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Cover Photo by John Juritech

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The fellow eating fire for your entertainment pleasure (and kids, don’t try this at home) on the cover of this month’s M-U-M is Keith Stickley. I first met Keith some years ago at a gathering of the Gary Darwin magic club in Las Vegas. We both subsequently moved from Vegas, so I haven’t seen Keith in a while. I knew that he performed around the world and that he was currently working on a law degree, but what I didn't know about was his avid interest in a vintage form of entertainment called the spook show. As you'll read in the cover story by Doc Dixon, Keith has expended considerable time, energy, and money to recreate an authentic spook show experience.


At the national council meeting in Las Vegas, the council unanimously elected Joshua Jay as our newest S.A.M. Ambassador of Magic. (Ambassadors are tasked with spreading the word about the S.A.M. to others around the world. Our other ambassadors are David Copperfield, Lance Burton, and Brad Jacobs.) Congratulations Joshua! The S.A.M. is proud to have you as an ambassador and we are confident that you will do an outstanding job.

Producer John Apperson has announced that former magic dealer Al Cohen will be the honoree at the Society of American Magicians annual convention, July 3-6, 2013. Al has the reputation of having been the best and most honest magic demonstrator in the country. He closed Al’s Magic Shop in 2004. The Washington, DC, convention will be held at the Marriott Hotel Crystal Gateway in Arlington, Virginia.

From Technical Chairman Bruce Kalver comes this important information: “When the S.A.M. switched over to the new website, all of your previous passwords were supposed to move over. Unfortunately, that didn’t happen. We now have a problem with members trying to get on and their password is not working. We do not know which ones are not working. We have a fix but we can’t help you unless you write to us and tell us that your password doesn’t work. Email your full name as it appears on your membership card and we will do the fix and write back to you. Send your request for help to me at SAMtalkBruce@cox.net and use PASSWORD PROBLEM in the subject line. Remember that we need your name as it appears on your card.”

Also on the S.A.M. website (www.magicsam.com) is a section with blogs written by experts in many different areas of magic. You’ll find posts by PNP Bruce Kalver on tech tricks, David Kaye (Silly Billy) on kids’ magic, and George Saterial on stage magic. The best part of the blogs is that they are interactive. You can comment, discuss, ask questions, and share with both the original writers of the articles and with all S.A.M. competitors. Be sure to check the site often for the latest posts and comments.

The Whittier Museum and the Society of American Magicians are currently presenting “Behind the Smoke and Mirrors.” The exhibit, which explores the history of magic and illusion, opened in September in Whittier, California. The collection includes illusions, props, costumes, posters, and photographs selected from the archives of The Society of American Magicians Magic Hall of Fame and Museum. The exhibit will continue until July of 2013. For more information go to www.whittiermuseum.org or call 562-945-3871.

My old friend Max Maven wrote to point out an error in the September “Treasures from the Salon Magie” column. Near the end of that column, a reference is made to Bernard “Ackero” Whitman. Bernie Whitman, a high school teacher by profession, did an elaborate Chinese act as a semi-pro, but he used the stage name “Fu Ling.” “Ackero” was Louis Ackerman, who was also from Massachusetts. He also did a Chinese act.

At the end of August, Lisa, Ava, and I drove up near Haliburton, Ontario, to spend a few days at the Sorcerers Safari magic camp. (Mike Segal, founder of the camp, was the subject of our May cover story.) I wasn’t exactly sure what to expect, but at the end of our three-day visit, I was blown away by the experience. Campers had the opportunity to interact with three FISM champions (Soma, Shawn Farquhar, and Greg Frewin), who were part of a talented staff that included Lee Asher, Aaron Fisher, Ben Train, Eric Leclerc, Johnny Toronto, and Nathan Kranzo. I can’t wait to go back next year. *
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LAS VEGAS

Now that we have made it to the convention issue of *M-U-M*, let me again say, “Wow! What a convention!” The lectures, the shows, the dealers, and the fellowship were outstanding. Those who attended can use this issue to reminisce. Those who were unable to attend can get an idea of what they missed.

Either way, I encourage all compeers to mark your calendars and plan to attend our 2013 convention in Arlington, Virginia (just outside Washington, D.C.). The committee is already hard at work planning another week of incredible shows, lectures, and other events. Save money by registering early.

CONVENTION DEALERS

You will find ads in this issue for the dealers from our Las Vegas convention. Please contact them and thank them for supporting the S.A.M. While you are at it, mention their ad in *M-U-M*. Telling our advertisers that you saw their ad helps to ensure future ads. This helps to support the S.A.M. and *M-U-M*, and keeps you informed about new products as they are released.

ABBOTT’S GET-TOGETHER

The week following the S.A.M. convention in Las Vegas, I travelled to Colon, Michigan, for the seventy-fifth annual Get-Together. During the Get-Together, I had the opportunity to talk to many magicians about the many benefits of S.A.M. membership, including the quality of our conventions and our magazine. I also had the opportunity to represent the S.A.M. by recognizing people and events.

I presented a Presidential Certificate of Recognition to Abbott’s Magic for reaching the milestone of seventy-five consecutive Get-Togethers. Past I.B.M. President June Horowitz presented a similar certificate on behalf of the I.B.M.

I presented two Presidential Citations to outstanding compeers as well. The first was to Adele Friell Rhindress, assistant to Harry Blackstone Sr., for helping to preserve the history of magic in her book, *Memoirs of an Elusive Moth*. The second was to legendary magician Eugene Burger in recognition of his life-long mission to help other magicians elevate and advance their art.

WEEKEND OF WONDER

As soon as we arrived home from Abbott’s, we began packing for the Weekend of Wonder in Warwick, Rhode Island. This was an incredible event for all involved. All the mentors involved (PNP Jann Goodsell, PNP Bruce Kalver, PNP George Schindler, PNP Ed Thomas, PNP Rich Dooley, National Treasurer Eric Lampert, UK Deputy Mandy Davis, Connecticut Deputy Dana Ring, Margaret Steele, and David Oliver, in addition to my wife and myself) donated their time and talents to pass on the traditions and techniques of magic to young people.

This type of dedication to the art and to our youth creates its own kind of magic. I think I speak for my fellow mentors as well as myself when I say that the looks of excitement, amazement, and appreciation in the faces of our young participants and their parents constituted payment in full for our time and efforts. This was a textbook example of what can happen when people choose to Get Involved and Pass It On!

MAGIC WEEK

Don’t forget to send a note to Magic Week Chair Jeff Sikora (jqmagic@cox.net) to let him know what your assembly is doing (or has done) in the spirit of National Magic Week. Remember that Magic Week is simply the time we celebrate a year of charitable work and donations of our time and talent. Take a few moments to brag about the ways that you and your assembly get involved, and Jeff will pass it on to compeers around the world.

NATIONAL COUNCIL IN INDIANAPOLIS

On November 10, the national council will have its fall meeting at the Marriott Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. Meetings are open to all compeers. If you have never attended a council meeting, I encourage you to check it out. The number of programs, committees, and people who are working to improve the S.A.M. and its offerings for you is staggering.

Not from the Midwest, or can’t make it that weekend? You can also stay up to date on the activities and programs of the S.A.M. by reading the Blue Book (the book of committee reports – now a downloadable PDF file rather than an actual book). You can find a copy on the S.A.M. website. (Just sign in, go to the member’s home page, and click the “Downloads” link.) You can also read the minutes of all our meetings right here in *M-U-M*.

ECHOES OF THE PAST

The following is from PNP J. Gary Bontjes’s report on Abbott’s in his November 1971 “The Prez Sez” column in *M-U-M*. “We saw some terrific shows and met lots of magicians who wanted to know more about the S.A.M. We personally talked to more than one hundred magicians, each of whom received a free copy of *M-U-M* with an S.A.M. application inside. A few were signed up
on the spot and others indicated a definite interest.”

This passage stands out to me because of the effort involved in spreading the word about the S.A.M., and also because of its continued relevance. The S.A.M. continues today because compeers spread the word to other magicians. Not all of them will sign up immediately, but sharing information about the S.A.M. can only help our Society to grow.

Spreading the word is easier than ever. Our website contains a great deal of information about the S.A.M., its history, and its benefits. Applications and a sample copy of M-U-M are available for download.

Tell every magician you meet about the S.A.M. Point them toward our website, a copy of the magazine, and an application. Help them to grow in magic and help the S.A.M. to grow. In other words – Get Involved, and Pass It On!

Photos by David Linsell

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WAREHOUSE SALE!

Every couple of years, we throw a “little” convention here in Las Vegas. And when we do, we create special promotional items. After the convention, we offer whatever stock we still have for sale. Here are a couple of great items to add to your gift list from MAGIC Live 2009 and 2011.

**MAGIC Magazine Padfolio (2011)**

Our bonded-leather padfolio is one of the nicest pieces ever! It measures just over 10 x 13 inches, and is zippered all the way around. Inside you’ll find another zippered pocket, plus sleeves for papers and business cards. And it comes with a letter-size pad and a MAGIC Magazine pen. This padfolio has the MAGIC logo “debossed” in black, as well as MAGIC Live! laser engraved on the metal tab.

**MAGIC Magazine Mouse Pad**

No compartments, no pens, no straps, no staples to remove — just a cool 7- x 9-inch pad for your mouse!

**MAGIC Magazine Messenger Bag (2009)**

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BOYSTOWN MAGIC WEEK
AND A BONUS

OMAHA, NE—Although this is not the time period generally devoted to Magic Week, the Omaha Magical Society had its annual picnic at Boystown, Nebraska, and donated a buffet-picnic at “Hogwarts Hall” (otherwise known as the Great Hall). First came the scrumptious buffet; the expert cooks came up with the side dishes and desserts to accompany the provided chicken. Jeff Sikora introduced the performers: himself, Dean Walter Graham, Neil Bable, Joe “Magic,” and Pete (the near) Great Petrashek. As good as the performers were, one would be easily impressed by the manners of the Boystown residents. After the show they were treated to a first-time “cotton candy levitation.” (You heard it here first.) It was fun to watch the product sailing through the air. I don’t know how the lucky audience is selected, but the crew at Boystown is certainly doing some magic with these young people. I’m sure all look forward to Magic Week at Boystown.

As a bonus this month, we also had a lecture by Cody Fisher from Austin, Texas. He impressed us as a very personable and talented performer and the 2½ hours flew by as if only thirty minutes. His presentation included his restaurant opener, the slip force (including the Mercury Card Fold), the pen through a $50 bill, his Rat Trap gimmick, Birthday Card trick, and how to cheat at cards. Each one of these effects was laced with entertaining comments that kept the audience’s attention. (And if you started to “toll off,” the Rat Trap brought you back in.)

After intermission (I finally won a door prize!) he demonstrated a variation of Dai Vernon’s Twisting the Aces. He finished the lecture with the Champagne Prediction (producing a signed card in a glass) and finally the Tossed Out Deck, offering his own little twist. Although the evening started with my wondering who he was, when he finished I wondered why we haven’t heard more from him. The audience showed their approval with the appropriate applause at the end.

—Jerry Golmanavich

We meet at the Southwest Church of Christ near 124th St. and West Center Road—right across from Hooters. Contact jerry_golmanavich@cox.net (402) 390-9834 ohamamagicalsociety.com for more details.

DIAMOND JIM TYLER LECTURE

CINCINNATI, OH—Leland Pennington opened the meeting by commenting that this was the ninetieth year for Assembly 11 (Queen City Mystics). Our original charter was signed by and presented to our assembly by Houdini when he appeared in Cincinnati over ninety years ago. Don Hinton also discussed the upcoming magic show on September 21, at 7:30 p.m. celebrating our ninety years of magic. The show will be emceed by Artie Kidwell and have the following performers: Don Hinton, Denny Metz, Leland Pennington, Bill Pryor, and Patrick Thernes.

The lecturer for the evening was Diamond Jim Tyler—a clever and entertaining Texan from Dallas. His first effect was Dia Monte. This was a Three-card Monte trick using Jokers and a Queen. The spectator was shown the cards face up and asked to locate the queen when they were turned over. On each occasion the card was a Joker. In the final iteration, all three cards were Jokers and were handed out. Jim then demonstrated how to keep the liquid in a Red Bull container when it was turned upside down and how to use a simple gimmick to demonstrate anti-gravity using a bottle of water turned upside down. His magnetic half dollars trick was done by using some simple moves as well as using credit cards. He demonstrated his coin through cup (with helper Nicholas Steins) using his muscle pass.

Diamond Jim then presented his haunted/animated card box routine that was truly magical. It moves, spins, opens, and stands up! Spellbound was just that spellbinding. A black stone turns clear and then back to black and then clear again. It is then examined by the spectator. His ring on a string (with helper Nicholas Steins) using his muscle pass.

—John Martini

Queen City Mystics, SAM Assembly 11 generally meets on the 2nd Friday of the month at Haines House of Cards in Cincinnati, Ohio.

MENTALIS M PANEL

DALLAS, TX—President Mark Jensen called the meeting to order, welcoming everyone to Wizards Sports Cafe. Mark began with a book report, highlighting the new Definitive Sankey three-volume set published by Vanishing Inc. The books contain over five hundred of Sankey’s effects and include essays from Sankey’s book Beyond Secrets. Included in the third volume is a DVD demonstrating some of the editors’ favorite effects. Overall, the set is very well done, with something in it for every type of magician.

Dr. Mike Smith also did a brief report on a recent article in Genii magazine, titled “Pick a Card, Not Any Card” by Jay Olson. The article details the psychological mechanisms behind the selection of a card by a spectator. Mike also reported on the comic book series Smoke and Mirrors by IDW publishing, available in both paper and digital formats.

After a short break, Geoff Grimes performed a series of mind-reading effects with playing cards and the assistance of Cinde Sanders. Geoff first asked Cinde to cut a deck of cards and, without looking at the deck, to take the top card and reverse it within the deck. Without touching the deck, Geoff was able to discern which card was reversed. Geoff asked Cinde to cut to two new cards, which were placed in her right and left back pockets. Geoff was then able to determine the identities of the two cards and the correct pocket location. Finally, using a jumbo deck of cards, Geoff asked Cinde to reach into the deck and select a cluster of cards. Geoff then correctly identified each of the cards in her hand.

The next performer was Chris HoffTheins. Taking headlines from the most unbiased source of news, The World Weekly News, Chris asked Brian O’Neill to call out stop as he shuffled through the headlines. The selected headline was “Duck Hunter Shoots Angel.” An envelope safeguarded by Mark Jensen was opened to reveal the correctly predicted headline.

After the performances, the members were engaged in a panel
discussion on mentalism. The panel was composed of David Magee, Ted Gillam, and Mark Jensen, and was moderated by Dr. Mike Smith. Topics included: What is the difference between mentalism and mental magic? Do you use disclaimers? What power/skill/ability are you demonstrating? What are your recommended resources for mentalism? Is there room for comedy in mentalism? The responses were insightful and somewhat varied between the panelists, which made for an engaging discussion. The Dallas Magic Clubs meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at Crosspointe on the third Tuesday of the month. The meeting is open to all. For more details, contact Reade Quinton reade.quinton@gmail.com (214) 2105725 www.assembly17.org for more details.

19 BUSY MEETING

HOUSTON, TX — The August meeting was a busy one. The TAOM convention to be held over Labor Day weekend here in Houston was on everybody’s mind. Everything is coming together and there is a lot of activity going on. This is going to be a great convention with lots of talent and magic.

The teach-in session this month was a talk by Doug Kornegay about his early years in the school show magic business. Doug’s first paid show was around 1943 as a kid in school. He ended up working extensively around the Houston area for HISD. Shows back then were a nickel, but no child was really ever turned away. By age sixteen Doug was managing a theater in the Houston area. He was going to school and performing shows during the day and managing the theater at night. He later worked for Duncan Yo-Yos and worked his magic there as well. It sounds as though Doug has been around the school show circuit for a while. It was great to listen to his stories; we hope to hear more of them in the future.

We again had numerous performances at this month’s meeting. Johan McElroy, Gene Protas, David Rangel, Jamie Salinas, Alex Rangel, Randy Stulken, Mark Melcher, Jesse Rubio, and Frank Price all performed for the group. We wish to thank them all.

— Miles Root

Assembly 19 meets the first Monday of every month at the IATSE Local 51 Meeting Hall, 3630 North Freeway, Houston, TX. A teaching lecture begins at 7:30 pm with the meeting beginning at 8:00 pm.

21 SUMMER DOLDRUMS

HARTFORD, CT— The sale of David Oliver wristbands at the Vegas convention was very successful. We’ve raised over $1800 so far. After the business meeting, we were able to see a copy of a video sent to Oliver done by several SYMs.

Dana Ring reported that he had attended the Weekend of Wonder for S.Y.M. members in Warwick, Rhode Island, that weekend. He was honored to be part of the “teaching staff,” demonstrating Professor’s Nightmare and giving each attendee his/her own set of ropes. For tonight’s group, he performed one of the tricks that the SYMs had learned during the convention: The Old Ten-Card Trick, wherein the magician is able to repeatedly tell how many cards a spectator has moved in a small packet.

Soll Levine produced a solid ball out of a tiny card case. He also showed us an appearing cube stick.

—Dana T. Ring

Assembly 21 meets at 289 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107. Contact Dana T. Ring dana@dannaring.com (860) 523-9888 www.ctmagic.org for more details.

22 MARTIN LEWIS LECTURES

LOS ANGELES, CA— August 20, 2012, was a warm evening in a string of very warm days in Los Angeles. It was also the evening of the Martin Lewis lecture. Originally scheduled to lecture in May, a minor injury to his hand prevented the performance of magic and necessitated a rescheduling. Fortunately this assembly meeting date fell between cruise ship performances for Lewis. Because of the lecture, a number of magician guests were present. Assembly President Jim Callen, after a few of his jokes, quickly dispatched with routine assembly business so the lecture could begin.

The first part of the lecture was stand-up material that included several signature Martin Lewis presentations. Included were Technicolor Prediction, Crystal Gazing (a selected card divination), and the Egg Bag. Lewis uses a Senor Mardo-style bag and performs a very entertaining routine. Lewis has the bags nicely made to his specifications and offers them for sale. Lewis performed his classic Cardiographic, but in a version that produced a rabbit emerging from a top hat. Closing the first half of the lecture was a nice story-telling effect with a selected card appearing in a bottle contained within two nested cigar boxes. A break in the lecture gave everyone a chance to enjoy the large selection of foods and treats always provided by Corinne Murphy, assembly hospitality chairperson. The lecture resumed with primarily close-up magic, although much of it could be used stand-up. A quick opening comedy bit with The Big Switch was performed to reveal a selected card. Business Card Cardiographic was demonstrated with several ideas to get your business card to a spectator. Comeback Card was an effect similar to Carl Germain’s Flash Change (see Tarbell Vol. 4). Martin Lewis performed his improved classic Sidewalk Shuffle, did a comedy gambling demonstration, and concluded with the McAbee Linking Rings.

This was a great lecture, full of information and performance advice using some very entertaining props and materials. Martin Lewis had most of the props he used available for purchase along with lecture notes on CD and his 1985 book, Martin’s Miracles. The book also does contain a number of the Martin Lewis signature effects. As always, the hour was late before the sales table emptied and the last of our members departed the hall.

—Steven L. Jennings

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

30 JAM IT UP

ATLANTA, GA— Emcee Debbie Leifer introduced Dan Garrett, who did a rather quick Flash Finger. Glad he kept it brief! Matt Baker, back home from a year at Berkeley, showed us how Jokers from one deck know information about other decks. He asked John Miller to make a sandwich of Jokers from a red deck. A card was selected from the blue deck and the Jokers removed from the blue deck. Matt waved the red Jokers over the blue deck and the selected card appeared between the Jokers.

Joe Turner performed a miraculous feat of card memory. He had cards cut into even packets and shuffled. Several people had
packets of cards and Joe told each of them the cards in their pack. Great!

Tim Wolfe demonstrated the strength of paper money. Since there are fibers imbedded in the bill, he could stick a pencil through a bill covered with plain paper. The plain paper ripped, but the bill remained solid.

Dan Garrett used the four Aces as bullets, a la Dirty Harry, inserting the cards randomly. He cut the deck into four piles. The piles were exchanged and three cards were dealt in place, then the rest of the cards were distributed to the other piles. Each pile was distributed in the same manner. An audience member chose a lucky number and in the end, the top card of each pile was the lucky number card.

Our program for the evening was a jam session. Dan Garrett began by teaching the effect he had just performed. Merritt Ambrose taught a trick he had tried earlier in the evening that had failed, but he was able to successfully perform it (the Tuesday night curse strikes!). Joe Turner showed an easy peek of a card. Matt Baker taught an impromptu card trick. John Miller ended the evening with a mini lecture on Twisting the Aces.

—Carol Garrett

Assembly 30 meets the second Tuesday of the month at Picadilly Cafeteria, 1-85/North Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, Georgia.

31 MAGICIANS’ CHOICE AT ASSEMBLY 31

INDIANAPOLIS, IN— The theme for the August 6, 2012, meeting of the Harry Riser Assembly was “Magicians’ Choice.” The choices turned out to be most interesting and abundant. Nine magicians performed.

Jim Croop, who also served as our master of ceremonies, began the evening with his version of Paul Gordon’s Psychotronic Rides Again. Jack Weigle then took a deck of cards and did two effects. The first one was It’s Up His Sleeve by William Zavis, found in Divers Deceits (1973). The second was Jay Sankey’s Outsider from his DVD Sankey’s Best Card Magic. Gerry Thompson demonstrated his newly obtained “Sixth Sense” effect. He asked the club members for assistance in developing a story to go with the effect.

Jay Newby performed the Johnny Thompson version of the Endless Chain or Fast and Loose. Daniel Lee did a nice rendition of Oz Pearlman’s Clutch. Taylor Martin used fifty-year-old slates to do the Spirit Slates. The slates were sold to him in Canada by a toy merchant who said he got them from a school in Ontario.

And finally, Michael Ray did his version of Calin Merelli’s Dress Code.

It was a fun evening with much magic as each performer did one of his favorites. —Dale Benson

Assembly 31 meets the first Monday of the month at 7:00 pm. If the first Monday conflicts with a holiday weekend, we postpone the meeting by one week. Unless otherwise announced the meeting location is the Irvington United Methodist Church, 30 Audubon Road on the east side of the city. See our website for details. Contact Steve Spence sspace@mediationalternative.com (317) 507-4534 www.sam31.com for more details.

35 SYNCHRONIZED MAGIC BECOMES NEWEST OLYMPIC EVENT

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY— A little bit of rain didn’t detract from a fabulous afternoon of magic at our annual BBQ. Joel Zaritsky and his wife Nadine once again hosted this spectacular annual event. After consuming an amazing variety of food, we were entertained by a diverse selection of magic. Joel converted his living room into a theater and performed his interpretation of the currently popular Gypsy Thread routine using a balloon as a wonderful variation on this classic. Derrin Berger and his wife Deanna performed a synchronized card trick. She nailed it, but Derrin was a little off. With practice and stronger concentration on their Olympic dreams, they’ll definitely be the gold medal favorites in Brazil. Ed Fitchett pulled out a great old horn effect that had all of us laughing. Sam Patton and Les Muldorf each performed a few favorites. A few hours after the party began, there were still a number of discussions occurring throughout the house ranging from the recent S.A.M. national convention to local happenings. Thanks to all the members who spent time preparing the fabulous dishes we enjoyed. Of course our unending gratitude goes to Grill Master Joel and his family for hosting this fabulous event once again. —Craig Kunasch

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

TONY CLARK AND KOZMO

DENVER, CO— The Mile High Magicians Society turned May into a Magic Month for Denver Colorado when we hosted a two-day Tony Clark event! Tony presented his wonderful “Timing is Everything” lecture to our club members on our usual meeting night and then offered his incredible Slydini Silks workshop to a lucky few on the following night. The lecture was informative and extremely useful, with mis-direction and timing cues being the center of every trick segment. We had a number of members who had never had the privilege of watching Tony work, and when Tony Clark works it gives you a hint of what it would have been like to watch the great Slydini work.

Tony Clark was one of Slydini’s last students; he taught the group of workshop participants just like the great Slydini would have. He made sure we all had each move in place before attempting to add more to it. He is a sensational performer and a thoughtful teacher. It is easy to see why he was a Magic Castle Stage Magician of the Year nominee. Add that to a lecturer, author, as well as producer and star of his smash hit show Phantasy II at the Horizon Casino resort in Lake Tahoe. Tony’s delightful personality and extensive knowledge of magic makes us want to spread the word and let our fellow magic clubs across the country know we give Tony Clark a gold star of approval.

One week later we hosted the clever and cunning street magician, Kozmo. This lecture is one of a kind. It is not just interesting and factual; it is one of the most entertaining lectures available. To demonstrate his street magic, Kozmo actually sets up a street show. He had all of our membership follow him outside to a parking area where he went about building a crowd from not only us but those who were nearby.

To make it even more impressive, he used layman who worked around our meeting place to help him out by picking cards and such. Their reactions were unbiased and natural and a pleasure for a magic group to watch. The Mile High Members were then brought back in where we all had a chance to dissect his show.

