



August 2023
Volume 113 Number 3

The Society of American Magicians

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Curt Miller

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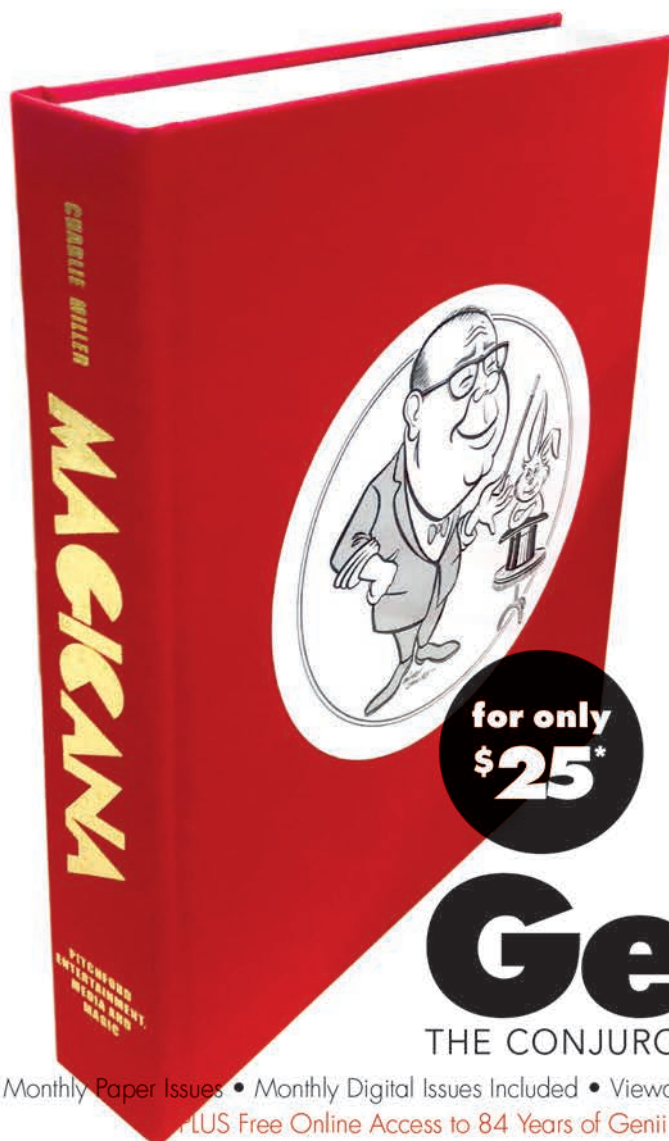
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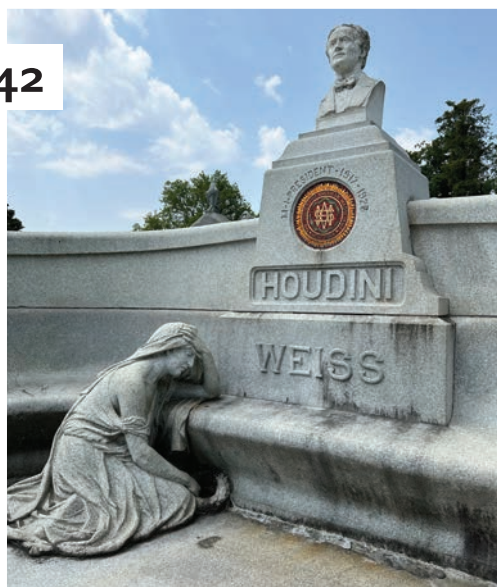
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Preshow

Alan Howard, Editor

COME TOGETHER

As The Beatles sang: “Come together, right now.” Of course, in the same song they also sang, “He got joo joo eyeball” and “Got to be good looking ‘cause he’s so hard to see,” but still, “Come Together” seems a good theme for this summer.

As I write this, with that song now reverberating around in my brain, the 94th SAM National Convention is coming down fast (sorry, another snippet of a Beatles lyric, and a new earworm here inside my head). Although some people might see this magazine before the end of the convention week, by the time most people see this the event will have made yet more SAM history, bringing together many of us with a shared passion for magic.

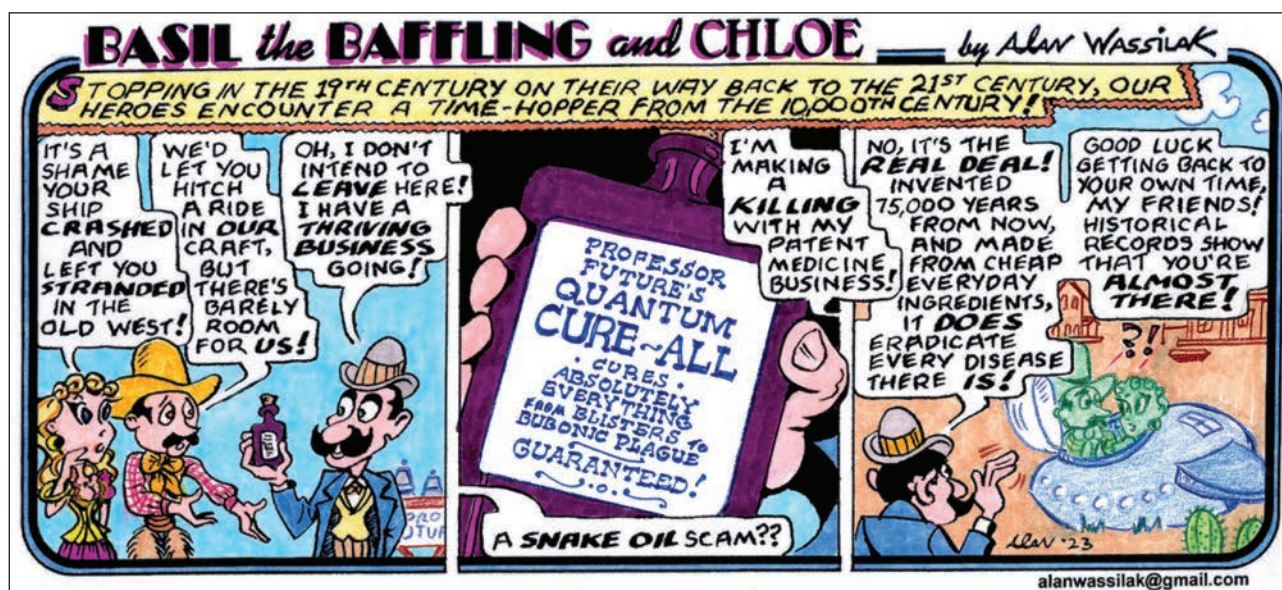
While the SAM operates all over the world, we do join together each month in one way or another, via *M-U-M* and other resources. SAM National Administrator Manon Rodriguez lives and

works in Colorado, National Secretary Marlene Clark is in Connecticut, and Treasurer Eric Lampert is in Pennsylvania. Our outgoing president, Rod Chow, is from Vancouver, and John Sturk, our incoming president, is in Illinois, with all the various regional vice-presidents and other officers and appointees scattered throughout North America and beyond. As for myself, I’m in Florida, but working with our art director, Nic LaCour, who at this moment is working remotely from somewhere in Ohio (although we met and started working together when we were each living in Nevada). As I said, we really do come together to make this all happen, not only for the National Conventions but each month with all that goes on with the SAM.

But right now, our focus is on heading to New Orleans for many of us to gather in person, and we expect it will be a great time. It’s hard not to have a great time in New Orleans; there

are even plenty of people who claim to have had a great time there while remembering none of it! In recent emails about the convention, people seem to be as enthused about the city as they are about the magic, especially looking forward to the food. I am, too. I recall that on my first visit to New Orleans, I had one of the best meals of my life. It was so good that we were afraid to go back to the same restaurant the next night, figuring it couldn’t possibly live up to what we’d had the night before. (Now, I’d love to go back and try again, but in my many visits since that time I have never been able to find the place again. It’s like a culinary Brigadoon.)

We expect to have some coverage of the convention in *M-U-M* next month, but for the moment, please forgive us as we can think of little else but the anticipation of the upcoming events, when we’ll find ourselves “All Together Now.” (And now *that* song is bouncing around between my ears...) ♪





From the President's Desk

John Sturk

CROSSING PATHS

As I write today, I'm still just beginning my experience serving as National President. You should be receiving this issue towards the end of July, and we may all still be recovering from the fantastic time we just had at the SAM Convention in New Orleans. I want to thank and congratulate the Convention Committee: Mark and Anne Weidhaas, Mike Miller, Dan and Manon Rodriguez, and all the volunteers who make the SAM Convention known as "the world's friendliest convention."

If you're experiencing FOMO right now because you weren't there — you should be! Let that fuel your drive to attend next year's convention with a historical twist: the first-ever joint convention with the Texas Association of Magicians and the FISM North American Championships. Start practicing now, folks. We look forward to an awe-inspiring competition to decide our delegates to the World Championships of Magic in 2025 in Torino, Italy.

I'm looking forward to seeing new and old friends soon at the Abbott's Magic Get-Together, August 1-5, in Colon, Michigan, the Magic Capital of the World.

For those unfamiliar with Colon, it's a sleepy little village in southwest Michigan, about halfway between Chicago and Detroit. It became the summer home of Harry Blackstone and his company in 1926. Later came the founding of the Abbott Magic Company, after co-founder Percy Abbott, an Australian immigrant, in 1934. They started having the Get-Together in 1934 and, except for periodic interruptions for world wars and pandemics, have been holding it ever since.

Abbott's is where my magic career changed from a mere hobby to a

passion. I first attended the Abbott Close-Up Convention in the spring of 2005. I decided on a whim to enter the One Trick Contest, and to my surprise, I was voted First Place and invited to perform at the big Get-Together that August. Hank Moorehouse, who I have chosen to feature on this year's Membership Card, was the man who coordinated the talent for the Get-Together at the time. Neither of us knew at the time that was the moment my path changed.

In 2006, Hank recommended me for a full summer contract to perform outdoor shows in the resort town of Mackinaw City, Michigan (wholly separate from the famed Mackinac Island). Performing six shows per day, seven days per week for pedestrians in an outdoor shopping complex was a masterclass in audience management and entertaining. It only further solidified the path I'm on today. I put down Hank's name as a reference when I applied for a job at Fun Incorporated, a magic manufacturing company in Chicago, not knowing that owner Graham Putnam and Hank had already been friends for decades.

All this to say, we never know how or when our influence or actions can change someone else's life and that every chance we have to share our magic is a diplomatic opportunity.

Consider how you relate to your audience, whether you perform for an audience of one or one thousand. Are you an ambassador for the art? How about when you meet a fellow magician? Are you an ambassador for the SAM?

This summer, I've been fortunate to book several shows with the Chicago Public Library, traveling to different branches scattered throughout the city. It's taken me to areas of town to perform for families who very possibly

have never seen a magician before. I always treat those as the opportunity to spread a love of magic, hoping that even if I don't inspire a child to become a magician, maybe I can inspire a magic fan. I hope you'll think about that, too. We can all agree, we need as many fans as we can get.

Speaking of libraries, I hope you will order your copy of *Magic In America* for your personal collection. It comes in a premium edition — hand-numbered, leatherbound, and with a bevy of digital bonuses. We also offer a standard edition, with SAM members receiving a digital bonus. See? Membership does have its privileges!

Painstakingly researched by longtime *M-U-M* editor PNP David Goodsell and edited by magic historian and author David Charvet, this is a testament to the SAM's legacy you will be proud to read and own. You'll also see many never-before published photographs dating back to our earliest days and some incredible appendices with biographies of our first 24 members, the Deans, and much more. Check out the preview pages and place your order at MagicSAM.com/historybook.

Department of Corrections: In my trick published last month, "Chicago Sugar Cube," I inadvertently credited Bruce Elliott's *Classic Secrets of Magic* as a source for the trick. Eagle-eyed reader and my fellow Assembly 3 member Gordon Gluff pointed out it wasn't in there, and he was correct. You can find the sugar-cube-mark-transfer principle described in *Tarbell* #3. (Like everything, it's in *Tarbell*!) Martin Gardner also published the routine, with credit to Chuck Sanders and PNP Werner "Dorny" Dornfield, namesake of Assembly 3 and former Dean. Can't ask for a better pedigree for a Chicago trick than that. ☼



The Dean's Diary

George Schindler

PETER RABBIT GOES TO TOWN

The year was 1992 and as president of the SAM I was at the SAM Japan convention in Ikebukoru, just outside of Tokyo. The grand opening show was attended by Prince and Princess Takamodo. We sat together surrounded by Japanese "secret service" personnel. At intermission time, we were invited to a real Japanese tea ceremony. Also invited were my interpreter Max Maven, and producer Shintaro Fujiyama. During the tea service, Max performed his new B'Wave trick, and Fujiyama did the Multiplying Bunnies. Later that afternoon, after the show, I asked the princess how she enjoyed the day, having seen birds, illusions, flowers, cards, and rope tricks. Her reply was short. "How did he get all those little bunnies in my hand?"

In 1925, Jesse Lybarger discovered the use of sponges and offered an effect in *The Linking Ring*. That same year, Joe Berg replaced his corks with sponge balls in his Cups & Balls routine. In June of that year, Carl Lohrey sold a Phantom Balls routine that explained how to

make the props on which Lybarger based his "first" sponge ball trick. Amos Rohn sold a Mystic Sponge Balls trick that same year. It wasn't until 1941 that Bob Nelson invented the Multiplying Rabbits under the name of Peter Rabbit Goes to Town.

Two rabbit-shaped sponges are introduced as Mama and Papa Rabbit. Papa Rabbit vanishes from the magician's hand and appears in the spectator's closed fist. After a few magic words, Mama and Papa appear in the spectator's closed hand, along with a family of five more mini bunnies.

This is one of the most popular tricks ever produced and it is my guess that you, dear reader, has at least one set in your repertoire. It has since been included in basic magic sets and has been a best seller for years by S.S. Adams, Fun Inc., Magic by Gosh, and dealers everywhere.

As in the case of Princess Takamodo, the effect is stronger than any grand illusion. It ranks alongside of Cups & Balls and Linking Rings as a classic of magic.

Carry a set in your pocket and you'll be a hit everywhere. 🐇



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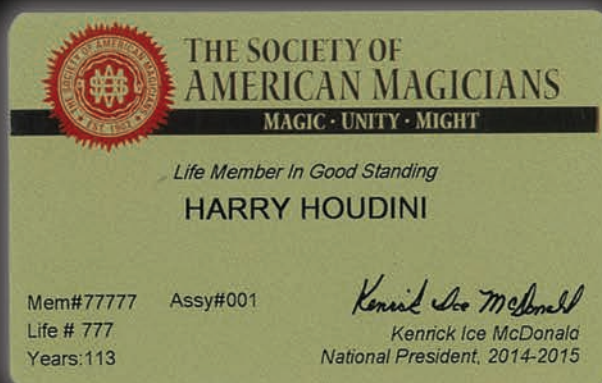
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To submit a report and photos of your local Assembly meetings, please email editor@magicsam.com

ASSEMBLY NEWS

Monthly News from the Society of American Magicians

August 2023
Volume 113, Number 3

1 New York, N.Y.

Magick Balay's Don't Blink Magic Shop played host to our significant gathering on June 2nd, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to him. Manhattan, New York City, continues to offer unique locations for immersive magical experiences, and this is yet another such place.

Today's event was a blend of gratitude mixed with a tinge of sadness. The reason being Sterling Lee's term as president of Parent Assembly 1 had ended. A role he has admirably executed and will certainly be missed in. Magicians gave him a standing ovation and there were praises for him, including gratitude about all of the important and meaningful work and coordination he has done for PA1.

Six years ago, Sterling was my gateway into the magical group, serving as an indispensable guide, informing me about the appropriate contacts and processes involved. His humorous nature was an endearing quality; his witty comebacks, seemingly conjured from thin air, never failed to entertain. Sterling was always willing to contribute to improving a magician's work — a fact I can vouch for through personal experience.

Amidst the melancholy of Sterling's departure, the thrilling phase of the PA1 elections has commenced. Moments like these provide a stark reminder of the sheer brilliance that populates PA1 and the fortunate circumstances that surround us in being amidst such formi-

dable talent. The officer elections were conducted via ballot.

An eagerly anticipated segment of the evening was the lecture by Chris Capehart, the master magician. We had previously savored his prowess at the 114th *Salute to Magic* event. Observing Capehart work his magic often blurs the line between reality and illusion, reinforcing the existence of magic itself.

One of his stunners was his light bulb effect, a part of why he received a standing ovation.

His presentation was underlined with a recurring theme: the essence of being a master magician, a factor central to his routines. He distinguished between merely performing tricks and crafting an engaging, cohesive magical performance. This he achieved by illustrating various instances of proving his mastery over magic, drawing upon timeless classics, including his extraordinary rendition of the Linking Rings.

Even with our vigilant observation, the manner in which Chris could connect one solid ring to another was genuinely remarkable and magical. True to the motto of the venue, in the presence of the mesmerizing magic of Chris Capehart, one must never blink!

— John Stamas

4 Philadelphia, Pa.

Our June 15th meeting was held at the Smoke & Mirrors Magic Theater in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. Owners Marty Martin and Danny

Archer announced that all paid up SAM #4 members get a discount to the shows using the promo code "SAMHALF."

Officers in attendance were President Rick Greenberg, First Vice-President Jim MacElroy, Second Vice-President Larry Grossman, Treasurer Bill Brown, and Secretary Michael Bonacci.

Greenberg and Bonacci presented certificates to members who won in the close-up contest and stage contests during the year. Rick presented two Presidential Certificates to Mike Miller and Michael Bonacci for all that they do during the year for the SAM #4.

We were honored to have with us the SAM National President Rod Chow and special guest Shreeyash Palshikar, who specializes in Indian magic. Rod Chow performed some money and card



The SAM #4 cast (from left): Anand and Shreeyash Palshikar, Rod Chow, Michael Heckenberger, Michael Bonacci, Mike Miller, Rick Greenberg, John Costello, and Tom Ewing, with Smoke & Mirrors Magic Theater owners Danny Archer and Marty Martin kneeling sat the front.

effects and Shreeyash presented some magic Indian style, such as the Cups & Balls and Sands of the Desert routine.

On Friday evening, June 16th, SAM



#4 members performed a fundraiser magic show in the Smoke & Mirrors Magic Theater, which was sold out. Rod Chow presented a Presidential Citation to theater owners Danny Archer and Marty Martin for all they have done and continue to do for the art of magic in their wonderful magic theater. The show consisted of emcee Tom Ewing; Rod Chow, who performed his Astro act; Danny Archer, who performed a mugged routine, a Three Fly coin routine, and Vino Aces; John Costello performed a Coins Across and some card routines; Shreeyash Palshikar and son Anand performed some Indian magic consisting of the Cups & Balls and the Indian Sword Basket; Rick Greenberg performed some card routines; SAM Mid-Atlantic Representative Michael Heckenberger performed the Linking Rings; Mike Miller performed an Apples and Oranges routine and a duct tape card effect; and Michael Bonacci performed a card effect as Vito Corleone and the Paper Balls to Box routine as Slydini.

On Sunday, June 25th, Rick and Marianne Greenberg opened up their home to have a picnic for the SAM #4 members. There were about 35 people in attendance. Several magicians performed magic. All had a great time. Thank you to Rick and Marianne.

Have a great and safe summer.

— Michael Bonacci

6 Baltimore, Md.

Meetings of Assembly 6 were held with members of IBM Ring 179 at Greenmount Station restaurant on June



Jacob Nuckey, John Gazman, Mark Wolfire, Andy London, and Jay Silverman share their magic at our June 6th meeting at Greenmount Station.

