider Backs) attention to quality control. So it usually comes down to "Do you like the looks of them? Then you should buy them."

Not so much with this pack. There are actual reasons why you might shell out the \$7.50 a deck asking price for these cards. First, they're the usual small batch quality USPC has been cranking out for several years, so you're not getting crappy cards with a clever back design. These are good cards and will slip right into a standard Rider Back red or blue Bicycle deck. And that to me is the real test that a pack must pass to pique my interest. If the cards can't stand in for the normal cards I handle, they are of limited use to me. With the exception of the Jokers and Ace of Spades, the faces of these cards match a regular pack well enough that when I mixed a few into a red Bicycle pack I couldn't easily locate them with the cards spread face up. There are a couple of extra cards in the pack and two Jokers, which could be used to make double backers if you have card splitting skills. And they have crisp white borders which make reversed cards less noticeable in the pack.

From the backs, it's another story. These cards stand out like a sore thumb. They are a golden, sepia tone, with a simple design that is attractive and not overly complex. That's an extra bonus if you're putting together a packet trick or Rainbow Deck, because mixing different patterns in standard red and blue doesn't provide the visual contrast such effects really need. Finding a pack that offers a third color and a different back pattern is a win/win for folks who perform those sorts of effects. Time to break out the Derek Dingle book and learn Triple Color Changing All Backs Aces...

The name "Moonshine" has connotations of cheap backwoods whiskey here in the States, but these cards are elegant; more moonlight and candles than stills and sour mash. If you collect playing cards, add these to your collection. The price is reasonable and they are nice looking, and different enough to be eye catching. If you're looking for something to provide contrast in an effect that you love, you might want to stock up on a few packs. These are a good value and I recommend them. ♦

If you wish to have your product reviewed, please send it to:

Bill Duncan P.O. Box 50562 Bellevue, WA 98015-0562

PARANORMAL HAPPENINGS

BY CHARLES SIEBERT, MD



Since this is the January issue of 2014, I thought I would take the opportunity to recap some of my favorite paranormal headlines of 2013. So here we go.

Ohio man sees Jesus in bird poop: A man and his son were leaving a McDonald's drive-through in Brooklyn, Ohio, in February when a bird did a flyby of their windshield and made a deposit. The two noticed something about the dropping – it looked like Jesus. “It’s like a perfect portrait. It’s like Jesus staring right at me.” The car was stored in a neighbor’s garage and the owner, believing it was a sign, was going to donate the windshield to raise money for charity.



Chinese woman stuck in an alleyway for seven hours. No one helps because they thought she was a ghost: In July, a Chinese woman from the Anhui Province took a shortcut while out for a walk and found a passage between two buildings. As she made her way through, the gap between the walls became narrower and narrower to the point where she couldn’t continue forward or turn around. Residents on the other side of the wall heard her screams, but assumed they were coming from a ghost, so they did nothing. A passerby on the street also heard the screams and realized they were not coming from the beyond and called the fire department. The fire department broke through the wall, releasing the greatly embarrassed woman.

Psychic didn’t see \$11,000 fraud lawsuit coming: In July, a North Hollywood psychic was hit with a lawsuit for

failing to lift a curse from her client. A female client paid \$11,000 to the psychic to mend her relationship with her boyfriend. Some of the outrageous costs included \$1,400 in gift cards and \$5,020 for the commissioning of a painting of the boyfriend that would help lift the curse.

Ghost hunters really running meth lab: In August, three North Carolina men were found suspiciously wandering in the woods. When questioned by sheriff’s deputies, they claimed they were ghost hunting because they had heard there was “paranormal activity” and that the woods were haunted. When brought in to the sheriff’s department and further questioned, they admitted that they were in the woods cooking meth; they didn’t want to do it indoors because they thought it might explode. When the cook failed, they argued, split up in the woods, and got lost. The three men were arrested and charged with manufacturing methamphetamine and possession of methamphetamine precursor chemicals.