The Mile High Magicians Society is a current club that is dedicated to the education of its membership. We like to think of ourselves as a front runner for magic clubs across America. Check us out! —Connie Elstun

Assembly 37 meets the second Thursday of the month at Riverpointe Senior center in Littleton Colorado. Contact Chad Wonder chad@Idomagic.com (303) 933-4118 www.milehighmagicians.com for more details.

OUR AUGUST MEETING ROCKED!

KANSAS CITY, MO— The world’s most laid back magic club, SAMKC Assembly 38, held its August meeting in the beautiful subterranean (not really) theater of the majestic Westport Cof-
Mentalism. Starting off the open performances was Paul Amerson, who entertained with a Meir Yedid effect called Casino Prediction. Next up was John Murphy, who performed Droodles, followed by Dwayne and Drake Stanton, who did a little mind reading. Joe Libby performed Finish Line by Larry Becker and Lee Earl, and Ray Adams, with the help from Rocky Racoon and Dahhne Moravits, did a Thought Transmitter effect. John Dahlinger did a great Cylinder and Coin and Chop Cup Routine, Michael Tallon entertained us with Casino Royale, Paul Mims did a puzzling Mental Speller, and Napoleon Savoy had us scratching our heads with Cubing. Many members of the assembly are looking forward to attending the TAOM in Houston, Texas, over Labor Day weekend.

The door prize winners for this meeting were Joe Libby, Doug Gorman, Ray Adams, Napoleon Savoy, and John Murphy.

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

56 AUGUST 2012 MEETING

DAYTON, OH— Our August meeting was well attended by both members and guests. We did not have a business meeting due to our special guest lecturer Judge Ray Corns from Frankfort, KY. Ray’s lecture was very entertaining and informative and a great time was had by all.

—Matthew David Stanley Various Locations Contact Paul Burnham pburnham@woh.rr.com for more details.

59 TUXEDOS TO SWIMSUITS

PORTLAND, OR— Summer is here and members of Assembly 59 have exchanged their tuxedos for swimsuits. We here in the Pacific Northwest (and in Portland, in particular), have managed to avoid the extreme heat conditions that have plagued other regions of the US.

Because we have gone dark doesn’t mean that members have curtailed their practice of the mystical arts. No, indeed! Instead, members have returned to practice basic skills, learn new effects, polish their presentations, and in many other ways improve their magic. Wait till September arrives; when the magicians fling wide the doors to their chambers the natives will all drop to their knees in amazement at the illusions they will experience. Be sure to be seated and buckled in lest you harm yourself in a fall.

We are particularly pleased to know that our own Whitney Adams, member of S.Y.M. 105, was the emcee for the Stars of Tomorrow program at the S.A.M. convention in Las Vegas. All reports indicated that she was amazing. At thirteen years old she has an amazing presence and a smile that wins friends wherever she goes – to say nothing of her excellence as a magician.

—Glen L. Bledsoe
Assembly 59 meets at the Beaverton Elks, 3500 SW 104th, Beaverton, OR 97005 on the 4th Wednesday of each month except for July and August. Contact Glen L. Bledsoe at: g l e n b l e d s o e @ m a c . c o m (503) 580-0502 www.sam59portland.org/ for more details.

71 VP LEADS PACK

ALBUQUERQUE, NM— The August 16, 2012, Assembly 71 meeting was a rain-soaked evening with a small turnout at the meeting. Our performers – a small but determined group – plowed forward and did a lot of magic. VP David Dunlop dominated the evening of performance with five effects throughout the evening. He began with a Barrie Richardson effect with matching jumbo cards effect and an old Jay Sankey effect with “hole” cards. David dragged out several old effects that were done very well: Card Thru Hanky and Escape Key, and he ended the evening with his very own sponge ball routine. Johnny Moon did safety pin magic, Jumping Gems, and Chinese coins. David Brahinsky did coin work, Coins Across without gimmicks, and the Johnson Hopping Half. Our visitor from the youth group who will turn eighteen very soon, Erinmarie Overstreet, showed us a couple of tricks. We hope she joins us in the S.A.M. adult club. I will be dried out from this event very soon.

—David M. Brahinsky Assembly 71 meets at 3201 Central Ave. Albuquerque, NM Contact Davidbrahinsky@comcast.net 505-833-0153 for more details.

82 ALDO & RACHEL COLOMBINI LECTURE

SAFETY HARBOR, FL— Sergeant-at-Arms Chris Ostrowski opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. We were proud to announce that Celeste Evans, one of the most famous women in magic, and a member of our club, was honored by the renaming of I.B.M. Ring 387. It is now the “Celeste Evans – Fraser Valley Magic Circle” in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Congratulations Celeste
Aldo and Rachel Colombini are a great magic couple. Aldo and Rachel are so energetic and entertaining. They constantly tell jokes and hilarious stories of real life, while performing stunning magic.

They are keeping magic very affordable. Each item for sale was only $10. They have magic for all ages and every skill level. They even have two DVDs called Gagbuster and Gagbuster the Sequel that are filled with gags and silly stuff.

Rachel really impressed me when she performed a mental effect. A spectator shuffles the cards and the top nine cards are used. The spectator freely eliminates the card he doesn’t want to use until only one card remains; it is the card Rachel predicted.

Aldo & Rachel Colombini Lecture
August 2012

Aldo had some very simple ways to put a false knot in a rope that looked very convincing, even up close. Then he did Restless Colors. Four identical blue-backed cards are shown. Then they change to red, then green, and then yellow. The next time they are shown he had one of each color. Finally, they all changed to Aces.

If you have never seen Rachel or Aldo perform, you are missing a very fun opportunity. If you have seen them, it doesn’t matter, see them again. They keep the tricks and jokes fresh and new, so it is like seeing them for the first time, every time!

We have a great line up of magicians that you won’t want to miss: Cameron Francis - Thursday, October 18, 2012; Francis Menotti - November 15 2012; There will be no meeting in December; January 17, 2013 - To be Announced; David Stone - Thursday, February 21, 2013; Tom Craven - Thursday, March 21, 2013.

Assembly 82 meets the third Thursday of each month at Sheriff’s Youth Ranch in Safety Harbor Florida. Members only close up class at 6:30 PM. TBMC monthly meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Contact Chris Ostrowski cmmagic@verizon.net (727) 847-7837 www.tampabaymagicclub.com for more details.

ANN ARBOR/YPSILANTI, MI— The Ann Arbor Magic Club held its annual Corn Roast in August at Faith Lutheran Church. We had chicken, corn, and more, plus all kinds of desserts! The weather couldn’t have been better. Members of the church congregation were invited, so there were well over fifty people. After our meal we put on a nice magic show for everyone that stayed. The performances began with Marvin Mathena (who turned a white silk and a green silk into the Michigan State college flag). He was followed by: Jim Placido (with his mathematical rope routine), Dan Jones (with a great story/card trick), Randy Smith (who produced a basketball from a briefcase), Joe Fusco (with a card routine and a linking rope routine), Bill Brang (who magically solved a Rubik’s Cube), Tyler Sousa (with card to mouth and a gospel trick), Marvin Mathena (with a Gospel Bag that changed when turned inside out), and George Honer (who produced a fir tree, streamers, silks, and water from a can; he then found a signed quarter in an amazing way). It was a great show and the best way to end the summer months! —Randy A. Smith, Secretary, AAMC

95
LAS VEGAS 2012

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From left: Ray Roch, Rod Chow, Lon Mandrake & Jens Henriksen spending a relaxing moment during the Las Vegas S.A.M. convention at the Golden Nugget.

The Golden Nugget Hotel was excellent as a convention venue, other than that the main convention theater was located in another part of the hotel away from the dealer’s room, which made room hopping rather difficult. The downtown location was exciting and offered a variety of inexpensive casino eating options. The 2012 S.A.M. convention in Las Vegas was a big success, with fantastic registration numbers, talent, learning, shows, and overall wonderful camaraderie and enjoyment. —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.

GATHERING AT THE GOLDEN NUGGET

LAS VEGAS 2012

VANCOUVER, CANADA—Assembly 95 was well represented at the 2012 S.A.M. national convention in Las Vegas. Attending the national council meeting as delegates were Rod Chow (RVP Canada, who was re-elected for a second term as RVP Canada) and Lon Mandrake (Assembly 95 president). Both Henry Tom (with his polished dental act on stage) and Steve Dickson (with his famous Coin in Bottle in close-up) had splendid performances in the contests. Enjoying the convention were Ray Roch, Treasurer Jens Henriksen, and Dean Shawn Farquhar and family. Volunteer- ing as one of the bus monitors to assist in the loading of buses to and from the theater venues was Rod Chow. Rod also performed close-up magic on the streets of Las Vegas as part of the Fremont Street Magic Experience on the final evening of the convention.

One of the highlights of the convention was the proclaiming of David Copperfield as the King of Magic by National President Vinny Grosso, and the following onstage personal interview of Copperfield by Stan Allen. The Copperfield show at the MGM was absolutely incredible and cutting edge high tech. In contrast, the Mac King show at Harrah’s was visibly free of technology, yet hilariously and magically entertaining.

It was a whirlwind of activities in the classic manner of conventions (sleep skipped, meals gulped), made all the more enjoyable by the company of so many friends. The theme of the week was the S.A.M. tribute to legendary performer David Copperfield and his designation as Magician of the Century. It was a historic event made even more impressive by an interview that revealed a disarmingly humble and pleasant man within the legend.

The free show David performed for us and the one provided by the wonderful Mac King would have been enough to justify the trip to an environment running five degrees cooler than hell. But so many wonderful shows, lectures,
people present, it was decided not to have a formal contest. However, since two members had prepared effects, we were happy to see what they brought.

Lou Abbotiello had a bag of short lengths of rope that magically transformed into a three-foot-long single rope with the wave of Lou’s hand over the bag. Rod Ries donned a professor’s lab coat and transported us back to our high school biology classes to learn the dissection of a frog. Using an X-Acto knife to remove the plastic appendages of a small green frog, Rod told us about one of the wonders of nature — regeneration. Certain lizards can grow new tails, frogs can grow new limbs, and even humans grow whole livers from the partial livers transplanted from donor humans. As he talked of these things, Rod placed the frog body and its parts into a glass, added a little “secret fluid,” and covered the glass. When he finished his talk he lifted the cloth and removed a whole frog from the glass. The restored frog did have one peculiarity, which we can not reveal here.

performed at the Lyndeborough Community Day Show

Assembly 118 meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Nashua Church of Christ, 97 Farley Rd., Nashua, NH. Our venue rotates, so contact us first. Contact Robert Granville sam.nashua@gmail.com (603) 505 8749 http://sam118.com for more details.

120 MAGIC WITH NUMBERS

CHAMPAIGN, IL— The 2013 Central Illinois Magic Get-Together will be held on Saturday May 4, 2013. So far we have Janie Taylor, Dan Garrett, Andy Dallas, and S.A.M. President Chris Bontjes on board for the Get-Together. We also have Ron London, Dan Garrett, and Andy Dallas as dealers.

Jeff Harpring was in attendance at the meeting representing our I.B.M. territory. Also mentioned was an upcoming convention for gospel magic hosted by Duane Laughlin in Michigan. Michael gave a report on the book Real Secrets by David Stone. He said it was a great fun book. Professor Higgins gave a report on Amaze with Spectacle by Jimmy Talksalot. Jim Percy mentioned that Derren Brown has a show now available to us from the Hulu website. The official meeting adjourned and then the floor was open for Magic with Numbers (or anything else).

JR started off with a Bill Goldman number trick in which he had Dane think of two dice to create a two-digit number. Dane then got a word from that number, which JR successfully identified. Chris Bontjes was up next and performed Carl Foul’s calculator card trick. Andy Dallas performed Bill Goldman’s Mental Yarn with Ashlin as his volunteer. Next up, Professor Higgins dazzled us with a flash of flame before he performed a classic three-card trick with a twist.

Andy Dallas once again took the floor and performed Ray Mangela’sn No Way Jose. This trick is based on Tannen’s Burmese Bangalor; Greater Magic calls this the 10 Card Trick, and it was also published in Expert at the Card Table as the Trick of Ten, naming this the oldest known card trick.

Andy Dallas, upon request from Jim Percy, brought out and discussed use of the Kozar prediction pad. Rob Thomas was in attendance and performed Rob Thompson’s Card to any Number. Next, Rob presented his famous Samoya. Jeff Harpring closed out the magic by performing It’s Done with Mirrors.— Jim Percy

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

129 AUCTION

PENSACOLA, FL — The GCMG August meeting was called to order at 7:55 p.m. We started a little late to give members time to arrive; twenty-plus members fought the blinding rain to attend. Gene Burrell got the members ready for a great night of magic with a teach-in.

The business end of the meeting went quite quickly; topics were the Annual Show in November, club blog, Shoot Ogawa in Fort Walton, and the standard reports.

In member news, Al Grimm is not doing well and Ronann Carrero is leaving the club. He is going to college in Baltimore at Johns Hopkins; he will be missed. Thanks to Betty Broomall for setting up the snack table every month!

We held our monthly raffle with over twenty magical items up for grabs; some really nice stuff was handed out to winning members. Thanks for the donations.

We then held an auction. Members Dale Bosarge, Nathan Nickerson, Dave Klooman, Brian Ward, Gene Burrell, and a few I can’t remember (sorry) all brought their slightly used magic that they weren’t using anymore and we auctioned it off to the highest bidder with ten percent of the proceeds going to the club. A lot of magic changed hands.

With only a few minutes left before we had to vacate the meeting room, the meeting was adjourned. Many members left with some new magic that will entertain once again. Thanks to all who attended and supported the club. If you know someone who is interested in magic, let us know (www.gulfcoastmagic.com) or bring them to a meeting.—Bill Metsch

The Gulf Coast Magicians Guild Assembly 129 meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Bay View Senior Center, Pensacola, Florida. At 6:45 pm.

136 SILVER ANNIVERSARY STARS OF MAGIC SHOW!

TUCSON, AZ — The meeting got started a few minutes late this month, but that was because everyone was deep in conversation throughout the room.

First item on the agenda: our very own Man of Mystery, Randy Atta, has made arrangements for our close-up and parlor contest to be held in November at O’Shaugnessy’s again this year; he has also volunteered to be the producer of the contests! Thanks, Randy.

We decided to have the initiation ceremony in October, possibly to coincide with Magic Week. We need volunteers to perform at some of the local hospitals during Magic Week. First VP George Franzan provided a newspaper story on our very own amazing and kind-hearted Jay Knapp. Way to go, Jay!

Ticket sales for the silver anniversary Stars of Magic Show generated a lot of important and informative reports from several people who are active in putting this incredible show together. We have hundreds of beautiful posters and many hundreds of post-card sized flyers/handouts to help with ticket sales. Several people spoke about the importance of contact lists, friend lists, email, and Facebook as ways to let people...
know and/or remind them about the show.
VP George Franzen then announced that McDonald’s is an official sponsor of this year’s show; he is trying really hard to make arrangements to get magicians to perform an hour of close-up magic at a McDonald’s near you.

World famous John Shryock volunteered to offer DVD copies of the actual show on the website, to be produced and shipped upon receipt of a paid order, for a sale price of $15 each with free shipping! What a great idea! I sure hope we get a lot of hits; it’s shipping! What a great idea! I

Then we watched a few video clips of Leland performing magic from his days in the Orange County Magic Club in California. After that, we watched him perform his favorite illusion, the Arm Chopper.

After Leland performed, the club started Tag-o-Magic. First up was Thomas Bowes, who performed a wonderful linking ring routine. He tagged Larry Heil. Larry tied a knot in a rope without letting go of either end and then tagged Bill Irwin. Bill used his wedding ring and a shoelace to perform a “ring and string” routine in which the ring always escaped, and always surprised us with where it would show up. Bill then tagged Marvin Gearheart.

Marvin performed a wonderful card count in which you spell out the value of the card, and that is the card you landed on. Marvin then tagged Geoff Grimes. Geoff did a demonstration that challenged what we perceive as “free will,” using nothing more than a bag of M&Ms. Geoff then tagged Ash Adams.

Ash, borrowing some M&Ms from Geoff, then showed us a street-smart game of Penny Paradox, as described in the book Bamboozler’s Volume Two by Diamond Jim Tyler.

—Jeff Hallberg

FORT WORTH, TX— The August 2012 meeting of the Fort Worth Magicians Club provided an opportunity for us to reflect on the people who help make our club special.

Our president, Ash Adams, opened the meeting and conducted the business portion.

Bill Irwin thanked the club for the magic acquired from the Dean Ponton estate that was then donated to the Cook Children’s Young Magicians Club. Bill promised that in the future one or more of the young magicians will perform for our club.

For our program for the evening, we started out by remembering Bob Utter. Bob was a past president of our club. During his life, Bob performed over seven hundred live TV magic performances. Bob was also very active in the community. He was a chairman or a board member for over forty different organizations! Ash read the typical introduction for Bob as “Mr. Mystic,” followed by a video of Bob’s performance on the Caravan of Magic.

After the break, Geoff Grimes came up to introduce Leland Van Deventer, the oldest member of our magic club. Leland has been performing magic for almost eighty years, having done his first performance for his family when he was just twelve years old.

Among the usual grab-bag of effects performed by volunteers with various props – coins, ESP cards, dice, and, of course, playing cards – one of the more intriguing was an “original” prediction effect done by a young guest. He had one card selected out of four faced-down pasteboards on the table (no magician’s choice). After it was shown around, he removed a folded card from the card case which, when unfolded, did not match the one chosen. But he turned it over to reveal the name of the chosen card written in big letters on the back! Several veteran magi were left scratching their heads at how this “absolute free choice” approach managed to force the predicted card.

Yours truly showed off a new effect sent free to all subscribers of a monthly magic magazine. The idea was to predict the cost of a four-course dinner at a restaurant. It’s a clever effect that would have been more mysterious if I’d paid more attention to building up the fact that the various menu items were all priced differently.

—Don Dunn

157 MAGIC, MAGIC EVERYWHERE

BEAVER, PA— The election committee for the Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley nominated a slate of officers that was voted on by the membership for the 2012/2013. Everyone was very happy that the Magi Fest in Columbus will continue under new owners. Those who went to the S.A.M. convention in Las Vegas thought it was one of the best. Teach and Learn was presented on Svengali Decks with several members participating.

Bill Cornelius showed his prowess as an emcee for the performances. Eric Davis did Whack Your Pack, where a helper chooses a few off the deck and slaps the deck as he shows the cards. Jim Weyand had a helper pick an entropy, an appetizer, a drink, and a dessert from six cash register receipts. Adding up the amounts, they met his prediction of a total. Jim Tate performed Wandering Royalty using red and black bags with cards, a red and black bracelet, and two helpers. He showed that magic is in bracelet. No matter how well mixed, the card colors always matched the bracelet. Doug Ries presented some “fun decks,” including an Electric Deck and a Mental Photography Deck. He then told about other fun decks.

We Love Magic
tation of a rope trick with four pieces of rope, a box, a tube, and two helpers. It consisted of tying ropes together, placing them in the tube, and placing the tube in the box. The rope came out all one piece. Bob Mullins showed a deck of generic cards that were blank, then real, then blank.

Dick Recktenwald had a green, a red, and a yellow scarf. He placed the green scarf over his hand, tucked the yellow scarf into the green one, rubbed the red one over the green one, and pulled the yellow one out of the red one. Don Moody presented a table with two wooden boxes attached. With "It's an Illusion" music playing, he showed the boxes were empty, placed tennis ball in one box, and pulled them from the other, repeating this several times. Don stated that this piece could also be used with live doves. —Judy Steed

161 ERIC JONES AND JIM ANGELO COMPETITION

SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ— Eric Jones was our lecturer for May. Eric is a coin guy, but that’s not all. He taught some moves that were accessible to many of us. He gathered the group around him and gave each person four cards that were torn in half. After mixing and cutting seemingly randomly, everyone was able to find a perfect match. This is an effect that Eric uses in his performances and gets a great reaction. You can find it in Woody Aragon’s A Book in English. Eric had a take on Oil and Water that used a simple yet effective method. Eric has a gentle, easygoing way of teaching and we were happy to have him visit our club. In June our members participated in the Jim Angelo competition. We were dazzled by a number of magical effects — most of which were successful!

First Place went to Jayson Katsikis with his elegant manipulation piece performed to music. Second Place went to Matt Sawchuk who did a rope routine. Third Place was Harvey Berg with a mentalism piece, while Fourth Place went to Norm Rosen with his two-coin trick. Fifth Place winner was Mike Fordice with a handful of card effects.

We were off in July and August with a bunch of us going to the S.A.M. conference in Las Vegas where David Copperfield was the honoree. It was a fantastic convention! David was very generous with his time, spending nearly two hours in an interview with Stan Allen, visiting with the S.Y.M. members, and strolling through the dealers’ room several times. Plus we got to see his show at the MGM as well as Mac King’s at Harrah’s. Check our website and visit us! —Christopher J Smith Society of American Magicians Assembly 161- The David Copperfield Assembly We meet on the second Monday of the month at the Stage House Restaurant & Tavern 366 Park Avenue, Scotch Plains N J 07076 at 6 p.m. Dinner – 8 p.m. Program. Contact Christopher J Smith sam-161@comcast.net (908) 850-8765 www.sam161.org/ for more details.

170 THE AMAZING ACROSTIC ACTIVITY

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO— Larry Mahan led off his presentation with a notes page for us scribes. On it he had the following acrostic:

Perception – Does your act feel big (fuller and more professional)? But can it pack small?
Layout – Make your stage (table, room…) look bigger with screens, banners, or tables.
Act Big – Establish your presence with music, confident eye contact, costume, and poise.
Yell? – No, but do amplify so subtle humor, jokes, and one-liners can entertain without strain.
Big Props – Jumbo cards, streamers, (spring) animals, and temple screens look big on stage.
Inflatables – Balls, balloons, balloon animals, and other objects (i.e. dice) are big when full.
Group Assist – Use as many audience helpers as possible for bigger stage presence.
Larry shared his experiences of good and bad performances, stagecraft, and had examples of all his suggestions such as background screens, banners, different tables, costumes, examples of practiced banter, wireless microphones and amplifiers, Jumbo cards strung on a rope, Temple Screens, a spring fox that scrambled in a bag separate from the magician, and balloon guitars. When it was all over Larry packed his bag and was able to take all of his demo gear out in a single trip. It was a small transporting package for the big show he had given us.

Assembly 170, Pikes Peak Prestidigitators, meet the 4th Tuesday monthly at Sand Creek Police Dept Community Room - 4125 Center. Park Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80916.

172 EXIT STAGE RIGHT

PORT ST. LUCIE, FL— Welcome once again to the Donald E. Lea Assembly 172 of Port St. Lucie, Florida. Following a short business meeting that included sending best wishes to Past President Ed Malinowski (bad back) and Nick Bradley (hand surgery), we moved on to a brief discussion about expanding our membership roles, and actually came up with a game plan that is already in motion thanks to Paul, Dean, and our local printer. Hopes for new members are high!

With that out of the way, President Paul Hilko presented us with a brief overview of the “Stage Arts,” discussing stage presence, movement on the stage, and the use of assistants (read “accomplices”) in the performance. He also stressed the importance of a proper introduction and that the intro should be written by the performer for the host or emcee to use. Keynotes were 1) Establish who you are…a persona, 2) dress the part, and 3) project that persona. In brief: Showmanship is everything. “There are no magicians.” Paul said. “There are only performers.” And all need to be well-versed in movement, costuming, and make-up.

With that we moved on to our general magic session with Paul opening with the Panama Rope Mystery. Alan Greenwood reprised his Block and Cord effect for us, followed by yours truly taking advantage of the MagicSAM apps and a deck of cards. Al Chiaverini showed us his new Silver Cane to Flowers effect, and Doug Latshaw followed up with Dean assisting in a Four-Ace Assembly. Paul Hilko brought the session to a close with his rendition of Smart Ass. —Dean F. Devitt

We meet the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December) at 7:00pm at the St. Lucie Lanes on S. US Route 1 in Port St. Lucie. Contact Dean F. Devitt quindar46@yahoo.com (772) 466-1942 for more details.

181 SAM 181 IN LAS VEGAS

HIGHTSTOWN, NJ— In August, we held our 2012-2013 planning meeting and barbecue hosted at Mitch Geier’s home. The hamburgers, hot dogs, and pulled pork were great. The magic conversation was even better.

Several members of Assembly 181 went to Las Vegas last month to attend the national convention. Everyone who attended the convention came back with rave reviews. There will be many places to read about the competitions, lecturers, and shows at the convention. However, for many members, it is the camaraderie, the meeting of old friends that makes the convention so memorable.

One of our members worked and lived in Las Vegas in the 1970s, and he became the de facto tour guide for the magical happenings of the city. First, there was a trip to the Penn & Teller show with a backstage meeting with the stars and Mr. Electric Marvyn Roy and Norm Nielsen.

There was a trip to see Gary Darwin at Boomer’s Bar, where Gary holds court at a magic club that meets each Wednesday. Gary is quite an interesting person and very inventive. The trip evolved into a visit to his home and magic museum.