6th and at Woodholme Country Club on June 14th. New Assembly 6 President Dave Thomen and Vice-President Andy London made the following announcements: Magic Warehouse shop owner Howard Katz will finish consolidating his business this month within the comic book store Alternate Worlds in Cockeysville, Maryland. Both businesses will benefit from the sharing of retail space and customers. Also, the Magic Warehouse once again will become a meeting place for our Assembly. There is a shared meeting room, and it is closer to Baltimore than Greenmount Station. We will continue to share meetings with our local Ring at Woodholme on the second Wednesday of each month and host our own meetings on the first Tuesday at the restaurant or shop. Meetings at the Magic Warehouse are convenient for sales while our get-togethers at the restaurant allow for dinner show opening act evaluations. Also at Greenmount, Dave Thomen lets members check out the many classic and new magic publications in his library.

During the Greenmount meeting and auditions, an announcement was made for the opening of a new Assembly secretary. Eric Hoffman relinquished this responsibility with Thomen two years ago and now Dave will serve in both roles until a new secretary is announced.

At the Woodholme meeting, the President of SAM Assembly 141, Rob Niccolini, shared a presentation about his recent visit to London's Magic Circle. Also, the Assembly had a record turnout on June 12 for their *Tommy Ivey Magic Show*, where donated canned goods for a community food drive provide admission for this annual performance.

SAM member performances at the Ring meeting included: Paul Belanger displayed a prediction effect using wooden sticks with numbers on them. Gary Plotnick had a volunteer choose four playing cards and by using their values was able to find a predicted card in the deck. Howard Katz had a playing card stand holding six numbered cards, all but one with a \$100 bill —

which a spectator is unable to choose. Jay Silverman presented two prediction cards that are randomly matched from a deck that contains all Jacks. Andy London had two volunteers take a few playing cards each, mix them, and after peaking at the top card, he revealed their selections. John Gazman performed a comedy Ambitious Card routine that ended with a prediction.

— Dave Thomen

7 Omaha, Nebr.

For Juneteenth, the OMS invited members to team-up and create a magic illusion with various props from one of



The Omaha Magical Society's poster for a night of "Mystery Magic."

our senior member's trove of unusual magic items. The evening cultivated teamwork and lots of laughter.

— Patrice Fisher

8 St. Louis, Mo.

The June 22, 2023 meeting had a great turnout and a good program. Scott Smith had planned an evening of John Bannon magic and brought a stack of books



that everyone could peruse. He gave a brief history of the books, along with Bannon's background, then performed View to A Skill, a trick several in attendance mentioned they wanted to learn. Steve Steer read the "Endpapers" from one of Bannon's books and distributed copies for everyone to review and discuss. Jesse Bader performed and taught Proxy Shock and Chop Shop from the book *Lucky*. Josh Weidner performed Hawaiian Punch, which he had purchased at Old Time Magic Shop. Columbus Smith performed Play It Straight Triumph from *Impossibilia*. Steve Zuehlke performed Discrepancy City Prediction from *Impossibilia*. I had to leave the meeting early and thank Columbus Smith for taking such wonderful notes.

Steve Zuehlke gave an update on the Gateway Close-Up Convention to be held April 11-13, 2024, which will feature John Bannon (guest of honor) and Nick Lewin. Other performers scheduled are David Parr, Dan Fleshman, Steve Ehlers, Robert Moreland, Antony Gerard, and Dr. Michael Rubinstein. Registration is \$200 and is limited to 150 so it is a small, intimate convention. Steve's last two conventions have been great and it is a wonderful opportunity to experience a one-on-one relationship with the performers that you just do not have at larger conventions. Michael Rubenstein is also offering a special workshop on coin magic which is an extra charge and limited to ten participants.

Randy Kalin, Josh Weidner, and Jesse Bader recently performed at the Kansas City Magic Showcase. They also have another *Disbelief Magic Show* scheduled at the St. Louis Westport Playhouse on August 26th.

Josh Weidner had fliers for the show he and Christian Misner have scheduled, *Magic Date Night*, at the Weingarten in Belleville, Illinois, on July 7. Also, congratulations to Laurence "Nothing Up My Sleeve" Levy who recently performed at the Blue Strawberry and to Gary Chan who is scheduled to perform at the Chicago Magic Lounge, July 27-30, 2023.

Trudy Monti had her new book available for autographs: *The Fatal Chord, or the Baffling Mystery of the Carnegie Hall Murder*.

We were also pleased to welcome Curtis McClain. Curtis has been "away from magic" for a while and we were pleased he was able to join us.

And a special "thank you" to Josh Weidner for providing refreshments for the evening.

— Trudy Monti (Monteith)

9 Boston, Mass.

The June meeting of SAM Assembly 9 was held on Wednesday, June 14, via Zoom.

The first item of business was the election of officers for 2023/2024. Having determined that a quorum of SAM Assembly 9 members was present, the slate of officers was reelected without opposition: President John Bach, First Vice-President Bob Filene, Second Vice-President Alan Ashare, Secretary Duncan Miller, Treasurer Steve Lerner, Sergeant-at-Arms Brian Murphy, Historian (Appointee) Alan Wassilak.

We then discussed planned events for the coming year.

By popular demand, Duncan Miller demonstrated and explained his impromptu borrowed deck prediction trick that involves placing one card in a card box while the cards are shuffled and dealt by various spectators. Several questions were asked and alternative presentations were discussed. The roots of this trick were published by Duncan in *M-U-M* in November 1982 under the title "Quadruple Prediction," though the underlying method is old and has been reinvented, used, and published many times by many magicians over the years.

We then turned to a discussion of rope and ring tricks. Bob Filene presented a detailed rope routine in which a rope changed length, was cut and restored, and had multiple ends and middles at various times. Kevin Butler

presented a Vanishing Wedding Ring trick in which the missing ring ended up inside a nest of boxes and bags.

Duncan Miller presented a knotted shoelace demonstration in which a nasty knot was magically untied. This was followed by a wide-ranging discussion of tips and techniques for rope routines, which included the best ways to prevent rope ends from fraying, using "throwaway knots" and other ways of making knots vanish, rope cutting, and how to tie a convincing fake knot in a rope using a "figure 8" knot, rather than an overhand knot.

Assembly 9 will continue to hold informal Zoom meetings during the summer, then move to a mixture of in-person and Zoom meetings, shows, and lectures.

— Duncan Miller

17 Springfield, Mass.

There ought to be an award for those who depart, not for heavenly rewards, but for somewhere far away. Instead of a Broken Wand, one that only points 1,000 miles west. There's no such award, of course, but we did our best to recognize compeer Jeff Pyzocha.

"I've had the honor and privilege to perform with most of you," Jeff told



Our Assembly's goodbye for Jeff Pyzocha.

the 21 other magicians in attendance. "Thank you so much for the last twenty-plus years. I love all of you."

Great with a trick, tech, or a pat on the back, Jeff's been our friend and



our utility player. As Dean Tom Gentile summed it up, “Jeff’s been an unbelievable asset to magic.” Ohio is getting another great magician.

Tom also introduced new members Charlie Cambra and Tim Pelletier. Tim wants to perform hospital magic and ably performed Mickael Chatelain’s The Thinnest Deck with President Lennie Nadeau. Charlie’s father, Charlie Cambra, was mentored by Slydini. No stranger to magic, he performed Daryl’s Triumph, Bashful Queens, and Twins. Tim Hamilton displayed scarves from nested boxes and then turned a deck into all Queen of Hearts. He used his Deluxe Money Paddle and broke a pencil in half with a \$20 bill before he tried to keep Jeff around with a pair of thumb cuffs on Jeff.

Assisted by Sarah Hamilton, Jeff followed up with Tenyo’s Eye of the Idol, a trick he got when he was thirteen years old, following up with Angelo Carbone’s The Gift, dazzling with Tenyo’s The Haunting, and bringing it home with Michael Paul’s Spectator Really Cuts the Aces.

Paul Hamilton, picking up on the unofficial theme of the night, performed another packet trick: Two-Card Monte.

Ed the Wizard followed up by telling Jeff his thought-of the card after Jeff shuffled and cut a non-existent deck and performed some neat arithmetic.

Tom Gentile dazzled with Psychic Crayons, a sort of tossed-out deck with a box of crayons. Riffing on the box motif, Rich Gilbert performed Taiwan Ben’s InstaBox before John Allen’s packet trick, Double Back.

Jake DuFour sucked a card to his mouth. Scotty Swan was next up with a PK pen effect. His wisecracks were too many to recount.

Rich Pinsonnault wrapped up the evening with, what else? A packet trick.

Deanna Congo, Javier Valencia, Tim Graves, Brian Dimock, Dave Proto, Dan Sclare, and Norman St. Laurent also dropped by to visit for a spell.

— Mark Bail

18 Pittsburgh, Pa.

The June meeting for the Bob Miller Assembly, SAM 18 was held on June 27, 2023 at the Eat ‘n Park on Banksville Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In attendance were three members (very sad): Mike Mykita, Levi Burdin, and myself, Frank DeAugustine. Lucy Hall was again our guest.

This month’s topic was “Production Magic That You Would perform at a Party or Show.”

First up was Frank doing a production of paper flowers from an empty paper sack. A bag was shown empty



Mike Mykita spins the bingo cage to choose the topics for the next six months of meetings.

then it produced a see-through casket with paper flowers in it. Three of these caskets were produced from the sack and, when put on top of each other, they were larger than the sack.

Michael produced a large ten-foot Appearing Pole from a Change Bag then, to our amazement he produced a very large jar of mayonnaise from a very small case.

Our productions were now over. Levi did a couple of card tricks with Frank, including Defaced by Martin Braessas.

Michael did Pocket Nightmare by Max Maven.

Tonight was again our night to select the next six months of themes, so Michael brought out the bingo cage and we selected the next six months. July is “Improv,” September is “Money,” October is “Predictions,” November is “Mentalism,” and December is “For the children.” We spent the rest of the evening talking about membership outreach and asked our members to invite guests to our meetings. We concluded with magical conversation.

Don’t forget about Liberty Magic; use it or lose it.

In a note that should have appeared last month: Carissa Hendrix, who was performing at Liberty Magic as Lucy Darling, came to the SYM meeting and taught the kids. *Wow!* Was she great! Those kids are definitely inspired now.

— Frank DeAugustine

19 Houston, Texas

The magic in Houston was really heating up in June. Bill Palmer began the evening with a teaching session of The Eight Card Trick. Inspired by Alan Francis’ Transpo Impromptu routine, as seen in issue 915 of *Abra*, Bill modified the handling and sleights to increase its impact to his liking. Bill went through the routine and then explained each phase, including the few sleights needed. Thank you, Bill!

Burt Rosenbluth followed with another biographical presentation of a magician from the past. This month, Alexander: The Man Who Knows, who was truly a man of mystery, was his focus. Since Burt will be moving away from Houston shortly, this was his last presentation, and like all of his others, was a sharing of not only facts and figures, but also shared Burt’s respect and honor to those who have gone before us in this art we call magic. Our club will miss him.

Panda led off our magic with a card routine using Burt Rosenbluth’s hands



Second vice-president of the SAM Matthew Crabtree congratulates new member Panda, welcoming him to SAM Doug and Donnie Kornegay Assembly 19 at the June meeting.

to trap a selected card with another, which then proceeded to melt right through the second card, becoming a visible part of the second card.

Ron Jernigan trapped a previously selected card back into its deck with a set of rubber bands. He then caused the card to pop out of the deck to see that it was indeed the selected card.

Rick Hebert folded up a flat Oreo container box in front of our eyes, into an actual box, and then proceeded to pour wrapped candy out of it.

Bill Palmer “shared” the secret of the Little Red Handkerchief and its ancient history back to the days of Merlin. After it vanished from sight, it was found once again in Burt Rosenbluth’s jacket sleeve.

Matthew Crabtree presented a “brand-new trick,” with gags, as he read over the instructions and then eventually had a quarter signed and vanished, only to be found once again inside a ball of bright red yarn.

Jamie Salinas followed up with a signed quarter, which he smashed onto the bottom of a sealed soda can, which ended up inside the can.

Dick Olson performed an elaborate

Cards Across routine with the help of Seamus and Bill Palmer.

Philip Blest performed some surgery on the arm of Rick Hebert. You had to be there to believe it.

We had magic giveaways afterward, and everyone took home something of interest.

— Miles Root

21 Hartford, Conn.

May and June saw Central Connecticut Magicians Association hold two lectures: May’s was by Adam Parisi, June’s was by Jon Allen.

Adam started with a gag about Six Card Repeat in which small cards were removed from among six large cards. He gave us a little history of how he came up with his routines and stressed the importance of keeping notes on what he did. At this point, I stopped taking my own notes and just thoroughly enjoyed his wonderful lecture.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend Jon Allen’s lecture, but CCMA President Brad Beady provided the following synopsis.

Mr. Allen opened with a trick that gave rise to the biggest cliché in magic and followed with a coin and Sharpie routine that ended with a surpris-



Adam Parisi and Jon Allen.

ing production of a glass of water. He followed up with a great, impromptu way to peak at a piece of information.

With our very own Dan Sclare standing place for a child volunteer, Mr. Allen demonstrated a great routine and a bit of business with a magic marker.

Jon Allen demonstrated a few of his own creations: Double Back, Perfect

Score, Wonder Fob, and closing with Rule of 3, a three-card prediction from a deck of blank cards.

In the second half of the lecture, Jon showcased one of his newest releases, Down 2 One where through a series of random coin flips CCMA member Dan Scare was once again chosen. An envelope was revealed to show that this set of random tosses and selections were all predicted.

Jon also gave some great advice on how to make spectators into participants and become more emotionally invested in a trick every magician knows, the Ambitious Card.

Jon closed the show with his Destination Box, a brilliant Signed Card to an Ompossible Location.

Attendees of the lecture were able to purchase Jon’s products and lecture notes after the show in addition to talk with Jon about his work, appearances on *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*, and storied career.

— Dana T. Ring

22 Los Angeles, Calif.

The Southern California Assembly 22 held its 92nd annual awards and installation banquet on June 24, 2023. This event, at the end of each Assembly year, is always very well attended by members, family, and friends, and this year was no exception. Held again at Westminster Gardens in Duarte, California, John Engman again served as toastmaster for the event.

Prior to the excellent buffet meal served by the banquet staff, Steven Jennings and Kim Hallinger conducted a “Turning of the Plate” ceremony for the late James Militello, Milt Larsen, and Don Hallinger. This historic ceremony dates back to the earliest years of the SAM, when members who had passed away during the previous year were honored at the SAM Annual Banquet.

Following the banquet meal, Assembly Past President Steven Jennings gave a historical presentation on the 1931 founding of the Southern Califor-



nia Assembly 22 and then conducted the installation of Assembly 22 officers and board of director members for the 2023-2024 Assembly year. Following a two-year cycle for officers to hold their office, Kelly Hernandez was again installed as Assembly president. Kelly then gave an address summarizing the success of the Assembly's growth this year and his expectations for a great year ahead.

It was then time for the always great banquet show, emceed by John Engman. Opening the show was Kim Hallinger, assisted by Roselle Cespon; it was a colorful act that included a Mutilated Parasol routine and the production of an endless number of silks and flags. Travis Martois was next with a bowling ball production, a Dean's Box routine, Mental Epic, and the vanish and reappearance of a bottle full of water from the folds of a newspaper. Closing the show was the hilariously funny act of Joe Monti. An act difficult to describe; full of gags, bits of business, and funny stuff. Joe did a very baffling Three-Card Monte with jumbo, jumbo cards, a multi-faceted Cut & Restored Rope routine, and a "sniffed" card routine that entertained Pablo Escobar

The final event of the evening was the presentation of awards and trophies by Steven Jennings and Kelly Hernandez to those who earned them for performances during the previous year. The Assembly trophy program dates back to 1962, and these trophies have inscribed on them some of magic's great names as previous winners.

The hour was late as the last of our members and guests departed into the very warm and pleasant Southern California evening.

— Steven Jennings



24 Albany, N.Y.

The June meeting of Assembly 24 was attended by 22 members and guests. We welcomed two of our newest members, who joined this evening. They were Chris Baily

from Ganesvoort, New York and John Fava of Watervliet, New York. We now have a total of fifty paying members.

Tonight we met our new officers for the year, which included Cliff Bruce (president), Dave Liberman (vice-president), Allan Alexander (secretary), and Ken Marcinowski (treasurer).

The evening had a theme of "Card Magic" and Cliff Bruce started with a brief history of Martin Nash and his approach to doing card magic with a short show and emphasis on storytelling. Cliff then gave us an excellent presentation with his version of Three Young Men, ending with four Jacks and finishing with a story based upon The Four Bank Robbers.

We had a full evening of great magic, which included the following presenters and routines. Karl Johnson made use of jumbo cards to perform a classic prediction. We then watched Chris Baily do a wonderful rendition of Coincidence with a half torn set of jumbo cards. This was followed by Bruce Barnett with his four Aces production and Triumph routine (Roll Over Aces by Dingle) with his own twist.

After a short break and some refreshments we continued with John Fava, using a small white board to show the odds of choosing a given card and then actually doing his own routine based upon Any Card at Any Name. Dave Liberman also showed a nice routine dealing with probability based upon John Bannon's Para Sympathetic. Ken Beckley followed with Out of this World. Finally, John Hoffman finished by showing some amusing self-fanning cards and cards that simulate a false cascading effect. He then performed the McCombical routine.

The evening was a success, full of great magic and entertainment.

— Allan Alexander

25 Butler, N.J.

The June meeting theme was "Rubber Bands and Card Reveals." The performances began with Assembly

President Jim Fau vanishing a coin from a rubber band-secured coin trap only to make it reappear inside a miniature flying saucer! Jim continued with a borrowed deck trick where eventually cards are added and counted down to reveal a selected card face up!

Dan Silvestri displayed his collection of handcuffs and restraints as a clever introduction to the rubber band classic, Crazy Man's Handcuffs. Dan shifted to a spiritualism themed card trick utilizing Dave Powell's Psychic Spirit Slates, where two selected cards are eerily revealed in chalk on two small slates.

Eddie Conrad vanished a selected card from the deck and it impossibly reappeared inside a sealed FedEx envelope!

Robert Mascuch attempted to find a signed, selected card with little luck — until he pointed to a small wooden box sitting the whole time on the table. Inside the box, he revealed the folded and signed card!

Alen Thompson presented Barnaby's Watch, with his own custom made props, and spun a somber adventure tale about



Dan Silvestri reveals the secrets of the Spirit Slates to a stunned Assembly.

tragedy on the high seas and a mysterious pocket watch that reveals the hour of a seaman's death! Alen followed up with a thought-of card revealed inside a within a wallet, courtesy of David Penn's Streamlined.

John Henderson expertly manipulated the pasteboards with Simon Aronson's Tarnation. John wagered us that he would quickly find the four lucky cards written on a fifty-dollar bill. John attempted to cut the deck four times



and hit the lucky cards. Unfortunately, he only turned up the four Aces. After some additional cuts, John cut four more piles to reveal the lucky cards next to the Aces! John continued with Sebastien Calbry's Offset. The deck is spread, a card is chosen, and soon enough, the card magically appears written on the outside of the card box!

Assembly Secretary Carl Morano closed out the evening with Mike Hummer's Hummer Stunner. A wallet was opened to reveal a crisp one-dollar bill for the lucky spectator in the event that Carl could not locate their selected card in a deck. After two failed attempts, the card was shown to have vanished from the deck. Carl begrudgingly opened his wallet only to find the dollar bill wrapped around the selected card! Carl also demonstrated his latest Penguin Magic acquisition, Dan Harlan's new, improved Cardtoon, the jumbo card edition, which seems to play quite nicely in a parlor setting.