Ghost hunters haunted by new terror – competition: Once the realm of the strange guy on the block who believed in ghosts, armed with his flashlight covered in red cellophane and his Polaroid camera, now ghost hunters are becoming TV stars, corporate speakers, and even sex symbols. Yes, you read that right. One Discovery Channel paranormal investigator was contacted by women who thought there was something “hot” about a man tangling with the supernatural. Ghost-hunting teams are chasing television gigs more than ghosts. The stars of some paranormal shows feud over whose show is real or fake. Local ghost-hunting teams refuse to work together because they see each other as business rivals. Some teams refuse to share spooky “evidence” captured on film because they plan to use it as a demo tape for a potential television pilot or a Hollywood movie. A national online database of paranormal investigation teams lists 4,413 ghost-hunting teams with two hundred more waiting to be added. Thanks to the glut of TV shows and movies like *The Conjuring*, paranormal investigators say they have never been busier. Unfortunately, due to the rules of supply and demand, there just aren’t enough ghosts to go around.

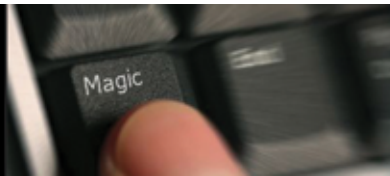
Actor Gary Busey claims a ghost once flew out of his soup: “Oh, yeah, I’ve

seen ghosts. I’ve seen them. There are mischievous ghosts; there are good ghosts; and there are ghosts who play tricks on you,” he told *TMZ* in October. But it didn’t end there. “I had a ghost one time come out of a big plate of soup I had – big bowl of soup. It was called a soup ghost,” he continued. “And it was a good-looking ghost because it was covered in vegetables. That’s my kind of ghost – one that looks like one you could eat it. When you can eat a ghost you’re doin’ good; you’ll be able to fly and sometimes you go invisible when you don’t even know it is coming.”

NYC psychic gets prison in six-figure scam case: A New York City psychic was convicted and sentenced in November to five-to-fifteen years in prison for defrauding tens of thousands of dollars from clients. One client testified to paying over \$120,000 to help rout negative energy. Another was told that in a prior life she was an Egyptian princess and her troubles stemmed from being too tied to money back then. She was convinced to write a \$27,000 check to the psychic.

Psychic under fire for wrongly predicting Ohio abductee’s death: What I would consider as the top epic fail of 2013 has to be the story of world’s most recognizable self-proclaimed psychic Sylvia Browne (who died November 20, 2013) and her miscall on a 2004 episode of the Montel Williams television show. When asked by Louwanna Miller, Amanda Berry’s mother, about the kidnapping of her daughter, Sylvia Browne unequivocally stated that: “She’s not alive, honey; your daughter’s not the kind who wouldn’t call.” Ms. Miller died a little over a year later from heart failure. Amanda Berry was found alive on May 6, 2013, along with two other women. Sylvia Browne, after a prolonged period of silence, finally stated, “If ever there was a time to be grateful and relieved for being mistaken, this is that time. Only God is right all the time.” This latest publicly revealed mistake has caused many of her huge fan base to doubt her self-proclaimed powers.

Well, these are some of my favorites for the year; believe me, there were plenty to choose from! We can only hope that 2014 brings more rational thinking, but the spirits may say otherwise. Have a great and prosperous New Year! ♦



Plaster the Walls with Posters

There is something about a magic poster that gets you all excited. Is it the colors, the wording, or simply the design? Whatever it is, magicians love to decorate their houses with them (much to the dismay of their spouses). Magic posters can also get a bit expensive. Fear not, the tech world has a solution.

The website www.freevintageposters.com has a multitude of copyright-free posters for you to download; do whatever you wish with them. Just click on the "CIRCUS" button to drool over posters from Houdini, Thurston, Newmann, Kellar, Neff, Alexander, and Herrmann, to name a few.

These high quality files can be downloaded and printed out on your home printer, or take them to the nearest office supply superstore for large sheet printouts. Use them not only to decorate your house, but also your tables, stage, etc. Along with the magic posters, this website has a variety of poster subjects including films, circus, western, and travel.

Our Next Speaker



This column has spent a lot of space telling you about the perfect speaker for your performances. As technology improves, we have more choices and features. Recently I witnessed a demonstration of a speaker that

would probably fit the bill for most performing magicians.

The Beats Pill is about the size of a mini-salami but packs a lot of power. It is small enough to use for a birthday party or close-up session. It is Bluetooth capable, which means that you can wirelessly send your music from your smart phone or tablet to the speaker.