The highlight of the week was meeting David Copperfield. Mitch
Geier had placed a “Remembering our Dear Friend James Angelo” in the convention’s commerative booklet. When Copperfield saw the ad, he “was quite touched” and autographed the booklet with a personnel comment. David Copperfield grew up in New Jersey, and as a youngster was mentored and often chauffeured around to the local magic clubs of New Jersey by Jim Angelo. The autographed booklet has been sent to Jim’s surviving relatives. What a fraternity we belong to, magicians love to do nice things for fellow magicians. —David Zboray

Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets on the first Thursday every month, September thru June at the First United Methodist Church 187 Stockton Street Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open 7:00PM Contact Stephen Sloan lands10@optonline.net (732) 757-5337 www.magasam181.com for more details.

215

FORWARD INTO THE PAST

LOUISVILLE, KY— Dan Garrett visited the Louisville Magic Club, Mac King Assembly 215 on August 22, 2012. His title for this lecture was “Forward into the Past,” and is explained as new ways to improve our magic with moves and sleights we know from our past. Dan used color changing knives, coins, cards, books, poetry, markers, ambigrams, and paddles to make his point.

If you think you know card routines, or if you think you know paddle moves, you have not seen what Mr. Garrett does.

Dan has some very impressive moves for the paddle or anything that can be used as a paddle (like a knife, a coin, a business card). Dan even gave us his impressionist talent for famous movies and actors. Thanks, Mr. Garrett, for the laughs, the secrets you shared, and the time you gave us.

—Tom Creecelius

Assembly 215, the Louisville magic club meets the second Tuesday of the month and other times as special scheduled at the St. Matthews Baptist Church. Contact Tom Creecelius medimagician@cs.com (812) 633-7684 for more details.

226

BOOK NIGHT (ENCORE)

WILLIAMSBURG, VA— Things got so busy this year that we really never got around to filling out the program schedule for this year. So for the July meeting we decided to do an encore book night. Most of the members like book night and have plenty in their library to choose from. We also had a guest visiting from Salisbury, North Carolina: Bill Ragsdale. Bill is author of the book Magic around the World and one of the few makers of the famous Troublemwit.

First up with his book was Joseph De Paul, who presented The Secret Art of Magic by Eric Evans. None of us knew of the book nor the author, but we were certainly glad Joseph brought this little gem with him. Eric Evans was a student of Cellini and took up performing street magic. Joseph actually met Eric and had a chance to see him perform. Eric takes the ancient military classic The Art of War by Sun Tzu and applies it to street magic. Cellini considered Eric one of his best students and coming from Cellini that says a heck of a lot.

Next up was Alexander Goldberg who presented a magic book by one of the founders of Assembly 226 – Jim Baker. Alexander explained it contained his favorite cut and restored rope routine, which he demonstrated very well.

Great job Alexander!

Ron Grossman presented Magic Fun for Everyone; his “feet” of magic was crumbling up a dollar bill, and then placing it into his pants pocket. He then displayed a sock, turning it inside out and then back. Showing his pants pocket empty, he produced the crumbled bill from the sock. Pretty cool!

Watt Hyer presented a book in order to take his Card Warp routine. The trick ended with a card you can examine, only to discover it cannot be changed back to its original state (sort of inside out at places).

Michael Heckenberger presented Michael Weber’s Lifesavers and presented One-Two Punch, in which the hole in one ticket is moved to another ticket.

Bill Ragsdale told us a little bit about himself and then demonstrated his Troublemwit routine – very nicely done! Bill then sold Lifesavers for a very reasonable price.

266

A LUCKY MEETING

LAKE LAND, FL— The thirteenth of the month brought nothing but good luck for the Lakeland magicians gathered at IHOP for our monthly meeting. President Ed McGowan brought the meeting to order and we moved into the annual election of officers. The club unanimously elected Jerry Kardos as the new president. Luis Campaneria, Bob Macey, and Al D’Alfonso will remain as vice-president, treasurer, and secretary respectively.

After a brief break, the magic portion of the meeting began with Al showing off an old magic kit that he found on vacation – a neat set of ice breakers packaged in a bottle. Beverly Kenemuth then spun a tale about a snake that had the magical ability to work himself into small spaces. As usual, Beverly enchanted us with her story and workmanship.

Funnyman Elmo Bennett brought out three cards and started by telling us he was going to explain how to do a trick. When he finished the only explanation needed was how he was able to fool us that badly. Jim Malone stayed with cards and had guest Randy Smith pick a card; he was able to spell the name out to reveal the card.

Ed played closing batter for the night and brought one of his recently rediscovered treasures – his classic chop cup routine. It was a treat watching the master share this gem. Although summer is winding down there is never any
lack of magic in sunny Central Florida. Be sure to visit when your vacation plans bring you to Florida.—Al D’Alfonso

Jim Zachary Assembly 266 meets the second Monday of the month at 7PM at the Lakeland I-HOP, 1-4 & US 98. Contact Al D’Alfonso keeper0499@embarqmail.com (321) 4373814 for more details.

274 SHOW & TELL MINI LECTURES

BOCA RATON, FL— On Monday, August 6, 2012, we had a “Show & Tell Night of Mini Lectures” by four of our talented members. Each performer taught twenty-five minutes of magic and then rotated to another part of the room to the next group of members, showing them the same magic tricks.

Richard Adler with his full Santa Claus beard, told us that he is booked for the entire month of December, a very smart entertainer! He taught us a clever card routine that was amazing and enjoyed by everyone. Next was Ed Oschmann, one of the East Coast’s most accomplished cardicians. Some of his effects included a clever deck switch, cutting the Aces, and a pocker deal. He was also kind enough to hand out a set of lecture notes for everyone. Bill Lucas showed us some simple effects with rubber bands and paper clips, he learned from Boy Scout manuals. He supplied us with rubber bands and paper clips to practice what he taught. Giovanni Abrate, demonstrated some very nice effects. He opened with the Gypsy Thread using a candle. He did a mental card selection trick causing a blue card to transport into a red pile. Money was offered on a selected card, if members could pick the correct choice, for his magic Credit Card Miracle. Another trick shown was his Laser Card, which was enjoyed by all. Giovanni also prepared lecture notes for members, which everyone really appreciated.

—Marshall Johnson

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

MAGIC COMPETITION PACKS THE HOUSE IN CHICAGO

With its polished wood floors, stained glass windows, and plantation-white walls framed by classical moldings, the Chicago Room of the Chicago History Museum seems transported from an elegant nineteenth-century mansion. It’s no wonder the space is a favorite of wedding planners and upper-crust charity fundraisers. But on the sunny afternoon of August 12, 2012, its air of dignity and importance hung over a very different sort of event: a contest among magicians.

The Chicago Magic Competition, presented jointly by the Chicago History Museum and Chicago Assembly 3, offered the public a rare opportunity. Not only could people experience performances by nine of the area’s top magicians in a single show, all for the price of a museum admission, they would be instrumental in determining who would be named among the winners. As the host and Assembly President Neil Tobin explained, “Unlike magic competitions around the world that concern themselves with technique, this one focuses on the most important criterion of all: the ability of the magician to entertain a real audience.”

Over 150 members of the public filled the seats. Among them sat a three-member judging panel charged with deciding the winners. The panel, specially assembled for its combination of theatrical and magic expertise, included: Chris Jones, Chief Theatre Critic for the Chicago Tribune; L. Walter Stearns, Executive Director of the Mercury Theatre; and Danny Orleans, professional magician and first place winner of the inaugural Chicago Magic Competition. Audience members who committed to watching all nine performers could vote on the recipient of the People’s Choice award.

Each contestant received a calligraphic certificate and tickets to the ongoing theatrical magic performances in town: The Magic Cabaret at the Greenhouse Theatre Center; Magic Chicago at Stage 773; The Magic Parlour at the Palmer House via the House Theatre; and Supernatural Chicago at Excalibur nightclub.

The judges awarded third place to Luis Carreon; second place went to John Sturk. In first place was Tim Hannig; the voting audience, in agreement with the judges, bestowed its People’s Choice award on Hannig as well.

The award-winning performers were each presented with certificates and handcrafted wands of exotic and domestic woods by Brian Humphrey of Fortress Wand Works. Tim Hannig was also offered a paid performance at the Chicago History Museum in association with its current magic exhibit.

Keeping an eye on the stopwatch for each magician’s performance was Assembly 3 Secretary Darlene Bull. Past first place winners Frank “Frankini” Glab and Bill Koch pitched in with ballot distribution and collection, while William and Chris Koch counted the votes. Ensuring the entire show ran like clockwork was the work of tireless stage manager Fred Paul Bailey.

The Chicago History Museum has agreed to host the event again next year, and Assembly 3 will again co-present. —Neil Tobin
New Members and Reinstatements

**NEW MEMBERS**

Adams, Loraine
Provo, UT

Armstrong, Ronald
Far Hills, NJ

Balay, Magick
New York, NY

Ball, Roy E
Redondo Beach, CA

Bartunek, Jeremy
Jacksonville, IL

Blickby, Sebastian
Halmstad, Sweden

Blum, Lorraine
Delray Beach, FL

Borchick, Duane
Nanticoke, PA

Bremner, Charlie
Elmhurst, IL

Bruce, Ed
Toronto, Canada

Buso, Ray
Salem, MA

Clark, Cody
Louisville, KY

Cottis, James
Rochford, UK

Dedee, Matthew
Webster, NY

Diaz, Victor Gabriel
San Antonio, TX

Dytor, Nicolas
Canada

Dyer, Nick
Laguna Niguel, CA

Dyer, Nicholas
Las Vegas, NV

Eidem, Roy
Middletown, VA

Evans, Glen
Los Gatos, CA

Evans, Thomas
Livingston, CA

Franchino, Peter
Chicago Park, CA

Gama, Pablo
Queretaro, Mexico

Givan, Joe
Castle Rock, CO

Gold, Joe
Sherman Oaks, CA

Harnes, Rebecca
Fenton, MO

Hidock, Gerald
Nanticoke, PA

Hood, Eddy
Syracuse, UT

Howick, Dane
Salt Lake City, UT

Isensee, Rik
San Francisco, CA

Jia, Kui
Los Angeles, CA

Joesel, William
Port Angeles, WA

Kazoeles, Tony
Coquitlam, BC Canada

Kercher, Rick
Draper, UT

Klein, Richie
Springfield, VA

Kumar, Satish
Singapore, Singapore

Lakin, Nicholas
Greenwood, IN

Liu, Rex Mingehao
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Lord, Maurie
Summerland, CA

Massie, Carol
Castle Rock, CO

Nada, Vic
Indian Trail, NC

Owen, Drew
Falls Church, VA

Padgett, Craig
Santa Barbara, CA

Perez, Everado
Mexico City, Mexico

Rahman, Sardar

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Rauch, Mitchell
Boca Raton, FL

Raich, Olive Perry
Boca Raton, FL

Rhine, Don
Baltimore, MD

Rivera, Richard
Grand Prairie, TX

Rodriguez, Nicholas
San Francisco, Mexico

San Giorgio, Kathy
Toa Baja, PR

Sapio, Peter
Yardville, NJ

Scott, Edna
Hamilton, ON Canada

Street, Richard
Rockwall, TX

Wetzel, Jeffrey
Somerfield, NJ

Williams, Kevin
Cincinnati, OH

**REINSTATMENTS**

Ayres, Mick
Bluffton, SC

Calhoun, David
Kernville, CA

Castillo, Richard
Broken Arrow, OK

Cohen, Alfred (Al)
Bethesda, MD

Demcak, Jozef
Richmond, BC

Denham, James
Houston, TX

Dietz, Sterling
Ferndale, WA

Dyer, Roger
New York, NY

Dunn, Chris
Maitland, FL

Fodrea, Gregory
Port Orchard, OR

Fontaine, Michel
Henderson, NV

Galbraith, James
Toa Baja, PR

Klores, Lars
Fairfax, VA

Leschber, Jeff
Garland, TX

Morey, David
Washington, DC

Mousch, David J
Shelton, CT

Peer, Stephen
Bloomington, MN

Rahman, Sardar
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Rauch, Oliver Perry
Boca Raton, FL

Rhine, Don
Baltimore, MD

Rivera, Richard
Grand Prairie, TX

Rodriguez, Nicholas
San Francisco, Mexico

San Giorgio, Kathy
Toa Baja, PR

Sapio, Peter
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Good Cheer List

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

Peter Anthony
5100 O’Bannon Dr. Apt 72
Las Vegas, NV 89146

David Ball
40 Sandy Lodge Way
Northwood, Middlesex
HA6 2AS UK

Roger Barr
883 B Leverpool Circle,
Manchester, NJ 08759

William H. Brewe
1698 Montrose
Cincinnati, OH 45214

Lawrence Clark
204 Hazelwood Ave
Buffalo, NY 14215

Tony Corrao
100 Daly Blvd. #2804
Oceanside, NY 11572

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 60136-3023

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

Bob King
304 Suburban Court,
Rochester, NY 14620

Robert D. Knaigge
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. Morrisey
24 Grove St.
Wayland, MA 01788

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

Nahmen Nissen
PO Box 1856
Colfax, CA 95713-1856

Larry Poague
34221 West 90 Circle
Desota, KS 66108

Jim Relyea
241 W. Lakeshore
Rockaway, NJ 07866

Harry Riser
8505 Woodfield Crossing
The Forum
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Dale Rumsnok
430 Perrymont Ave
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Pat Ryan
43 Fairbanks Rd.
Churchville, NY 14428

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

Helene Schad
2440 Virginia Ave.
Bensalem, PA 19020

Grant Schofield
(The Great Granzini)
9303 Quailbrook Ct.
Bakersfield, CA 93312

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

Sam Stecher
1000 Loring Ave Apt. C-23
Salem, MA 01970-4253

Bob Steiner
c/o San Miguel Villa
1050 San Miguel Blvd.
Concord, CA 94518

Hank Strasser
46 Bordentown-Chesterfield Rd.
Chesterfield, NJ 08515

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

Larry Taverner
805 LaPaz Ct.
Bakersfield, CA 93312

Jack White
4288 Arguello St.
San Diego, CA 92103

S.A.M. SPOTLIGHT - CHAR GOTT

Char Gott is a member and past president of Assembly
51 in Peoria, Illinois. She is also Past National Director of
the Society of Young Magicians. She is currently working
to establish a program of instruction in magic for senior
citizens who are looking for avocations to fill their
retirement years. She teaches continuing education
classes in magic in Peoria and in Destin, Florida.

Her life-long devotion to magic and to the S.A.M.
has helped our art and our Society grow. Her continued
willingness to donate her time to mentor those just
beginning in magic is a shining example of the ideals of
brotherhood on which the S.A.M. was founded. She has
helped to mentor countless magicians throughout the country.
Most Illustrious Vinny Grosso called the Annual Meeting of The Society of American Magicians to order according to ritual at 6:45 p.m. PNP Fr. Cyprian Murray, Chaplain Emeritus, gave the invocation. MI Grosso welcomed PNP Brad Jacobs, David Goodsell, Fr. Cyprian Murray, Michael Douglass, Dean George Schindler, Dan Rodriguez, Dan Garrett, Don Oltz, Gary Hughes, Harry Monti, Jann Goodsell, Ed Thomas, Jay Gorham, John Apperson, Rich Dooley, Andy Dallas, Bruce Kalver, Mike Miller and Mark Weidhaas.

He also welcomed the International President of International Brotherhood of Magicians John Pye and his wife Carol; president of the British Ring of the IBM Brian Miller and his wife Audrey. Outgoing IBM President Vanni Pule was unable to attend. MI Grosso had a certificate of appreciation for Vanni, which President Pye will accept on Pye’s behalf.

At that time PNP Ed Thomas asked if any council member or delegate had a ballot to give to him. Hearing no response, he asked that he and his committee be excused to count the election ballots. MI Grosso excused PNP Thomas.

Minutes of March 17, 2012 meeting:
National Secretary asked that the minutes be corrected to read that Ann Weidhaas – not Jann Goodsell – was in attendance at the inaugural stage show at the Magic Center in Parker Colorado.

Motion: PNP John Apperson moved the minutes be approved as corrected.

Discussion: none. Vote: motion passed.

REPORTS

Reports are in the Blue Book except those listed as live reports. The Blue Book is available electronically from National Secretary Marlene Clark, as hard copy from National Administrator Manon Rodriguez, or online in the member-only section at www.MagicSam.com

NATIONAL OFFICER REPORTS
(all present with reports in the Blue Book)

Most Illustrious Vinny Grosso noted that in 2011-12, the S.A.M. had the largest increase in membership in the past 20 years and that the society’s financial situation also has improved, thanks to a healthy reserve account and an annual convention that has made money for a few years. He stated that too often we look for one single thing to credit or blame for a situation and that is hardly ever the case. He attributed the positive news to the collective work of National Council members over several years and thanked everyone for helping to move the S.A.M. in a good direction.

Michael Douglass interrupted the report portion of the meeting to seek approval for a new inductee into the S.A.M. Hall of Fame: PNP and M-U-M Editor Emeritus David Goodsell (Goodsell had stepped out of the room, and Douglass wanted the vote to take place before he returned). Goodsell has had a distinguished history in the S.A.M., said Douglass.

Motion: PNP Douglass moved to approve the induction of David R. Goodsell into the S.A.M. Hall of Fame.

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

President-elect Chris Bontjes discussed the new Video Instruction Program (VIP) in the member-only section of the S.A.M. website, where qualified S.A.M. members will teach tricks and related material, as opposed to bad magic tutorials done by teens on YouTube. The first two instructions cover the magic trick found on the 2012-13 membership cards and the poker chip trick packed in convention registration packets. He is preparing submission requirements and qualified assembly members to think about adding to the VIP library. He’s been working on committee appointments and is happy with the team he will be working with.


Second VP Kenrick “Ice” McDonald asked the RVPs in the room to stand, thanked them for their work and iterated that it is important for them to visit assemblies. He thanked Assembly #181 in New Jersey for the work it has done for the S.A.M.

National Secretary Marlene Clark thanked those who sent their reports in on time and reminded council members that reporting their activities is important because without a record, members will think that council members do nothing.

National Treasurer Mary Ann Blowers reported that 2011-12 was a very good year: income exceeded expenses by $4,566.17. She thanked all for keeping their expenses within the budget. She presented a budget of $376,850.00 for FY 2012-2013. The proposed budget is lower than FY 2011-12 budget of $392,000.00 because income is down; still, she is confident that the council can stay within the proposed budget. She urged members to advertise in M-U-M.

Motion: PNP Brad Jacobs moved to accept the proposed budget. Discussion: none. Vote: motion passed.

In a thank-you statement, Treasurer Blowers noted that this is her last year as National Treasurer. She recalled that when PNP Rich Dooley asked her to take the position, it was to be for the end of that fiscal year. Since then, she has been elected six times and has served under PNPs Dooley, Maria Ibanez, Andy Dallas, Bruce Kalver, Mike Miller, Mark Weidhaas, and current president Vinny Grosso. A goal was to send money to the reserve fund. In the past 6 years, she has sent $70,000 to the reserve account, which could only happen when the S.A.M. works as a team and together.

“Thank you for the years of distraught ad the years of happiness; I can end with happiness,” she said.

Following her statement, MI Grosso presented Blowers with a presidential citation signed by all the presidents she worked under – the first time in S.A.M. history that had multiple presidents sign a citation.

PNP and former treasurer Rich Dooley thanked Blowers for stepping in into a “temporary” assignment. Getting her to
serve as treasurer was his best trick, ever, he said. It allowed him to focus on his presidency.

**ADMINISTRATIVE, REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(Note: Reports are not in order, as some council members had to leave the meeting to attend to convention duties.)

Conference Executive John Apperson (live report) updated council members on upcoming S.A.M. Conventions and National Council Meetings.

Upcoming Council meetings & conventions:

- Council meeting November 9 & 10, 2012: Indianapolis, Indiana.
- 2013 S.A.M. National Convention: Arlington Virginia, July 3, 4, 5, 6: Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel; room rates $114, a night, single or double.
- 2014 IBM-SAM Combined Convention: St. Louis, Missouri, July 2, 3, 4 5, 2014; Marriott Renaissance Hotel, $115 a night, single or double.
- 2015 S.A.M. National Convention: July 1,2,3,4, Philadelphia Marriott Downtown; $115 a night, single or double.

SAMtalk Chairman Bruce Kalver, SAMtalk and Technology Chairman gave a live “Tweet” of his technology report (140 characters or fewer): “Thank you, Vinny Grosso, for finding the right company and the right team to create our brand new website.” Kalver said that one third of the membership is on SAMtalk. Joining SAMtalk via the new website is easy: click “SAMtalk” and type your name. He asked members to encourage others to join SAMtalk. He also reported that the MagicSAM app has an update.

Ethics Chairman Marc DeSouza (live report) – The ethics guidelines will be posted on the website. MI Gross said the background of this effort, which PNP Miller started with the aim of creating guidelines other magic organizations could support.

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT REPORTS**

The following RVPs were not present but had submitted reports for the Blue Book: North Atlantic, Pat Colby; Central Plains, Jania Taylor; Southwestern States, John Shryock. All other RVPs were present.

**New England – Joseph Caulfield** met his goal of visiting every assembly in his six-state region in his first year as RVP. The Famous Unknown Magicians Convention moved to Manchester New Hampshire this year, where organizers plan to hold it annually. Next year, the convention will be combined with a magic contest that Assembly #118 of Manchester New Hampshire sponsors.

Mid Atlantic – David Bowers thanked the executive officers and assemblies in his region for helping during his three years as RVP and encouraged others to run for office.

South Atlantic – Debbie Leifer (live report) has enjoyed communicating with assemblies in her region. She reported that the Orlando assembly is having attendance problems and encouraged members to attend meetings of the Orlando assembly when visiting the area. It meets the 3rd Wednesday.

Midwestern States – Jeff Sikora is serving his last term and thanked the National Council for guidance and support he’s received. One of his first official acts was to present the charter to Assembly #293 of Lincoln, Nebraska. He said it was fitting that his last official act is to announce that Omaha Nebraska will start an S.Y.M. Assembly.

South Central States – Jeff Lanes thanked MI Grosso and National Treasurer MaryAnn Blowers for their service.

Northwest States – Michael Roth reported that magicians in central Oregon are working to start an assembly there. Assemblies in his region would like the National Council to consider holding a conference in a Northwestern state.

Canada – Rod Chow said members of Assembly #95 enjoyed MI Grosso’s visit: “Vinny’s Vancouver Visit.” He highlighted many coincidences concerning “95,” MI Grosso’s visit, and the S.A.M. MI Grosso thanked #95 for its hospitality.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORTS**

The following administrative officers were absent, but their reports are in the Blue Book: Insurance Advisor Michael Piacente; Gifts & Insignia, Craig Schwarz

The following administrative officers were present:

National Administrator Manon Rodriguez was pleased to announce an increase of 341 members in the S.A.M. and 5 in the S.Y.M. members since last year. The only issue is that while associate membership is up by 562, assembly membership has decreased by 131.

Chaplain Michael Douglass referred to his report in the Blue Book, as well as “up there.”

Insurance – Joseph Caulfield reporting: the committee unanimously recommends a new insurance plan issued by Lexington Insurance through Specialty Insurance Agency. It has better coverage and less cost than the current S.A.M. policy.

Motion: That the National Council authorize the insurance committee to coordinate with the national administrator a new general liability policy available to our members. Discussion: Rating is equal to the current carrier; Lexington offers $3 million liability policy; the current policy is $2 million; and riders are handled efficiently and are free. Vote: Motion passed.

Investments – Richard Dooley explained that the investment committee oversees the reserve account – the accumulation of National Council general operating surpluses – essentially a rainy day fund. He oversees the management of the fund while adhering to the following criteria: sustained income, capital preservation, investment protection and liquidity. Dividends of about $3,000 a year go to the National Treasurer. Capital gains are reinvested. As of May 31, the reserve account had a balance of $247,270.71.

Legal Council – Stu Schneider reviews contracts for hotels and performance venues and gives opinions on society issues. The main goal is to protect the S.A.M. and the board from future problems. He said there were few problems this year.

Member Services – Jean Kinnicutt is stepping down from this position. She said it had been a pleasure serving the
S.A.M.

Life Member Chairman Clem Kinnicutt signed two new members since he wrote his report. He also is stepping down as Life Member chair. He said it’s been an honor and pleasure to serve and wished new chairman Dan Scare well.

MI Grosso presented Jean and Clem Kinnicutt with Presidential Certificates of Appreciation for their work and dedication to the S.A.M.

Strategic Planning, Roles and Responsibilities – Dick Bowman said his committee defines the mission, goals and objectives of the society 5 and 10 years down the road that include role and responsibility guidelines for all officers and committee chairmen and that will be standardized so more members can get involved in the organization.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Promotions – Steve Marshall; Sharing Awareness Mentoring Program – Bob Carroll; and National Historian – Tom Ewing were not present and did not have reports in the Blue Book

Assembly Contact Coordinator
Kyle Peron thanked all who helped him maintain and update the assembly contact list. Next year he will be working more closely with the 2nd Vice President and RVPs to more effectively maintain the list.

New Assembly Coordinator Les Cooper said he had forms for those interested in forming new assemblies.

Dean George Schindler (International Deputy Coordinator, Public Relations, Houdini Fund) has not heard much from our international members, as FISM took much time and energy. He’s been working with David Xanatos on public relations and is glad Xanatos will continue as an advisor on the new website. He asked members to send publicity items to him, and it will go where it needs to go. He also reminded people that the Houdini Fund is available to magicians and related performers, and all grants are confidential. The grants are for medical-related expenses. Those seeking money must submit a request and a letter from a doctor or medical facility verifying that the requester is under medical care. This year the fund gave out about $4,000.