— Carl Morano



26 Providence, R.I.

Adam Parisi, from nearby Branford, Connecticut, was Assembly 26's guest lecturer in May. Presenting his new (perhaps first) lecture titled "Welcome to My World," Adam performed eight effects woven into two sets of mostly original work. Using a shuffled deck (which could be borrowed), the first effect was Four Packet Monte, which allows the performer to quickly gain access to four of a kind for a flashy reveal/opener. This got everyone's attention. Adam used the four cards for the next trick called Long Tall Sally, a card "stretching" quickie where one of the four seemed to be stretched to twice its length before being restored to normal. The four cards are then lost in the deck (apparently) only to be found reversed in Four of a Kind Triumph. Adam ended the first set with Paul Gordon's Budget Assembly.

During a brief break Adam talked about his appearance on *Penn & Teller* in February. Although he didn't fool the duo with his Blockhead routine, he did get a "he's hammering a damn nail up his damn nose" comment along with kudos from Penn Jillete, and "you grossed me out" from host Alyson Hannigan. His appearance can be found on YouTube or on Adam's website.

Adam resumed the lecture with his entertaining take on John Gustaferro's Either Or, where a spectator's card in found by answering a series of "either/



Adam Parisi performs during his "Welcome To My World" lecture.

or" questions. This was followed by Jump and Pass, Adam's version of Hofzinger's Ace Problem, which then led into Scatter — a Spectator Finds the Aces effect. Adam's final trick was a card-under-glass effect called HD/High Def but using the card box rather than a cocktail glass. Nicely done — this author was definitely fooled.

At the conclusion of the lecture, newly printed lecture notes were available for purchase. They not only describe the original effects in detail, they also contain copious credits and references should the reader desire further information on Adam's inspiration for each effect.

Well done, Adam! Assembly 26 wishes you all the best for continued success.

— Jeff Smith

31 Indianapolis, Ind.

President Barry Rice called the June 5 meeting to order. Treasurer Jay Newby

reported the money in our account was \$2,420.47. We were reminded of the picnic on June 25 and the coming Matthew Garrett lecture September 22.

For announcements, Steve Spence reminded us of the SAM convention in Louisiana July 22-26. Outgoing President Barry Rice installed the new slate of officers for the next year: PNP Steve Spence (president), Mike Root (vice-president), Jay Newby (treasurer), Jack Weigle (secretary).

Following the theme of "Fast Tricks," Barry Rice performed his four-ring Linking routine.

Roger Alting performed magic with Chinese coins.

Mike Root performed a silk routine where a star silk disappeared into a black hole silk. He pulled the star silk back out of the hole silk and then tossed it into the hole. It missed the hole and went up Jack Weigle's sleeve!

Chris Henderson performed a Three-Card Monte routine that ended with four Queens!

Jack Weigle performed an experiment in intuition, asking his helper to deal the cards, without looking, into piles of red and black. When it looked as though he failed miserably, Jack showed that he really meant the red and black backs of the cards and he was nearly perfect with that!

Chris Wagers performed a coin transposition effect. He also performed a trick where the chosen card was predicted by the fine print on the Ace of Spades and then appeared inside his phone case!

Craig Stone performed a card trick where the chosen card changed back color and then changed back!

PNP Steve Spence shared with us the beginning, adventurous process, and soon the publishing of the *History of the SAM*. It will be available at the convention.

In attendance at Open Door Baptist Church were: Jack Weigle, Mike Root, Jay Newby, Steve Spence, Chris Wagers, Barry Rice, Tony Xayosomioth, Craig Stone, Andy Knight, Wayne Corrigan, Roger Alting, and Chris Henderson.

— Jack Weigle



37 Denver, Colo.

This month we had two fantastic lectures. The first was “How to Routine Your Magic” and the second was Marcos Waldemar.

Jeff Jenson started us off with how he made his TNR Toilet Paper act into a routine. Try to pick your music to go with the flow and beats of your performance. Shawn Preston was a few seconds short of timing his music with the act. It dawned on him to do something simple to fix it so he just rolled up both sleeves and that solved the problem. Sometimes it is just that simple. If you are thinking of adding music to your act, start with walk on and walk off music, then add to it.

Joe Givan and Carole Massie stated that engaging and connecting with the audience is very important. Listening to the audience’s “oohs” and “ahs” will give you feedback to what tricks worked and how your patter was. Eye contact and scripting are a must.

Tara Headberg suggested that you always face your audience, stand at a 45-degree angle to the audience, and the audience and the side and helper can all see and hear you. The main thing for you to think about is always be ready to recover when something goes wrong — it definitely could happen!

Tips for trade shows: hit the bullet points for the company, perform a patter trick if the music dies, keep the volume down when using instrumental music, your music should be the frosting on the cake that helps the magic, always allow time for applause, greet them at the beginning and thank them for coming to your show, practice and time your act, and use video or audio equipment to help you practice.

Marcos Waldemar performed a bunch of fun magic for us while passing through. He did a nice Card at Any Number, The Tree, and The Better Half. The latter was a card trick where many cards were torn in half and placed into piles. After the piles were shuffled they two halves matched! Marcos talked



Marcos Waldemar performing, demonstrating, and lecturing for Assembly #37.

about the Penelope Principal used in one of his tricks. He also explained his handling on the Erdnase Color Change and did a nice trick with your business card. He also did a nice trick with a thin candy wrapper; we could name what candy we wanted and the wrapper actually smelled like the named flavor. Last he had a pet fly that found the spectator’s card.

— Glenn Proulx

51 Peoria, Ill.

As our regular venue is now closing on Mondays, and we prefer to continue meeting in the same location, the main goal of our meeting on June 14 was to decide which day and week to call our regular meeting night. That decision was second Wednesday of the month. The venue will remain Peoria Pizza Works on Prospect Rd. in Peoria Heights.

Two members from the Peoria Magicians attended Abracornadabra: Rodney Nordstrom, a.k.a. D’Nordo, competed in the senior tournament, assisted by his wife, Cheri. Michael Baker hosted the Sideshow of Wonders event as his horror host alter ego, Dr. Zirkus, and had a dealer booth.

CIMGT had a number of attendees

from Peoria, including Troy Keefer, a.k.a. Yort, who was a four-way threat — or rather, treat, in that he performed close-up and stage, presented a lecture, and had a dealer booth. Undoubtedly, Yort is the hardest working magician in the area — at least at CIMGT.

We plan is to host a mini convention that will be *free* to any and all magicians this October. The events will consist of a flea market, close-up shows, lectures, and a public show, with nominal charges for tickets. Because the mini convention is free, we are soliciting volunteers to perform and/or lecture.

Periodically, we ask our members to bring for performance or Show & Tell anything they wish. Kyle Bassett, a.k.a. Gambit, performed with an interesting double stripper deck. Rather than completely expose what it is, I suggest you research it; it could prove to be a powerful tool for the card worker. Kyle also performed a quick idea he had involving coins and sponge balls in a small box. Kyle also mentioned his continuing shows, *Get Tricked*, which have proven to be popular in the area.

Michael Baker showed several items that he will be including in a Fun Club Member Pack for fans of *The Haunted Dungeon Show*. This is the horror show he produces in his spare time away from building magic, and the fun pack, consisting of trading cards, post cards, buttons, and more, is part of the branding effort. The connection to magic is that his show, as Dr. Zirkus, has segments called Monster Magic. These are, as the name implies, magic performed with a “monster” or “horror” theme.

The remainder of the meeting was more discussion about all things that interested us, and ran much later than usual. I think the smoke from Terry Grawey’s cigar hypnotized all of us...

— Michael Baker

59 Portland, Ore.

John Edsall started the entertainment off having a spectator hold a silk



in mimic of John doing the same. After waving it and inserting it into the closed fist, both vanished. Only to be repeated a second time.

Bob Eaton displayed a large card that appeared to be potentially too risqué for this delicate audience but, when unfolded, revealed it was merely a donkey with a previously chosen card displayed in its mouth. Bob then suddenly fused two quarters together, which he gave to the spectator (eat your heart out, Uri Geller).

Sage repeatedly magically changed Kings into Aces. Then four Aces into four Kings.

Larry Seymore had Aces and Jacks magically changing places and up-down orientation finally to have four Aces appear between two black Jacks. Larry then demonstrated the effect and handed out printed instructions.

Michael Sturgon performed a very clean Matrix using four bottle caps. He then explained the effect, including detail on how to get good bottle caps. Michael next pulled a prediction card from a deck. Then a spectator called "stop" as cards were dealt, with the selected card providing a number to deal to that matched the predicted card. Again, a demonstration followed.

Next, Michael laid a card face down and had the spectator name a card, repeated two more times. When the cards were turned over, they all matched the thought-of cards of the spectator. Again, Michael demonstrated how to do it (Muldoon Match?).

Mel Anderson took a lucky coin off of a chain and somehow pushed a pencil through the small hole in the coin without damaging the coin. The coin then vanished and mysteriously reappeared on the chain. Mel then demonstrated how to do it.

Steve Bay had two spectators each hold two ends of two long ropes. He then tied a combination of silks and a wand into the middle of the ropes. When he slid the wand out, the silks were also released and the ropes were intact.

Aaron Oneal borrowed some dollar bills and had them face down. When his

back was turned, a spectator chose and marked one of the bills. The magician was able to discern the bill that was marked. Aaron then demonstrated how to do it.

The meeting then moved into open discussion and interaction. A final vanishing act of Krispy Kreme donuts was performed by all.

Again, a lot of lively entertainment and valuable demonstration of a variety of effects.

— *Stephen Johnsen*

63 Norwich, Conn.

President "Sir" Bob Hale called our June 5 meeting to order. Treasurer's report was read and accepted, old business was quickly discussed.

We will be having Chris Capehart lecture on the 17th of June; this should



A performance by Jim Vines.

be the event of the year for our organization. Ocean beach shows start on June 28th. Pete Haddad will be kicking off the season while Alex Saxon makes his debut on July 19th. Jon Allen will be at the Hartford club on Friday, June 9th.

Jim Vines performed his brilliant close up/parlour act for us tonight. This was a special treat. Coins, credit cards, cash, and a special surprise ending showed up from thin air. What a talent and a very nice and generous man.

Alex performed a very nice and entertaining Cups & Balls routine. This was nice to see him branch out from cards and coins. Matt Hary showed everyone the Three Fly routine he performs during his walk-around gigs.

Paul Stellar gave us all a math lesson with his version of the 1089 trick (very clever).

Bill Jergensen fooled one of our long time members with the Strat-O-Spheres. Well done, Bill. (Wayne: time to look up this old trick.) The look on Wayne's face when the Strat-O-Sphere fooled him was priceless.

After the member magic there was about an hour of talk and workshoping. This was one of the best meetings we have had in a long time. Thanks to Jim Spinnato for bringing in Jim Vines; thanks again to Jim Vines for his wonderful performance.

The July 3rd meeting will be in Clinton at Bob Hale's home.

— *Peter Haddad*

77 Long Island, N.Y.

Nothing like the smell of lo mein and sushi in the evening. It's that time of year where the Long Island Mystics gather for our annual dinner and show!

Steve Rodman introduced our emcee while we were still full from DJ's International Buffet great spread of our favorites. The emcee was our newest member and longtime friend, "Magic-Al" Garber! He took the mic and reminded us all why he's funny! After all, he's been seen on *Letterman*! He mentioned a lot of members past and present in his set and boy, I tell you: funny. 'Nuff said!

Speaking of funny, Al introduced our comedian for the show and it was none other than Long Island's comedy staple Rich Walker, who zeroed in on our funny bones with "So this woman said this to me during my set..." war stories and we ate up every one. Great choices.

We closed our night with Las Vegas favorite Bizzaro! There were unexpected magic moments from him eating glue (kids, don't do this; he's a pro) and then a Traveling Hank that had us scratching our heads. Plus, Bizzaro gave a lecture to all of us on the following night. All of us were taught the Vanishing Knot and he used a desk bell to alert us



Bizzaro lectured for Assembly 77 on June 6th.

of great tips for performers. His Sharpie marker magic was a hit.

That's it for this installment. See you in September.

— Lou Johnson

80 Hayward, Calif.

It was monte night for this month's meeting as we continued our journey through the magic of David Regal. Contained within Regal's latest book, *Interpreting Magic*, are four separate monte-style routines, and we took it upon ourselves to learn and perform all of them. Each was unique in its own way, but local office supply stores may have noticed a run on a particular double-sided product Mr. Regal is fond of utilizing with cards.

For show and tell this month, Doug Eakin brought in his newly acquired School for Scoundrels busking table, which is a nice size, of high quality, and easily transportable. Bill Ragsdale provided a review of the Richard Wiseman, Jordan Colliver, and Rik Worth book, *Hocus Pocus: Magic Mystery and the Mind*. The book covers scientific, paranormal, and magic history presented in a graphic novel/comic book style. For a product review, we got a sampling of Joshua Jay's *Six Impossible*

Things, which is a viewing of Jay's show that ran in New York. All the impossible things are then explained.

Bill Ragsdale finished the evening by demonstrating and teaching Regal's version of Card Warp called Hyper Drive. This version has some nice touches on the get ready and work on convincing display. We will be warping our own cards in performance next month.

— Brad Sasser

88 Ann Arbor, Mich.

Our meeting was called to order by President Dan Jones and we kicked off with Michael Doyle as our featured performer. Michael performed several effects, including a couple of different die predictions, a tarot match effect with two volunteers, and an impressive book-based mindreading effect.

Then it was time for our get-to-know-you round table question, where members introduced themselves and then told us about their "favorite summertime activity." Answers were varied and included swimming, hiking, BBQ, sailing, fishing, traveling, boating, and of course attending magic conventions. We had several guests and prospective members attend, including Caden Burkhardt, a student from the University of Michigan Magic Club; Charlie and Mike Palko, a father and son from the neighborhood; and Manish Mishra-Marzetti, an attendee from our club's parlor show.

Then it was on to performances. Johnny New York performed a unique Rock-Paper-Scissors prediction with three volunteers, clever nametags, and three mystery boxes. Mike Bogdas then performed a Spinning Star three-card prediction. Ron Hoole performed a clever card-matching trick with half a deck, which was an actual deck cut in half cross-ways. Karl Rabe performed a card force and reveal. Caden performed a four Aces routine. Dan Jones shared his visual story of trying to buy a casket and ending up with a trash can.

Then we wrapped up with Sean Naes providing a hands-on learning session for The Professor's Nightmare.

— Karl Rabe

95 Vancouver, BC

The theme of "Transportation(s)" started off with Juan Garcia doing a children's presentation of traveling colored blocks from a tube to a box on the other side of the table. Jens Henriksen told a joke about asking for a person's occupation; the person answered that he was an aircraft carrier, and Jens pulled a toy airplane from his pocket.

Reg Donnelly did some jokes with "Nothing" and "Something" cards and finished with "Everything," and restored a classic Mickey Mouse poster from individual pieces. Rod Chow performed his Emoji routine, a simultaneous transposition with six volunteers (published in the June 2023 *M-U-M*).

David Parker did an effect to land a toy airplane on the predicted country in a grid of cards on the table. Anthony Young demonstrated a Die Box with a baffling surprise ending, taking apart the sides of the box to show it completely empty then visually reappearing the solid die from a clearly empty and open box.

Glen LaBarre showed a transportation of marked Xs and Os on copper and silver coins placed in coin purses, surprising everyone by showing only the marks transporting, and not the coins themselves. Mike Likey vanished Jiri Slovencik's card and showed it had transported itself to an "out" box on the table.

Rick Mearns had the Ace of Spades transport from the table to the fan of Aces in his hand, then all the Aces changed to different backs. Ray Wong did a transportation of coins from one tube to another in phases, one and two at a time, until he transported all three at once.

Dave Watters did Test Drive from Tony Chris with cards that had various cars printed on them; a car keys card



SAM National President Rod Chow presents a Presidential Citation to Glen LaBarre — always willing and able to help, support, and encourage his fellow magician, Glen is also an exceptional magic coach with diverse talents, creativity, and ingenuity to solve any magic challenge.

ended up on a car that matched Dave's prediction. Dave also had Henry Tom write the name of a city on the back of his business card, then utilized a toy car to drive and stop on the card with the name of the city Henry had written. Henry then closed the evening with two elastic bands stretched between his hands in a ladder format and had David Parker pinch the top bands to transport himself one band at a time down the ladder to Hawaii.

Assembly #95 again volunteered to perform at the annual RBC Race for Kids Charity function for the BC Children's Hospital. Lon Mandrake, Juan Garcia, and I represented the Assembly at this year's fundraising event, which attracted a record attendance of over 7,000 participants, and raised over \$1.7 million.

— Rod Chow



Transportation(s).

99 Orlando, Fla.

The June meeting date was shifted to earlier in the month so we could host

a lecture by New Jersey's Bill Wisch. President Ryan Stiner introduced Bill and his son, Kevin.

Wisch is a fifty-year full-time professional sleight-of-hand artist, performer, and innovator. He is the only student Slydini ever authorized to lecture his magic on his behalf. Bill is the inventor of over thirty original sleights, winner of multiple awards in magic, and is proud of the fact that most of the magic he does is of his own creation or enhanced versions of classic magic.

His lecture included Impromptu Any Card at Any Number, a variation of the famous card effect. This was his great version of the ACAAN effect. He presented A Beautiful Day, the Slydini Wild Card Turnover, and his new Flushtstration Count. In Slydini's Helicopter Card, a chosen card invisibly goes from a card fan to a pile on the table. The Slydini Knots showed the classic knots in two tied handkerchiefs that melt away.

Often you get something that you don't expect in a magic lecture, and this was case with Wisch. Slydini was a mentor to Wisch. He advertised his visit as a lecture on Slydini magic, but Wisch focused more on how he enhanced and improved on a few of his mentor's effects. There were some new and clever moves like the Wisch Wedge and a flip-flop deal that fooled Dai Vernon at The Magic Castle.

Since many of the moves were unique and unusual, Wisch had available DVDs with full explanations. Quality instruction from a master is priceless.

— Dennis Phillips

104 Salem, Mass.

Wednesday, June 14, was an incredible wrap up to Assembly 104's regular season. With a rainstorm threatening outside Supino's Italian Restaurant in Danvers, Massachusetts, magicians and friends ate their way through a balanced feast toward our Annual Installation of Officers. Most Illustrious Rod Chow, SAM National President, had flown in from

Vancouver to join us and Past National President Tom Gentile had driven over 130 Massachusetts miles (the worst kind) to perform the ceremony on this dark evening.

The line-up for 2023-2024: President Bill Jensen, Vice-President Tony Gangi, Second Vice-President Wayne Moulton, Treasurer Pete Jackson. Secretary Bob Forrest, and Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Marotte.

With fellowship at a high, Bill Jensen wasted no time in presenting beloved Eddie Gardner with a Certif-



Eddie Gardner gets Assembly #104 Life Membership.

icate of Life Membership in Assembly 104, to thunderous applause. Bill also presented Bruce Lawson with an award for the work he accomplished during his presidency. Bruce graciously acknowledged the support he enjoyed during his tenure. Finally, SAM President Chow bestowed two Presidential Citations. One to Bill Jensen for his unswerving devotion and service to the SAM. The second to Jim Rainho, a 104 founder.

With food and formality set aside, it was time for fun. It was time for Rod Chow to perform his exquisite Astro Act. For anyone who hasn't seen it, Rod combines eloquent poetry in a cosmologically themed series of effects combining illuminated planets, transformations, gems, and stunning eye



candy. Few magic routines can truly be called breathtaking. From beginning to end, this one was.

With the long-awaited torrents beating against the windows and lightning flashing outside, comic dessert was served up by our featured performer. There is only one Mike Bent. Nature would never allow more. His background as a professional comedy teacher and writer has always informed Mike's magic and this night was no different. And no disappointment.