The Beats Pill has an auxiliary input to attach non-Bluetooth or wired devices. Here's the best part: it also has an output jack that allows you to plug the Pill into any speaker or sound system, turning that sound system into a Bluetooth-capable system. Now you can stand on stage and control your music wirelessly using the theater's soundboard and speakers. **Beats Pills** come in a few colors, but I like the black one; you can paint the ends with white tips creating a cool magic wand. **Beats Pills** are available online at Amazon, or in person at the Apple Store, Walmart, and Target. They sell for \$199.

Mary Poppins Would Be Proud

The late Bob Read had a wonderful routine using a wallet that expanded into a bag. These wallets have not been made in years, but now they are back. Google "Mini Magic Bag Expandable Wallet Tote Bag" and you will find many places that carry it, including www.onlythebestgifts.com.



Based on Bob Read's prop, I used to perform the following routine when I worked on cruise ships:

A card was selected and I failed to find the card. Explaining that it jumped to my pocket, I pulled out another wrong card. Remembering where my prediction is, I opened my jacket and showed that I had lots of cards pinned to the lining of my jacket. Nine cards on each side. All wrong. I took off the jacket and removed my shirt. My undershirt had a giant card painted on it. Also wrong. I then remembered that the card travelled to my wallet. I took out the wallet and pulled cards out of the pockets. All wrong. I turned the wallet into a bag while saying, "I have lots more in here!" After pulling handfuls of cards out of the bag, I finally pulled out a bunched up giant card silk to wipe my brow in frustration. I apologized for not finding the card and showed the giant card, which was correct. Not noticing, I folded up the giant card and walked off the stage.

I got six minutes out of this wallet, which packed small and played big. I noticed some of these on eBay and all over the net. They are priced at \$5-\$8.

M-U-M's High Tech Bonuses



All members of the S.A.M. are entitled to the online version of *M-U-M*. Many have noticed that we are evolving some new tech features. Film clips and demos of magic are now available whenever you see the special movie symbol. Advertisers will

start showing film clips and audio in their advertising. There are some hidden eggs throughout so you may be surprised if you click around. An example would be to click on MI Dal Sanders's photo in his President's Column and see what happens.

Understand that all these bonuses only happen when you read the online edition. They will not work with the downloaded one. At least not yet. We are working on that for the near future. In the meantime, go to www.magicsam.com and sign in as a member on the top right. Once you are signed in to the Members Home area, look on the left and click on *M-U-M* Magazine. Pick the year you wish to view and click on the cover you wish to have open up. Enjoy! ♦

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

TREASURES FROM THE SALON DE MAGIE

BY KEN KLOSTERMAN



WILLIAM WOOD



A new year of Treasures from the Salon de Magie begins with a heads-up that we will feature not only rare and unusual equipment and effects, but also selected posters and other images to delight readers. Such is the case with this month's offering, a poster: Wood's Great Sensation, Edna.

Edna was one of several levitations invented and patented by William B. Wood, who was a performer noted both for his magic and his abilities as a multi-lingual ventriloquist. The

illusion was named for Wood's wife. Wearing only light-colored tights and a dancer's short overdress, sometimes with butterfly wings between her arms and torso, she became the "Original and Only Human Being Who Walks in the Air. She ascends imaginary stairs, runs forward and backwards, walks with feet up and head down, floats, sails, and turns somersaults in the air with the greatest of ease." All of this without having to lie on a couch at the beginning, or being covered with a cloth. And a hoop could be passed over her at any time to show that no wires were holding her aloft.

Wood introduced the Edna illusion in 1888, and patented it early the next year. Kellar added a copy of it called "Astarte" to his show, which he presented at his second Egyptian Hall theater in Philadelphia. Dot Robinson – who became Suee Seen when her husband William Robinson took the persona of Chung Ling Soo – was the girl in the air. The Robinsons left Kellar; the Woods replaced them the next season, and with the real-life Edna literally in harness, they became a major feature.

Wood and Edna, playing sometimes as Edna and Company, had a great deal of success in South America in the late 1890s and early 1900s. But in 1907, in a storm in the Gulf of Mexico, their show was lost and Wood and his adult daughter drowned, although Edna survived. The circumstances certainly involved negligence and perhaps even murder, for \$14,000 in cash also disappeared.

David Price outlines Wood's career and death in *Magic, A Pictorial History*. Additional revealing information about this unusual man is in an article by Richard Hatch that accompanies a Wood ventriloquist lithograph in the July 2006 issue of *M-U-M*.