Facebook – Eric Decamps said that the S.A.M. Facebook page is a great platform to share ideas in real time. It originated as a fan page for a local assembly. It grew, and MI Grosso saw the potential and took it national in January. It now has 570 members, about 100 visitors a day and sees 14-16 posts a day. He thanked the council for its vision and support.

FISM Liaison and Magic Endowment Fund – Brad Jacobs: The Magic Endowment Fund has given more than $500,000 since it was established in 1986 – a remarkable feat, since total assets as of June 30 is $742,000, up only $4,000 from last year. About half the money is held in trust for the Houdini Fund. The remaining is funded by bequests, donations, dividends and interests. Jacobs listed many activities the MEF supports, from a documentary on magic and the integral part the S.A.M. has played, to scholarship for young magicians. The fund is managed by 17 trustees.

Jacobs represents the S.A.M. in the FISM general assembly and is helping organize the North American Championship of Magic at the next IBM/SAM convention. Jacobs summarized the most recent FISM contests in Blackpool England. Andost, a winner in close-up at the NACM contest at 2011 S.A.M. Convention in Pittsburgh was crowned the 2012 World Champion in Close-up Micro at FISM. We also have many Grand Prix winners at our 2012 S.A.M. Convention.

Dominico Dante of Italy has been elected FISM President. The 2015 FISM World Championship of Magic will be held in Rimini Italy, right after the 2015 S.A.M. National Convention in Philadelphia.

Gifts & Insignia – Manon Rodriguez reporting: Manon reported that the zip-up hoodies have sold out, except for youth medium. They will be available on the website. Gifts & Insignia will offer a red-white-and-blue baseball jersey at Arlington next year. She also asked that members contact them with ideas.

Good & Welfare – Anthony Antonelly thanked everyone who helped him during his three years as chairman. He was pleased that he got David Copperfield to sign one of his cards.

Elections: Election Chairman Ed Thomas returned with the results of the 2012 S.A.M. National Election. Two ballots were declared void because they neglected to follow instructions.

The following officers were elected to serve for the 2012-2013 year:

National officers:
President Elect – Dal Sanders
First Vice President – Kenrick “Ice” McDonald
Second Vice President – David Bowers
Secretary – Marlene Clark
Treasurer – Eric Lampert

Regional vice presidents:
New England – Joseph Caulfield
North Atlantic – Eric DeCamps
Mid Atlantic – Phil Milstead
South Atlantic – Debbie Leifer
Central Plains – Jania Taylor
Mid Western Shawn Rivera
South Central- Jeff Lanes
Northwestern – Michael Roth
Southwestern – Ronald Ishimaru
Canada – Rod Chow

After giving his report, Thomas left the room to destroy the ballots.

Hall of Fame & Magic Museum Inc. – John Engman said the Hall of Fame will have an exhibit in the Whittier Historic Society Museum beginning in September and running through July.

Motion (Engman): That the hall of fame elect of David Copperfield and Doug Henning to the Hall of Fame. Discussion: David Goodsell’s name will be added to theirs. Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Heroism & Patriotism – Bill Gleason announced that the video for the September 11 National Day of Service Remembrance is complete. In addition to presenting the Heroism and Patriotism Award, the committee will honor all magicians who have been nominated and those who take part in the September 11 National Day of Service with at least a commendation.

IBM/SAM Combined Convention – Mark Weidhaas reported there will be three contests held concurrently at the
convention: I.B.M., S.A.M. and NACM. After hearing feedback from the Pittsburgh NACM, the committee will require that those who wish to compete in the NACM for FISM must reside in North America.

*Magic Center Foundation – Phil Milstead* announced he has stepped down as president of the magic center and introduced the new president, PNP Dan Rodriguez. Dan reported that the Magic Center just signed a lease in Parker Colorado. The facility has a library, a museum and a theater.

*Magic for Special Education – Trudy Monti* announced the winner of the 2012 Monti Scholarship is Trevor Motycka.

*Marketing – Mark Weidhaas* asked attendees to sign their name to the large David Copperfield poster that the committee will present to David Copperfield. He also thanked MI Grosso for spearheading the effort that resulted in the new S.A.M. website.

*Marketing – Advertising – Dal Sanders (live report)* has been working on a coordinated advertising campaign that will tie in benefits to belonging to the S.A.M.

*Marketing – Member Retention – Kelly Peron* calls members who haven’t paid their dues, and members are glad to hear from the National Council. MI Grosso commended Kelly for being a major reason why membership is growing. The new website will have a spot for automatic renewal.

*National Magic Week – Jeff Sikora* said the spirit of National Magic Week should last all year long. He asked that those who wish to compete in the NACM for FISM must reside in North America.

*VETERANS PROGRAM/MILITARY LIASON – Scott Hollingsworth* said his is a win-win program for veterans, families, and those who perform for them. Since his last report, 22 magicians performed at 7 veterans’ hospitals for more than 500 veterans and their families. He has completed the updates for veterans’ hospitals and their contacts in the U.S.

*Young Member Program – Jann Goodsell* said S.Y.M. is doing great with new members who have joined on their own; not because their parents are magicians.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Unauthorized use of S.A.M. Seal by Bigfish “Houdini’s Secret” game: MI Grosso and the maker of the game have agreed that the game will continue using the S.A.M. seal and will reference the S.A.M. and will include a link to the S.A.M. website. The S.A.M. will place a link to the Bigfish website on ours.

**SOCIETY BUSINESS (Items from Caucus)**

2012-13 appointments – Chris Bontjes

Motion: (Bontjes) moved that the council approve the committee list as presented. Discussion: none. Vote: motion passed.

Assembly name changes:

Motion: Marlene Clark moved the following: Change the name of SYM Assembly Y029 from the “John Calvert Boston Area Assembly #29 Society of Young Magicians to: “John Calvert/David Oliver Boston Area Assembly #29 Society of Young Magicians.”

Change the name of SYM Assembly Y114 to the “Ed Solomon Assembly Y114 Society of Young Magicians. Discussion: none. Vote: motion passed.

Cosmetic/minor changes to Article III, Section 2b of the S.A.M. Constitu-

**SOCIETY BUSINESS (other)**

New and renewed charters (2):

Motion: (Marlene Clark) Approve the rechartering of Hocus Pocus Assembly #115

Approve a new charter for S.Y.M. Magic Dove Assembly #143 in Cocoa Florida.

Discussion: none. Vote: passed.

**GOOD & WELFARE:**

Vinny Grosso reported that Willis White of Jay Gorham Assembly #24 has passed away. **BENEDICTION:** Michael Douglass

**ADJOURN:**

Meeting was adjourned according to ritual at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Clark,

S.A.M. National Secretary
BITS AND PIECES 4

TURNING ONE SOCK INTO A PAIR

This is a simple sight gag that I can include in a show whenever the spirit moves me. I reach into my table and bring out a small white sock as I say, “Why is it that on laundry day, after you take the clothes out of the dryer, you still have one sock left over?”

As I continue, I work the sock into my hand. “As a magician I can easily turn just one sock into a pair.” At that point the hand is opened to reveal not two socks, but a pear.

A small plastic pear with a hole in one side is palmed in your hand as seen in Photo 1. You work the sock inside it, just as you would push a scarf into a hollow egg in the Sucker Egg Trick. Photo 2 shows the sock inside the pear. When you reveal the pear you hold it with the hole in the back. I don’t consider this much of a mystery; I just want a good laugh or chuckle. It took quite a while to locate a plastic pear small enough to palm. I kept checking out toy stores, arts and crafts shops, and department stores. Finally, I found the small plastic pear and I’ve used the gag ever since. The sock should be white for visibility and small so that it fits in the pear. I bought a pair of baby’s socks; now I have a spare.

THE TRIDENT

The three-pronged pitchfork carried by the devil is properly known as a trident. (It’s also carried by Poseidon, the god of the sea.) A plastic version of the trident with a wooden handle is commonly available in toy stores during the Halloween season. I use it for a cute sight gag in my shows. It’s another of the motivational/education-al segments that educators are so fond of. This one is quite short, running under a minute.

In Photo 3 you can see that I’ve modified the trident as it comes from the stores. First, I’ve shortened it to the length of a typical magic wand. Mine measures 18-inches from the tip of the center prong to the opposite end. I used some plastic tape to make the white tip. You could simply dip the tip into a can of white paint. Because the wood stick is merely a friction fit into the plastic part of the trident, it has a tendency to wobble and sometimes comes out. I solved this by driving a small carpet tack through the plastic material and into the wooden handle.

When I’m ready to do this in a show, I say, “Some people think that magicians, like me, are evil. They claim that what we do is witchcraft or sorcery. Especially if I do a trick with a magic wand...” At this point I reach into the table and bring up the white tip of the trident, leaving it standing upright as seen in Photo 4. It appears to be a magic wand. “...they think that I’m working with the devil.” As I say this I grip the tip of the “wand” in preparation for bringing it out of the table. “I want you to know that this is absolutely not true.” As I say the word “absolutely,” I quickly bring the trident out of the table, turning it upright. As I say the words “not true,” I gesture with the trident for emphasis. There is generally a good laugh, or at least a chuckle at this point; I wait for it to die down before I continue. “What I do is sleight of hand or illusions. It’s the kind of magic that you could do if you practiced enough. Would you like to know how to learn some magic? It’s simple...go to a library. Almost all school libraries and public libraries have some good beginning books on magic. The librarians are happy to help you find them. You can have a lot of fun learning to fool your friends.”

If I have the time, when I’m setting up for a school show, I’ll go to the school librarian and ask her if the library has any books on magic. Generally it does, and I tell her that I’m going to do a plug during the show for magic books; I suggest that she set up a display of magic books for the youngsters.

There are some conservative folks who react negatively to the word “magic.” They equate it with sorcery or witchcraft; at several schools some youngsters were not allowed to attend my assembly program on religious grounds. My trident routine is an attempt to help the children to understand that what they are seeing are tricks and illusions, not black magic. It also gets in a quick plug for books and libraries, and adds a bit of humor to the show. Not bad for a one-minute segment with a prop you can put together quickly and easily!

Educators love little moments like these. That’s why I always take a moment to explain to youngsters how to properly hold a rabbit after I produce one. I certainly include a warning against picking up a rabbit by the ears. I hope that none of my readers are guilty of that.

THE DAY THEY TURNED THE POWER OFF

I was booked to entertain at a small school in an equally small Nevada town. I arrived, and the principal told me that about twenty minutes into my program the power company was going to turn the
power off. This was something they did once a year to clean the generators or some such thing.

Naturally, the PA system was going to cut out. I wasn’t too worried, because this was a small group and I felt I could project. But the assembly was to be held in the gym, and to makes things worse, it had no windows! No way could I overcome the fact that we’d be in the dark.

The principal explained that they had a solution. Everybody had brought light sources from home. There were kerosene lanterns, large battery-operated campsite lanterns, and lots and lots of flashlights.

We set up the lanterns in a semicircle on the floor in front of me, and everyone with a flashlight held it in their hand and pointed it at the performing area. They would pan the flashlights around as I moved. It was like a plethora of follow spots manned by inept operators. There was a kind of charming quality to the quaint lighting; it was one of the strangest shows I’ve done – but not the strangest.

THE MISSING SCHOOL

While touring for National School Assemblies, I followed the route sheet and it led me to an empty lot with a small portable office building on it. Thinking that I had gotten a bad address, I went inside. It was the office of the principal and the secretary. I introduced myself as the magician. The principal said he had been expecting me. A couple of weeks before, the school building had burned to the ground! They had suspended classes until they could come up with a temporary solution. Everybody had brought light sources from home. There were kerosene lanterns, large battery-operated campsite lanterns, and lots and lots of flashlights.

The principal anticipated my concern, but was not the strangest show I’ve ever done. During the five seasons that I worked for National School Assemblies, I saw many different performing venues and different kinds of audiences. Most were regular elementary schools with a few junior highs and senior highs. One week, there was a venue on my route sheet that I couldn’t figure out. It was one of those rather vague generic names that told you nothing about the school except that it wasn’t a regular public school. National had booked me into schools on Indian reservations, children’s wards in hospitals, and occasional adult venues. But this place was a mystery. The principal explained that half of the children were deaf and the other half were blind! Stop a second, my brother magicians, and think about what you could do for that kind of an audience. I’d performed for several deaf groups, but I’d never worked for a combined group of deaf and blind spectators.

The principal anticipated my concern, of course, and explained what they were going to do. The deaf kids would be in rows of chairs in front of the stage; an interpreter would sign what I was saying. In the back half of the cafeteria the remaining chairs were in concentric circles for the blind kids. The principal would be seated in the center of that circle and he would watch me and speak out loud, telling the blind kids what he was seeing.

So I got set up and we started the show. From my standpoint, I thought this would be like the shows I’d done for deaf groups in the past. And the voice of the principal would not bother the deaf kids at all. I had to listen to him and keep quiet when he was speaking so that the blind kids could hear what I said when I was speaking. But the principal’s voice drove me nuts! What he chose to tell them coupled with what he didn’t tell them was sometimes astonishing. I tried to retain my composure while thinking things like, “Why didn’t he tell them that the box the bird appeared in was clear glass?” And yes, this was the strangest show I’ve ever done. And during my career I calculate that I’ve done well over six thousand shows.

This is a good place to share a few thoughts about performing for the deaf. For those of you who have done this, you’ve probably figured out what I’m about to tell you, but if you haven’t, and want to be ready for the day that you do, read on.

When you perform for the deaf, if you do your regular show, it will run much longer than usual. There are two reasons for this. First, when you speak a sentence you must then stop talking for a while as your interpreter does the sign language. The faster or better the interpreter is, the less time you need to remain silent. The other reason is that your onstage helpers cannot hear what you are saying. After you speak a sentence, they will have to turn their heads and look at the interpreter to get what you just said. If you’re like me, you probably have the habit of looking your helpers in the eyes while you are talking to them. But if they’re deaf, you can’t do that. They must be looking at the interpreter when you speak. As an example, suppose that they are looking at you and you ask them to take a card. They won’t know what to do until they see the signs. I’m not talking about deaf people who read lips. Most adult deaf folks do, but a lot of children do not, or at least not very well. Don’t think that you have to speak very slowly. Most signers are comfortable with normal speech. But do pause briefly at the end of the sentence, especially long sentences, so that the signer can keep up. If you’re not sure if they are through signing, just look over at them; you can see if her hands and fingers are moving.

One time I got to eat with deaf students in their lunchroom and I discovered that speaking in sign language has one advantage. School lunchrooms for hearing children are quite noisy because of the sound of all of the conversations the children are having; youngsters can only speak to others that are close to them. But the deaf can communicate with a friend who is way across the room as long as they have a clear line of vision. It was quite fascinating to watch. ☯

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

Steve Mayhew, the guy with serious card chops and mad comedy skillz.

You’ll enjoy every minute of Steve’s entire show, with real laughs and real astonishment from a real audience. But it’s not just laughs...

**Freedom** (aka *The Mayhew Poker Deal*), is the ultimate demonstration of false dealing, in which you appear to deal 3rd, 7th, 35th, 42nd or whatever.

For the working pros there’s **Full Frontal Conus**, in which Steve steals the aces out from under the spectator’s hand—again, and again!

The **Conus Aces**—a routine revered by generations of performers. Steve handles this with charm, even after the audience has been repeatedly punk’d.

And if that’s not enough, Steve tips four more commercial routines from his working repertoire: **Three by Three** (aka *A Balloon, a Cartwheel, and a Pony Ride*); the **James Brown Aces, Delores in the Meadow**, and the **Sanborn Switch**. We’ve also included a bonus interview with Steve, along with outrageous outtakes.

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MAGIC ON THE MOVE
(PART TWO)

This month’s column is a continuation of my thoughts and experiences about traveling with a magic act.

I ended last month’s column discussing the manipulation act that I did back in the early 1980s. Luckily, I was able to carry the entire act in a single hard-sided suitcase. The advantage of such a case is that it was within the size requirements of airlines, so I would never have to pay an oversize luggage fee. Another benefit is that when you have an ordinary looking suitcase, it is less likely to stick out as something especially valuable to thieves (and it won’t garner extra scrutiny from customs officials at the airport).

Back in those days, I used only one dove in my manipulation act. But I usually traveled with two doves so that the birds would have a companion in the cage. And in case a dove became ill, there was always a back-up bird for the show. Because of the frequent air travel, I quickly became very knowledgeable about the rules and regulations of the various airlines when it came to pets. At the beginning, I was always one hundred percent compliant, but I soon discovered that my diligence did not matter. Too often, the agents at the check-in counter did not know the rules of their airline. So they would sometimes make some crazy demand that did not apply to birds.

For instance, quite often I would be told that I could not have two doves in a single kennel. Once I was told to show proof that my dove had had rabies vaccination. I would argue with them; eventually they would call their supervisor who would ultimately tell them that those rules only applied to dogs and that I was correct. On a couple of occasions I almost missed a flight because of the delays caused by the arguments at the check-in counter. Eventually I realized that it did not pay to follow the rules. I ended up carrying the doves in a small non-obtrusive box, which had discrete air holes in it. Before I went to the check-in counter, I would go to the men’s room; in the toilet stall I removed the doves from the box and put them in a small black cloth bag. I then loaded the doves into my coat pockets. I then checked in for the flight at the counter. I also went through the metal detector at the security check point “wearing” the doves. Since doves are not metallic, I had no problem going through. After I got past security, I secretly took the doves out of the bags and put them in the travel box, which went under the airline seat in front of me. Incidentally, I would later find out that I was not the only magician to do this; one friend of mine actually wore a special vest that allowed him to smuggle six doves into the airport. Of course, this was in the 1980s, when you were allowed to go through the airport security metal detector with your coat and shoes on. Needless to say, today you cannot get away with this.

In more recent times there have been outbreaks of diseases such as the avian flu, which have made international travel with birds extremely difficult (and sometimes impossible). I knew a magician who used to produce a couple of birds in his show; when he had to do a performance in a foreign country, he captured a few white pigeons in local parks. After he used the pigeons in his act, he returned to the park and set the birds free. I can imagine that trapping wild animals could possibly be illegal in some places; at that point I think the benefit of using the birds is just not worth it. Therefore, for any magician starting out, I offer the following advice: if you plan to travel internationally I suggest that you do not use any live animals in your show. If, however, you are a magician who only travels locally by car, you are generally okay. Just make sure that your animals are cared for, transported safely, and used in a humane way.

You should be aware that around the world there is a growing animal rights movement. Today, these groups are very vocal about the use of animals in entertainment and are pressuring circuses to stop hiring animal acts. I believe it’s only a matter of time before the ire of this social movement is directed at magicians with doves and rabbits. Regardless of how you feel about this, the fact is that a magic act is not an essential commodity like food or fuel. Typically, a magician can only get booked if the audience genuinely likes the performer. All it takes is one person who vocally expresses his displeasure with the fact that you use animals in your act to keep you from getting a job. I quit using doves and rabbits decades ago, and I am much happier for it.”
a flower burst into flames and transformed into a lit candle, and a dancing cane that was on fire as it floated in the air. Without a doubt, the use of fire in magic is potentially dangerous. I have been very lucky in that I’ve never had a serious mishap in my acts, but I was aware of the potential for a catastrophe and always insisted on having a stagehand waiting in the wings with a fire extinguisher just in case. Also, my fire routines required me to travel with flash paper, flash cotton, flash string, and lighter fluid. Today airlines and governments have become extremely strict when it comes to transporting flammable material on aircraft; if you get caught with such materials in your luggage you can get into legal trouble.

Some acts that I know request that the producer of the show provide the flammable materials when the performer arrives at the gig. That is okay, I guess, but it doesn’t solve the problem entirely, because these days, out of an abundance of caution, many theaters and nightclubs have completely banned fire. I remember doing my manipulation act on a cruise ship about twenty-seven years ago — the fire was not a problem. Today on a cruise ship, if I did any trick that used fire, even something as mundane as burning a borrowed dollar bill for a routine, I would be in breach of contract and I would lose my gig. I don’t work for every single cruise line, so there might be a few exceptions to the non-fire clause that I don’t know about. But on most ships fire is a non-starter. As a general rule you should do your best to develop an act that is flameless.

WHERE THERE IS SMOKE THERE IS FIRE

Soon after World War One, the consumption of cigarettes became extremely popular. It did not take long for vaudeville-era magicians such as Richard Cardini, Jose Frakson, Keith Clark, and Roy Benson to take advantage of the smoking fad and include cigarette manipulation in their performances. Objectively speaking, there were a lot of great things about cigarette magic. First of all, cigarettes are an ordinary household object whose sudden appearance in the fingertips is very magical. This is because the lay audience is ignorant of the magician’s artifice and therefore they cannot fathom how a person can manipulate a burning object that is both fragile and dangerous to hold. Another great thing is that a magician can hold a lit cigarette between the index and middle fingers of the hand and at the same time secretly palm an object such as a ball. This method of holding a lit cigarette is very natural; the presence of the cigarette helps mask the presence of the palmed ball.

“Times change, and entertainers must change if we are to remain relevant and commercial.”

In fact, both Cardini and Roy Benson used this technique repeatedly in their excellent billiard ball routines. To make a ball appear, both men drew the cigarette smoke into their lungs, blew out a puff, and then seemingly made the palmed ball appear out of the smoke. When properly illuminated, the sudden appearance of the ball from the smoke was extremely magical.

So what’s the downside?

First of all, cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health. A person might posit that he will only smoke cigarettes for the magic act and therefore he could limit the negative health effects of the cigarettes. The problem is that cigarette smoking is also highly addictive. I personally know several magicians who did not smoke, but chose to do some cigarette routines in their acts; as a result, they ended up becoming lifelong smokers. Also, bear in mind that the negative health effects of cigarette smoking is what killed both Cardini and Roy Benson. In the book Roy Benson by Starlight I wrote that cigarette magic has killed more magician than the Bullet Catch. Sadly, this is a true statement; about a dozen conjurers were killed by the lead bullet, but those who have succumbed to the tobacco leaf no doubt number in the thousands.

If a magician is not worried about the health risks, then he should be concerned with the financial implications (and I’m not talking about the high price of cigarettes). I’m referring to the fact that, everyday, smoking is banned in more and more venues. If you are doing any sort of show in which kids are in the audience, you stand the risk of parental complaints. By using a cigarette in your act you limit the number of places that you can perform; in today’s economy that is a silly thing to do.

I look back to the 1980s when I performed a forty-five-minute set at comedy clubs filled with smokers. I also recall unpacking my prop case the next day and smelling the stale cigarette odor emanating from my gear. The smoked-filled nightclub is a romantic notion that is best viewed in photographs and cinema; for those of us who actually lived it, it was not a pleasant place to work. When I think back on it, it all seems like a bad dream.

It’s interesting that Cardini was the world’s most successful manipulator and that the basic theme of his act was the supposed hallucinations of a tipsy man who is smoking cigarettes. In his day, smoking and drunkenness was seen as fun and cool; today these activities are more often than not considered a taboo. The public’s mores evolve over time. For instance, in the nineteenth century, the Italian conjuror Bartolomeo Bosco did a magic trick that involved cutting the heads off of live pigeons. Today you can’t do such a trick. Times change, and entertainers must change if we are to remain relevant and commercial.

In summation, for anyone starting out in magic, I would recommend that you do not use live animals in your show because it will negatively affect your ability to travel. Stay away from tricks that use fire, and never use cigarettes.

In next month’s column I will tell to what you should bring to a show and how to deal with the TSA. *

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A Few Tips on the Chinese Second

This sleight is listed in *Dai Vernon’s Inner Secrets* by Lewis Ganson under the chapter heading “Miracles Take a Little Longer.” The sleight was encountered by Jack McMillan in the Chinatown area of San Francisco. There is nothing wrong with the description as written by Mr. Ganson; I learned the sleight from it directly. However, I later got several tips and worked out some things on my own to improve the process a bit.

I don’t claim to have the facility with this interesting piece of business to use it flawlessly, but it certainly can be done. The idea here is to simulate the one-handed deal often used in stud poker in which the top card is pulled around to the bottom of the pack by the index finger. It is then either tossed out from this position or dealt out with the free hand. As a one-handed second deal you are required to initiate the sleight by pulling the top two cards out so they project from the front of the deck. This is accomplished by pulling the top card back with the thumb (Photo 1) just before the two top cards are pulled forward with index finger of the hand holding the deck. As in the legitimate deal, the index finger curls up and over the front of the deck. The two top cards are moved forward as a unit to a position where the second card is overlapping the deck by about three-eighths of an inch and the top card is again realigned with the remainder of the pack.

Here are two tips. The first is that in order to hide this action, the pack should be rocked back slightly from the wrist. Doing this too much makes the sleight even more difficult, but kept to a limited amount the rocking helps hide the action. In a game you would be called for flashing the bottom card if you did this to excess, so that will help guide the amount you should limit yourself to.

Second, in order to pull the top two cards forward cleanly (that is without fanning or dragging other cards along), I sort of pinch the second card in the fold of the first joint of the index finger and pull the two along that way. This pinching occurs just as the second card begins to clear the deck (Photo 2). Pinch may be too strong a term, but it is the next thing to it.