Mike's goal was clearly not to try and fool a room filled with magicians, but rather to entertain them. And he did. Promising "chills," "horror," and "suspense," his Monster Movie routine offered a tongue-in-cheek Confabulation result on a huge paper from spectators' choices. Mike delivered a hilariously convoluted take on The Bellhop story, using a giant deck. He "taught" his "secret" to the Card in Balloon, and if you think there's no way to milk magic and laughs from "Hello, Kitty," well, Bent will prove you wrong.

— Bob Forrest

110 Harrisburg, Pa.

In attendance at the May 11 meeting were Stephen Smith, Treasurer Al Bienstock, Acting Vice-President and Secretary Michael Reist, Jack Ritter, Ed Lopez, John Sergolt, Richie Matthews, Evan Katz, Jack Ritter, Rodney Ries, and John Fortino.

President Steve Smith opened the meeting at 6:27. The Secretary's minutes were approved the Treasurer's Report was approved.

There was no new business and Smith's Thought for the Month was what is the difference between mentalism and mental Magic?

In Good of the Order: Michael Reist reported that he began writing his book on booking daycares.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:41. We then had a Mentalism Workshop by John Sergott and Al Bienstock.

Al performed an effect that used

strips of papers with rows of single-digit numbers. He had volunteers use the strips to create a series of four-digit numbers that were then added up and matched his prediction. He then showed a board with the last names of US presidents. Six names were on a board. He had us all pick a president to start with. He then gave us instructions on a series of moves eliminating various names. He successfully predicted the US president we all ended up on. He then did a very nice book test presentation and another nice number prediction.

John began with an impromptu coin prediction, then did a very nice ESP presentation. John next did an effect where he showed various celebrities in four envelopes and predicted who each volunteer held in their envelope. He then did a very nicely done book test, and followed that up with a very nice card prediction/location routine. He then did a routine he called his version of Picture This with a Mental Photography deck, then had a prediction on a business card and through a series of questions he had a volunteer make a choice and lo and behold his prediction was the thought-of card. Our meetings currently are held the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at John's Diner. Until next month.

— Michael Reist

112 Concord, Calif.

Our June meeting was attended by Jerry Barrilleaux, Bob Holdridge, Diego Cervantes, Armando Cervantes, Perry Rist, and James Wisnewski.

Bob Holdridge performed an In And Box, which he made himself many years ago. Bob and the box both performed flawlessly.

Diego performed a card effect and then performed a One Second Knot, in his shoelace. After watching him perform it a few times I decided to only purchase shoes with Velcro!

Jerry Barrilleaux performed a card effect with a reversed card.

James Wisnewski performed several



James Wisnewski demonstrates how to tie a knot in a rope without letting go of either end.

feats of magic and then showed us how to hold both ends of a rope and tie a knot in it without letting go of the rope. Bob also taught us how to tell what numbers were rolled by a Muggle on invisible dice.

— Perry Rist

115 Charlottesville, Va.

Discussion for the meeting centered around the use of a bot to create some presentational ideas. Present for the discussion were Matt Caldwell, George Buckley, Tom Olshelski, Dan Rowan, and Kevin Hettinger.

Matt performed Ryan's Schlutz's impromptu version of Out of This World. It's from his *Super Strong, Super Simple* DVD/download. While the OotW isn't his favorite card plot, he does like Schlutz's version because a) it's super easy and sleight free, b) can be done impromptu, and c) is quick (your spectator only guesses the colors of half the deck, so it doesn't drag on like some OotWs can).

Tom was gracious enough to show us his version of OotW, which was very well done. Rather than use a red and black card, for the pile markers he uses polished red and black stones, which definitely dresses up the presentation a bit. His version does go through the



entirety of the deck, so it is longer, but he does a nice job of keeping the spectator engaged throughout. He also switches things up for the spectator halfway through the deck, which prevents the “pick a color” bit from getting stale. He promised it’ll be included in his book, so something to look forward to!

Tom also presented his version of Michael Close’s effect called The Trick That Fooled Houdini. Tom calls his version The Trick That Fooled Dai Vernon. It is a special version of the venerable Ambitious Card effect specifically designed to fool magicians. Tom’s story tells of his first visit to The Magic Castle way back in 1969 when he saw a “strangely dressed man with a long grey beard” perform a card trick that fooled the legendary father of modern close-up magic — the Professor, Dai Vernon — and his entire magical fraternity. And it fooled us, too!

George performed The Final Three Card Effect. He did not know who came up with the effect.

Dan performed a four-trick rope routine that he created to test a bot. The bot was created by Adam Grace of the Conjurer Community. The bot was created around an application at *poe.com*. The routine consisted of four rope tricks: 1. The classic one-handed knot. 2. The double knot creation (using his own vertical technique) 3. The classic triple knot 4. Dan’s own “eight” knot. Dan ran five presentation simulations and shared them with the group. Working with the bot he says was fun and produced some useful presentation ideas.

— David Clauss

136 Tucson, Ariz.

Thirteen of us met at our new meeting place, Rusty’s Family Restaurant and Sports Grille. The theme of the night was “Money / Bill Magic.”

Mike Bekidem started with a teach-a-trick where he taught a Torn & Restored Bill effect he learned from Aldo Columbini. Dan MacInnis taught Roger Klause’s Ultimate Slow Motion

Bill Transposition where a two-dollar bill transposes with a one-dollar bill in a spectator’s hand.

The business portion of the meeting focused on preparations for our 35th annual *Stars of Magic* show in August.

Steve Ehlers began the magic performances with Star Warp, a Card Warp-type routine using a dollar bill. Dan MacInnis performed Bamboozled, a short change routine by Gary Plants he learned at PebblePalooza. Dave Olson showed a counterfeit detector that apparently shredded a borrowed bill, and then did a bill serial number premonition effect. Mike Bekidem performed a two-dollar bill to two one-dollar bill transformation, and then back again. He also performed a Dani Daortiz spelling card trick. Chris Williams did an Animated Bill under glass effect. John Shryock performed Mark Allen’s Bill Transformation where he transformed four one-dollar bills to five-dollar bills and then to hundred-dollar bills. Juan Frieg produced sponge balls from borrowed bills. David Fuller finished the night with an original effect using a deck of cards with different pictures on the faces — he correctly divined the chosen picture card.

Later in the month, the Assembly had Marcos Waldemar, a Spanish magician, lecture for us. He taught impromptu card magic, including his version of Any Card at Any Number (ACAAN Cruz) that used the Penelope Principle, an age prediction effect, a matching the cards effect using torn cards, and effects using the Erdnase color change. The second half of the lecture included demonstrating marketed effects that included his Swami nail-writing gimmick, a clever scent effect with a paper candy wrapper, and his signature FLY that uses a house fly to find a selected card lost in the deck.

— Dan MacInnis

138 Fort Worth, Texas

Over a dozen members and guests were in attendance at the June 15, 2023



Bernie Trowbridge displays Gene Anderson’s *The Book*.

monthly Assembly meeting of the Fort Worth SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists. President Bernie Trowbridge called the 7:00 p.m. meeting to order at the Illusion Warehouse magic shop.

After a few opening comments about upcoming meetings, Lisa Fulce performed first, producing a handful of candy from a small drawer box. The insurmountable Jack McCoy then performed a great rendition of Dai Vernon’s classic Cutting the Aces. He went on to talk about the validity of the classic *Stars of Magic* book, and how the book was so inspirational to him in his younger years.

Bernie returned to the stage and gave a brief introduction about the life and work of the famous Gene Anderson. Bernie talked about Anderson’s famous Torn & Restored Newspaper trick. He then showed a video of Anderson performing not only the newspaper tear, but also his ministerial Old Mother Hubbard sermonette and hilarious rendition of the Die Box. Bruce Chadwick then brought out onto the stage one of the actual Die Boxes made for Anderson by the late George Kimery of Chalet Magic. Talk about a collector’s item — wow!

After a short break, Bruce then moderated a five-person panel discussion on “When Things Go Wrong.” The club heard great stories from William “Wee-bo” Beaty, Margaret Clauder, Shel



Higgins, Jack McCoy, and Hare Evison. There was a lot of laughter as each performer talked about their encounters with challenging experiences performing magic and how they managed to work through their problems. Certainly there was a lot of practical down-to-earth advice divulged that would benefit any performer.

In all, the evening was a great success and full of fun.

— Charles Boliver

141 Columbia, Md.

The Columbia Conjurors have had a busy spring! On May 8, the Conjurors held the 43rd Annual Lindsey Crawford Originality Contest, named after one of the founding members of the Assembly. Eight magicians performed original routines, with judges Peter Wood and Matt Neufeld ruling that the winner was — Theo Rushin! Theo gets to proudly display the traveling trophy on his mantle for the coming year!

Then, on June 12, the Conjurors held their annual *Tommy Ivey Community Magic Show* (also named after a founding



Theo Rushin winning the Lindsey Crawford Competition.

member). Over 130 audience members enjoyed eight magicians performing in and rotating through three different parlor rooms. The magicians performing were President Rob Niccolini;

Vice-President John Gazman; Treasurer Bob Leedom; Secretary Matt Neufeld; and members Peter Wood, Ed Gardocki, Theo Rushin, and Tom Paxton. The event raised a car-load of canned food donations for the Howard County Food Bank, and a great time was had by all!

— Rob Niccolini

161 North Branch, N.J.

Our meeting was a night of card magic. Doug had a card selected and returned. Placing the deck behind his back for two seconds, *whoosh!* – the card was face up in the facedown deck. Carl Morano bravely showed us the Devil's Deck where two blackjack hands were revealed while the other cards were Sixes. *Kaboom!* Two adventurous visitors, Bob and Ray (not the radio comedy team), travelled two hours from Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania! They met the day before via the SAM website — use it, it's great! Bob showed how Topher's freely chosen Four of Clubs resisted magic spells. How? Every other card became blank! *Blip bloop!* Gunnar Zoomed in and told us he's an "SAM orphan" because he doesn't have a local Assembly in Iceland. We're happy he's joining our club virtually in September! He had a pair of mustachioed investigators find the chosen Jack of Spades. *Shazam! Nabbed!* We won't tip the entire secret, but Gunnar knows how to use Zoom framing to his magical advantage.

Pablo asked Doug to deal cards one by one, stop on one, and square up the deck. *Thwack!* Pablo found the card. Dick had a card selected, returned, and it was to appear at the number that Doug dealt to. There was a "slight sleight" error, but it happens to the best of us, and we learned a new trick where the spectator does the dealing. *Zowie!* Ray, the other half of Bob and Ray had some trouble with a cantankerous stripper deck yet made a valiant effort. *Vronk!*

Did you know casinos have nice decks (that are destroyed) and mean ones? Marv acquired a nice deck. Just by requesting the Aces, he got Aces.

"Pretty please" produced a royal flush in Spades! *Sploosh!* Topher had Pablo mix and deal four piles of cards, yet the four Jacks appeared on top. Topher also shared his presentation of Twisting the Aces. *Zap!*

David Copperfield was next! Well, he was via YouTube as Nathan showed



Our newest member, Gunnar Kr Sigurjónsson, Zooms in from Iceland.

David's Nine Card Problem created by Jim Steinmeyer. David performed flawlessly. *Bam!* Phil performed a Simon Aronson effect that fooled Penn & Teller. The Jokers located two randomly chosen cards. *Wham!* As a science teacher, Ken taught the second law of thermodynamics. We don't understand the first law, but we do know this: the cards were in red/black pairs, then shuffled, yet the chaos became ordered. *Pow!*

Thanks to all for participating!

— Doug Thornton

168 Parsippany, N.J.

After discussing several upcoming local magic events, and a brief coffee break, Michael Healy, fresh from hand surgery, performed a few illusions in keeping with the evening's theme of "Thread and String Magic." Michael demonstrated how to unravel a rope to create the illusion of two pieces. He also performed a Gypsy Thread routine as taught to him by the late Tony Spina. Michael concluded with the Ultimate Shoelace from SEO Magic. A shoelace is covered by a silk with two spectators holding each end while a ring is magically threaded onto the middle of the lace!



Ron Toffolo performs his eerie glow-in-the-dark Gypsy Thread.

Assembly President Ron Toffolo performed his atmospheric and other worldly Gypsy Thread routine, utilizing a glow-in-the-dark thread, a black light, and appropriately exotic music.

Master illusionist Joe Garsetti performed his masterful finger Ring On-and-Off a Lace routine. He was followed by Greg Ferdinand, who presented his work-in-progress Ring on String routine that stressed an original yin/yang philosophical themed patter.

Lou Antonucci presented his recent acquisition of the Smart Memo Pad, an electronic impression device from Ellusionist. Lou showed an array of accessories that work with the device and explained the extreme versatility of the product.

Stan Bladec performed his take on Doc Eason's All Screwed Up. The routine begins with three nuts across and ending with the three nuts threaded on a bolt! For good measure, Stan literally threw a wrench into the mix as a kicker!

For a demented encore, Lou Antonucci performed Eric Ross' controversial Hook. Lou cautiously positioned a gnarly fishing hook into his mouth with four twine lines dangling from his mouth. By a process of Russian roulette, each line is pulled one at a time by the spectator in the hopes that the only truly secured line to the hook is not yanked! The suspense Lou created was palpable!

— Carl Morano

170 Colorado Springs, Colo.

The intrepid souls who braved the storms and rainy weather (What? June rain in Colorado?) were treated to a fantastic "Christmas in June" show. PNP Mark Weidhaas, as Inspector Magic, brought his red-and-white-striped suit jacket and tie to our meeting along with the show he recently performed at Santa's Workshop located at the North Pole, Colorado. He performed five shows a day for three days, filling in for resident magician John Bryan. Mark transformed us into young children, then performed his show. Beginning with his opening Rubik's Cube, to his Baxter Bunny routine, and others before his closer, a Floating Table he used to creatively demonstrate how Santa's sleigh can fly. Fun filled show! He shared a behind the scenes look at his routines.

Tom Paine then performed a four-of-a-kind routine using a deck with one card each from 52 different casinos. Dave Wintermute helped discover the locations of three pairs of cards, using



Mark Weidhaas and friend.

three Jacks as locator cards, which not only matched the faces but also the back. Dave then randomly selected another card, which was the fourth Jack! We then had a raffle where two lucky winners received decks to perform this trick. It was a superb night and we even managed to stay dry on the way home.

— Dick Bowman

174 Augusta, Maine

We kicked off our June 11 meeting time with a visit from Markus Steelgrave. He popped in for a quick visit and we all caught up for a bit.

Our business meeting was quick and easy, but the discussion and ideas for a club fundraiser in the fall flowed for a good amount of time. We then dove headfirst into our topic for the June: "Ropes."

Up first was Wes Booth performing The Bachelor's Needle with a religious themed patter, a nice effect that can be found in *Tarbell* and *Abbott's Encyclopedia of Rope Magic*.

Next was yours truly, performing the Hindu Rope out of *The Mark Wilson Course*. A length of rope is suspended toward the ceiling and slowly slinks back down — an eerie effect that can be repeated. The next item I displayed was Davenport's Mental Ropes, where the power of influence works 100 percent of the time.

The Great Stephan performed Four Nightmares, an entertaining routine that Stephan mentioned is a nightmare to learn because the instructions were written in Chinese. Although this was tough to learn he proclaimed that it was, bar none, "the best rope effect on the market." The next item he showed us was a bit of works-in-progress. I recognized it as an item I saw at the dealer's room at FISM Quebec last year. He hasn't had time to mess with it, and the meeting was a good place to work out the bugs. The effect was a length of rope is shown and looped together, them miraculously the length of rope becomes individual loops that can be passed for examination, leaving you completely clean.

We then workshopped false knots, including the G.W. Hunter bowtie knot, otherwise known as the Magic Shoelaces in the *Abbott's* book. Another one by G.W. Hunter we worked on was the puzzle knot. We also worked on Darryl's Acrobatic Knot moves, and Rainbow Ropes, along with playing



Wes Booth demonstrates the Bachelor's Needle, and says it's easier to put a camel through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven.

with a set of Klamm's Linking Ropes. Wes had a works in progress he wanted opinions on, involving cane to three silk hankies.

Fellowship was carried on to Margarita's, where we entertained our waiter, who is interested in magic himself. (Maybe we can get him to a meeting; we'll see!)

Ralph Greenwood Assembly #174 meets on the second Sunday of each month at the Buker Community Center in Augusta, Maine.

— Scot Grassette

181 Hightstown, N.J.

In our last meeting before summer break, the Slumlords started the evening with a discussion of another item of slum magic (cheap magic that sits unused in a drawer but deserves another look). The effect they chose to demonstrate, Coin to an Impossible Location, can be used to close a show. Imagine a spectator writes their initials on a coin, and that coin disappears and then reappears in a nest of boxes. UFO is the current low-cost version of Coin to an Impossible Location from Apprentice Magic.

Following the Slumlords presenta-

tion, Jeff led a workshop presenting a potpourri of magic, each with its own unique takeaway. In the first effect, Jeff gave a spectator a free choice of one of three statues, each representing a different hand gesture: thumbs-up, the peace sign, and okay. The spectator's free choice is predicted by the magician. Old method with a new presentation.

You all have seen the Crystal Silk Tube; in this workshop a color silk Blendo effect was done with a tube, no rubber bands, and a unique handling. You had to be there to see that plastics spoons can be used to make a very interesting blindfold.

In his final effect, Jeff showed the proper handling of the Mis-Made Flag from a well-organized Change Bag. Now it is an effect that even I can do.

Wayne showed a method for altering serial numbers on newly printed bills that could be used for many effects, only limited by your imagination.

Usually, plastic serving swords are used to assemble a sandwich. Not in Michael Gutman's mind. Michael's manic card effect involves the stabbing of a deck of cards with one of those little plastic serving swords, with comedy, and getting the same results as sharply pointed two-edged rapier. Card found.

Few people notice the relationship



Card tricks were just some of the magic presented at the Assembly #181 meeting.

between a deck of playing cards and a calendar. Four seasons and four suits, 52 weeks in a year and 52 cards in a deck. If you add up all the pips in a deck of cards, they total 364; add a Joker and you get 365. In that spirit, David Zboray performed Validate by Val Le Val, an

effect that proves the calendar-card relationship. A date is selected from a calendar and the card name written on the date matches the card that is spelled out from a deck of cards.

Tom Durnin, a NYFD firefighter for 25 years riffed, and Reba finished the evening's performances with several of her walk-around effects.

— David Zboray

194 Yonkers, N.Y.

Our June meeting was devoted entirely to a lecture from Jon Allen, which was terrific.

Jon Allen is a performer, lecturer, published author, and creator of unique magical effects and routines. A professional magician. The night he came was also the night that the greater NYC area was having its worst air experience in history due to the fires in Canada. Despite this, a good turnout came and was treated to a great evening of being fooled and then learning methods. More key to the lecture were/are presentation thoughts Jon shares along with ways to please and interact with audiences.

He shared some great techniques he has honed and sells — all of it worthwhile. But his thoughts on performing were really superb and carry over to many effects. Without hearing and listening to his philosophy and style, one misses the fine points that make him a great magician. He is a multi-award winning magician who won The Magic Circle, World IBM, and British Ring IBM close-up competitions. He has lectured to magicians worldwide from USA to Australia. He has made several TV appearances and was one of the magicians chosen to appear on the TV show *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* in the UK.

Our lecture highlights included: A multi-phase routine using a pen and a coin, with a surprise finale; a super simple peek; a great Torn & Restored Napkin "do as I do" impromptu routine that makes the volunteer into a magician and will warm audiences when they see



it; thoughts on how to use your props for more than just the tricks; why you should learn about things for which you have no current interest; and a great move and effect for putting a deck of cards into a balloon and then extracting a selected one and then the rest of the deck for good measure.

Jon's lecture was delightful as well as practical and if you can catch it, don't miss it!

We have come out of the pandemic this past year with a good number of lectures and live meetings of our membership. We look forward to inviting our members and other guests to further events next year.