After more than a hundred years, the illusion was recreated for attendees at the Los Angeles Conference on Magic History last November. Craftsman, collector, and magic historian John Gaughan built the levitation; it was just as startling then as it was to audiences in previous centuries. A young lady, clad in much the same style as the original Edna, stood on stage and then began a conversation with a crescent-shaped man-in-the-moon on the back stage wall. Expressing her desire to float like the moon, she rose in the air and sat on the crescent shaped moon.

Now, obviously enjoying the sensation, she floated away from the moon, floated up and down, walked up an invisible wall, across an invisible ceiling with her feet up and her head down. She continued down the other side until she stood once again on stage.

During the performance she not only floated up and down, but turned in complete 360-degree circles horizontally. Gaughan passed a silver hoop over her floating form, and then she herself passed the hoop over her body twice from top to bottom and bottom to top. Finally, she turned upright, floated down to the stage once more and stepped forward. It was startling and produced a standing ovation.

The "Wood's Great Sensation Edna" shown here came from the collection of John Henry Grossman, whose column "Ask the Doctor" ran for decades in *M-U-M*. It was printed by the Donaldson Litho Co. of Newport, Kentucky. The accompanying photo shows Dot Robinson performing it on the Kellar show. ♦

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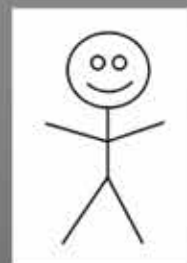
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THE DEAN'S DIARY

BY GEORGE SCHINDLER



Two Deans

How many magicians ever gave thought to producing an Armadillo? I know of only one: Parker Swan. He said, "You might be able to produce two, because it already has a shell." One the funniest men in magic, and an old, old friend, Parker died in November 2013, leaving us a long legacy of laughter with which to remember him.

Along with his wife (who was also funny), the Parker Swan and Claire act provided us with out-of-the-box insight on magic at conventions, such as "Prunes of all Nations" and the memorable "Fruits We Have Worked With." All were performed with great costuming, comical lines, and good "almost" magic. None of his audiences will ever forget the "Signed Card in Watermelon." The spectator was given a small pocket knife with which to cut into the melon. Parker privately confided to me, "It was supposed to be the card in the peanut, but someone accidentally ate the prop."

His satire on the Miser's Dream was a classic, with coins falling from droppers and elsewhere, culminating in, finally, the production of a single coin. His satire dove act used only rubber doves. He loved working in the theater and at one show stopped the act to take a picture of his audience and "this beautiful theater." Parker's hilarious lecture before the 2005 convention gave the whole country valuable tips on "How to Speak Boston."

Parker Swan performed throughout New England, at Boy Scout shows and church "bean suppers," with standard but funny magic. He closed his family shows with his invention, the Parker Swan Doll House. He would build this in front of the audience; after showing it empty, he produced all sorts of silks and other larger items. He sold the manufacturing rights to a dealer who has never paid the royalties promised.

I first saw his lecture in New York. Everyone got free notes – nothing written, just a few sheets of musical notes, "including the sharps and flats!" His memorable "book test" allowed the spectator to choose and remove any one of the five possible books from his table, which was easy since four of them were firmly nailed down. He wanted us to see his vacations, but not having a projector he handed out a dozen single slides to be passed around the room. He taught us his most famous secret: all the details on "How to

Force a Watermelon." Claire actually grew the watermelons and was the lady who glued the seeds to the playing cards.

Parker and I shared the privilege of having the experience of working behind the counter as magic demonstrators at Max Holden's Magic Shops. Parker worked for Herman Hansen from 1942 to 1946 and I worked in New York from 1949 to 1950. We did not meet until many years later at a midyear meeting of the S.A.M. Parker was the first to lobby for a Houdini stamp, he coordinated travel to conventions, and he was a Regional Vice President in New England. Parker was Assembly 16 Magician of the Year in 1952 and was their Dean. He was a collector and lectured for the New England Magic Collectors.

The most fun we had together was at lunch in Las Vegas; Parker set off to the men's room at the Palace Station and came back to the table with a handful of silver dollars he had just won at a slot machine. Nina and Claire were looking for ideas of what to do with the winnings. At dinner at the Riviera, it was decided to start our campaign to run Father Cyprian for Pope. ♦

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