Once you are in this position, you adjust slightly so that the pad of the index finger rests on the protruding second card down. Now by pulling down on the protruding card you cause it to come up and over the far end of the deck (Photo 3) and come to rest on the bottom of the pack just as in the standard one-handed deal. The tip of the index finger ends up pressing a third or less of this now face-up card against the bottom of the pack in the final position (Photo 4). The top card hinges up along the side of the pack where the middle, ring, and little fingers are resting. This allows the second card to come up and over the pack as the top card moves out of the way.

Here are the final two points, and they are crucial. Both are somewhat counterintuitive, and both are absolutely critical to the proper execution of the sleight. The first is that second card neither twists nor bends in its journey. It comes directly over in line with the long edges of the pack. I originally had a tendency to think the sleight would be more deceptive if the second card was kind of sneak out by limiting how much the top card was allowed to come up. But no, it was pointed out to me that the top card levers up to a virtually vertical position, allowing the unbending second card to make an unhindered journey as it circumnavigates the pack (well, almost).

The last point is the critical action of the little finger in all this.
The little finger (and only the little finger) controls the top card. The little finger holds the top card in place by the natural adhesion of the skin against the card; it straightens enough to allow the top card to lever up and then closes it back down once the second card has passed. The middle and ring fingers play no part in this at all.

When everything works right, this all occurs as somewhat of a snap. The first finger pulls the second card down and around in a quick continuous motion. The action is held back for a fraction of a second by the little finger and then the snap occurs nearly instantaneously as the metering little finger allows the action to progress. You will amaze yourself when this occurs; it looks better from the viewer’s angle in front than it does to the person executing it. Correctly done, the second card seems to pass through the top card in the manner of an optical illusion.

There is a final tip from Dai Vernon at the end of Mr. Ganson’s explanation that should not be overlooked, but I’ll leave you to find that on your own.

It goes without saying (but I’ll say it anyway) that if you are not familiar with the legitimate one-handed deal this false deal seeks to replicate, you will need to learn it first. I’ll mention in passing that while trying to learn this second deal I often inadvertently flipped the second card free of the deck and onto the table. I subsequently turned this into a little flourish by learning to flip the top card 360 degrees in this manner. This minor conceit was published in Lewis Ganson’s last book, appropriately titled, Ganson.
It’s 8 p.m. It’s dark. I’m near Detroit. I know. That’s scary enough.

The lobby of the Village Theater Performing Arts Center is packed with baby boomers, teens, and even little kids. Some of the kids are wearing costumes and some of the older crowd look to be costumed up like something out of a steampunk convention crossed with *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. A twenty-something woman leans over and asks her date, “What exactly is this show we are about to see?”

Her spiky-haired male companion replies, “I don’t really know, but my dad laughed when he saw a poster for the show, and told me I should go, and that he and his friends went to ‘spook shows’ as kids growing up in Flint. They were fun.”

Not really the answer his date was looking for, she asked, “Well, is it a movie, or is it like a play? Is it scary or is it funny?”

“I think both,” he replied, trying to play it cool. That sums up the expectations of most of the audience: they don’t exactly know what it will be, but they know it’s going to be fun. And a few, like spiky-hair guy, might realize it’s also a cool slice of show biz history brought into the present: the newly forgotten and truly American tradition of the spook show.

Like virtually all smart (meaning “profitable”) theatre, the theatrics begin before the show itself. The vintage-style posters plastered on telephone poles, coffee shops, grocery stores, and retail shops throughout the town of Canton, Michigan, promised horrors from beyond the grave. Even the give-away of a “Real Dead Body” were simply too appealing – too intriguing – for this crowd of nearly four hundred people to resist on a cool brisk fall Michigan night.

But what is a “spook show” anyhow, and why doesn’t anyone today really know?

There were many variations of the spook show. The material presented and quality of the performance varied greatly. However, most of the traditional spook shows seemed to consist of a standard format – the live magic and illusion segment, a dark séance segment known as the “blackout,” and the showing of one or more feature-length horror films.

It was in the 1930s that a performer by the name of El-Wynn (Elwin-Charles Peck) created this basic show format, which would eventually become a big moneymaker during tough economic times. Starting as a mentalist and crystal gazer, El-Wynn eventually put together a program of magic based on effects that spirit mediums were using at the time. This, of course, was in an era in which spiritualism was resurging, and such psychic “phenomena” was quite popular. El-Wynn concluded his act by devising a sort of mass séance in which audience members would be plunged into total darkness in the theater, and manifestations of ghosts and goblins would fly over their heads, literally attacking them in their seats. Until this point, most spiritualistic séances were done on a much smaller scale, and were taken as a genuine form of communication with the dead. They consisted of séance attendees hearing the voices of the dearly departed, as well as seeing ghostly apparitions and feeling cold breezes and even touches from spirits from the other side. But El-Wynn realized he could use these same effects on a much larger scale in a legitimate theater for entertainment – to give his audience a real thrill – and consequently
created the “standard format” of the spook show: live magic act, blackout, and the horror movie.

The blackout segment became the main attraction for spook shows. The blackout generally lasted no more than three to seven minutes. During the blackout, every single light in the theater would be extinguished, such as aisle lighting. Emergency exit lighting was turned off, replaced by signs with luminous paint to keep the fire marshal happy. From there, the audience would see glowing apparitions flying over their heads, they could feel cobwebs brush against their faces, and they could hear the shrieks and moans of monsters as they apparently paraded up and down the aisle, terrifying everyone in their seats. And then suddenly, just as fast as it all began, it was over. The lights all came on instantly, and there was nothing to be seen, just a crowd of screaming teenagers looking around in shock trying to figure out where all these paranormal attacks were launched from. This experience was most often followed by the starting of a horror movie on the screen.

From the 1930s through the 1960s, these shows were presented across the country at single-screen neighborhood movie palaces, often converted from vaudeville theaters. Most often the spook shows were performed late at night after all of the day’s movies were shown, presented by magicians the magic community at large has nearly forgotten. However, it is important to note that since they were quite popular, many mainstream performers like Harry Blackstone Sr. would add in a special late-night spook show at the end of the run in any particular city to try to capitalize on the show format’s popularity and to make some extra cash.

What made these shows so profitable for the theater? It was an excuse for teenagers to spend time with their friends late at night, un-chaperoned, and often in a dark theater. (The local theater was often the main social hangout for the kids of that generation.) Every week new movies were presented, and up until the mid 1950s it wasn’t uncommon for movie stars to make live appearances to bolster ticket sales of their films. So when this strange show that was presented at midnight came to town, it was a great late-night special event that brought in the crowds from near and far. And when the lights went out during the blackout, even the wimpiest guy could act brave “protecting” his date.

One of the other reasons spook shows were so profitable is that they were promoted with virtually unprecedented ad and promotional campaigns for a live show. Often using more “paper” (theatrical window cards and posters) than a circus or classic magicians, the promoters plastered the city in which they were appearing. This was combined with the revolutionary idea of using theatrical movie trailers – the early predecessor to television advertising – for a month or more to promote the show. The results were massive ticket sales.

In fact, it was spook show impresario and performer Jack Baker (Dr. Silkini) who actually invented the concept of the shared (or piggyback) ad to promote his Asylum of Horrors spook show tour. Baker built seven different touring units of his show – each playing a different theater every night. Occasionally, Baker would bring his company into a large city like Chicago, where there were literally dozens of theaters. He wanted his production to play them all – but how could he afford to properly promote the show at dozens of different locations in a large metropolitan area where ad space was expensive? Easy. Baker bought one massive full-page ad, and at the bottom included a listing of all the different theaters where the show could be seen. The “piggyback” ad, as he referred to it, was a massive success, and soon theater chains and movie studios throughout the country were using his technique to promote all of their shows.

So what was it that “killed” the spook show and made it a distant memory? There were multiple factors. First, live theatrical venues became rare. In an effort to keep up with the rising popularity of television in the 1950s, theaters began installing giant curved screens that required permanent mounting in the theater, thus blocking the stage that hosted live entertainment. And as urban flight took place and populations left the cities for the suburbs, the grand old movie palaces were torn down and replaced with smaller multi-screen movie theaters at shopping malls.

Second, over time, spook shows became a victim of their success. As more and more performers heard that a quick buck could be made doing them, magicians by the hundreds tried to jump on the bandwagon, copying the promotional posters of the pioneers. They put on hideously lame amateur displays that gave the genre a reputation for being dated, cheap, and amateurish. Amateurs would buy stacks of promotional posters from printing houses like Globe Printing or the famous magic dealer and publisher Robert Nelson in Columbus, Ohio, and then buy a couple of generic film trailers produced by the legendary Filmac
film trailer company out of Chicago. The next stop was a handful of Halloween tricks from Abbott’s. Then they would try to book themselves as a spook show. In the late ‘50s and ‘60s this practice became so common that almost all of the spook shows were using similar advertising material, with one of the things constantly mentioned being “This is the first time this show has been at this theater.”

Third, as time marched on, audiences simply found other forms of entertainment to occupy their time. As civic groups like the Jaycees started to operate interactive walk-through haunted houses, audiences didn’t have to sit in a large theater to be scared. Movie studios used special effects to push the envelope in obtaining startled reactions from their audiences. Many cities enacted curfew rules in the late 1960s that prohibited the youth from going out alone at night. Philip Morris and Jack Baker were basically the last two performers to tour with a spook show into the 1970s. It was the end of an era. Jack Baker passed away in the early 1980s, and Philip Morris parlayed his financial success as a spook show performer and producer into the world’s largest supplier of costumes and accessories. And the world virtually forgot what a spook show was.

KEITH STICKLEY RESURRECTS THE DEAD... SHOW

While attending the University of Nevada Las Vegas in the early 2000s, Keith met Scott Alexander, then a headliner at the now defunct Caesars Magical Empire. Scott and Keith shared a passion for all things spooky, and for a short time they co-produced a haunted house just off the Las Vegas strip. Keith says, “A couple of years later, the International Association of Haunted Attractions, a trade group for haunted house owners/operators, were having their annual meeting in Las Vegas. I met some of the directors while involved in our haunted house. They were looking for something special to do while in town, and I knew Scott had produced several spook show type events while he was in college years before. I pitched them the idea of recreating a classic spook show as part of their conference. They bought it. The show was a big hit.” Spook show legend Phil Morris was in the audience that night. After the show, Morris told them, “For a couple of young guys who never had a chance to really see a touring spook show, you guys really came close to re-creating what it was really like.” It was like the Pope telling a new priest, “Nice sermon.”

Several years passed and Scott became a sought-after cruise ship performer and producer, relocating his family to Pennsylvania. Keith graduated from UNLV and started performing full time, working corporate events, fairs, and festivals, as well as resorts around the world.

In the back of his mind, Stickley always wondered what it must have been like to tour a real spook show in its heyday. More than that, Keith sought to present the show in its historical context, a “spook show revival.” With the encouragement of his wife Wendy, he decided to take the big leap and actually put a spook show on stage to better experience it, bringing the art form to a new generation of audiences.

After nearly two years of preparation that included extensive...
audience: Are they really a pound gorilla of a question that must be in the minds of half the edge before the curtain even rose. And there’s that eight-hundred-seeing the ads (just as forty years ago), the audience was a little on types of movie ads drew in large audiences. That night, after the younger set in the audience. It’s not difficult to see why these black-and-white footage. Frightened looks were on the faces of definition-color-video world, we don’t often see grainy, basic, fun) and the time frame (Fifties and Sixties). In today’s high-sioned and that were made from actual vintage stock spook show art as sold by Robert Nelson and others, to Filmac-style theatrical trailers we edited and distributed to the venues before the show, to the actual props and routines used in writing the show, my aim was to create a really entertaining throw-back to the spook shows of yesteryear.”

The Show

The show begins with a projection screen playing some of the very theatrical film trailers from the spook shows of fifty years ago. What struck me about the “B” movie feel of the trailers is how much they brought the audience into both the mood (scary fun) and the time frame (Fifties and Sixties). In today’s high-definition-color-video world, we don’t often see grainy, basic, black-and-white footage. Frightened looks were on the faces of the younger set in the audience. It’s not difficult to see why these types of movie ads drew in large audiences. That night, after seeing the ads (just as forty years ago), the audience was a little on edge before the curtain even rose. And there’s that eight-hundred-pound gorilla of a question that must be in the minds of half the audience: Are they really going to give away a real dead body?

The curtain rises to a beautifully painted vintage horror backdrop complete with skeleton moon and graveyard scene. A vertical shadow cabinet with a light hanging in the middle sits center stage. As a creepy overture starts playing, a stagehand lowers the cloth sides of the shadow cabinet; mere seconds later we see the shadow of a young girl apparently looking for someone or something. Suddenly a much larger shadow appears behind her holding a butcher knife, which is plunged into the shadow of the girl. A loud shriek is heard and the shadows of the girl and the man fade away. As the music increases in volume, it looks almost as if the shadow of a monster grows very large. At the peak crescendo of the music, the front of the cabinet is whipped away, revealing Stickley as “Dr. Scream.” The audience eats it up.

Dr. Scream introduces himself in a gravelly voice, which holds pretty true to character throughout the show, save a few times when it breaks slightly as Stickley tries to catch his breath in some of the more physical numbers. He is very much playing a character – not simply being a generic magician doing some spooky tricks.

Making reference to what the audience is in for tonight and his “ghoulfriends” (as he affectionately refers to his dancers), Dr. Scream launches into a fire-eating routine that gets solid audience response and draws them in.

Dr. Scream and his ghoulfriends perform a Denny Haney-esque sword basket routine. Haney was one of Keith’s teachers and was a strong influence on Stickley while Stickley helped run Denny’s Las Vegas magic shop while in college. Denny’s influence is apparent, and Stickley is better for it. It’s great to see a comparatively young guy learn from those like Haney who came before him, taking their advice and teaching, and presenting classic material well.

From there, Dr. Scream performs the seemingly obligatory trick in every Halloween show – the French guillotine head-chopper. While the lines and gags predate dirt, it is amusing to a fellow magician just how much mileage can be obtained out of this scenario. Dr. Scream pulled out all the standard campy gags, including the newspaper headline and the basket with “yesterday’s head” still in it. If this was done out of character at a magic convention today, we’d probably throw fruit – or at least be able to finish all the lines and gags for him. But in the context of this show it worked. Stickley plays the part, the audience laughs at the right times, and it’s hard to argue with that.

Next was something that many people in the lobby were joking about before the show, the giving away of a “Real Dead Body.” Devised in the 1960s by spook show performer Phil Morris as a marketing gimmick to get kids in the theater, I was really interested to see how this would play. Originally, Dr. Evil (Phil Morris) would host a dance contest – most often the Twist – on stage with multiple female participants. Dr. Scream gets four ladies from the audience and has a funny balloon-popping race. The losers get various knick-knack consolation prizes, but it is announced that the winner wins a real dead body. As the funeral march music starts, Dr. Scream blindfolds the winner; his ghoulfriends bring out a cardboard coffin and walk it in front of the spectator. Since the spectator is blindfolded, Dr. Scream narrates to the spectator everything that is happening, and even asks the audience to verify his statements. The witch ghoulfriend opens the lid of the coffin,
and Dr. Scream places the spectator’s hand into it; she screamed as she felt “cold slimy flesh.” The audience and spectator all laugh when Dr. Scream reveals just what the dead body was. I won’t reveal it here, but it was definitely real, dead, and a body...minus the feathers. This is a pretty funny bit – and obviously a total come-on to get people talking. While it probably didn’t have the impact today as it did when Morris originated the stunt, it really added to the campy, Rocky Horror-type atmosphere of the event.

Dr. Scream then announces we were headed to the crematorium. The main drape opened to reveal a prop rarely seen performed – the classic Cremation Illusion. Trying to go for that authentic vintage feel, Stickley had this prop constructed from the original plans used to build the unit used on the Harry Thurston (Howard’s older brother) show. Dr. Scream hypnotized one of his ghoulfriends and slid her into the end of the cremation coffin. A torch was lit and handed to Dr. Scream by a stagehand, and he inserted it into the coffin, creating several bright flashes and puffs of smoke. Due to modern fire regulations, Dr. Scream is relegated to using a little smoke powder and some flash paper. A few days after the show, Keith mentioned to me, “Traditionally, ground-up road flares were used and the coffin was really set ablaze!” The sides of the coffin are lowered and all that is left is a smoldering skeleton. And the crowd goes wild. This is a very deceptive and entertaining illusion – by far the highlight of the show. More modern illusions – with beveled bases, aluminum strips, and fancy veneers – would look out of place in this show. This prop is a plain-looking box, painted with flat surfaces, and it looked really good.

After the show, Keith told me a magician once asked him, “Why didn’t you do a run-around with the girl after you burned her?” Stickley, slightly confused, asked what he meant by the comment. The magician stated, “Well, she’s not actually in there, right – she must have snuck out!” Keith winked, laughed, and walked off. This thing is a fooler.

My Cranky Old Magician Two Cents: Everyone always asks, “What’s new in magic?” Keith is all too happy to have spent much of his youth asking the old guys “What’s good in magic?” This classic piece, performed well, reminded me that some of the old-timers really did know what they were doing. Kudos.

After a cleanly executed card manipulation routine in front of the main drape, the curtains again rose to a trick I hadn’t seen in years – a Richiardi style buzz saw. Dr. Scream says a few words about Richiardi as he dons a lab coat before doing a very competent version, complete with blood and guts flying at the audience, and several audience members inspecting the hideous gash across his assistant. Unlike Richiardi, however, the curtains close on the dead and dripping assistant.

In front of the curtain, Dr. Scream thanks the audience for coming out, and explains that what they had been witnessing for the past hour was a recreation of the lost theatrical tradition known as the spook show. He speaks of the live show, and then of the movie that would be following (William Castle’s House on Haunted Hill). But then he gets very quiet as he describes what would be coming next...before the movie...the blackout. Using every creepy adjective imaginable under the sun, Dr. Scream implies that the audience may feel many strange things – snakes, spiders, ants – crawling about when the lights go out. The audience is literally on edge with nervous laughter and yelps of “oh no.”

Stickley plays this part masterfully; Phil Morris had talked to him and taught him at length just how important it was to paint a picture in the audience’s mind before the lights go out. It certainly worked. Dr. Scream wishes the audience “pleasant nightmares” in the grand tradition of spook show legend Bill Neff, and the audience is plunged into darkness. Real darkness.

One of the problems with creating true blackout conditions in a modern theater is the overabundance of light leaking from exit signs. And today’s audience comes armed to the teeth with iPhones and every other imaginable electronic flashing gizmo. In his speech before the blackout, Dr. Scream gently suggests that anyone using a light-up device would force the show to be over. Keith tells me his success rate with this “warning” is one hundred percent – an impressive bit of showmanship. Stickley has also painstakingly (and with great expense) created an exit sign system that is approved by most fire marshals. He said, “It’s not easy, and it’s certainly not cheap,” but it works and allows for a nearly perfect blackout sequence.

As the lights go out, a loud, most un-nerving (and dare I say annoying) soundtrack plays. If you’re into dying cats, air-raid sirens, and screeching nails on a chalkboard played full blast out of theater speakers, you’d have loved this. It’s true – the audio itself is scary. But I couldn’t help but laugh as adults and kids alike actually feel “bugs” land on them in their seats. A glowing skeleton break-dances on the stage, and several large glowing “monsters” float around the sides of the stage. Those not shutting their eyes in fear can see two flying, glowing “ghosts” streaking over their heads – a really cool effect that had many yelling, “Hey look up there.” When the lights come on three minutes later, there is nothing to be seen, aside from Dr. Scream standing center stage taking a large bow and popcorn strewn all over the theater! He announces the movie that is about to start, takes another bow, receives a large round of applause, and exits to the wings as the movie starts.

After the movie it was obvious by looking around that the crowd had a good time. Several audience members express to Keith how they couldn’t believe these shows didn’t exist anymore. And therein lies the problem with a show like this: How do you sell it when no one today knows what it is?

Stickley’s interest in this nearly forgotten form of entertainment, as well as magic history, is infectious – and it shows as he talks to people leaving the theater. If he gets to educate and share his passion for the history of our art with a new crop of audiences and they can learn to appreciate and enjoy it, his ultimate goal will have been met. He’s a complete history geek at heart, and the way he expresses that is by fully immersing himself into that history. It will be interesting to see what he recreates next. *

Go to www.SpookShowRevival.com for more information on Dr. Scream’s Spook Show Revival.
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David Copperfield Interview

Monday morning started with an interview with David Copperfield. Stan Allen, the editor of MAGIC magazine, chatted with David about the history of his career. David came off as genuine and quite humble about his stardom and many accomplishments.

As David answered Stan’s questions about his life, there were ample revelations about David's performing philosophy. He talked about the importance of having an original point of view in magic. He said, “As a magician, you have to wrap around your magic the same things singers wrap around their songs.”

David was able to laugh about some of his early television pieces and at the same time relay to the audience the importance of surrounding yourself with smart people to help you when you are in unfamiliar territory. There were many moments of humor and fun during the two hours.

To the delight of the audience, David talked about some of his more dangerous television illusions and how close to disaster some of those came. We found that one of his biggest injuries came from when he cut off a part of his finger with a very sharp pair of scissors during a rope routine.

The interview was interspersed with pictures and videos of his many specials and television appearances. The audience loved it and gave David Copperfield a long standing ovation.

After the interview, National Administrator Manon Rodriguez presented David Copperfield with a stained-glass portrait of Houdini that she had worked on for many months. David, pleased with the gift, will be adding it to his museum. – Christian Painter

Later in the afternoon, in a two-hour, youth-only event, Copperfield, his right-hand man Chris Kenner, and Jonathan Bayme from Theory 11 answered questions and gave advice to the over sixty young magicians attending the conference. No question was off limits.

When someone asked a question that showed true interest in the art, David spoke to them later, giving them further mentoring advice.

After the Q&A, David went around to each ten-seat table and signed souvenirs, took pictures, and continued to answer the multitude of questions. Also in attendance was David’s son, who also asked questions. Will his son join the S.Y.M. someday? Time will tell. —Bruce Kalver
David Copperfield and Mac King Shows

David Copperfield and his team have come up with one of the most entertaining shows convention-goers had ever seen. Copperfield presented many new illusions, both big and small. Some tug at the heartstrings, while others completely baffled us. For its sheer entertainment value, the Copperfield show is a must-see. I know I’ll be back to see it again.

Warm, charming, homey, and hysterically funny were some of the adjectives used to describe Mac King and his magic show. From the moment Mac appeared on stage, we knew we were in for a good time. Along with his down-home, welcoming personality, Mac has structured his show to have a laugh every thirty seconds, which makes it the funniest and most family-friendly show in Vegas. Mac King is another must-see when you are in town. —Bruce Kalver

Magic Duets

Magic-themed theaters are the new trend popping up in various locations around the country. Two couples who have made a living performing weekly in these type of venues came together to create an unusual evening, giving us all a taste of what they do in their respective theaters.

Roland Sarlot and Susan Eyed create a fun, vaudeville-inspired magic show that shows off their ability to entertain a crowd. Susan, mixing in belly dancing, acting, and Carol Burnett-style facial reactions, is in perfect sync with Roland as consummate showmen. We felt as if we were in a vaudeville tent show in the old West as they took us around the world. Of particular note is their sword basket routine. The inside of the basket lid is decorated a certain way so that at the end of the routine, Susan holds the lid behind her head, framing the ending blackout. Seeing a taste of their performance makes you want to see their full show in Arizona.

The other couple was Christian and Katalina from Indianapolis. This husband-and-wife team has been working together for thirteen years, and they have mastered the ability to be charming. You can see the love they share for each other as they perform very entertaining demonstrations of their psychic abilities. Christian is respectful of his wife and partner, and he treats audience members with the same attitude. Rather than cringe when asked to come up, audience members are eager to help out. Watching them was refreshing. They are spot on with their code act, which was the most natural repartee many have ever heard.

Not satisfied with just doing their time-tested routines, the two couples decided to create some special routines for the S.A.M. convention. These routines not only showed how creative they can be working together, but also how each member was willing to share the stage. It was a wonderful show. —Bruce Kalver
From the wild-and-crazy antics of David Stone to the classic repertoire of maestro Johnny Thompson, attendees at the S.A.M. convention in Las Vegas were treated to a wide variety of lectures. With lecture topics ranging from “The Magic of Ghosts in the Cemetery” to the latest and greatest “tech toys,” there was truly something for everyone.

—Michael Close
Ali Shelley hosted the close-up show, which featured four performers from France. She got it off to a fun start using her flight attendant character. The audience loved her inside jokes.

David Stone was the first act and had the audience howling with his whacky style. He produced a card from between his toes, other cards appeared on his forehead, and decks vanished at will.

Mathieu Bich wooed the audience with his easy-going and relaxed style. His close-up manipulation of the pasteboards had even jaded magicians ooh-ing and aah-ing.

With multiple surprise and tugs at the heart, Boris Wild charmed everyone using a romantic theme, butterflies, and cards. He received a standing ovation.