Everyone have a great summer!
— Steven Sundheim

199 Raleigh, N.C.

Our June meeting, ruled by Gemini, ushered in the heat of summer and guided our theme to "Magical Matching." No stranger to the heat, Dan Harlan decided to play with matches — the fire-making kind — kicking off our meeting by teaching us a trick or two. Actually, five.

Just like the playful and intellectually curious Gemini, our junior member Josh pitted Paul Syros against Harlan in a duality duel of questions. Syros successfully scored softballs, while Harlan surprisingly fielded 1.5 scorches.

A fearless thinker, Gemini is always down to try something new, as Matthew Heady demonstrated with three different colored crystal rods (red, yellow, and green) hidden under a black handkerchief. Two were removed and the remaining one became blue — so sad. Hmmm, maybe Gemini is always down to try something blue?

Gemini moves too fast to care about missteps as Paul Syros exemplified when he kinda figured out Josh's birthdate and star sign — and moved on.

Using sets of ten cards and two wine glasses (sadly, no wine), Tony Thomas tried to straighten out his ever-so-

slightly evil twin (played by Wayne Haarhaus), but ultimately succumbed to the ever-so-slight chaos, as his cards rearranged to match Wayne's mixed-up bunch. Not bad. Would have been better with wine.

Emulating this hyperactive air sign, Marcus Auclair moved fluidly from one innovative expression to another as three white dice (see how they run) traveled in increasingly challenging ways to join a red one twixt two tiny trays.

Excellent at guiding change and transformation (like Gemini), Harlan gifted Wayne Haarhaus with a somewhat pointless superpower to find matching cards and eventually instantly pair all the rest. With pointless power comes great lack of responsibility.

The act of expression (important to Gemini) inherent in random "Florida Man" stories led the loquacious Kevin Burke to lead Josh's mom, Sara, to match a Florida license plate that subsequently matched the story in which it appeared, creating a paradox that destroyed the universe — according to my horoscope.

Actually, I don't believe horoscopes, but that's typical of my sign...

— Dan Harlan

206 Austin, Texas

On a hot summer evening, Monday, June 26th, Assembly #206 met for a meeting centered around "Homemade Magic." We have a very creative group of magicians!

President Adam Dunraven opened by performing his latest creation, Frozen Fashion, for the first time anywhere! He went on to show different versions of it that he has created over the years and different applications of the same principle before ending with a selected card and superhero appearing in a picture frame that had been on display since before the meeting.

Kent Cummins followed, showing a trick based on the same principles that had been built for him by Peter the Adequate for a show he was hired

to do for a literal zoo! He then showed a jigsaw puzzle-based trick that he built with his brother when they were kids, expanding on the animal theme he had already introduced.

Dan Page followed with a mesmerizing performance involving twin Jokers that were able to stand on their own and balance not just a disk on their heads, but a ball on top of that.

After a short break, Immediate Past President Bertil Fredstrom performed



Dan Page hypnotizes the audience before a precision balancing act with the twin Jokers.

the classic Tip Over Box illusion that he built in his high school woodworking class. He explained how he had worked off of plans in a book and learned through experience the small tweaks needed for the illusion to work. He managed to keep the methods hidden from his shop teacher the entire time he was building it!

Brooks Griffith then showed how Jokers can be used to duplicate a chosen card (they are wild, after all) but that there's a law of diminishing returns that comes into play when they're used that way. See the video link to see what they can do.

Ryan DuMont closed out the meeting with an original performance of a classic trick involving arches that change from long to short and back again. His presentation was great and ideas flowed after that on ways he could make it even stronger.

It was a fantastic meeting, with a lot of discussion on how things can be custom-made at home, and playing to your strengths. We hope that more magicians



from the Austin area (or even those who happen to be in town) can join us in July.

Correction: Last month, Ryan DuMont was incorrectly captioned in the photo as "Alan DuMont." Apologies to Ryan DuMont, the current Assembly #206 Fool Us champion.

— Joe Weaver



Brooks Griffith performs
Diminishing Returns for
SAM Assembly #206.

215 Louisville, Ky.

The Louisville Magic Club held its monthly meeting on June 13th at the Kosair Charities Center, 782 Eastern Parkway in Louisville, Kentucky. There were 23 members present, plus we welcomed 5 new members to the club: Greg Maddox, Parker Lee, Andre and Brayden Freeman, and Taylor Anderson. Welcome, all!

Since our last meeting, club member Cody Clark presented another edition of his very popular and highly successful *Cody Clark and Friends* show starring Dennis Alm, Buddy August, and special guests The Variety Tricksters of Cincinnati featuring Sir Pat-Trick and Sharisse Santos. It was another great and sold-out show. Cody himself was proudly acknowledged and presented with a Certificate of Appreciation and Completion by the staff of the Highview Arts Center for his successful season-long series of four shows. Congratulations Cody; see you next season!

After a few short announcements of upcoming LMC events the main event of the meeting commenced: The LMC Annual Bag Challenge. I'm sure most, if not all, of us knows how a Bag Challenge works. Briefly, teams are assembled, with each team given an identical bag containing several items: cards, coins, scarfs, rope, cups, ping pong balls, sponge items, etc. Teams are given time to work up routines or create tricks, then present those tricks or routines to the audience and to a panel of judges. The final product was very comical,

entertaining, and also very creative as well. In the end, team "Gryffindor" was crowned the winner. Congratulations, and well done. The same goes to all of the teams and team members who competed in the contest.

See you next month.

— Carl Loud

226 Williamsburg, Va.

President Ron Grossman started the meeting at 6 p.m. Harold Wood, Watt Hyer, Bill Baber, Henry Aldrich, Mike Heckenberger, Peter Brownlee, Jackie Unitis, Mike Shaw, Josh Erlich, and Penn Russell were in attendance.

Final coordination was done for the auction on Sunday, June 25. (Note: The auction was very well attended. People got some great magic at a great price and helped a compeer starting a new adventure in magic. Thank you to Harold for emceeing, Ron for set-up and support, and Jackie for managing the money. And thanks to all who attended, bought, and donated to the cause.)

Jackie received her five-year SAM certificate, to great applause.

Henry discussed the next Magic a la Carte, July 28 at Center Street Grill in Williamsburg. So far Ron, Josh, Steve, Davis, and Dan are scheduled to perform.

We then turned to member magic. Mike S. performed Jim Steinmeyer's *The Deck Knows*, by which he identified a chosen card from four printed strips of cards after the spectator answered just a few questions. Harold performed an original card trick themed around a horse race with cards, where at the end Harold proved he always knew the winner. Watt demonstrated a trick based on printed cards with numbers organized in a way that allowed him to identify the spectator's selected number after the spectator followed instructions to choose three related cards. The effect is contained in May's *Linking Ring*. Watt also brought a stack of printed papers with a double-sided pattern of 4

x 4 alternating red and green squares, and he explained the Bicolor Cut: how to fold the paper to allow the magician to cut out all of the squares of one color (spectator's choice) from the larger sheet in one cut.

The Assembly will be off in July with no meeting until August 24th. Have a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing what you worked on over the summer.

— Steven Mains



291 Los Angeles, Calif.

Audiences like watching magic, but they *love* having it happen in their own hands — even when it's an audience of Assembly 291 magicians enjoying "Magic in the Spectator's Hands" at their June meeting.

The goal was to amaze with little handling from magicians, and Max Meza's reaction to Christopher Cory's opener — "Oh, wow" — certainly set the tone. Max, a prospective member, repeatedly shuffled and stacked a card deck only to have Christopher reveal a randomly chosen Ace at Max's selected card location.

Valerie Repnau was the volunteer for Howard Paris, holding a rope horizontally as Howard passed handkerchiefs through a "hole" in the rope. Soon handkerchiefs were passing through Valerie's wrist, and each other, without Howard touching them.

Bill Dow never touched his props either, instructing Dan Cray to deal cards into two piles, choose one pile, then turn over the top card. Sure enough, Bill revealed a matching card on the underside of the card box.

Moments later, SYM member Oz conducted a memory test with another prospective member, Alan Litteneker, who was asked to remember which of two Aces held between his thumb and forefinger was on top — difficult to do, since the Aces had transformed into Queens.



Alan and Oz then shifted roles, as Alan had Oz cut a deck into three packs, peek at the top card of one pack, then reshuffle them. Alan slid a single card into Oz's outstretched fist — the glimpsed card.

Valerie returned, professing little knowledge of superheroes or the cities they serve, but Phil Goodman had an inkling she might know more than she realized. Sure enough, using face-down postcards, Valerie managed to separate superhero images from city images by intuition alone.

Could it be the Tooth Fairy collects a specific number of teeth every night? Dan Cray had Bill and Howard count teeth from a jar as another Bill (Bedecarre) added numbers from a set of dental charts. Gasp! The number of teeth matched the random number.

Les Cooper put a ribbon on the night by sitting comfortably in a faraway chair while Oz, his volunteer, followed Les' written card handling instructions and discovered his selected card was on the back. Later, Les located a second selection even though it was buried within a pile that was stowed inside Oz's pocket.

"I mean, was that not in the spectator's hands?" Les quipped, perfectly summarizing the entire evening's theme.

— Dan Cray

292 Greeley, Colo.

June Minutes 11 a.m. — Come to order and approve minutes from the previous meeting.

Door Prizes: Thank you to the magicians who donated the door prizes!

Discuss shows previously performed: Tim Foolery did a library show in Greeley for 20 kids and 80 adults for about 45 minutes, which resulted in a standing ovation! Tim also did a show at a senior convention earlier in the year. Master magicians Paul Noffsinger and Paul Prater performed an amazing show in Arkansas.

Discussed shows seen: Newcomer

Ryan Dougherty talked about Steven Bargaze's show at Red Rocks which he told the group was entertaining and of course, everyone dreams of performing at Red Rocks. David Park performed at Theater of Dreams in Castle Rock, Colorado.

Upcoming shows: Paul Noffsinger and Paul Prater will be performing a *Mystery Collection* show at the Stanley Hotel this month. Tickets are still available but will sell out fast!

Teach-A-Trick: The Great Lewdini taught a version of Finding the Aces by John Scarne that will fool even the best magicians.

Performances: First up, and as per tradition, newcomer Ryan Dougherty, who is also a professional stand-up comedian, performed Skullduggery — masterfully, I might add, a prediction



Ryan Dougherty performing Skullduggery.

effect with very nicely handmade skulls on a stick! Next up was Gary Erickson with a Name Your Card effect that ended up with a selected name on a selected card. Tim Foolery performed Dowsing Duplicates by T.J. Osbourne, a wonderful matching effect using beautifully crafted cards with old-school horror movie posters! The 90's Magician showed off why he is the best basketball player-watcher on the planet by performing his version of Laced Up by Donovan Mount, including a story about NBA champion MVP Nikola Jokic and a ring on his shoe. Finally, Gary Kornfield with The Mystery of the Flying Pincushion Coin — wow, very nice, handmade props and a solid coin with very magical properties!

Our thoughts and well wishes continue to be with our member Lloyd Mobley. Thoughts also with Baxter Dunn and Cameo Heitzmen.

Join us next month, the second Saturday of the month, at Kenny's Steak House in Greeley, Colorado! All are welcome

— Joseph Gschwind

305 Montana

June was a busy month for Montana SAM Assembly 305. Assembly members manned six booths, performed stage shows, and did roaming magic at the Montana Renaissance Festival, then followed up with performances at several local businesses. Corporate shows at a mental health facility, Gospel magic at a three-day Vacation Bible School, topped off with performances at the largest car show in the state highlighted the wide range of magical styles featured in our Assembly.

The theme of "When Magic Happens for Real" wound through our June meeting, as stories were swapped about those moments when illusions have such impact that even the magician is amazed. From the look of wonder in a child's eyes when they catch a bit of magic no one else noticed to those mysterious times when a trick works in an unexpected way, the definition of true magic as "What occurs when even the magician doesn't know what happened — but it worked!" was proven to be true.

We welcomed new members to our Assembly, including Lisa Krol from Canada. Since we are both a virtual and geographical-based Assembly, we have the advantage of being a magic community even in areas where distance would otherwise create a "magic desert." Robina invited us to her Tuesday magic shows, which have a world-wide virtual audience.

James Jones performed a variation of the Crystal Tube involving the traditional balls and a mischievous rubber duckie, which led to a discussion of famous magicians in Montana, particu-



larly Fred Brahner, an SAM Magician of the year.

Use of puppetry in magic shows and roaming magic was discussed. Robina told the tale of her enlarging tiger and how puppetry added a new dimension to her stage performances.

Books reviewed were: *How to Cheat Your Friends and Get Away with It* by Penn & Teller (card magic and card sharpening), *Street Magic* by Paul Zennon, *Precious Tricks* by Morgan & West, *The Warlock Effect* by Jeremy Dison, and *Theater of the Mind* by Barrie Richardson.

Videos reviewed were: *Secrets of Cups & Balls* by the World's Greatest Magicians group, and *My Night With a Stripper I* featuring stripper card magic.

The meeting ended with a session of the world's worst — and best — magician jokes and how humor, even odd and corny, can enhance a performance.

Next month's meeting's theme will be "How to Recover a Magic Trick When Something Goes Wrong."

— MaryAlice Jones

306 Idaho

Assembly #306, The Idaho Virtual Gathering, held the meeting on June 12, 2023.

The Psychology of Magic by Gustav Kuhn and Alice Pailhes was discussed and how it helps improve our performances. Some card tricks were demonstrated from the *Phonetastic* book by Joe Hernandez.

Because we are a virtual group, we have people join us from all over. The



Kipp Sherry presents his silk routine.

expertise and knowledge that is in our group is of great value. Questions are encouraged, skills are gained, and people learn from each other. It's a judgment free, safe place to learn and try new skills. We help each other.

Assembly President Kipp Sherry has a great story about Santa's sleigh that he uses in his silk routine.

The evening was a mix of members visiting about magic shows, books, cards, and silks.

You are most welcome to join us on the second Monday each month for an evening of magic, learning, and fun.

Come to our Virtual Assembly.

— Paul Jenkins

309 Ottawa, Ont.

Ray Bertrand, the Regional Deputy for Ontario – Ottawa contacted the prospective members of Assembly #309. We are anticipating being Chartered at the National Assembly in New Orleans on July 23rd.

"The Mystics of Ottawa" met on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Ray Bertrand, Joan (Louise) Reay, Gerry Bertrand, George Sapounidis, Wayne (Martin Domino) Radford, Jill St. Hillaire, Luc Leduc, Minh Le, Keith Takayesy, and Max Le were present. Trevor Reay could not attend due to work commitments. Gerry Bertrand was accompanied by his partner, Paulette Major.

Ray led the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation. He described the benefits of membership and the possibilities that lie before us. He explained that the SAM was not in competition with other magic organizations. We support and share our talents to benefit others.

A message from Most Illustrious National President Rod Chow was delivered stating the other membership packages were in the mail.

Ray presented Martin Domino with a Certificate of Appreciation. Ray did a PowerPoint presentation of the Princess Card Trick inspired by David Copperfield's national television show.

He spoke of fun and how we can mentor youth through SYM. A video of thirteen-year-old autistic Cillian O'Conner auditioning on *Britain's Got Talent* was streamed. This demonstrated what praise, support, and mentorship can do for someone struggling with any challenges and how we can help them become all they can be.

Ray presented a mental card reveal. George shared his beginnings and Wayne spoke of his history with SAM members in the Montréal area and that many of us are members of different groups as well. Max dazzled us with his



Wayne Radford receives a Charter Membership on June 28, 2023.

card moves and shared he was saving to go study with Dani Daortiz. Keith presented a coin routine and went to get his daughter Eileen and introduced her. She is very interested in magic. Luc Leduc shared some stories about his life as a professional magician (48 years) and amazed us using four blank black cards, which he used to find the chosen card. Gerry told stories of his experiences performing as an amateur. Ray closed the evening with a penny, nickel, and dime routine. Not overly magical but more "sleight of mouth."

Everyone enjoyed themselves. We will meet at the same place on the last Wednesday of every month.

— Ray Bertrand 🍀

MEETINGS AND REPORTS

To find information about local Assemblies — locations, meeting times, contact person, etc. — go to www.magicSAM.com and click on the “Find an Assembly” button.

M-U-M Assembly reports should always include Assembly number and city/state, along with what month is being reported on and the name of the person submitting the report. Reports should be no more than 400 words in length, please; photos need to be high-resolution images. Deadline to submit reports is the first of each month (for example, August 1 for content in the September issue).

When submitting photos, consider

the size at which they will be printed in a single column of text on a three-column page — horizontal group photos will likely be small, with indistinguishable faces; vertically oriented photos with fewer people and props will represent your subject better.

Reports may be sent in via the Assembly Reports submission form link on the www.magicSAM.com website (or <https://form.jotform.com/73569075363162>). Reports and photos may be emailed to editor@magicsam.com.

You can share a video clip from your Assembly meeting by uploading it to YouTube or Vimeo and emailing the URL along with your Assembly report. It will

be included with the report on the digital version of *M-U-M*, providing a direct link to your video online.



Find a local Assembly.



Submit a local Assembly report.

The gold medals pictured on some of the reports recognize those Assemblies that have gained the most members in the past year. For more information on the Assembly Growth Awards see www.magicsam.com/page/AssemblyGrowthAwards.



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The SYM Newsletter

Excerpts from the monthly online newsletter for the Society of Young Magicians

Arlen Solomon

NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST 2023

August is here and the SAM Convention and Youth Academy are behind us. You will see all the highlights in the September *M-U-M* magazine. You can plan now for the Academy in 2024 in Dallas, Texas over Labor Day Weekend.

This month, we have some fun stories to read, including a book review from one of our SYM members. Also remember that in the emailed edition of the newsletter you will have some special articles for you about how to promote yourself as a young magician and a special gift for you from Nick Lewin. There will be a few other surprises.

Emailed newsletters will have information on our upcoming virtual meetings. The login information can also be found in the emailed edition. Hope to see you all at the meetings. If you are not getting your email newsletters, reach out to SYM@magicsam.com

Book Review By Liam Abner

Designing Miracles by Darwin Ortiz is an exemplary work that delves deep into the art of creating and presenting magic. With his wealth of knowledge and experience as a renowned magician, Ortiz skillfully guides readers through the intricate process of designing and executing mind-boggling illusions. This book is an invaluable resource for both aspiring magicians and seasoned professionals looking to refine their craft.

Ortiz begins the book by establishing a solid foundation in the principles and theory behind effective magic. He masterfully explains how to engage and captivate audiences by integrating psychology, misdirection, and timing into every performance. This analytical approach provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of the

underlying mechanics that make magic successful.

The true strength of *Designing Miracles* lies in its emphasis on the art of storytelling in magic. Ortiz delves into the significance of constructing narratives that resonate with spectators, allowing them to become fully immersed in the illusion. By illustrating various techniques such as scripting, pacing, and character development, Ortiz provides magicians with the tools to create compelling and memorable magical experiences.

One of the standout features of this book is Ortiz's meticulous attention to detail. He leaves no stone unturned as he explores each aspect of magic design, from selecting the perfect props and gimmicks to refining the choreography of intricate sleight of hand. Ortiz's dedication to precision and his ability to convey complex concepts in a clear and concise manner make this book an invaluable resource for magicians at any level of expertise.

Furthermore, *Designing Miracles* stands out due to its practical approach. Ortiz not only imparts his knowledge but also includes numerous examples and case studies to illustrate his points effectively. These real-world examples not only inspire readers but also provide practical insights into the creative process. By sharing his own experiences and lessons learned, Ortiz ensures that readers gain a deeper understanding of the principles discussed.