Fresh from the FISM convention in Blackpool, England, Yann Frish finished the show with his Grand-Prix winning act. It is a simple and elegant act that uses only a cup, a ball, and a pitcher. Yann’s character is eccentric and battles the mysterious multiplying and vanishing ball. The dynamic of the battle with this inanimate object is highlighted by his over-the-top facial expressions. He also received a standing ovation. – Christian Painter
Close-Up and Stand-up Contests

Dr. Paul Critelli Close-up Contest of Magic

Dressed nicely in a black suit, Ben Jackson showed us how to make money with lemons. Shaping a lemonade sign into a cone, he produced a lemon. Taking a straw and pushing it into the cone, a tall cool glass of lemonade popped out to the surprise of everyone.

Using the straw as a wand, coins appeared and vanished in yet another version of Three Fly. Unexpected glasses of iced lemonade appeared throughout his performance, along with lemons and lemon slices. One card effect had the selected card appearing inside a lemon that Ben, with a sour face, bit into. As a surprise, his shoe was produced instead of lemonade exposing his yellow socks.

At the end of his set, everything turned pink: pink lemons, pink lemonade, his socks (which were previously yellow), and the deck of cards. It was a nicely-routined and well thought-out performance. Ben won the close-up contest, and was also awarded the Silver Medal of Merit and the Brad Jacobs People’s Choice Award.

You knew this was going to be a fun act when Pipo Villanueva came out holding a hypno-wheel on a stand and said, “This is the best thing in my act...maybe I’ll save it for later!”

He opened with a version of Three Fly with a charming twist. He kept trying to vanish the coins, but they kept appearing in the other hand. Coins kept reappearing, while the funny, frustrated magician tried to make it all work. Although English was not his main language, his personality and wit made us enjoy every frustrating moment.

Hypnotizing the audience with a hypno-wheel for three seconds, Pipo had a spectator select a card. Every time the spectator looked at a card Pipo held up, it was the selected card, but it kept instantly changing to a different card when Pipo looked at it. This was repeated to lots of laughter from all. Finally, the selected card disappeared from the deck and appeared under the hypno-wheel. Pipo was awarded second place in the close-up contest and The President’s Award (which is chosen by the contestants).

Starting out simply with some coins, a Slinky spring toy, and a napkin, Chaz King made the coins mysteriously appear inside the Slinky and occasionally under the napkin. This was a very smart routine with several good surprises at the finale. A three-ring Linking Ring routine closed his set— a routine filled with unexpected links and unlinks including a surprise link to his belt. Chaz won the William Andrews Mystic Craig Award for professional promise in close-up. —Bruce Kalver

The Father Cyprian Murray Stage Contest of Magic

Hiroki Hara grabbed our attention wearing a stunning traditional Japanese costume. Using dynamic movements, he produced parasols, silks, and card fans. Throughout the routine he made surprising and elaborate costume changes. Hiroki won the Father Cyprian Murray Stage Contest of Magic. He also won the Brad Jacobs People’s Choice Award.

Reuben Moreland completely surprised the audience with a very creative and Spartan act using a glass and balls that changed color at will. His act contained an impressive display of manual dexterity. Reuben won second place in the stage contest.

Bill Boaz opened the competition with a well-structured and elegant rope and silk routine. His movements were as smooth as the silks he produced, and his stage character was engaging. The audience rewarded him with a strong round of applause. Bill won the President’s Award. —Christian Painter
Whitney Adams (aka The Wonderful Whitney) was a fabulous emcee. Showing skill and maturity far beyond her years, she was well prepared, clever, and very entertaining. She made quite a few fans after her appearance. At one point after making a humorous mistake, Whitney was able to quickly brush it aside and keep the show on time and on pace. She is one to keep your eye on in the future.

TJ Ketchmark wowed the audience with a very smooth act that featured parasols and balls. Keeping the act simple and elegant kept the focus on TJ’s skilled and well-rehearsed movements. The audience erupted into spontaneous applause. You can bet that this skilled performer will be competing very soon.

Quintero entertained the audience with a futuristic act that featured black lights, his version of the Dancing Cane, and a microphone with a mind of its own – a very fun act.

Magic Nick surprised the audience by walking out on stage in full devil costume, complete with tail and red face. His characterization of Lucifer was hilarious, complete with clever jokes and tricks that made sense to the character. His act is ready to walk off the stage and into a local night club.

Oliver Dodd strolled out and displayed his many magical talents. After spending way too short a time impressing us with his abilities, he strolled back off the stage in the same way.

Youri came out with a clever sign that folded and unfolded in various ways that introduced him. He was a magic machine and the audience enjoyed his impish personality.

Sebak was fantastic as he skateboarded on stage while performing card manipulations. He continued to amaze the audience with his dexterity with the pasteboards. What made Sebak stand out was that his act made sense to his age. It was total enjoyment for the audience. —Christian Painter
The Las Vegas Magic Experience Show

The Wednesday night show was presented in the brand new Smith Center. Entering the venue, the attendees were awed by the multitude of boxes and balconies that were reminiscent of a Vienna opera house. Every seat was perfect for the show that was about to take place. The sound was perfect and the stage was well equipped; the audience was rewarded with some wonderful performances.

Fielding West emceed the show with lots of fun jokes and bits of magic business, including his Bengal tiger production. He kept the night moving and kept us entertained.

Luna Shimada performed with tremendous intensity and skill, creating an act that was both visually stunning and highly entertaining. Harkening back to her father’s parasol act, she produced the colorful umbrellas with confidence and surprise. Her Orange-Lemon-Egg-Canary is pure perfection.

Jason Baney presented a manipulation act that pleased the audience. His unique ideas, such as producing silks from a puff of spray paint, makes this act not the normal sleight-of-hand act, but something to sit up and take notice of.

Losander is a legend in dramatic performance, and his performance tonight was no exception. He is the master of the stage, presenting his traditional act and, like many other legends, you marvel at his perfect floating table presentation.

Ayala and Tanya are not the typical illusion act. With dramatic flair, they present illusions consisting of masks, swords, fire, and “torture-like” boxes. High energy and tango-like movements make this an act that completely engages an audience. —Bruce Kalver
The International Magic Spectacular Show

R.G. Smith served as the emcee for the Thursday night show, bringing out Hyun Joon Kim as the opening act. Opening to a stark stage with only himself and a top hat stand, Hyun meticulously devastated the audience with his amazing card manipulations. It was true artistry in motion. His music, transitions, and movements were beautiful. A very nice touch was that he ended exactly as he started, wearing a single white glove and standing next to the top hat.

Next up was Funtasio, who delighted the audience with a parody of an “almost good” magician. Using many of the props that he markets, he had many humorous and clever moments throughout the routine. However, there were also a few times when he fooled the audience badly. They loved it.

John Cassidy was next to take the stage. He began with microphone trouble, and many people thought his act was going to die since he is a talking act. Then, luck smiled on him and his microphone began working. He brought up two children and took the audience on one of the wildest rides of the convention. The reactions of the children had the audience in hysterics. John masterfully orchestrated their movements, actions, and dilemmas using his trunk of terror. At one point he asked one of the children who looked a little frightened if he wanted to live his life in fear or in adventure. The child responded, “Adventure.” The audience went wild. It was the act of the night.

Chris Kenner was next up and performed two of his signature acts. Donning a Velcro suit, he had people throw Velcro balls at him. He had predicted where they would land. After that he performed with a divining rod that finds H2O paper.

Next up were the eagerly awaited Johnny and Pam Thompson, performing as Tomsoni & Co. They did the act they have been performing for decades, and the audience loved every moment of it. They received a standing ovation.

The closing act was Nathan Burton. His rapid-fire illusion show was fast and furious. One couldn’t count the number of illusions that rolled across the stage that night. In one particularly surprising illusion, a large Plexiglas box was shown and then was covered with a cloth. In what seemed like only a few seconds, the cover was whipped away and four Las Vegas dancers were standing in unison, smiling at the audience, as if they had just finished a dance number.

The show was a huge hit; everyone was talking about something different as they left the theater. —Christian Painter

Convention Photos by Dale Farris
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**MUSIC AT THE WAVE OF A WAND**

In our never-ending quest to find portable speakers for our performances, I found this really cool solution. **Zooka Wireless Speaker Bar** is a silicon tube that can clip on your iPad or laptop and produce sounds that are five times louder than your device. Since it is Bluetooth, you can also separate it and place it anywhere. The sound comes out of two separate speakers on the ends of the tube. Simple buttons make it a snap to use.

A rechargeable battery gives you eight hours of music and works with any tablet, Smartphone, laptop, or media player. If you don’t have Bluetooth support, you can plug your device into a plug in the back of the tube.

Although it comes in six colors, I recommend the black one. You can use some white vinyl tape on both ends to make it look like a magic wand. When you do close-up magic at a table, you can drop the wand on the table and play your music from your phone. This device began as a Kickstarter project and enough people invested to bring it to production. Well worth the $100, it is available at the Apple Store and the manufacturer’s website (www.carbonaudioinc.com).

**YOUR EYES TELL ALL**

**Magic-Eye** (don’t forget the dash) is a cool, really easy magic app that is fun to do. A spectator selects a card of his choice from your iPhone and then flips the card over so that you cannot see what card has been selected. Looking into his eyes, you name three cards and apparently look for a subtle shift to tell you which card has been selected. You correctly guess the card selected by the spectator.

The method is clever and easy to do, so you can concentrate on the routine. I also see this app as a utility tool for other effects. I’ve been showing this around and it gets great reactions. I can see magicians performing this at bars to meet women (if telling them that you are a magician doesn’t scare them away). Use it on any iDevice. **Magic-Eye** is available at the iTunes App Store for $3.99.

**Found a cool gadget, app, or website for magic applications? Share your discovery for Bruce to include in a future column. Email him (SAMtalkBruce@cox.net).**
Hello again, and welcome to another slice of Scottish magic. This time around I have two routines from a couple of heavyweights in the local magic scene: Paul Wilson and Peter Duffie. I met both men in 1988 through Roy Walton’s shop in Glasgow, and have had many happy sessions with them over the years.

Paul’s routine is one of the more challenging that I’ve put in this column, but don’t let that put you off. If you needed a reason to learn and use the bottom deal (and who hasn’t?), then this one is for you. The spectator thinks of a card and you find it, while they find a card that you are merely thinking of. When you think about it, this is pretty gosh darned interesting.

Peter’s routine is one that I used a lot when I read it way back when; it was published in Imagine, one of Peter’s early booklets (I first read it sitting in Paul’s spare room), and then again in Card Compulsions. It’s called The Ultimate Truth, and it’s one of the best Lie Detector solutions extant. Also, in a nice yin/yang to Paul’s routine, it’s dead easy to do. You can find more of Peter’s books at www.PeterDuffie.com

Having said all that, let’s get to the routines. First off, Paul’s description of Old Bottom, with a few interjections from me.

Old Bottom
By Paul Wilson

This is an alternative method for a Tomas Blomberg effect.

This requires no duplicates and a modicum of skill, which is rewarded with a sense of fairness that’s quite interesting. Most people will completely ignore this thanks to the bold use of the bottom deal. Rest assured, if you have this move down, the trick works very well.

Place any ten-card stack you can remember on top of the deck. The Four to King of Diamonds works just fine, so long as you are able to manage the audience at the end (they cannot be allowed to pick up the rest of the cards and examine them). Paul uses the first ten cards of his memorized stack, but you could as easily use Eight Kings, which we discussed in the March 2011 Basic Training.

You are going to false shuffle, keeping the top ten cards in order. Any false shuffle you know will do, but the overhand chop shuffle from the December 2009 Basic Training works nicely here. Make sure that the first chop is more than ten cards, pick them up on the second chop, and then shuffle off the remaining cards, throwing the stock down when you get to the break. If you look back at the lesson you’ll understand that with ease! Tell the spectator that you will take ten cards; then deal ten cards onto the table in a pile, reversing their order. If you are casual and don’t look at the deck when you shuffle and deal, pretty much anything will fly here.

Hand the deck to a spectator and ask him to shuffle and deal ten cards for himself. All the cards are face down.

Pick up your pile as you say, “I’m going to ask you to think of any number from one to ten; I will then show you your cards and ask you to merely think of the card that is at your number.” Offer to demonstrate. Pick up your cards, pretend to think of a number, and then look through them one at a time so only you can see them; do not disturb their order.

Now drop your packet in front of you and pick up the spectator’s cards. Ask him to think of a number and remember it. Show him the cards in his packet one at a time, ensuring that you do not disturb the order. When you do this, it’s a good idea to hold the packet in a dealing grip and thumb off the top card. Take this in the right hand, with the thumb on top, and raise it to eye level to display it; at this point say, “One,” out loud. Bring the right hand down and take the second card under the first. Raise this as before, and say, “Two.” If you go slowly and say the words out loud, the spectator will have no problem remembering his card.

Say, “You now have a card in mind that I could not possibly know, correct?” Drop his packet on top of yours. “Also, I am thinking of a card you cannot possibly know.” Pick up the combined packet in the left hand, face down, ready for a bottom deal.

Deal ten cards in a row, counting from one to ten, each card separated from the others (not overlapped). All the cards are dealt from the bottom. Deal these in front of the spectator. Before you break into a cold sweat at the thought of ten bottom deals in a row, remember that you are dealing from a packet of twenty cards; this is so much easier than dealing from a full deck, and it gets easier the more cards that you deal. The deception can be made less frightening by doing this instead: while you are looking at the spectator, bottom deal the ten cards into a pile on the table in front of you. Because you are dealing onto a pile, there is less need to look at them as you deal, and you can maintain eye contact with the helper. Once you have dealt the ten cards, pick them up and spread them across the table so that they do not overlap. A simple ribbon spread and a manual adjustment works well here.

Say, “We also know the position of our thought-of cards: they are at the number we each thought of.” As you speak, deal the remaining cards in a row in front of you, the first three dealt from the bottom. Count aloud as you deal. You can either deal in a row here, or use the pile method again. If you dealt into the pile on the first deal, it is best to do that again here.

The rest is easy (so says Paul, anyway); ask the spectator to name his number and to place his hand on top of the card at that position.

Thanks to your stack, you now know the card under his hand. Also, you know where his card is, too. If he says a number from one to seven, add three to that number and tell him that this is the number you thought of. If he names eight, nine, or ten, subtract that number from eleven and name that number. Cover up the card at that position with your hand.

For example, let’s say we are using Eight Kings as our stack, and the spectator thought of the number five. The fifth card in Eight Kings is the Two of Clubs; you cover up the card at the eighth position in your row. If he said nine, that card in the stack is the Queen of Clubs, and you cover position two.
Pause for a second then name your card (the card in the stack at the number he named) and ask him to name his card. Ask him to turn over the card under his hand. Pause while he reacts, and then turn over your card to show his thought-of card. Breathe an enormous sigh of relief and resolve to practice your bottom deal more…

✧✧✧✧✧✧✧

The Ultimate Truth
By Peter Duffie

We need only twelve cards for this effect, and the values are not that important. All that you need to remember is even, even, odd four times, and CHSD three times. So the first card needs to be an even Club, then an even Heart followed by an odd Spade and an even Diamond. Photo 1 shows one such arrangement.

Now that you have assembled your packet, it can be cut any number of times without disturbing the relationship of the cards. Hand the cards to the spectator and ask her to cut it and complete the cut as many times as she wishes. She looks at the top card, remembers it, replaces it on top, and then hands the packet to you. Let’s assume that the card she selected, which is now on the top of the packet, is the Two of Clubs.

There is now a quick and easy shuffle sequence that places the Two into the required position. Double undercut the Two from the top to the bottom of the packet and then take the cards into a shuffle grip. Run off four cards singly, as you talk about poly graphs and the like, and then throw the remainder on top. You are now going to cut the cards, but you only take two cards from the top to the bottom. Don’t look at the cards at all during this sequence. You are just shuffling up the packet; there is no need to pay attention to them. If you need help in cutting two cards, all you need to do is lift the top card slightly at the rear with the right thumb, and then lift the card underneath it. Lift up to get the break and complete the cut.

Now you are going to set the lie detector. From the top of the packet, out-jog the second card, and continue this “anti-faro” action for five cards. Photo 2 shows this. In action, this is a very fast sequence that doesn’t need a table, nor does it need to be this wide; just out-jog the cards and keep everything in your hands. When you have done that, square the cards so you have the five cards out-jogged for just under half their length.

Now you are going to ask the same three questions. First, ask if the selection was red or black. Reach into your pocket and remove the outermost card, without showing it. Once she answers, turn the card to display the truth. The next two questions are dealt with in the same way, taking the outer card. On the final question – the actual card – reach in and take the innermost card and you are done.

A Pocketful of Lies

Peter has added another phase to the routine, and here it is. As before, ask your spectator to cut the packet, remember the top card, and hand the packet back to you. This time you run two cards and throw the balance on top. This places the selection on the face of the packet; place the cards into your right pocket with the backs out.

You are now going to ask the same three questions. First, ask if the selection was red or black. Reach into your pocket and remove the outermost card, without showing it. Once she answers, turn the card to display the truth. The next two questions are dealt with in the same way, taking the outer card. On the final question – the actual card – reach in and take the innermost card and you are done.

Final Thoughts

There you go – two routines at opposite ends of the difficulty spectrum, but both well worth the effort. In fact, after typing this up, I think I’ll resurrect Peter’s lie detector routine into my active effects again. See you next time. ♦
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Houdini’s constant quest for new and novel tricks brought some spectacular pieces of apparatus. The most sought-after by performers and collectors, the Flight of Time, was singled out for mention in The Billboard of March 20, 1926: “The newly introduced alarm clock number gets one of the biggest hands of the evening. It is his own invention, works smoothly, and is very impressive. He makes clocks - eight of them - disappear from the tray on one side of the stage and they appear instantaneously...on the other side of the stage.”

What the audience saw was this: The first alarm clock was thrown into the air, where it vanished. Instantly it reappeared, ringing, on the end of a ribbon suspended from a thin-topped stand on the other side of the stage. One by one the remaining seven clocks vanished and reappeared in the same way. The trick was a quick one, but visually startling.

Houdini was not the inventor. The Flight of Time was built by Rudolf Schlosser, based on an illusion introduced to the magic fraternity by Carl Willmann of Germany. Schlosser’s apparatus was far superior to that of Willmann and other versions by Floyd Thayer, both of whom simply called their four- and five-clock tricks, Ringing Alarm Clocks on Ribbons. Houdini chose eight clocks on the “bigger is better” principle, and eventually used oversized watch chains instead of ribbons - a theatrically stronger choice. Several subtle features of Schlosser’s design made the trick seem impossible. Perhaps most important, when the clocks reappeared they seemed to jump onto the chains from where the magician had thrown them, across the stage, not dropping or shooting down from directly above. During Houdini’s day, other magicians coveted the trick. His brother Hardeen commented that at one time Thurston had offered Houdini $10,000 to use the apparatus in big theaters.

After Houdini’s death, the Flight of Time became a signature illusion in Hardeen’s show at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, on Broadway in Olsen and Johnson’s Hellzapoppin’ musical review in the early 1940s, and on the road. It then passed to Hardeen’s successor, Doug Geoffrey, who presented it as Hardeen Jr. However, he thought the eight-clock throw was a bit unwieldy on the smaller stages he played, so he had a new version of the trick built that used only five clocks, extras from the larger set. They were held on a tray before they vanished to appear on an appropriately-sized stand.

All the apparatus is now in the Salon de Magie. It came from William Rauscher, who presented it in his own full-evening programs. Rauscher’s performance of the effect was the highlight of the New England Magic Collector’s Association weekend in 1986. The five-clock unit is on display in the Salon. The stand is 33-inches tall, 51-inches long, and 11 inches from front to back. Scratched inside one of the clocks on the eight-clock unit are the initials “J.C.” and the date 1932. One could assume that Jim Collins, Houdini’s faithful assistant, scratched them there when he repaired the trick for Hardeen at that time, six years after Houdini’s death. ✪
First off, I would like to welcome Dan Stapleton back to this column; he has the distinction of being the first two-time contributor here. Last September he was featured in these pages along with his effect, Spirit Buttons, and now he's back with his effect, Ectoplasm. (Do you notice a theme here?)

Last September I introduced you to Dan and told you of his years of performing an illusion show at Circus World in Florida before hitting the high seas for a long and adventurous career as a cruise ship magician.

One thing that I have admired about Dan over the years is his love for magic, its history, and the performers of our great art. A few years ago Dan decided to produce “tribute” shows in Orlando to honor magicians in central Florida for their years of service to our craft. I asked him to share some stories of these special events here so that my readers could learn of these types of shows and possibly start doing them in their own areas, since it’s such a great idea.

I’ll let Dan tell you about these shows in his own words.

“The first tribute show I did in 2007 was for three Central Florida magicians who were all involved with the Orlando magic scene in the 1960s. Don Masters owned magic shops at various years, and in various locations, throughout Orlando, and was a student of Burling Hull. Harry Wise was early television’s “Mr. Magic,” and Lee Bernard was a DJ/emcee/magician at various nightclubs as Walt Disney World was being built. (All three have passed away since the tribute.) I always thought that, probably, any club could select two or three elder magicians from their area and highlight their lives for their peers, and make it an interesting program.

“The second tribute in 2008 was for Bev Bergeron and Don Arthur; this time I stepped it up by including films and slides that helped to chronicle their lives.

“For the third one in 2009, I rented an old restored theater; it was, by far, one very elegant evening. Legends Jack Kodell and Celeste Evans were the honorees in this two-hour tribute, with Celeste walking offstage with an arm of long-stemmed roses and Jack Kodell and his wife Mary riding off in a white limousine.

“In each of these tributes I also had a proclamation of appreciation created for them to add to their memoirs.

“Why did I do these tributes? Because I appreciate the history and the contributions to our art from those who share with us.”

As stated above, Dan hopes that other assemblies and clubs will take this idea and run with it to pay tribute to their own local legends of magic. It’s a worthwhile endeavor that would be rewarding, not only for the honorees, but for the attendees and organizers as well.

**Ectoplasm**

By Dan Stapleton

Here’s a great spooky and fun routine for your Halloween shows. Read the presentation below and then the workings and you will have no trouble with this one.

**Effect:** Resting on the table is a stack of six small Styrofoam drinking cups. Next to that is one more cup with seven small black birthday candles inside. An empty glass bowl also rests on the table. Seven spectators are invited to each take one cup and one candle of their choice. They are asked to make a tiny hole in the bottom of each of their cups, with a pencil or pen tip, and to place the candle inside of the hole sticking out the cup bottom enough for the cup to act as a candle holder when inverted. After this is completed, the seven spectators are asked to each place the cups on the table and set them in a row next to each other in any order they choose. The magician now hands out six slips of paper and asks the spectators to each write the name of a living person on each slip. A seventh paper is handed to someone and they are asked to write the name of a dead person. All items, cups, candles, and paper are freely examinable at any time.

After writing the names, the helpers are all asked to fold their paper in half, and then in half again. Another spectator is asked to collect the slips and in doing so, mix them up. After they are handed back to you, each slip is placed under each of the cups starting at one end and finishing at the seventh cup. A cigarette lighter is produced and each of the candles is lit (Photo 1). Now, with your back turned, another spectator is asked to slowly mix the cups up so that no one, including you (the magician) has a clue as to which cup holds the slip containing the name of the dead person.

Turning back around, you slowly guide your hand back and forth over the flames, stopping at one of the cups. You say that the final resting spot (the final cup) will reveal the dead person. You announce that under this particular cup (the one

**Photo 1**
you are currently holding your hand over) is the name of a living person. Pick up that cup and blow out the candle. Take the candle out of its hole and drop it back into the cup. Read the name on the slip, acknowledging that the name is, indeed, that of a person still living. Wad up the paper and drop that into the cup, placing it to the side. This is repeated five more times until you have one cup left. Ask a spectator to blow out the final (seventh) candle; he is unable to do so since the flame will not go out!

Take out a squirt gun. Hold the cup up in one hand and squirt it with the gun. You'll garner many laughs here, because you miss the flame and squirt the audience members as you try to extinguish the candle flame. Put the gun away and tell the spectators that you will just snuff out the flame with your fingers; as you attempt to do this, a ball of flame erupts, surprising even you! Wetting your fingers, you now are able to extinguish the flame. Finally, drop this candle into the cup and ask the final spectator what the name of the dead person is. Have someone in the front row open the slip to show that your sixth sense was, indeed, correct.

But it's not over yet. You explain that it wasn't just chance that guided you to find the slip containing the dead name. There was, in fact, a presence that was your guide; although no one can see this spirit, it was able to leave evidence of its presence…ectoplasm. The magician inverts the final cup, and as he crushes it, a gooey slime pours out into the bowl (Photo 2).

**Method:** I feel that this presentation works best when done in a parlor setting – that is, close enough to the audience so that they can clearly see all items fairly well. I love presenting an effect using many spectators, because part of the mystery is in the number of random spectators used.

Here are the three secrets that make it all work:

1. The slips of paper, although not really gimmicked, are cut to a size of your choice. I use slips approximately 8” x 2”. One slip, however, has torn edges, not cut edges (Photo 3). Therefore, as each spectator looks at his or her slip, no markings can be seen. (You might say that the torn slip is an entire “marking.”) When the folded slips are collected and mixed, only you will notice the slip with the torn edges because this is the one you handed out for the final spectator to write the dead person’s name on. When tearing the slip in preparation for this trick, make the tear a “clean” tear, that is, one without obvious nicks or blemishes.