Invisible Thread By Danny Bowen (Adapted from the Magic SYMBol for November 1999)

The best utility item I have in my show is invisible. I use invisible thread in all my performances, and you can do some of the most amazing things ever imagined. A Lifesaver floats into your

mouth, a borrowed ring flows back into the spectator's hand, a tissue dances up and down on your arm, and a dollar bill floats in midair. All these effects and more possible with invisible thread.

When using invisible thread there are two things you should be aware of: the lighting and your background. If you're working close-up and your background is mostly your clothes; darker pattern clothes work best for hiding the thread. On stage, most curtains contain some kind of pattern, which works great. Lighting is more important than the background; fluorescent light, back-lighting, or daylight will cause reflection. In a closer environment any kind of indirect or dim lighting works well. If you have a good background on stage and you are not backlit, there can be any number of spotlights in front of you and it will be safe. Make sure that the colored lights or backlights are turned off when using invisible thread onstage. I always check out lighting, background, and angles from the audience viewpoint.

There are various types of invisible thread on the market today. They are made from different materials, have different strength and diameters, and they perform different kinds of effects. There is the standard invisible thread, strong invisible thread, elastic thread, and super thin thread.

Nothing is more practical than elastic thread. It is about the same diameter as regular invisible thread, but it stretches to 500 percent of its length. It can be used over and over, and unlike regular invisible thread, the elasticity doesn't wear off. You don't have to worry about accidentally hitting the line with your hand or about it snapping if you step too far back. Elastic thread is synthetic and cannot always be used under the same conditions as regular thread. It's very sensitive to light, so you want to make sure the lighting is dim or indirect.

Invisible thread is different for everyone, so experiment with the different types available to find the kind that works for you in your performance.

The most important thing to keep in mind when using invisible thread is said in a famous quote by Dai Vernon: “Be Natural.” Practice and become so natural with your hookup that you yourself won’t realize the thread is there. Remember: if *you* don’t see it, *they* won’t see it. Good luck!

Magician in History: Carl Herrmann

Carl (Compars) Herrmann (1816–1887) was a German illusionist and magician. He was part of what has been referred to by some as the “first-family of magic.” Carl had fifteen brothers and sisters.

Carl’s father Samuel, a practicing German physician, was the first to enjoy magic as a hobby. Samuel’s first son Carl (Compars) was born in 1816 and left medical school at an early age to pursue a career as a magician. He was the first in the family to gain fame as a conjurer.



By the age of thirty, Carl was recognized as one of Europe’s most accomplished magicians.

Alexander Herrmann, who was 27 years younger than his brother Carl, also became a world-famous magician.

Carl’s repertoire was praised by the *London News*. Some of his notable effects included the Inexhaustible Bottle, which produces endless quantities of different liquors in what seems to be an endless supply; The Portfolio, a routine in which items such as flowers, turtle doves, and a live boy would be produced from the empty portfolio; and the Second Sight,

where items are named with a blind-folded assistant. Carl took the title of “The First Professor of Magic in the World.”

Creating a Character By Christian Manahl

1. The Body

In the TV show, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, the character named William T. Riker sits in chairs funny. Rather than approaching the chair from the front he approaches chairs from behind, steps over the back, and sits down. It’s lovingly referred to by fans as the “Riker Maneuver.” It turns out that this is how Jonathan Frakes, the actor, sits in chairs (due to a back injury) — but it is also how the character, William Riker, sits in a chair.

The distinction is important. How do you carry your body on the stage? How does your character, in contrast, carry *their* body on the stage? How do they do normal things that you don’t think about? I am very tall, about 6’4”. My con artist character, Dan Splaney, must be as well. However, he realizes that being tall may be intimidating — a con man would not like to intimidate, so he walks intentionally with quite a crouch in his back. On the contrary, Edward Nocturne, a spirit medium from the 1920s raised in an upper-class household, keeps his back straight as a ruler. Your exercise for today is to think about your character and think about how they would be seen using their body onstage. How do they walk? How do they pick up a deck of cards or shake hands? Make faces in the mirror. If you don’t perform as a character who is not yourself, then study these actions in yourself the way they normally are! It’s kind of like trying to tickle yourself — watch what your body moves like without doing anything differently than before. In this way, you should come to learn about how your body movements characterize you.

2. The Mind

Onstage, you are at an advantage — you are rehearsed, polished, and ready to go. In your everyday life you have to settle for doing what comes to mind as it comes, improvisationally. The only reason I am so much funnier onstage than in person (I think — the jury’s out, I could be equally

unfunny on both) is that I have the time to really work out what I’m going to say onstage, and I don’t have this while I am working my day job or speaking with clients or trying to convince someone to pretty please let me cuddle their cat. So, don’t be nervous if the character you are presenting is nothing like you. You have hours and hours to perfect what they think and make sure they say the appropriate things in your script. If you do not want to perform as a character different from yourself, then pay attention to your own thoughts and the way they influence your behavior! How does the audience see what you are thinking? Do you — or your character — think in surprising ways? Your exercise for today: Read a book, as your character, and think about the happenings in the story as your character might. Think like your character for a while and being like them will be much easier.

3. The Soul

After all the things you’ve done before, make sure the character is likable, fun to watch. Make sure the audience wants to see what they’re going to do next. By nature, a magic trick already has a fantastic story — something impossible happens before your very eyes. It could be easy to forget to add on to this a character with an interesting soul. And keep in mind that, when skillfully done, a character who is a terrible person can be very fun to watch. Think of your favorite super-villain, or the curmudgeonly Ebenezer Scrooge who learns to better himself despite beginning his story as an obnoxious, selfish wreck. It is impossible for you to make your character perfect because some people will have different opinions about what makes a person “good.” Think about what flaws your character has and make them endearing. Perhaps they’re lovably insecure? Affably impatient? Ambitious? Daring? Make the audience root for you and who you are, whoever that is! My con artist character is quick with a jarring insult — but they’re incredibly witty, and all clearly in good fun, so everyone is excited to hear the next one. Everyone has insecurities, and seeing them reflected is a sure way to get an audience on your side. ♪

CURT MILLER

— THE UNLIKELY ILLUSIONIST

By Mark Holstein

A Texan, businessman, marketing director, producer, videographer, video editor, guitar player, keyboardist, drummer, songwriter, prop mechanic, pinball machine repairman, day trader, close-up magician, and illusionist all walk into a bar. It sounds like the set up to a punch line. But instead, it's a partial description of the many talents of our cover story this month, Houston-based magician Curt Miller. He's likely one the most commercially successful magicians in Texas, but he remains mostly unknown in the magic community. He's made very few appearances at conventions and other magic-related events. Curt has found ways to mix and match his seemingly endless talents to create a most interesting and lucrative career.

It started in Grabill, Indiana, a very small community northwest of Fort Wayne. On a trip to a local shopping mall, Curt spotted a magic trick — the box appeared to depict a Salt Pour, which Curt's parents had seen on TV and dramatically described. When he got home with his new prop, a simple thumb tip, he was disappointed. It was not the miracle his parents described and he expected. He threw it in the trashcan. Fortunately, a few days later, Curt retrieved the humble prop and learned to make a small amount of salt vanish. He showed it to a few friends and was surprised by the reactions of amazement this modest prop and his presentation received. He was hooked.

As his interest progressed, Curt would visit Dick Stoner's Fun Store. Miller admired Stoner as a performer — he still does. At age thirteen, Curt was offered his first paying gig — a house party paying a whopping ten dollars. This sparked Curt's interest in magic as a business. At age fifteen, he produced a full-evening show with big tricks and pretty girls. Heeding advice from his father, he never did any of it half way. Through high school, he performed shows throughout the Midwest. With magic, he was earning his college tuition and spending money.



At age eighteen, Curt moved to Houston, Texas to attend the University of Houston. While he considered studying drama, his practical instinct was to study radio and television production. He also started to perform circus close-up magic, three nights a week, at Circus restaurant. As the name suggests, it was a family restaurant with a strong circus theme and decor. Curt stayed there for three years, honing his sleight of hand skills and continuing to fund his studies.

When he was nineteen, Curt auditioned for the fledgling Disney Channel. He nearly missed this opportunity, having overslept on the morning of the

audition. He rushed down to the studio to apologize and attempt to reschedule his audition. Once there, he was asked to audition on the spot, but he did not have his planned material with him. He did an impromptu effect with a borrowed bill. That did the trick and Curt was awarded a twenty-minute appearance on national TV.

On graduation, Curt recalls being burnt out on magic. He went to work for two local television stations. After a few years, local magic friends asked Curt to help produce their promotional videos. As Curt recalls, he was working the night shift and had access to thousands of dollars worth of equipment. As

he created these videos, it rekindled his passion for magic. He recalls that Charles Greene III and Richard Hatch were particularly inspirational. And as a businessman, he came to the realization that he made more money when he was performing than he was making working in television.

Fate would intervene. Houston was home to the relatively new Magic Island, a private luxury dinner theater modeled in the image of The Magic Castle in Hollywood. After a dispute with management, all of the resident close-up magicians simultaneously resigned and walked out. Richard Hatch recommended Curt to talent director Scott Hollingsworth. After an audition, Curt was hired. Curt recalls that Scott said, "You may not be that good yet, but you'll get good."

Curt performed at "the Island" for four years. At times, it was a grind. The close-up room was poorly ventilated and on busy nights, he could be called upon to perform up to fifteen shows, with sixty seconds between. During these challenging times, he learned that his own attitude would dramatically influence audience reactions. Curt recalls one particularly difficult night. Renowned magician George Sands was there and watched through the open door as Curt struggled with an unresponsive audience. When Curt stepped out, George asked, "Mind if I do something?" Curt welcomed the break. George went in and had the same audience laughing and applauding. It was an important lesson. From that point on, Curt always put his all into every show. If he was having fun, so would his audience.

Around the start of his fourth year at Magic Island, businessman Curt recognized that the corporate market was taking off. He was comfortable performing for corporate audiences, as they were a big part of Magic Island's clientele. During his last year there, Curt began breaking in stage material during his close-up shows. Some of the staples of his current corporate show were developed at the Island during this last year. On leaving the Island, Curt began performing corporate shows, and was quickly in demand.

Curt is a very good magician, but he excels at marketing. "When people ask

me what I do for a living, I'm tempted to tell them I am a salesman," Curt observes. He filled his calendar with sales meetings, after-dinner shows, and other business-related events. With the popularity of Doug Henning, Harry Blackstone, and David Copperfield, clients began requesting "big tricks" and Curt saw the opportunity to upsell. The problem was that Curt did not own any illusions. However, he made the sales and then rented illusions and hired experienced magicians' assistants. As the demand grew, Curt eventually purchased and added a few illusions to his repertoire. One of his favorites from those days is Walter Blaney's personal

need to hire a director. He conducted a search of local college theater departments. Ultimately, he interviewed Jonathan Gonzalez, a very traditional theater director with no magic experience. During the interview, Curt laid out his vision for his show and Jonathan disagreed with him. Curt hired him anyway, on the theory that he didn't want a "yes" man. Jonathan sought out videos of magicians, in order to learn more about his new client. Curt dissuaded him from watching the tapes, saying, "I want your unique vision for what I should do." Jonathan still works with Curt to this day.

One specific corporate event for a



"The Young Magician" is Curt Miller, in May 1978.

suspension. Curt repeatedly rented it from Walter, and Walter finally agreed to let Curt have it. He performs it to this day.

Interestingly, Curt says that he is an "unlikely illusionist." By his own description, he is not tall or suave. He has no theatrical movement or dance experience. He attributes his ability to be successful with illusions to authenticity. He doesn't try to mimic the archetype of the powerful stage illusionist. Instead, he works to tell compelling stories with the big props, while remaining true to his personality. He also recognized the

local real estate firm set Curt permanently on the path to becoming a stage illusionist. After a successful show, the client asked Curt if he could produce a large holiday event with additional illusions. Curt made the sale and then figured out how he would produce this event. This led to the acquisition of additional illusions, as well as producing all other aspects of the event. While Curt recalls being in over his head, he was successful and this led to other large-scale opportunities.

In fact, it led Curt to another island. Moody Gardens is an educational tourist

destination on Galveston Island, with a golf course and hotel. They feature three multi-story pyramids housing an aquarium, a rain forest, and a science museum. There is also a convention center. In 2008, the resort decided to run variety entertainment over the summer, when tourists dominated over conventions. After seeing Curt perform at a corporate event, the management of Moody Gardens wanted Curt to fill a

two-week slot with an even larger show than Curt had built to date.

Again, Curt made the sale and then set about building an even larger full seventy-minute illusion show. His wife Lisa served as the lead assistant and backstage manager. Curt hired local actress Julie Fontenot as his second assistant—a relationship that continues to this date. Well-known illusion builder Rich Hill, a friend since their teenage

years in Indiana, also joined the team, flying down from Indiana to stage manage the show. Rich also expertly built a number of the illusions that Curt was adding to his repertoire.

The first season was quite successful and led to a booking for second set of shows the following year. Unfortunately, no one could predict that at the end of the first season, Galveston would be savagely devastated by Hurricane

DOING CARD TRICKS FOR MOVIE STARS

By Curt Miller

Like most entertainers, I found myself suddenly without work in the summer of 2020. The global COVID pandemic had brought my magic career to a sudden and dramatic halt. At first it seemed like an opportunity to work on new material, but it eventually became apparent that there was no end in sight. I started wondering if maybe I had been forced into early retirement and had a lot of time on my hands — never a good thing for an artist. I needed to do something creative for my own amusement.

Many years earlier, when I worked at a TV station, I had killed the time of the night shift by “green screening” myself into an old black-and-white sci-fi movie called *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. I became one of the characters, interacting with the stars, and I occasionally showed the video at parties. Remembering this

experience gave me the idea of doing a card trick for the great actor Robert De Niro, because the contrast of our personalities could be very funny.

I found a great scene in a film called *Analyze This* and went to work, slicing the film in my editing program and pulling in dialogue from other parts of the movie to make my new scene work. After the writing was complete, it was time to head into the studio to set up the lights, camera, etc. I even printed a photo of Mr. De Niro and taped it on a mic stand so I could better interact with him! Getting the lighting right was the most challenging. It had to match the original film perfectly for the illusion to work. When the short movie was finished, I posted it on Facebook, and to my amazement it blew up and went all over the world!

Clearly, the universe was telling me this was fresh and different, so I set about making a second. *Star Wars* seemed like a great target, doing a card trick for Han Solo, Chewbacca, and Obi-Wan. This would be a challenge, because it took some pretty challenging video editing to get them all on one side of the table. Special effects turned my magic wand into a lightsaber, and at the end Han Solo blasted me with a laser after I fooled him.

My third movie had to be *Pulp Fiction*. Samuel L Jackson is a cinema icon, and there was no turning back once the vision hit of him pointing a gun at me while I was showing him a card trick. This was the most challenging movie yet, because there were multiple setups, and director Quentin Tarantino moves his camera all over, which made



Curt attempts to impress Han Solo with his light saber magic wand.



One of many attempts to do a trick for John Cleese.

Ike — Moody Gardens was severely damaged and would be closed for almost an entire year. While Moody Gardens brought Curt back in the summer of 2009, it didn't work as well. Galveston was struggling to rebuild and tourism was down significantly. While the shows were great, the resort did not renew the variety shows for a third summer. Ironically, this same hurricane severely damaged Magic Island, which

was forced to close and it has never reopened.

Undeterred, Curt decided that he needed to cement his image as a premier entertainment attraction in Texas. He recognized that the pre-eminent theatrical venue in Houston was the Hobby Center. Located in downtown Houston, it typically hosts bus and truck tours of Broadway musicals and other touring attractions. It's a state of the art facility.

Curt decided to "four wall" a full-evening show for one weekend. Every single expense associated with producing and marketing this show would be on Curt's shoulders. While it was a tremendous undertaking, Curt believed that hosting his show there would lend him and his brand some serious credibility. Curt was joined on these shows by Lisa, Julie, and Rich. The show was artistically successful. It had elements from the Moody



Finally revealing Cleese's card after being run over by a steamroller.



Miller joins Jackson and Travolta in concealing a weapon.



Curt Miller in a scene from Pulp Fiction.



The green screen reality of Curt's scene with Samuel L. Jackson.

the green integration a huge puzzle. This movie ended up being my most popular and got over two million views on TikTok — which netted me a whopping seven dollars! Fortunately, I was just doing these for fun!

The fourth movie came about when I got the chance to meet and perform for John Cleese (*Monty Python*, *Fawlty Towers*, etc.). I pitched the idea to him of doing one of my movies with some of his films, and he was very excited about it and came up with some ideas of his

own. We ended up having four meetings about it. This movie turned out to be a marathon because the goal was to do a tribute to Mr. Cleese's film career. My concept was that I would start to do a card trick for him in the 1960s (in his early black-and-white films) but various obstacles would keep me from finishing the trick. I would pop in from film to film (as we progressed through his film catalog) and get more and more agitated when he wouldn't let me find his card! At the end of this movie, I get run over by a

bulldozer and end up hanging on to the wheels of a jet, shouting, "It was the Six of Hearts!!" Thankfully, Mr. Cleese loved the movie and shared it on all his social media. This is probably the coolest thing that's ever happened to me.

Elf (Will Ferrell) and *Die Hard* (Alan Rickman and Bruce Willis) are my latest two projects. They're all on YouTube if you'd like to see some magic and have a good laugh. Search for "Doing a Card Trick for Robert De Niro," which will also lead you to the others. ♣



Stepping into the audience for some close-up magic at Moody Gardens, circa 2008.



The perfect illusion for a combination magician / guitarist.



Garden shows, with additional scenic elements, more costumes, and the benefit of a beautiful facility. However, Curt invested over \$50,000 of his own money in that weekend and lost a significant amount of that investment.

Now, in Curt's mind, it was time to return to Moody Gardens. The facilities had been repaired and tourists were coming back. Emboldened by his lessons on marketing from the Hobby Center, he suggested to the resort management that he would "four wall" a series of summer shows. He asked the resort to provide a ballroom, platform, and otherwise "stay out of our way." Curt would handle everything else, including

Curt performing at Houston's Magic Island. (Facing page) Corporate magic, grand illusions, and a green screen levitation for a pre-show photo op.

marketing. The resort initially declined, but ultimately agreed. Curt, Lisa, Julie, and a small team produced the show, brought in lights, sound, curtains, video projection, major stage illusions, and all of the required paraphernalia to perform over twenty shows in a two-week slot. They set up a gift shop and a photo booth attraction. Curt did all of the marketing himself, including TV and radio ads, social media and other online marketing, print materials, promotional appearances, and video kiosks at the resort (which Curt built himself). The amount of work was daunting, but it succeeded. The shows were successful and profitable. The summer series shows ran for ten years.

Moody Gardens management noticed this success and Curt's marketing acumen. For a few years, the resort tried to produce an ambitious Christmas holiday event centered around a Cirque du Soleil type of show featuring circus acts and a Christmas theme. Ticket buyers would also receive a dinner buffet and then walk through an outdoor Christmas light display. Unfortunately for Moody Gardens, the event was losing money — for some reason it was not working. They approached Curt and asked him to pitch a show that would replace the circus. Curt prepared an elaborate pitch and made the sale. It would be his most ambitious undertaking to date.

Curt envisioned a very large-scale variety show, not unlike the television Christmas specials of the 1960s and '70s. Magic would be the core of the show, but there would be elaborate dance numbers and Christmas music performed by talented award-winning singers, often accompanied by Curt on piano. (More on Curt's musical prowess later.) The show would be supported by a full theatrical lighting rig, lasers, full theater sound, video projection scenery, and 27 snow machines. Two giant IMAG screens would allow tables at the back of a room seating over 1,000 to see the magic, and allowed Curt to include some close-up magic as part of the elaborate show.

With almost thirty cast and crew supporting this show, he had certainly come a long way from the Circus restaurant. The large, elaborate production ran for most of the month of December for a very impressive four years. Ten of

thousands saw the show, and it became a tradition on the holiday schedule of many Houston area families.