When the stack of slips are handed to you, glance at the stack carefully; as you go along placing a slip under each cup, simply skip over the “torn” slip until you come to the cup containing the trick candle. This should look casual and random.

2. The candles are standard birthday candles, but they must, of course, resemble the one trick novelty magic relighting candle. It might not be easy to find matching candles, so I spray-painted all mine black; the only difference is in the trick candle's slight thickness. Only I can tell the difference when I glance over them (Photo 4).

The ectoplasm is simply white or beige head shampoo. I purchased a large bottle at a dollar store.

**The Work:** The cups should be small, either six or eight ounces in size, but no larger. An extra cup containing the shampoo/ectoplasm sits below the table (perhaps on a chair) within easy reach. Fill the cup approximately two-thirds full with the shampoo so that when you bring it up to the tabletop, the “ectoplasm” will not be seen prematurely.

A wad of flash paper is in your pocket and removed when you put the small squirt gun away.

Have pens available so as not to slow down the trick in the event the spectators don't come with pens. Don't use marking pens, because the ink might bleed through the paper. Use all the same type of pens and have them on the table for each spectator to also freely choose.

Don't overdo the squirting of the spectators and avoid the people in the front rows; you don't want to squirt anyone in the eye.

The cup of ectoplasm “switch” is done as you are putting away the cups and paper slips. Don't make a big deal of the switch. This is also done as a front row spectator unfolds the dead-person slip and displays it. The lighting should be dim if possible, but not too dim, because the guests must be able to see the writing on the slips and you must be able to sight the “dead” slip and trick candle. Play some eerie soft music during the presentation. (Halloween stores usually carry a good selection of eerie music CDs.)

**Steve’s Stuff:**

I really like the use of the relighting candle in this effect. It's nice to see an old gag recycled into something magical.

When you ask the spectators to write the names of the living people and dead person, ask them to write down the names of famous people. This solves the problem of no one knowing who the people are at the end and avoids the problem of people thinking of recently departed relatives during your show. This can be a real downer, man!

As I always like to mention, be careful when using fire. If you light the candles and then have the spectator mix the cups make sure to tell him or her to hold the cups at the base and to not reach over the flame. Be careful when holding your hand over the flame, too!

Also, when you're squirting the audience with the squirt gun, make sure to notice if anyone is wearing silk or leather and avoid them, because water can cause stains on these fabrics. Have fun with this; it's a nice routine! *
Four United States presidents and three English kings were among the international celebrities and heads of state who comprised the audiences of the remarkable Max Malini. Now, more than a half-century since his death, it’s reasonable to assume he’s almost unknown among younger magicians, and practically forgotten by the rest.

Few magicians ever got to see Malini perform. He never appeared at magic conventions, rarely visited magic shops, and he didn’t spend time with other magicians. Because most of his performances were private (he didn’t work in vaudeville), he was seldom seen by professionals or amateurs.

Two magicians who did get to know Malini well, Dai Vernon and Charlie Miller, spoke with reverence about his skills. Vernon, with the help of Lewis Ganson, wrote *Malini and his Magic* in 1961, the only book ever written about this amazing character. In doing the research for this piece, it occurred to me that I may be the last magician alive who ever saw Max Malini perform. It happened fifty-seven years ago in the back room of a restaurant where a meeting of the Seattle Magic Ring took place.

Malini, on his way to Honolulu, stopped over in Seattle for a few days and, probably needing money, uncharacteristically agreed to do an hour of close-up magic for the members. His show that night was surely the last one he ever did in the States. He died a few months later in Honolulu in 1942, at the age of sixty-nine.

Max Malini was simply one of the most extraordinary magicians who ever lived! Born in Poland in 1873 with the name Max Katz Breit, he moved with his family to New York City at a young age. By fifteen, he was earning a living performing magic in a Bowery drinking establishment. Within a few years, he was a full-fledged busker and saloon entertainer. From these rugged performances he took a quantum leap, bypassing traditional music hall and vaudeville stages to begin delighting wealthy, sophisticated, and titled audiences in private clubs, mansions, and palaces.

He did it all himself. With no help from booking or press agents, this uneducated, non-aristocratic-appearing little man with a gruff voice and thick eastern European accent launched an incredible career on the world’s most intimate and prestigious stages.

In 1942, I was fourteen years old, too young to be a member of the Seattle Magic Ring. But occasionally a member would invite me to attend as a guest. So when Bill Bowman called to tell me Max Malini would be performing, I didn’t need any urging. The club met in the back room of a restaurant with twenty or so members sitting around a few large tables. Malini’s reputation had preceded him, so there was great anticipation of his arrival.

Malini arrived dressed in a fine suit and vest with an elegant gold watch and chain. But he had no bag of props with him. In those days intimate magic was not called close-up. It was referred to as “pocket tricks.” Fittingly, all the miracles he was to do for the next hour came out of his pockets. In an age in which magicians depended much more on apparatus, Malini, whether working in close-up or parlor style, didn’t rely on magician’s mechanical paraphernalia. He depended solely on small, familiar items, with an ever-present cigar as his magic wand. In the 1940s, a magic show was performed on a stage or platform, or at least standing in front of a seated audience.

Nobody did a close-up show (with the exception of a few close-up table workers like Bert Allerton and Dr. Jaks). The kind of informal show Malini did for us was the way he performed for small groups in the bars of exclusive private clubs, which often resulted in lucrative private engagements.

It all seemed spontaneous. On this occasion, we all sat or stood around one table where Malini alternated between sitting and standing. From the moment he began, you were struck by his personality. The magic was marvelous, but he was more so. His charming accent, the amusing way he used the language, and his infinite wit, captivated us all! Malini’s remarkable personality almost overshadowed the magic. After all these years I can see him vividly while I’ve forgotten details of the tricks. He started by borrowing a deck of cards. With his tiny hands you wondered how he could do any serious sleight of hand. We quickly learned this was no handicap. He had eight cards selected by different people and then found or revealed them in unique, surprising ways. This is done regularly today, but back then we had never seen anything like it done so well.

He did more impressive card magic followed by amusing sleight of hand with borrowed half dollars. (Then they were as common as quarters.) Next, he pulled out of his pocket a small black cloth bag of obviously fine material and proceeded to knock our socks off with the Egg Bag. I and every other magician worthy of the name owned an Egg Bag and a set of Linking Rings. But the Egg Bag routines we did bore no resemblance to Malini’s. I couldn’t believe the secret was basically the same as that of my larger, plaid woolen bag with the wooden egg. I was not to see it done as well for decades, until I saw Johnny Thompson’s superb handling much later.

As good as the Egg Bag, card, coin, and other tricks he did were, the best was saved for last. Picking up a newspaper and three heavy restaurant glass tumblers, he proceeded to wrap them with paper. From his pocket came three corks made by cutting common as quarters. Next, he pulled out of his pocket a small black cloth bag of obviously fine material and proceeded to knock our socks off with the Egg Bag. I and every other magician worthy of the name owned an Egg Bag and a set of Linking Rings. But the Egg Bag routines we did bore no resemblance to Malini’s. I couldn’t believe the secret was basically the same as that of my larger, plaid woolen bag with the wooden egg. I was not to see it done as well for decades, until I saw Johnny Thompson’s superb handling much later.

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As good as the Egg Bag, card, coin, and other tricks he did were, the best was saved for last. Picking up a newspaper and three heavy restaurant glass tumblers, he proceeded to wrap them with paper. From his pocket came three corks made by cutting wine corks in half. What followed was a cup and ball routine like no other I’d seen before or since. The corks rapidly multiplied, changed in size, traveled to spectator’s pockets, and transformed into lemons and shot glasses filled with whiskey. All this was accompanied by his inimitable patter.

We were too stunned that night at the Seattle Magic Ring to leap to our feet. But I knew I’d seen a monumental magician. I’ve never forgotten him.

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Jeff McBride is unquestionably one of this era’s most influential magicians. His book, *The Show Doctor*, may become one of the most influential books as well, because of both the content and the format. Although it is basically a collection of essays from a magazine column, it is well-rounded enough to give you steady and solid information in a much under-considered area of magic. Using Jeff’s medical metaphor, the chapters give advice on how to heal an ailing performance. If your performance is strong instead of ill, there is still plenty of worthwhile advice on how to keep it healthy.

Let’s start with the basics. The book reprints forty-eight of McBride’s “Show Doctor” columns from *MAGIC* magazine, provides updates and additional advice material, and then adds practical examples by way of tricks and routines. Because the impetus of the book was a monthly column, each chapter is a thousand-word essay on a specific topic. The topics cover many of the most common foibles that prevent a performer from being at his best. Often McBride talks about a problem, defines and explains why it makes for poor performance, and then teaches you a way to avoid or overcome that problem.

Are your close-up guests disinterested despite your excellent card handling? Maybe it’s because you have not planned your routine to bring their focus up to your face instead of down at the cards. Do your stage audiences clap weakly and mutter to themselves on the way out? Maybe you need to re-examine your cluttered and outdated stage props. Do people like your show but never rehire you? Maybe your magic is great but your dress or language is below their expectations. I strongly believe that everyone performing magic can find some way to improve, if they would explore some self-examination. These articles give you many places to look.

The advice Jeff gives is borne of his many years not only performing world-class acts, but also teaching thousands of others how to enhance their performance. This is real-world, practical performance advice. Most of you know that you need these types of suggestions. If you don’t think you need it, then you probably need it more than the rest of us. This book is good medicine for almost everyone. It is as helpful and useful as Ken Weber’s *Maximum Entertainment*, which set the standard for show improvement lessons.

If you have read Jeff McBride’s column “The Show Doctor” in *MAGIC* and saved your back issues, you have most of the information at hand. Would it benefit you to spend money for an extra set of those articles in a different format? I think absolutely. I have those articles neatly filed in my magazine index, but I’m never going to go through forty-eight back issues trying to find a column about getting more applause or handling spectators with respect. The book has an index and can instantly send me to any one of almost fifty topics. If you have *not* read those columns, then this book is a must. Unless your only goal in magic is to learn tricks and discuss them with club members instead of performing them, then you should get this book, read it, and think about it. Then read it again.

Now, on to the extras. Eleven of the articles have an expanded follow-up article, in which Jeff has re-examined and added additional advice. A few offer variations on the advice, while most of these clarify what he was forced to put too succinctly in his word-limited column. There are also three new chapters with full explanations for eleven of his working routines. These include a bare-handed production of not one, but two, shot glasses full of liquid; a bare-handed production of not one, but two, flower bouquets; and a clever coin vanish and production. Also taught are a mentalism routine that involves a drawing duplication, a clever, in-the-hands stand-up card stab routine with a unique storyline, an easy but showy manipulation routine, and more. Each of these is illustrated and thoroughly written with explanations and a full script. I would have bought a book with just these eleven tricks and no advice, although here Jeff uses each routine as a clear example of the implementation of one of his pieces of advice.

Earlier, I mentioned the unique format. *The Show Doctor* is available as a “standard” 290-page hardcover book with high quality paper, binding, and design. It is also available in a tablet version, readable on your iPad. I read both versions to compare. They are so similar, that no one will need both. My opinion is that almost anyone would enjoy and appreciate the book, but for around half the price, the iPad version has some strong advantages. *The Show Doctor* app opens and reads just like the book, except with plenty of extras that make it more dynamic and more readable. The menu bar has two indices, one vertical and one horizontal, so you can scroll through either from front to back or side to side. This makes selecting a specific article for rereading quick and easy. The illustrations are mostly in slide-show format, so a quick flick of one finger shows you three or four sequential moves in a row, almost like a flip book or a mini-movie. Videos, additional articles, and Web links are embedded in the text. So after reading about Eugene Burger’s RIP card trick, for example, you can immediately watch him perform it; after reading an article about show tables, you can jump to the website that sells them. Several videos were filmed specifically for the book as a visual demonstration of Jeff’s tricks or an interview about an advice topic. These links and videos are available to hardcover book buyers as well, but you have to put the book down, go to your computer, and type in the URL. With the app version, having it all right in your hand as you sit and read the chapters is a clean and elegant experience. If you have an iPad, you are techno-savvy enough to be ready to experience the tablet version. I suggest you...
Women magicians are rare. Autobiographies of women magicians are even rarer, which is what made Celeste Evans’s recently released autobiography such a joy to read. It’s not so much a traditional biography or even a memoir, but a series of anecdotes arranged more or less in chronological order. Through them you learn about her early life and how she eventually became a magician whose signature manipulation and dove act took her multiple times around the world, and to some of the swankiest nightclubs of her era.

8 Effects and a Sleight Ebook
By Michael Kociolek
Available from: www.Lybrary.com
Price $20.00

REVIEW BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL

Michael Kociolek is an up-and-coming cardman from Poland with a taste for gambling material and well-constructed card magic. I know this because he liked my DVDs enough to ask me for an endorsement of his debut ebook, 8 Effects and a Sleight. I gave it, because he’s put together a collection of card material with some very solid thinking behind it, which is always an enjoyable read. He’s also left-handed, which makes him good people.

PDF downloads and ebooks have taken the place of the pamphlets and booklets you used to find on the shelves of many magic stores. The best thing about them is always the hidden gem you find tucked away between the pages. In this collection, the two standout items are Michael’s pseudo center-dealing demo Off-Centers, and the titular Sleight, the MK Multiple Shift. Off-Centers is put together in such a way that you create a very convincing illusion of four Aces going into the center of the deck; all you need is a convincing bottom deal to finish off the job. The MK Multiple Shift is an in-the-hands-to-the-table shift that’s not difficult, and should fit perfectly into a table-worker’s repertoire.

Beyond those two items, the material offered here may appeal to some more than others, but all of it is very well thought out. For example, there are a couple of applications of the Smith Myth (including a Collectors routine that some will find very interesting) that aren’t my cup of tea. That’s only because I’m not a fan of the Smith Myth; other folks might jump all over these routines. My tastes run more towards Plan B, a sneaky and powerful routine in which three selections materialize in the spectators’ hands, and In Between, a very clever routine that makes good use of a Si Stebbins set-up.

All in all, this is a very nice sampling of some very promising card work, and definitely worth checking out. I’m looking forward to more from Michael Kociolek.

I Can Still See Me Book
By Celeste Evans
Available from: www.celesteevansmagic.com
Price $35.00 (includes an autographed picture)

REVIEW BY PAYNE

Women magicians are rare. Autobiographies of women magicians are even rarer, which is what made Celeste Evans’s recently released autobiography such a joy to read. It’s not so much a traditional biography or even a memoir, but a series of anecdotes arranged more or less in chronological order. Through them you learn about her early life and how she eventually became a magician whose signature manipulation and dove act took her multiple times around the world, and to some of the swankiest nightclubs of her era.

“What era is that?” I hear many of you ask, because the name Celeste Evans is unfamiliar to you. I, too, was unfamiliar with the name. But as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words, and the instant you see the photo of her on the cover of the book you know instantly who she is. She’s that iconic beauty in the slinky gown surrounded by either cards or doves. Throughout the Fifties and Sixties she was known as the Queen of Magic. I doubt that there is a book published on the history of magic that has a section devoted to women in magic that doesn’t feature a picture or two of her. That is, if you can find a book on the history of magic that has a section devoted to women in magic in it. Sadly, the only book in my meager library of texts on magic history that has a section devoted to women in magic is Bill Severn’s Guide to Magic as a Hobby, in which a short bio of Ms. Evans appears on pages 87-89. Even more reason to add I Can Still See Me to your magic library. It’s an inspiring tale of a woman who was not only able to make it to the top of a male-dominated field, but who did so when magic was in one of its steepest declines, the post-war era when that last venue of the variety artist, the nightclub, was quickly disappearing from the scene.

When many magicians were hanging up their top hats and putting their rabbits out to pasture, Celeste Evans was able to carve a niche for herself in the entertainment industry. She did this by performing in several around-the-world tours entertaining servicemen and women. This eventually led to a special good will tour of Asia in the early 1960s, the story of which makes up a very interesting portion of the book. Here you get to read about her adventures in places such as Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Iran, locales that to most of us today are seen only as places of war and destruction. But when Ms. Evans toured them they were very different places. In these countries she performed not only for the locals and servicemen, but for kings, presidents, shahs, and princes. Not many performers today can claim to have entertained such dignitaries.

I Can Still See Me is a fascinating and enjoyable read that gives us all a glimpse into a long gone world of fading nightclubs, a rising Las Vegas, and tours around a world that no longer exists.

Noteworthy Lecture Notes
By David Gabbay
Available from: www.gabbaymagic.com
Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies
Price $20.00

REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER

Noteworthy is a set of lecture notes from David Gabbay; it contains ten effects and seven short essays in which David offers his thoughts on a number of topics relevant to magical performers. This is not a set of stapled notes, but a perfect-bound book with sixty-eight pages of text and sixty-five illustrations. The illustrations are photos that have been turned into black and white PDFs. The illustrations are photos that have been turned into black and white PDFs. The illustrations are photos that have been turned into black and white PDFs.
Six-Shooter – 6 Deadly New Mentalism Weapons Book
By Richard Osterlind
Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies
Price $40.00

REVIEW BY JOSHUA KANE

Six-Shooter appears to be titled to bring to mind the image of a six gun slung at your waist, six new bullets for your performance arsenal. The arsenal metaphor is tried and true, and so is some of the material in this book.

The first routine is called Hands Off. The performer shuffles the deck and asks the spectator to cut the cards as many times as he wishes. The spectator is then to take the top card, look at it, and insert it about halfway into the deck. The performer furrows his brow and announces that the card now rests in the seventeenth position. The spectator counts out sixteen cards, turning them face up, and stops. The performer then names the card the spectator is thinking of and when the next card is turned over it is indeed the spectator’s card at the named position. While the revelation of the card has some punch, I feel that the naming of the position is of lesser impact. The performer told the spectator approximately where to place the card. There is no shuffling by the spectator to lose it in the deck. This is not a 1-in-52 position situation such as one has in ACAAN. It is at best a 1-in-10. The restrictive handling of the deck at the top of the routine, and the necessary clean up at the end of it, removes the free flowing ease and natural progression of the best mentalism.

3SP is a three-phase ESP card routine with two decks. ESP cards are associated with ESP testing, and test conditions typically dictate that the performer handles the cards as little as possible, especially in the actions of shuffling. This routine is marred as mentalism by the need for the performer to shuffle the cards himself and to be so involved in the handling of the cards. As a magic trick with ESP cards, it is a fairly good routine that combines elements of Al Koran’s Five Star Prediction, a version of ACAAN, and a borrowing from Osterlind’s own Dynamo Deck Cards from Pocket. Unfortunately, touches such as the traditional “please note the card before and after are different” from the Koran Five Star prediction element are weakened by the use of the ESP cards. An ESP deck includes only five symbols. It would be reasonable with five duplicates per symbol to have a repeat show up next to the selected card; in this case, the point does not confirm randomness but rather highlights the potential presence of a stack.

Osterlind next combines two Living and Dead tests from...
Annemann’s Practical Mental Effects. I feel that the method is riskier than others often used in achieving a clean final climax, because you are at the mercy of lighting and handwriting. The glimpse is not guaranteed or easy, but Osterlind does walk you through how to close off the routine even when you cannot make the final revelation (an outcome which to my mind can play even stronger).

In The Poor Man’s Book Test, Osterlind credits inspiration to Irv Weiner and then goes on to teach a method that, to “coin” a phrase, is old and well used. I will say that the reason the method has remained in the employ of performers is because it is a useful one for impromptu situations. There is also a bold version of the classic Add-a-Number. In this version no numbers are switched out and the numbers are written out in clear view of the audience. The total does indeed match the one pulled out of an envelope. Osterlind himself admits that people may be disappointed by the method.

The best piece in the book is Jack London’s classic effect Almost Real Prediction. If you do not own the original, I suggest you find and buy one. According to Osterlind, London published and marketed his effect in 1973. (Note that there was also an earlier version sold in the 1960s.) Osterlind himself says regarding his contributions to London’s routine, “Although the handling is almost unchanged from the original, the slight bits of mental misdirection make all the difference in the world” (p.7). Osterlind’s main contribution appears to be that instead of asking the three spectators to look at the last four digits of respectively their credit card, social security card, and driver’s license as suggested by London, he has changed the cards to being all credit cards and he has one person looking at the first set of numbers, another the second set, and the third the third set, which I feel complicates both the performer grabbing a fast and easy peek (credit card numbers are often shiny and hard to read) and also trusts that the spectator does not get confused about where they are on the card. Also, anyone in finance or who processes credit cards will know that the first digits of a credit card are the issuer identification number (IIN), which can be presupposed to be telegraphing information to the performer. In contrast, people are used to giving out the last four digits of card to identify themselves to companies that they have accounts with. I prefer London’s routine as he wrote it, and am not sure if the touches warranted the inclusion. The contents of this volume, if laid out on full-size pages minus hyperbole, would have made for a standard set of lecture notes, the kind one buys for $20. In a world where $40 can buy one a hardbound book from HermeticPress.com with richer content, I would spend my dollars elsewhere.

AL KORAN’S SECRETS DVD
BY GRAHAM JOLLEY
Available from: www.abracadabra.co.uk
Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies
Price $42.50

REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA

If you have any interest in the field of mentalism, you need to have this DVD. Al Koran was one of the preeminent mentalists of our age. There are several books on his work that I consider required reading for any magician. In this DVD, we see his material brought to life by one of my favorite professional mentalists, Graham Jolley. Jolley has been one of the UK’s top pros for many years, and recently fooled Penn & Teller on their TV show. If you have never seen Jolley work, you certainly will want to after viewing this DVD. Unfortunately, he doesn’t seem to go over as well in the US. I believe that it is more difficult for Americans to understand his subtle humorous asides due to the accent, but he is a fast, funny, and engaging performer who does some killer material.

It is bittersweet to watch this DVD, because much of it is a conversation between Jolley and Martin Breese. This was Martin’s last project, and for anyone who knew him it will be difficult to see him looking so frail. He passed away after a long illness, just prior to the release of this fantastic disc. If this is to be his legacy, it is a very fine one.

What we get from Jolley is not only the performance and explanation of Koran’s original routines, but many variations that are obviously from his own performing repertoire. His work is smooth, confident, and packed with great scripting. He offers many performance tips and handleings that are the result of years of stage time with these routines. In addition, he offers many of Koran’s own variations on the material, many of which never saw print. And there are some great conversations between the two of them about Koran.

Concerning the material, it is all classic stuff that could go right in to any act. The 5 Star Miracle Wallet is very aptly named. In this version, Jolley does not use the typical double-faced card method; this is far better and I immediately incorporated it into my own routine. His handling of Countdown, aka the Koran Newspaper Test, is baffling as can be and is currently being used by a number of pros. He has a clever routine that he calls The Card Stab. A card is selected and a knife is then pushed into the side of the deck. It has cut right to the mate of the selected card – very direct and reasonably easy to do. Direct Mind Control is Koran’s dictionary test. Jolley demonstrates two versions. The first uses a Himber dictionary that is no longer available. Jolley actually uses that version in a routine he performs later in the Bonus section. The second version uses a gimmicked dictionary that Harry Stanley released that uses an entirely different method. That version is currently available from E. Raymond Carlyle. In either case, the effect is extremely direct and clear.

Jolley teaches Koran’s Lazy Man’s Card Trick, a very clever routine for the close-up worker. It is a real fooler if you don’t know the method, and is easy as can be. Koran would frequently perform a magic effect to open his show. It was often his Three Silver Rings, a version of the classic Linking Rings performed with very large (15” diameter) rings. I have a very soft spot in my heart for this routine because Ken Brooke convinced me to buy it when I was seventeen years old. I learned it and it became the basis for my own routine, which I have been performing for over forty years. Jolley handles this very well and teaches several of the key sequences. The final routine taught is The Gold Medallion. A performer could not ask for a better number prediction effect. Jolley teaches Koran’s original handling. Regardless of how it reads in the book, it is a great handling and plays so well in front of an audience – simple, but the best method. Jolley then teaches a variation on it that looks incredibly good. It is something that I intend to try out myself.

There are two bonus clips of Jolley performing two routines in front of a corporate audience. These are performance only, but are worth the price of the disc. What a fantastic performer he is. In the first, he performs a three-part prediction incorporating the dictionary test taught earlier, as well as a card prediction.
and a number prediction. The last routine is the one he is best known for, The Snooker Ball routine. If you don’t know what is going on, you will be badly fooled, as well as entertained. Simply marvellous! This DVD should go down as a classic; it gets my very highest recommendation.

**Amos Levkovitch: Wings DVD**  
By Amos Levkovitch  
Available from: MiracleFactory.net  
Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies  
Price $30.00

**Review by Jim Kleefeld**  
Amos Levkovitch has performed a premier dove act for over twenty years, and he was twice voted Stage Magician of the Year at the Magic Castle. When he talks about how to work with doves, it is worth a listen. In this DVD, old footage recently released, he shows and explains his dove harness, coat holder, loop system, and sleeve production. He speaks with a loving and knowledgeable tone about what kind and size of cage works best, and how to feed, water, train, and care for the birds. He expounds on why you should use distilled water, and why you should not trim feathers. He explains exactly how he teaches his doves to fly out to the audience and then return to his waiting hand. He demonstrates exactly how he loads his doves into harnesses, coat pockets, and sleeves. There is a wealth of information here—nearly enough to get anyone started in dove magic. Even though I worked a dove act for fifteen years, I learned some valuable new advice. For anyone who works with doves now, or who wants to begin, this will give you a fine head start for a modest cost. It’s even a good investment if you are considering doves but are not sure if you want to make the plunge, because you can see both his flawless stage act and his behind-the-scenes caretaking before you decide if this type of magic is for you.