Curt challenged himself to create and stage new magic every year. Curt and Lisa added a 28x18-foot rehearsal space to their home, designed to Curt's specifications. New illusions and costumes were added. Music was composed. Curt hired a professional choreographer and new dance routines were created and choreographed. In later shows, the dancers would be included in the magic. Curt and Lisa would start in January and work through the year in preparation for the show as it increased in size and complexity every year. They paused only to create, rehearse, and do the Moody Gardens summer show and for Curt to perform the many corporate shows he performs every year. Curt did a lecture for a Houston magic club detailing the month-by-month extensive preparation for this annual show. He wasn't worried about anyone stealing his ideas. Curt commented, "Once they see how much work is involved, they'd be crazy to try!"

Notwithstanding the new material every year, Curt consistently closed

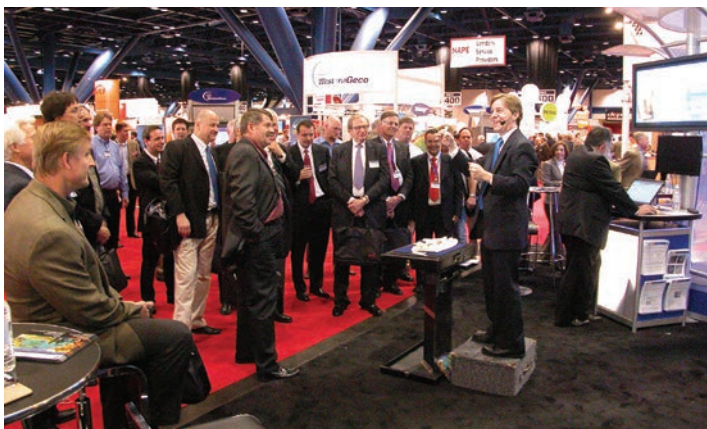
his summer and Christmas show with the same routine. Loosely based on Blackstone's Who Wears the Whiskers, Curt's version is called Rock Star and shows off Curt's virtuoso skills as a drummer, pianist, and guitar player. At the end of this elaborate, theatrical routine, Lisa appears in place of Curt under the whiskers he was wearing and he reappears in the rear of the auditorium in a profusion of lights and smoke. Curt is a highly skilled musician, and often plays in local Houston bands. His yearly birthday party, held in his home, features no magic. Instead, local musicians and band mates conduct an afternoon-long jam session.

After ten years of producing these elaborate shows, Curt recognized that interest in big production illusion shows was waning. He put all of the big illusions in storage at his home and a storage facility. He set about designing his most ambitious show yet, called *The Conjuror*. He sought to combine his love for close-up magic and the theatricality of a large-scale illusion show. And just as he was picking up momentum with this new project, another natural

disaster intervened — this time, a global pandemic.

Like many magicians, Curt abruptly adapted. However, his experience with video and TV production gave him a head start and he immediately began to perform online shows from his rehearsal room. He set up a very theatrical environment with proper lighting and sound. He had years and years of material from which to choose. He did over fifty virtual shows and he managed to perform for some notables like Henry Winkler, John Cleese, Christopher Lloyd, Gilbert Gottfried, and William Shatner.

In addition, Curt used the downtime during the pandemic to produce a series of incredible short film that feature Curt performing magic to famous movie stars, by editing in excerpts from classic movies. He's done six of these very entertaining movies, involving Robert DeNiro (*Analyze This*), Harrison Ford (*Star Wars*), John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson (*Pulp Fiction*), Will Ferrell (*Elf*), John Cleese (a montage of his film appearances), and Alan Rickman and Bruce Willis (*Die Hard*). The magic is fun, but the video editing is really incred-



THE CONJURER: AN INTIMATE MAGICAL EXPERIENCE

By Schubert Huang

You walk into the hotel lobby and follow the signs to the designated conference room. But wait! Today you are not here on business, sitting with a notepad and water bottle, enduring another boring presentation. Today you are smartly dressed with your date (cocktails in hand) and anticipating an exciting evening of amazing magic, clean comedy, and theatre. Today you are entering the world of *The Conjuror*, the creation of magician Curt Miller and appearing monthly in various luxury hotels in Texas and beyond.

Your evening feels magical from the

performance and shows you to your seats. The anticipation in the crowd is palpable as the lights slowly darken. Suddenly the room goes black, the music and video introduction begin, and *The Conjuror* — Curt Miller — suddenly appears in a flash of light. It's show time!

You quickly realize that this is no ordinary magic show. The first part of the show is set entirely to music, with large coins appearing and disappearing in rapid succession. But you won't just be watching trick after trick for 75 minutes; this is a magical theatrical *experience*. You'll be taken on an

get the audience emotionally invested. There is one very touching routine about the importance of appreciating the present moments called "Forever is Composed of Nows" (based on the Emily Dickinson poem), where Miller shows a video montage of his daughter growing up and performs a Broken/Restored Thread illusion as a metaphor for the segments of our past that come together to create a beautiful and complete life.

There is plenty of laughter, and funny comments are often heard from the audience themselves as they realize their importance in the show. Like his role



The intimate theater Curt created for The Conjuror.



Getting the audience involved with theatrical close-up.

moment you enter the *Conjuror* theater. It's an oasis of elegance; classical music and theatrical lighting set the mood. Four rows of seating (the back two raised) and a beautiful performance table are surrounded by plush curtains, a video monitor displaying vintage magic posters, and lighted biographies of past master magicians on the walls. As you read about the great Blackstone, Thurston, Houdini, and others you realize you're in for a very special evening that will prove to be amazing, hilarious, interactive, educational, emotionally satisfying, and exceptionally entertaining.

But first, your date grabs you to pose at the complimentary "selfie station" and moments later a personalized photo of the experience is sent to your phone. The hostess gives you a packet of souvenirs and playing cards you will use during the

amazing journey led by Miller, who has disguised all of the hard work involved in creating a show of this magnitude. Lighting, music, and video cues are seamlessly integrated to enhance your adventure and transport you into another world. Once the lights dim you completely forget where you are and become embodied with the experience. As one patron puts it, "This is like a *big* show in a small venue."

Despite the high production values, the magic effects themselves are all first-class and baffling. People come expecting to be fooled, and Miller delivers with a mix of sleight-of-hand and platform magic rehearsed to perfection. Weaving these effects together are historical and documentary videos on the history of magic, philosophical concepts, and storytelling used to

model Johnny Carson, Miller often sets up people in the crowd to be funny while treating them like kings and queens. No one is ever demeaned or made to feel unimportant. By the end of the show, you feel as if everyone around you is an old friend and magic is real, living, and relevant.

With Miller's staple of 100 percent clean and respectful fun (which seems harder and harder to find nowadays) and focus on entertainment for *all* ages and nationalities, this production is a smart, relaxed, and hilarious way to expand your mind and give you an outstanding date night or group outing. *The Conjuror* is truly an unforgettable intimate magical experience. ♣♣

Schubert Huang is an aerospace engineer, a classical flautist, and a fan of The Conjuror.

ible. John Cleese shared his version on his own social media, declaring it “brilliant.” [See Curt’s sidebar story, “Doing Card Tricks for Movie Stars.”]

As the pandemic was winding down, Curt picked up *The Conjurer* and really ran with it. This is a seventy-minute fully theatrical close-up experience. It might be close-up, but it requires a large truck to transport and a small crew to present. Curt brings the entire theater environment (curtains, 36 chairs, decor, a large specially designed horse-shoe-shaped performance table, theatrical lighting, sound, and video replay) to the venue, most often a luxury hotel banquet room. The experience is like a full illusion show with light and sound cues and video clips. The magic is smaller, a combination of true close-up effects and slightly larger parlor effects, including a satirical Bullet Catch that is preceded by an impressive historical video.

The Conjurer was an immediate hit,

and is playing hotels in the greater Houston area. Curt intends to continue this show indefinitely, and eventually tour. “It’s the best show I’ve created,” says Curt. “It combines everything I’ve learned during my career.”

When he’s not performing, Curt and Lisa live in southwest Houston in a beautiful mid-century modern home that includes the aforementioned rehearsal space. Curt is an avid collector and player of pinball machines. His home includes an impressive collection, including a few magic themed machines. Curt has become quite expert at repairing these machines in his limited spare time. There’s a piano in the family room and band practice often takes place in the rehearsal room, when they are not in the midst of preparation for a magic event. Their daughter, Marina, caught the show business bug and performs as an aerialist at corporate and other events.

The office area of the home includes

a full video editing suite and audio recording studio. In addition to doing all of this work for his own productions, Curt is in high demand doing video editing and audio production for high profile clients. And Curt is an accomplished investor, having developed his own strategy. Most mornings, he’s up early managing his portfolio, “very successfully.”

At this point in his life, Curt is satisfied with his accomplishments and career. He has no plans to slow down or retire. He muses, “I’ll keep doing this for as long as my audiences think I’m relevant. I think I’ll know when it’s time.” ##

Illusionist Mark Holstein and his wife Sue have toured their show across the US. They have been frequent performers at Abbott’s Get-Togethers, where Mark has served as the stage manager for over thirty years. Outside of magic, Mark is a corporate executive in Houston.



A magical appearance at Moody Gardens.



The disappearing legs is both baffling and comic.



A classic dove act.

RETURNING THE HONOR: THE HOUDINI GRAVESITE RESTORATION PROJECT

BY ROD CHOW

The most sacred monument in the heritage of the Society of American Magicians, the Houdini Gravesite, is in need of our help. It requires a degree of invisible mending of cracks in the structure, detailed restoration and preservation of the centerpiece SAM flaming mosaic seal, and general cleaning/maintenance. The skilled artisans who are able to perform this specialized work — and who at the same time have the passion for the subject of the work to be able to put in the care, time, and artistry to successfully carry out the work to the desired high standards — are indeed a rare breed.

In addition, obtaining adequate funding to move from project proposal to implementation is always challenging, especially when the nature of the work is not inexpensive. Houdini apparently spared no expense, which is quite evident even when one just considers the expensive nature of the materials he selected for the SAM flaming seal, including what experts have said is real gold leaf mosaic tile.

Through the initiative of former Houdini Gravesite Chair PNP David Bowers, the Society of American Magicians Magic Endowment Fund (MEF) had approved a yet unused grant to be used towards restoration, and has been providing plot



The Houdini Gravesite at the Machpelah Cemetery in Queens, New York. Houdini paid tribute to his parents on each side of the memorial edifice.

maintenance payments to the cemetery. Current Houdini Gravesite Chair Dorothy Dietrich has put together a project proposal that the MEF is reviewing to provide additional funding. Dorothy, through long hours of research and consultation, has located and secured a team of artisans who have a love for Houdini along with expertise and experience in this type of fine work.

As all of the work is outdoors, it is important that the project proceeds during the summer/early fall, so that all the restoration can be done before winter. It is possible that with potential water ingress and internal freezing, that leaving the damage unchecked for another season may make matters worse or even non-repairable.

You may also wish to play a role to help Return the Honor to Houdini, by providing funds directly to the SAM in the name of the Houdini Gravesite Restoration Project, and/or by making a charitable donation to the MEF. The many worthy endeavors that the MEF supports, including medical assistance through the Houdini Hospital Fund, honor the benevolent ideals of Harry Houdini.

The link to provide funds to the SAM is <https://www.magicsam.com/donations/>, and to make a charitable donation to the Magic Endowment Fund is <https://sammagicendowmentfund.org/donate/>.



Dorothy Dietrich at the Weiss family plot.



Dorothy Dietrich speaking on the need for restoration at the Houdini Gravesite.

PHOTOS: ROD CHOW AND JOE DEVLIN

I did have a truly enlightening visit to the Houdini Gravesite at the Machpelah Cemetery in Queens, New York. I thank Dorothy Dietrich and Dick Brookz for coming into New York from their home and Houdini Museum & Magic Theater in Scranton, Pennsylvania especially to pick me up from Chinatown, New York to take me there, where we met up with new SAM Parent Assembly #1 President Joe Devlin. Together they provided me with a personally escorted viewing and in-depth background of this monumental and historically significant family gravesite of the longest serving SAM president in the 120-year history of the oldest magic organization in the world. The SAM flaming seal that stands so prominently below the bust of Houdini was especially commissioned by Houdini to be at the center of this monument, which Houdini built prior to his passing. As Dorothy so accurately pointed out, the original orange mosaic tiles in the official National Council SAM flaming seal brilliantly reflect the sunlight, as if the seal was lit up in neon. Driving up to the graveyard entrance, the Houdini gravesite is instantly identifiable by our SAM seal, which stands above all else.

Although, this magnificent Houdini gravesite has withstood most of the ravages of time, the original Houdini bust was damaged beyond repair and was generously replaced by Dorothy and Dick and their Houdini Museum in 2011. I was shown by Dorothy how the gravesite is at this time in need of some critical repairs, restoration, and maintenance, and the only barrier to this being immediately done is the lack of funding.

These are the sincere words of Dorothy Dietrich who, together with Dick Brookz, has been dedicat-



*Dorothy and Rod at the back of the gravesite.
Note the large cracks along the upper left side.*

edly conducting a Houdini séance each and every year from their Houdini Museum:

It's very important for the members of the SAM to know the history of the organization. It started in New York City as a local group of magicians. Houdini realized the value of meeting with other magicians, so as he traveled around the world, he held banquets — which Houdini himself paid for — to invite all magicians to join the SAM organization. It became an international organization because of Houdini's efforts. Houdini loved the SAM organization so much that he has a magnificent mosaic tile medallion of the crest of the Society of



The colorful seal seems to glow in the sunlight.



The stonework and the colorful seal are all in need of repair.



Large cracks in the stone monument have been increasing in size due to age and weather.

American Magicians on his gravesite. As Houdini traveled, he would visit the graves of magicians. If needed, Houdini would pay to restore them. Houdini was president of the SAM for almost ten years.

Houdini did many generous acts of kindness throughout his life. He invented and patented a deep-sea diving suit with a quick release so divers wouldn't drown; he donated the patent to the Navy. Houdini also gave money to help out struggling performers.

During World War I, he formed the Rabbis' Sons Theatrical Benevolent Association, which included Jewish-American stars. Its officers included Houdini as president, Al Jolson as vice-president, and Irving Berlin as secretary. The organization raised funds for Hebrew associations helping military families, as well as for the Red Cross. Houdini was also a major supporter of Zionist institutions. Throughout his life, he performed great acts of charity, but insisted upon anonymity because "the Jewish way is to give charity quietly."

Houdini also helped support widows of magicians who passed away.

I feel that it is imperative that the SAM members should commit to taking care of Houdini's gravesite out of respect for Houdini's lifelong commitment to the SAM organization.

Through the reflective words of Parent Assembly 1 President Joe Devlin, he honors Houdini, and speaks on Houdini's inspiration and the need for preservation:

As I stood on the ground that cradles the legendary Harry Houdini, a surge of emotions overcame me. The air was filled with history, and the weight of Houdini's legacy seemed to settle on my shoulders. It is there, at his final resting place, that I found myself reflecting about the journey that had brought me to that moment. From a naïve teenage magician to the Presidency of the Society of American Magicians Parent Assembly #1 in New York City.

In the innocence of my younger years, I awakened to the wonderful world of magic. It was between the pages of Houdini's biography that I first read about his unequalled artistry and unique determination. From that moment on, my path was set. Houdini's remarkable feats of escapology, illusion, and showmanship became my guide, leading me through the many doorways of the magical arts. His dedication to pushing the boundaries of what seemed impossible inspired me to strive for greatness and push my own limits.



Rod Chow, Dick Brookz, Dorothy Dietrich, and Joe Devlin.

Through many hours of practice, performances, and a pursuit of mastery, I slowly climbed the ranks of the magic community. It is no small feat to achieve the presidency of the prestigious SAM Parent Assembly #1, a position once held by Houdini himself. Yet, as I write this today, I am humbled to have reached this pinnacle.

But more than a personal accomplishment, it is a testament to the enduring power of magic and the influence of those who came before us.

With the presidency of the Parent Assembly comes a distinctive responsibility — to carry on Houdini's love for the Society of American Magicians and honor his spirit. Houdini's tireless dedication to his art and his endless pursuit of mystery and wonder are a guiding light.

I recognize the importance of preserving his legacy; Houdini's gravesite is a sacred reminder of his influence and impact on the world of magic. As the president of the Parent Assembly, I hope to ensure the ongoing maintenance and preservation of this historic site. Just as Houdini's magic has captivated us, so too shall his final resting place serve as a source of inspiration for decades to come. I pay my respect to the man whose name will forever be chained to the art of magic — Harry Houdini.

I am certainly honored to be amongst the prestigious roster of SAM presidents who preceded and followed Houdini. I am now so humbled that I have made this remarkable visit to the family gravesite of the compeer to whom the SAM owes so much. Thanks Dorothy, Dick, and Joe for all you to do to promote and preserve the legacy of the Most Illustrious Harry Houdini. 🍀

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PERFORMING FOR OUR “SEASONED” FANS

I love performing for most people — kids excluded, as I typically perform mentalism, which is an art form not well suited to that age group, as well as their general lack of attention skills. However, for some reason I’ve drifted into performing for smaller groups of older folks. Typically these audiences are found in various communities or “retirement homes,” which can include independent living, assisted living, and Alzheimer’s or memory-assisted facilities.

In this article I’ll discuss how I got into this performing niche, as well as some of the experiences I’ve enjoyed and some tips you may find helpful if performing for seasoned older folks fits the bill for your type of magic.

TIP 1

You likely won’t be on a stage, although some facilities do have a nice “stage” area, or at least a larger area in a room that might double as a movie theater. This means you likely won’t be doing larger stage illusions, but rather will need to plan a parlor show. Your “stage” is typically a small area in a corner of a room used for happy hour, eating, or general socialization. In one facility I worked, the room was quite large and I was able to be in the front middle of the room, floor level, which fit my needs as a “stage.”

TIP 2

Your “dressing room” will likely be a public restroom. I dress at home with the outfit I’m wearing for the show, and typically only use the restroom to load and check my pockets to verify what I need is in place for my show. (Also, for the originally intended use of such a room, of course.)

TIP 3

You may need your own sound system, although I’ve never brought a sound system for use. The places I’ve performed have typically been smaller venues with audiences of ten to fifty people in a close setting. One facility did have a sound system that consisted of a lapel microphone and a handheld mic. Keep in mind that many older folks

may have hearing issues, so if you’re soft spoken a sound system is a good investment for this type of venue.

TIP 4

Audience size varies. I never know how many folks will show up. My audiences have been in a living room in one home of the facility (for this show there were about ten folks *very* close up to me and my performance area), as well as audiences up to about fifty folks. (Sometimes I’ve performed on a weekend family day when the audience could be larger due to the guests.) And sometimes the audience will grow during the show, as people (residents and staff) walking by will stop to watch and enjoy the fun.

TIP 5

Angles could be an issue. I try not to perform surrounded, as I prefer to look out into the audience. However, in some facilities guests or workers will walk by my sides and back as I perform. For a mentalist this is usually not a problem, but keep this in mind as you plan your show. You rarely have control over your environment.

TIP 6

Usually I will need to move around tables and chairs and place them where I need them, especially for whenever I call volunteers to come onstage. I’ve also had to move chairs further back from my stage to make the show more comfortable for myself and the volunteers I will use. There are no stagehands, although the entertainment director and various workers, who typically attend the show, are very helpful.

TIP 7

The older folks usually *love* to volunteer, especially the ladies. Folks, this audience really likes to have fun! Enjoy yourself and let the audience volunteers enjoy being part of the show. For this reason I don’t think a silent act would work as well in this setting, unless an official stage is available — and even then I think you’re missing a golden oppor-

BY SHAWN MESSONNIER

tunity to utilize onstage a very receptive and engaging audience.