Although I thought the DVD was a fine explanation of dove work, there are some points to consider. You can make a good living by traveling with a twelve-minute world-class silent stage act like his. But you may not feel that all of the time and care involved is worth the effort if you never get calls for a classy but short stage show. It’s hard to get away with inserting this style of magic into a children’s birthday party, a restaurant gig, or an hour-long community fund-raiser. Plus, you can completely disregard his advice on air travel. It is simply no longer true.

Jeff Hobson does a fine job of interviewing and monitoring Levkovitch, and though this was filmed several years ago as a part of Hobson’s online Lecture Network, it holds up fairly well. It suffers a bit from the transference, however. The original broadcast was live and people wrote in with comments, most of which we don’t get to see. Also, perhaps because of the online time constriction, this feels truncated. What might have been more fully explained sometimes gets cut short with a commercial. Many of Amos’s efforts at explaining props were intercepted by Hobson’s plea for viewers to visit his website and buy the product. The move, if you are unaware of it, is a false count designed to hide one or more cards in a small packet. The Elmsley count has become one of the most popular card sleights ever created, and was popularized when Dai Vernon used it in his seminal Twisting the Aces. The sound, video, and disc navigation are excellent, and Liam is a focused and competent instructor. He breaks the Elmsley count down to its smallest steps, and leads you through the basics, teaching several different grips and variations along the way. Once you have learned the count, he teaches some of the best of the other moves and counts developed for small packets. Among the other counts that are explained are Ed Marlo’s OPEC count, Jack Parker’s Out-jogged Elmsley, the Snap count, Split Elmsley count, Jordan count, Spirit count, John Bannon’s Discrepancy City and Bullet Party Displays, and Jack Avis’s Siva count.

Disc Two begins with a mini tutorial on multiple lifts from a small packet, because some of these lifts are used in the effects that make up the rest of this disc. And what better place to start than at the beginning with Elmsley’s Four Card Trick, in which four blank cards are shown and a face appears. The card turns face up and down several times and the back changes color for the climax. This is followed by Dai Vernon’s Twisting the Aces, a bona fide classic of card magic.

**The Elmsley Count Project DVD**  
By Liam Montier  
Available from: www.bigblindmedia.com  
Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies  
Price $35.00

**Review by Danny Archer**  
Liam Montier is the star of this ninety-minute double DVD from Big Blind Media; it covers most everything you ever wanted to know about the Elmsley count. (Disclosure: Liam assisted on-screen with my DVD set produced by Big Blind Media.)

The Elmsley count was originally named the Ghost count by Alex Elmsley in his Four Card Trick back in 1959. The move, if you are unaware of it, is a false count designed to hide one or more cards in a small packet. The Elmsley count has become one of the most popular card sleights ever created, and was popularized when Dai Vernon used it in his seminal Twisting the Aces. The sound, video, and disc navigation are excellent, and Liam is a focused and competent instructor. He breaks the Elmsley count down to its smallest steps, and leads you through the basics, teaching several different grips and variations along the way. Once you have learned the count, he teaches some of the best of the other moves and counts developed for small packets. Among the other counts that are explained are Ed Marlo’s OPEC count, Jack Parker’s Out-jogged Elmsley, the Snap count, Split Elmsley count, Jordan count, Spirit count, John Bannon’s Discrepancy City and Bullet Party Displays, and Jack Avis’s Siva count.

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*Odd Man Out* is Liam’s own very visual trick that uses the Bullet Party Display to great effect. One court card is seen among a few blank cards. Then, one at a time, all the cards but one change to court cards. For the climax all the cards have different colored backs. One Too Many Cards by George McBride combines a selection with a Six Card Repeat type of routine in which cards...
are removed, and yet there are still four cards. Then all the cards vanish except for the selection. Que Sera Sera is a little known John Bannon routine based upon the Open Prediction in which the performer removes three prediction cards and has the deck shuffled by the spectator. The spectator deals cards to the table and, whenever they like, a face-down card (which the performer says he hopes is a Jack) is dealt on top of the performer’s packet. The card is turned over and shown to be a Jack and the other three cards are shown to be the other three Jacks.

Jacks in the Box by David Solomon has the four Jacks removed and tabled, and then a card is selected and lost in the deck. The black Jacks are shown and placed into the card box. But when the two remaining cards are shown, they are the black Jacks and inside the box are the two red Jacks along with the selected card. No palming or duplicates…and the selection can be signed.

Last, but in no way least, is another classic card routine, Jazz Aces by Peter Kane. It’s an Ace assembly routine stripped to the bare minimum using just eight cards. A few Elmsley counts and a couple of multiple lifts produce an easy to understand yet totally eye-popping card routine.

So, in addition to learning the Elmsley count (along with a number of associated counts) you also get some really excellent card routines. Obviously, if you want to learn the Elmsley count, this DVD should be at the top of your list. And for people like myself who know the Elmsley count (and I have to admit that I learned a thing or two along with some of the other counts I was not familiar with), I would still recommend this DVD due to the very high quality of the included tricks.

SHOW CUES APP
BY CARL ANDREWS

Available from: mojosoftwareonline.com
Price $59.99 iPhone/iPod Touch version, $69.99 iPad version

REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM

And now for something completely different. Neither trick, nor snazzy accessory, this is an app that gives you or your sound technician quick, simple, and reliable control over the music and sound effects that support your show. This is a professional tool designed by a professional, for professionals. But we part-time pros can like it, too.

Even if you’re a speaking performer, you want your walk-on and wave-off music under your control, don’t you? And once you’ve got that, why not add a professional introduction? After that, you might be surprised how liberating it is to know that you can add incidental music to your show, and maybe even stop talking for a while. This app allows you to do all that.

Show Cues is available for download from the iTunes App Store. Press the purchase button, and the app downloads in a flash (and takes up almost no space on your device). The instructions are clear and easy to find. They tell you how to play with the app, which is what the seasoned performer is bound to do. There’s no substitute for play to learn just what this app can do, and here’s what that is:

1. You prepare a playlist in iTunes; all of the complicated production work (like cuts, loops, fades, rises) should be done at this level, or before. Show Cues is designed to make it easy for anyone to play back these tracks in order, on cue. It is not a tool for editing.

2. Once your playlist is prepared, you load it onto your device. (Which one you use will depend on which operational mode you choose. I’ll get to that presently.) You can also load all the music you might possibly need onto your device, and build the playlist through the app when you know what pieces you’ll be performing. This makes it easy to try out different songs, or to cut or rearrange pieces when somebody changes the schedule.

3. In the app you can decide whether each song will end in a fade or an abrupt cut. You can also add cues like “Volume up when I start spouting confetti” that will appear on the screen when the song comes up.

With all that done, you can now do one of three basic things:

First, if there is a sound technician tasked with running your music, you can simply hand him your device and show him how the app works. Carl has his show music on an iPod Touch and this is how he hands off his music to the sound guys on the cruise ships he works. The interface is designed to be simple and easy to understand. The people I’ve shown it to were comfortable in under a minute. If you work a lot of venues that come with their own sound crew, this is hard to beat. However, this puts an important part of your show into the hands of strangers, and many magicians have trust issues that crop up at times like this.

This distrust is not unfounded, since, for those whose performances are more casual, the “sound tech” is often just some guy in the band who knows how to run the amp. In those cases, you’ll probably want to run your music yourself. For this, Show Cues presents two options:

The best way would be to buy the remote designed especially for this app. (You can read more about the remote and how to get it in the Show Cues instructions.) You could then run the sounds yourself from the stage. I can’t tell you much about the details, as I do not own one. However, it does solve the problem of leaving your cues to a complete stranger. Of course, using a remote is something that must be practiced, just like every other facet of your act, and it can be daunting if you have difficulty multitasking.

Finally, you can take the approach I did, likely the worst approach, unless you’re working very casual gigs where you’re trying new material and/or new music. You run the show from your iPhone, which you keep with you on stage. Here again, the simplicity of the Show Cues display is its greatest strength, since you’re going to be cueing the music from a mere glance at the screen. The phone still has to be hooked into the sound system somehow, and this was a stumbling block until I located a Bluetooth receiver with an output jack. These are sold so that you can listen to music from your iPod/Pad/Phone over your home stereo system. Brookstone has one, and others are available online. This approach offers an additional advantage to the performer who carries his show music on his phone – you don’t have to surrender your iPhone to a sound guy way before your show.

Using this system, I used Show Cues to run the music for my stand-up show on three occasions, one being the recent 2012 PCAM convention in Seattle. It exceeded expectations, meaning it worked perfectly right out of the box. I found it very easy to turn on and off my introductory music, and even to raise and lower volume at the right moments. Yes, the audience knew I was doing it, but they took the actions for what they were (which suggests that I could have used running my music as an excuse to ditch something). There was only one problem, due entirely to my own bone-headedness, from which I have derived the following warning: If you’re foolish enough to run your show from your phone, follow the instructions and put it on airplane mode. Unless you do this, someone could call during your show. I’m just saying.

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Other caveats:
I haven’t tried this on an iPad, so I can’t comment on that. But it seems that the larger screen would be an asset if you’re cuing your sounds via the remote. It can be a long way to the mixing board.

There have been other systems sold that allow you to cue your iPod remotely. However, they were not, as far as I know, designed to work with the iPod Touch, iPad, or iPhone. Also, Show Cues shuts off the screen saver so your device doesn’t go to sleep when music isn’t playing. This was a problem for previous remote-based systems, necessitating tracks of silence to play between songs. Those are no longer necessary. While Show Cues might be a bit pricey for an app, it costs far less than other show controllers on the market.

I showed this to one busy pro who said that in all of the venues she has played recently, the sound crew preferred to download all of her music onto their system, and then to run the show on machines they were familiar with. If you’re lucky enough to play houses such as this, Sound Cues won’t get in the way, and you will have it in reserve for those times when conditions aren’t as professional as your agent promised.

**MAGNETIC BUG WRITER AND BOON WRITER GIMMICKS BY VERNET MAGIC**
*Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies*
*Price from $16.00 to $50.00*

**REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA**

Some call them nail writers, some call them Swami gimmicks. Whatever you wish to call them, secret writing devices have been one of the basic tools of mentalism for years. I think virtually every working mentalist today has at least tried working with them; some have made reputations with their aid. There have been many versions released over the years, from under-nail writers, to band gimmicks, to thumb tips, but two of the most popular have been the Boon Writer, which I believe was created by Eric Mason, and a variation on it by Ray Piatt called the Scarab. Vernet Magic of Argentina has applied the same technology as their famous thumb tips to these two variations and upped the ante. All of the gimmicks supplied for this review use pencil lead, but they are also available with Listo grease lead for the same price.

The Boon is a small, dome-shaped gimmick that sticks to your thumb. They supply a special adhesive disk, but some performers prefer Blu-Tack, which they also supply. The instructions are very complete concerning the attachment of the gimmick, replacement of leads, and basic use. The gimmick is well made and works very well. One improvement Vernet has made is that the writers are magnetic. The gimmick alone sells for $16, but Vernet has created a special holder for the gimmick, and it is fantastic. It is a small plastic box with a pivoting lid that pops into your trouser pocket. The holder is specially molded with a recess to protect the lead, and magnets are strategically placed so the gimmick is held in an instantly accessible position. It takes only a second or two to place your hand in the pocket, push the lid aside, and get the writer into perfect writing position. The holder sells for $50 and comes with the magnetic Boon writer. I am used to working with a Boon writer and found that these work very well, but the Boon is not my preferred device.

The other version made by Vernet is called the Bug Writer. This uses a design similar to Piatt’s, and I really prefer this one. The primary advantage is that it is larger and provides a more a stable attachment. I find writing easier and clearer with the Bug than with the Boon. All of the attributes mentioned above apply to this version of the gimmick as well. This version is available alone for $18 or with the magnetic holder for $50.

If you are a mentalist, you will definitely want to buy one or both. I would certainly purchase the set with the holder as it is a real help in managing the use of these tiny assistants. And as an aside, if you want some good information on the use of this type of writer, seek out the book *A Boon for All Seasons* by Eric Mason and Barrie Richardson. These gimmicks get a high recommendation from me.

**THE DOOR UTILITY PROP BY MICHAEL MURRAY**
*Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies*
*Price $16.00*

**REVIEW BY JOSHUA KANE**

The Door is a utility prop. You receive two sets of five cards with marked backs, blank fronts to write upon, and a vinyl case to keep them in. The backs are a black rectangle with white borders. The marks are different than those used by the PLF cards distributed by Tannen’s Magic. The marks are easily read under most lighting conditions and are not obvious to those unfamiliar with the system. Both banks of cards let you code up to five pieces of information. The marking system is credited to Jerry Sadowitz. Two routines are included.

For those not comfortable marking their own business cards or 3 x 5 index cards, this may serve as a useful tool for performing routines in which tracking the location of specific information is required. To reset, you write over the Sharpie markings on the front of the cards with the dry erase pen and wipe clean. This reset is not one you would do in front of spectators, so the reset cannot be said to be instantaneous. The cards, while not being ordinary, still manage to come across as fairly innocuous. You will need to buy your own dry erase marker and a Sharpie pen. These can be used for close-up and walk-around. Magicians looking to explore mental themes may find these to be a good prop to keep in their case.

**HOVER DVD AND GIMMICK BY ANGELO CARBONE**
*Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies*
*Price $29.99*

**REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS**

Hover is not exactly what you may think. This effect is not a floating deck of cards but more of an impossible-looking balancing of a deck of cards. The beauty of this effect is that you can borrow
a pack of cards, perform this stunt, and then immediately hand the cards back to the owner.

You borrow a deck of cards or have your deck examined prior to the stunt. The box is placed on the table and the deck is placed on top of the empty box. You then slowly slide the box out from under the deck up to the very edge of the corner of the box. The deck remains suspended by the very corner of the box. You can then pass a card under the suspended deck.

The box is moved back under the suspended pack. You can then pick up the pack and box to hand out for examination or return the borrowed deck. The box and cards can be examined before and after the effect. Included with the DVD is a simple gimmick that you can easily introduce and remove from the setup. The simple gimmick is somewhat solid but will need some care in storing.

The effect is not too difficult to master, and is good for the beginning to intermediate performer. Bottom line: this looks good, but you will have to watch your angles. The gimmick is lightweight and will need to be handled with some care, but you can probably make a new gimmick yourself if you need a replacement. I suggest you see a photo or video demo to help you decide if this effect is for you. It is not a bad investment for what you get as far as the effect goes.

**Keymaster Reloaded Trick**

By Craig Petty

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies

Price $70.00

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**REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS**

Craig Petty purchased the rights to the original Keymaster effect, added more ideas, more gimmicks, more routines, and just simply, more. Keymaster Reloaded begins with the original effect: The holes from two different keys are moved around from one key to another and then back to the original key in a different location. This routine looks very good as it is, but wait, there is more!

Essentially, this is a “moving hole” routine in which the hole is moved off one key and onto another. For a kicker, the hole is placed in a different location on the key it was taken from. When you are finished, everything can be examined. A variation of this routine is called the Gatekeeper; you use many of the same moves but with just one key. After seeing these two original versions, I am really sold on this effect. It is very visual and apparently uses common objects.

As if these original versions were not enough, there is, as I mentioned earlier, more. In the new version, the method is even cleaner, and can happen in the spectator’s hands. Although all the gaffs are included, you will need to perform a little crafty work on the gaffs before you can use them. This process is not very difficult and once it is completed, you are all set. I thought the original routine looked fantastic and now that you can perform the same effect in the spectator’s hand, it’s even better!

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Just when you thought it was done, there are yet more variations including one with a pack of cards. You will learn enough variations to find something that suits your taste. Included are six keys in all, well made of brass; they should last you a lifetime.

This is a very strong, visual effect for the close-up or strolling magician. With the many variations included, you will undoubtedly find a version for your abilities and presentation style. I don’t say this often but…I highly recommend this effect!

**Audio Transposition Trick**

By Daryl

Available from: www.Daryl.net

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price $38.95

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**REVIEW BY PAYNE**

This was one of the big hits at last year’s MAGIC Live. I was particularly impressed by it because it used one of the most overlooked mediums in magic—sound.

Here’s the effect. The magician tells the audience the tale of performing his very first trick. It was when he was a baby and was playing with his rattle and squeaky ball, his two favorite toys at the time. The magician takes out of a flannel bag (provided) a baby rattle, which he proceeds to shake. Next a plush ball is removed and shown to squeak when squeezed. The performer then informs us that his mother came into the room to tell him to stop making such a racket with his toys, because it was disturbing his father. So with a wave of his tiny toddler hands he removed the sounds from the toys so he could continue to play with them without irritating his father. The ball is now squeezed, but it no longer squeaks; when the rattle is shaken, it too remains silent.

“But when dad left for work,” the magician continues, “I put the sounds back where they came from. Well, sort of.” Being just a baby, the magician couldn’t remember which item made what sound. So at the conclusion of the effect the squeaky ball now rattles and the rattle now squeaks. The transformed infant playthings can even be handed out for examination if you’re into that kind of thing.

I’ll admit that this is not everyone’s cup of tea. But it’s a great, offbeat, and novel effect that answers the ever-annoying question of “So how did you become a magician?” You receive everything you need to perform this post-natal miracle: the ball, the rattle, the flannel bag, and that secret something that makes it all work. You also receive written instructions. Yes, that’s right…actual written instructions on a real piece of paper. No DVD is included. Thank you, Daryl.

The trick is angle proof and resets the instant you return the ball and the rattle to the baby bag. My only complaint is that secret something that is used to make the rattle noise could be a little louder. But after a little bit of fiddling I was able to come up with a better substitute. So if you’re in the market for something a little different to separate you from the pack, give Audio Transposition a try. *
BREAKFAST IN COLON

The first week of August not only means “magic at Abbott’s,” it also signals the beginning of a week of great breakfasts served at Randy and Mary Jo Sharp’s place on Sturgeon Lake. Her home has five guest bedrooms, where some of the greatest magic acts from around the world have stayed. There is a circular staircase from the great room leading to the lower rooms, where a large living room area with a TV set, bar, and couch has a place to accommodate “show” animals, such as birds in their cages, rabbits, and this year, Luigi, a mind-reading parrot.

The view of the lake from the upstairs living room window, past the hummingbird feeders, looks downhill toward the boat dock. Mary Jo’s garden includes a small waterfall, a maze, a gazebo, her grandchildren’s trampoline, and many trees. The early morning sounds of the birds and geese are enchanting, and once in a while there’s a glimpse of a fawn.

Nina and I arrived there in 2002 and refused to leave. Prior to that time we had stayed in a few other places in town. Usually, Mary Jo caters only to the acts appearing the week of the Get-Together, but we coerced her into allowing us a room each year.

The breakfast menus range from quiches to all manner of egg dishes, to sticky buns, fruit, pancakes, French toast, and other dishes served with breakfast meats, coffee, juice, and a variety of delicious novelty items, all served with the best dishes and fancy silverware, which gave rise to Stan Allen’s comment, “I didn’t know we were staying with Martha Stewart!”

The bright dining room table is always set with a hand-printed menu and different unusual napkin rings. On the sideboard there is an “emergency” array of ordinary food (bagels, jam, cereal, etc.), which never seems to be chosen. The guest book reads like a who’s who in show business. The best part is that the guests can all schmooze and get to really know the other acts as we exchange ideas, relate our war stories, and stretch our egos. It is also an opportunity to meet many of the overseas acts with whom we never get to spend time at other conventions.

Each year we make new friends at the table, and there are some odd ones as well. One year a ventriloquist brought his figure to dine with us each morning and commented on each item while using both of his voices. I also remember a guest who bought hundreds of dollars worth of magic props to take back to Asia. After he left, his credit card “bounced.” Then there was the man who almost missed his show because he was spending too much time in the hot tub.

The list of fun people is too long for me to name, but we have shared our stories and learned about cruise ship performances, stage and close-up work, booking agents, and travel problems with illusions, equipment, and animal acts. We’ve exchanged many hilarious onstage incidents that have happened to all of us. I imagine that the old vaudeville boarding houses that I’ve read about shared the same characteristics except for our relaxed atmosphere. (And I’m sure they didn’t have the great food.) I haven’t even mentioned the pre-show Friday night wine-and-cheese party. We have adopted the Sharps as family; getting there a day early earned us such perks as a boat trip and a sightseeing ride for Nina, with Randy Sharp taking her on a tour of the back roads on his motorcycle. How lucky can we get? ★
“DO YOU KNOW WHY I STOPPED YOU?”

Tickets – we love them unless they are from the long arm of the law. I want to talk about how to avoid them.

In forty percent of traffic stops, you will not get a ticket. Forty percent of the times you are stopped, you will get a ticket. And twenty percent of the time your actions will dictate whether or not you get a ticket.

Your fate is dictated by many factors. You are more prone to get a ticket the last week of the month. A Ford Mustang or a Dodge Charger may also tip the scales the wrong way. A bumper sticker (or stickers) may also work against you. Non-moving violations are a huge factor. A car that has an expired tag or an expired safety sticker, or not having insurance also come into play, and will cause you to get a ticket. I would also point out that drinking will also play against you, as will having a dirty car. A cluttered car also goes against you.

The rule of thumb is that you want a situation in which the police officer has nothing to go on. The moment that the flashing lights come on, you want to slow down, put your turn signal on, and if at all possible pull into a parking lot so the officer will be out of harm’s way. After you stop, if it’s dark, turn on the inside light and leave both hands on the steering wheel. In the event you have a loaded gun and a permit, you need to tell the officer that you are packing and where the gun is. (I do not recommend carrying a gun without a permit.)

The key to not getting a ticket comes down to only one word: contrite. Any other emotion will get you a ticket. Being condescending, smart, argumentative, smug, or defiant will get you a ticket. During a traffic stop the police officer holds all the cards. You do have one ploy that will help and that is the time span from when the officer asks for your driver’s license until you hand it to him. These few seconds will give you a chance to let him know that you’re a nice guy; if you have the license out when he first walks to the car you have no chance to make a case.

If you are asked, “Do you know why I stopped you?” give your best guess. You should not argue or give him any reason not to like you. If you act like a jerk, it’s easy for him to write a ticket. I will say that if you can get him to laugh or smile, you are well on your way to not getting a ticket. When I was in law enforcement, I once stopped a guy for running a red light. I asked him, “Did you not see the red light?” His response was, “I didn’t even see the house.” A lady once sped past me, pulled into a gas station, jumped out of her car, and ran into the bathroom. When she came out she said, “I just made it.”

I go into any traffic stop planning on getting a ticket; in the event that I don’t, I feel like I won. You have to understand that when you are pulled over, you have no idea what is going on in the officer’s world. Your job is to let him know the following; you’re a nice guy, you messed up (but only a little), and you not only need a break, you deserve one.

One other thing I should point out: If you see that a cop is following you, go ahead and pull into a parking lot before his lights go on. If you are speeding and you see that a policeman is turning around to come after you, go ahead and pull over. You get major points for that.
Many readers have asked for a series of columns offering helpful hints for part-timers – for example, how to handle unscheduled discrepancies that creep in during a performance. That’s a fine line to walk.

Many ideas that I have adapted came from books written by others. My feeling is that if you bought the book, you paid for the information inside and are entitled to use it. It is not, however, yours to pass on to others under your own banner. When possible, I will endeavor to credit sources.

I can share what works for me, but because we all have different personalities and do not work the same way, you will have to adapt anything you choose to use. I am not an authority on anything. I’m just another part-time magician with a tux two sizes too small for his ego. I am an expert only to the extent that an “ex” is a has-been and a “spurt” is a drip under pressure.

All of us have, or will, encounter problems during a performance. Most of those problems we bring upon ourselves. They can be traced back to two root causes: keeping ourselves in a perpetual state of confusion and lack of preparation. Resolve those two issues first, and most problems will be eliminated.

Fulltime professionals have to be all things to all people. If they wish to eat regularly, they must be able to provide everything from big box illusions to close-up cell phone and computer applications, to effects you are not all that comfortable performing. Stop buying more “stuff.” We all live in fear of having to admit we don’t know how to do a specific trick. With the exception of some of our younger colleagues, there is not much new out there. And that’s the big secret.

When I am asked about an effect someone saw another magician perform, I never admit I can’t do it. I state that I won’t do it. I explain that all magicians create material that is exclusively theirs. It would be unethical to appropriate someone else’s intellectual property. It’s akin to stealing. (Of course, we’d steal the effect in a heartbeat if we knew the method, but we never said we wouldn’t. We just stated that it would not be right to do so.)

So number one is to restrict yourself to effects you enjoy performing and are within your skill set. Create an act you can do in your sleep and reduce your collection to that number of effects. For me, the number was fifty. I kept nothing that could not be carried in a stage table.

Sell or give away everything else. If you don’t, you will be constantly tempted to mess around with it and you will never develop a polished act that you are comfortable performing. Stop buying more “stuff.” We all live in fear of having to admit we don’t know how to do a specific trick. With the exception of some cell phone and computer applications, there is not much new out there. And that’s the big secret.

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