TIP 8

Mental acuity can be an issue among audience members. Remember that the average age of your audience can be anywhere from seventy to eighty years old. Some of these folks — many of them, if you're performing in an Alzheimer's or cognitive challenged unit — may not understand your instructions or be able to follow them closely. This was an eye-opener for me as a mentalist. I've solved this problem, or at least dealt with it, in several ways.

First, I always over-plan a show, packing more tricks than I know I'll end up performing. My first trick or two, plus meeting with the entertainment director before the actual show, tells me just what mental abilities I can expect from each audience. If the audience may not be able to follow some tricks I've planned, I can scrap those since I have backup tricks that will work.

Second, when needed I will choose employees of the facility to be my assistants onstage.

Finally, I try to plan tricks that don't involve quite the amount of mental energy, mathematics, or concentration that I would perform for a more "regular" audience. Even those audiences of Alzheimer's patients who may have no clue what I'm doing at least enjoy being out of their rooms and interacting (to the best of their abilities) with me, the staff, and other guests.

TIP 9

You won't get rich performing at these venues. Most activity directors have a limited budget of \$50 to \$100, which may cover the cost of a new trick or two. I do it more for the experience, practice, and a tiny bit of cash for a very part-time gig. Oh, and I do enjoy seeing the happiness on the faces of the audience members, who are so grateful that someone would take the time to visit them, work for them, and give them a bright moment in what could be an otherwise routine day.

TIP 10

It's not always easy to break into this category of audiences, which was surprising to me. Many senior facilities are booked six to twelve months ahead of time. Some activity directors are terribly slow to respond to an email or phone call. (At one facility, it took me over twelve months to finally get hold of the director, as she never returned my calls or emails. I got lucky by phoning one day when she happened to be at her desk and took my call!)

Persistence is the key. Call the facility and ask for information about who is the activity or entertainment director. Most places will happily book a magician or mentalist, as most of their regular entertainment is musicians. (One place where I performed several mentalism shows had me come back with a few musician friends, playing and singing some songs we knew the residents would enjoy!)

FINAL THOUGHTS

My shows are typically 30 to 45 minutes. I always ask the entertainment director how long she likes a typical event to last when "negotiating" the fee. I try to book places that are close to my home, typically within a thirty-minute drive.

If invited back — and I always follow-up to try to rebook — I will usually do some of the same tricks (audience favorites) as well as some new material. Most of the audience won't remember my exact effects from three to six months ago, but I do use audience feedback to determine which tricks I will repeat. My new material is added based upon the cognitive ability of the audience, which I determined from my prior performance.

I hope I've answered some questions you may have had about performing for our older audience members. If you give this a try, I think you'll find this group very rewarding when you perform for them. ☘

Shawn Messonnier DVM is a holistic veterinarian, author, and radio host. He welcomes comments or questions at shawnvet@sbcglobal.net.



Illusions of Grandeur

David Seebach

ILLUMINATING A NOVEL ILLUSION

Our topic this time around is a well-known but rarely seen illusion that is usually referred to as Light Bulbs Thru Girl. It's the modern twist on another one of P.T. Selbit's creations, one that he called the Human Pincushion. Most called it the Spike Cabinet.

It was an upright cabinet outfitted with a wall of large spikes that could be moved by a wheel. Turning the wheel moved the spikes from the back of the prop forward and out through the front of the cabinet. As the name implies, an assistant took her place in front of the spikes and the magician turned the wheel so that the spikes moved forward and penetrated the woman.

Illusionist Leon replaced the spikes with showcase light bulbs, adding a modern look to the illusion.

Mark Wilson and Harry Blackstone featured versions of this illusion and I recall seeing Orson Welles perform it on a network TV or cable television special. In his version, after the penetrating effect the cabinet was opened to reveal that the woman had vanished (accomplished by camera/editing trickery and not stage trickery).

Today, I know of only John Bundy, Michigan's Bill Schulert, and myself having this in their repertoires. If I am incorrect and missing someone I am confident it will be brought to my attention once this is in print.

The act can be staged with the bulbs remaining fixed (unmoving) or with a mechanism that moves (pushes) the bulbs through the woman.

Chicago's De Yip Loo built one version and California's Owen Magic Supreme built the other. Bill Schulert has the De Yip Loo version; I own the Owen prop.

I came to own mine by happenstance. In the early 1980s, I was appearing in Chicago at their big auto show, representing Oldsmobile. Magician Mark Sweet was, at the time, an auto show fixture for Chevrolet. Several years earlier we had both appeared at malls as Willy Wonka with a candy promotion, but that's another tale altogether.

Mark approached me in Chicago and said he knew of this illusion for sale in Detroit. I am not 100

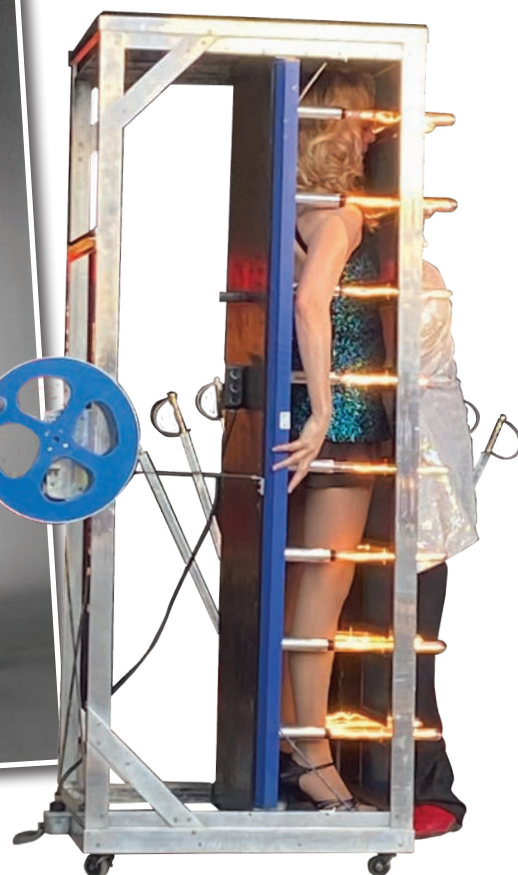
percent sure now of who had owned it, but there was a history that included a divorce and custody of the prop. It was offered to me at a "fire sale" price and I quickly agreed to purchase it.

I had to drive to Detroit to fetch it.

Back then I had met a young man with a sincere interest in magic. He attended more than a few of my appearances and introduced himself, telling me he would be eager to assist me in any way he could; onstage, offstage, loading, setting up, etc. He agreed to accompany me to Detroit. He is still my go-to stage manager, having accompanied me to Hawaii multiple times, into Canada, and from coast-to-coast on various



A 1980s promo photo of David Seebach performing the Light Bulbs Through Girl with Lisa.



A side view of the illusion with Chicago pro assistant Karen Burris skewered by the bulbs in 2023.

tours. You may know of him — he's Brian LeBoeuf, who is on the celebrated stage crew for Abbott's Magic Get-Together, he does the sound and lights at Iowa's Abracornadabra convention, and he's a regular backstage technician at the prestigious AMAs in Hollywood. For him it all began with a trip to Detroit to pick up the Light Bulbs illusion.

It was in a very large fiber case. Fiber was the go-to material for cases before the days of ATA protection. Fiber is fine for smaller gear, but not a good choice for something as big and bulky as Owen's Baffling Bulbs. So, one of my first "improvements" was to order multiple cases from the Anvil company. One was a small fiber case just for all the bulbs. This fits into a slightly larger ATA case along with an appropriate AC extension cord and the wheel that mounts to the illusion and operates the wall of light bulbs that move forward and through the woman. And, finally, there is a very large case for the illusion itself. It's big and bulky, but not terribly heavy for its size. For the record, the small ATA case measures 17.5" x 17.5" x 17.5" and weighs 40 pounds. The illusion case is 31" x 37" x 80" and weighs 316 pounds. These weights include the weight of the props.

I recall that when they were delivered to the dealer I ordered them through here in Milwaukee, I was notified they had arrived. I said that I'd be over in a day or two to pick them up.

"No," the dealer said. "You have to come *now*. We can't get that one through the door into our shop!"

The positive is that while this certainly does not "pack flat," it doesn't take long to set up: just four small bolts to affix the wheel to the cabinet. Of course, you have all those bulbs to screw into their sockets.

I now had more money invested in this acquisition.

When I received an attention-getting electric shock from the prop I had the unit re-wired for safety, and now I had had spent additional funds.

Just before composing this article I chatted with Owen Magic's Alan Zagorsky. I knew from the Owen Magic nameplate that it had been built when they still were located in Alhambra (before Azusa). Alan remembered only a few were ever made.



David and Anne presenting the illusion in 2017.

An early issue we faced was that as the bulbs were cranked forward it was always possible — sometimes likely — that they wouldn't perfectly align with their holes in the grillwork front of the cabinet. Another issue was that 24 75-watt light bulbs produce a lot of heat and assistants did complain. The illusion drew 1,800 watts of AC power and that could cause a circuit breaker to trip.

I took the illusion to a theatrical firm and they worked on bulb alignment for me. I also discovered I could replace all the 75-watt bulbs with 40-watt ones that were exactly the same size (in length), but slightly smaller in circumference.

That seemed like a great idea! Less power meant fewer blown circuits, plus less heat generated for sensitive female victims.

However, there was an unintended consequence. The original bulbs were made by General Electric. These new bulbs were a foreign import and had poor quality production control. The glass bulb was not always properly inserted in the threaded base of the unit during their manufacture. This meant that, when screwed into the sockets, bulbs could come out at a slight angle, not straight. So, even though they were smaller in circumference and should have more easily passed through the holes in the grillwork front, they could

also be "off" in a manner that kept them from passing effortlessly in their travel.

There was one additional problem that really bothered me that had to do with a necessary deceptive aspect of the illusion. It may have come from years of use, as I truly believe Owen Magic would not have delivered the apparatus with this obvious visual flaw. It would take too much space to describe here. I will just say that multiple individuals and firms tried to correct this issue to no avail. However, my lifelong friend, Rick Swaney, took it as a challenge and rectified it perfectly in about an hour.

Several years ago, we discovered that the ATA cases had fallen victim to foam rot, a malady that has vexed plenty of illusionists. A local case company removed all the old, original foam and installed new foam.

You can understand that the original "fire sale" price turned out to be the *least* expensive part of this acquisition. And, it hasn't ended! Currently we have replaced all the bulbs *again* with modern LED ones. They have excellent manufacturing quality, are bigger around (like the originals), glow brightly, and require just a few watts, so AC power issues and complaining showgirls would be a thing of the past. The bulbs are expensive and I needed more than two dozen.

So much for those details and issues;



"Baffling Bill" Schulert with the Blackstone/De Yip Loo version.



The Baffling Bulbs have passed through the Anne's body.

now let's discuss the illusion, its impact, and its practicality.

You can perform this illusion with just one assistant. And, it really doesn't have any bad angles. It can roll through many — but not all — doorways. The cranking wheel can be an issue. Lighting is never an issue; this prop illuminates itself!

And I am confident you won't hear an audience saying, "Oh, this again. I've seen it so many times."

My preference is to begin the presentation with the bulbs in a forward position with their front tips protruding at the front of the cabinet.

You demonstrate how the apparatus operates by turning the wheel to move the panel back and bringing all the bulbs to the rear of the prop. There's never an issue with the bulbs going *out* (moving back).

The assistant takes her place and two side curtains are drawn and clipped in place. Both are on roller shades.

The illusionist begins turning the wheel and the bulbs begin their inexorable trip forward. For some of this the prop can be straight on to the audience, and then the prop can be turned to show a side view and allow spectators to see the progress of the bulb panel as it is moving.

If a bulb should fail to align with its hole at the front, the performer will immediately feel resistance to his cranking. If he does not stop, the bulb will break and shatter.

An experienced assistant can carefully watch the bulbs and re-direct one that seems to be off-course.

For those readers "in-the-know," not all bulbs need to line up at all.

The brightly lit bulbs will come out the front and the fact that they're lit proves an electrical connection. And unlike using spikes you won't hear, "I bet those things bend; they're rubber."

But, someone might suspect the assistant has somehow exited. The magician can open the curtains showing the woman — in profile — with bulbs glowing and all about her.

The convincer, though, is when the front panel is removed and the woman is plainly seen with bulbs coming *directly* out of the front of her body.

This is truly visible magic. It is *very* impressive!

The process is reversed. The front panel is put back, the wheel cranked to draw the light bulbs back, and the lady emerges unharmed.

It's a natural to utilize a German *Funkenring* in this act for effect.

For most shows I use my full-size Ford Econoline van so this easily fits. But it takes up lots of space, so keep that in mind.

I would describe mine as a bit "fussy," but we have solved so many issues that I'm not bothered much anymore.

I will never forget a memorable performance for a corporate holiday party on the grounds of Milwaukee's famous zoo. My client was in a building where I could drive up, unload, and set up in the afternoon. We had this prop, two fog machines (for the Broom Suspension), and a pretty substantial PA system, along with the rest of the show (Lester Lake Chopper, Sub Trunk, etc.). Before we finished our set-up I turned every electrical component on. It was all fine.

We departed and then returned, hours later, for the show.

None of us were aware that a beer cooler had been brought in (this was Milwaukee, after all). Everything went well — for awhile. The audience was a bit noisy from their hospitality hour, but nothing out of line. The Bulbs was probably mid-show. I gave it an introduction and the pounding music began. I reached to flip the lights on and the entire *building* went black!

Now there were hoots and hollers. It turned out that the circuit breakers were actually in another structure!

After several minutes in total blackness, power was restored and the show went on. What more could we have done?

I will not tell anyone to rush out and obtain this illusion. Nor will I advise that it should be avoided. That's your choice.

But I will plainly state this: Do *not* try to build this yourself! There's carpentry, metal work, and electrical components. This isn't a home workshop hobby project.

You certainly may contact me with questions or if you are seriously interested in mine. ☿

Your comments and thoughts are always appreciated. David Seebach may be contacted via email at david@davidseebach.com or via snail mail at 4581 North 101st St., Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53225.



Taking the Stage

Brian T. Lees

TRANSITIONING

As magicians perform, tricks are planned out in sequences. The specific magic in a sequence may not be cast in stone, however, the sequences seem to be. If the magician does a trick with silks, he usually performs a few more with silk before he moves on to coins, rope, or something else.

Magicians do not do a rope trick then one with silk to come back and do another rope trick. They perform a sequence of tricks before they move to another category. Working in this posture helps eliminate introducing each trick. Phrases such as: "For my next trick," and "now I will produce..." become ineffective very quickly.

The approach is to lead the ending of one sequence into another. That is the term I refer to as "transitioning." The audience follows the magician as he moves from one category of magic into another. The best part of transitioning is that it is smooth. A magician who was working with silks naturally moves on to working with coins — there is no break in the performance, as the last silk trick produces a coin that he immediately uses to launch his coin magic.

I am asked to perform the Linking Rings any time I am contracted for a show. I know they are considered old magic. But what I consider is not important. My audience pays my invoice. I like to work with a few rope tricks and near the end bring out a ring. I have three tricks I do with the rope jumping on to and off of the ring, and a couple fake knots on the ring.

The transition comes when I have a volunteer in the front row hold the ring, with the rope tied onto it, high in the air. I wave my hands and the rope pulls off the ring. I toss the rope to the back of the stage and prompt the

audience for my volunteer's applause as I take back the ring. From there, I begin with a crash link and I am into my Rings sequence.

Some tricks must be set up with narration. Others play better if they are announced. But one does not have to do an entire performance that way. Blending in a few transitions takes the audience's entertainment factor up to the next level.

The question then becomes: how does one get started with transitioning? The answer begins with your magic inventory. If you have not organized your magic by category, now is the time to do it. At a minimum, list your magic on paper by category. Armed with this information you can begin to consider transitions.

Think of your magic in terms of beginnings and endings. Search for the ending of a trick to move into, match, or allow you to launch the beginning of another. The coin produced with the silk that leads to coin magic and the rope/linking ring mentioned are good examples.

There may be times when your patter will enable you to bring the beginning of the next trick into your hands. Maybe you have a silk routine that ends with a large silk rabbit. Using a box, you can insert the silk and make it vanish. When you open the box again out comes a long piece of rope.

That transition launches you into a rope routine. Or, if you prefer, you can produce a bright red ball. Using that ball, you can lead yourself into Strat-O-Spheres. The movement would be smooth, and no introduction would be required. You begin the routine once you produce the ball from the box. While moving over to the rest of the props you begin your patter. Now, you are into your Strat-O-Spheres routine.

As I mentioned, the individual tricks

within a sequence are not cast in stone. The only two are the first and the last. The first trick is transitioned to from the last trick in the previous sequence. Perform the magic in this category that you wish and when you are ready, perform the last trick, whose ending will be the start of a trick in your next sequence.

Use transitioning to keep your performance flow smooth. You do not have to over-use it. But it will add luster to the flow of your show. One recommendation I have is within the categories themselves. I do not script my performance so tightly that I cannot pick and choose tricks within a category to match my audience.

As an example, there are several routines I can do with silks, which I can choose depending on the audience. When I am ready to move on, I can change a silk into a cane, or go from Knots Off Silk into The Whole Thing card routine, or just use the last silk as a cover to produce something in my hands.

This should give you a good idea. You do not have to transition your entire show. It is best to mix it up with some introduction, narration, and transition. The focus is to avoid announcing each trick: "For my next trick..." "And now, for your amazement..." "Next I will..."

Announcing each trick/routine tends to rein in your audience. It places a ceiling on the entertainment factor you are trying to build. As performers, we want the audience entertainment factor to peak as high as it can go. 🍀

Brian Lees has learned the skills and craftsmanship needed in performance with over 55 years of experience in front of an audience, from tap dancing to music, acting to magic. He welcomes emails from readers at magicwithbrian@yahoo.com.



Phonetastic

Magic You Can Do Over The Phone

Joe Hernandez

IMPOSSIBLE REVELATION

The following is a rather sinister effect. It is not difficult, but there is a lot to follow. This trick uses a variation of the JDH Principle, which will be explained.

EFFECT: The spectator shuffles a deck of playing cards. The performer asks to have a “cold reading” of the cards. The spectator holds the cards face down in a dealing position and deals them face up one at a time as he calls them out. After calling out a few cards, the performer asks the spectator to stop and instructs him to pick up the face-up dealt pile and place these cards back face down on top of the deck.

The spectator is requested to think of a number between one and twelve. He is then to deal from the top of the face-down deck to his secretly chosen number. The spectator is then to look at his card, place it back on top of the deck face down, and place the cards dealt on top of his selection.

The spectator is instructed to riffle-shuffle the cards and give the cards a cut. The performer again asks for a second “cold-reading.” The chosen card is then revealed.

REQUIREMENTS: A deck of playing cards, a notepad, and a pencil. The deck of cards does not need to be complete.

SETUP: JDH Principle.

THE WORKS: You need to do a variation of the JDH Principle, and I will describe it before proceeding. But first, let me demonstrate how this trick would be done live in front of an audience so you can easily understand the setup that needs to occur during the effect when performed over the phone.

Begin with the Ace of Spades through the King of Spades on the top of the deck. This setup can be in any order. There would be no need for a “cold reading;”

you would proceed straight into the effect. However, before beginning the trick, you need to know the top Spade card. Use your favorite method. I make a mental note as I set up the suits and then do any false shuffle to keep the top twelve cards in place.

The spectator is asked to think of a number under twelve. Let us assume he picked ten and that the top card in the deck is the Five of Spades. He deals ten cards face down and looks at the tenth card. He then remembers this card and places it back on the deck from where it was dealt. Let us assume it is the King of Spades. The spectator then picks up all the cards dealt and puts them on top of the selected card. The Five of Spades was at the bottom of the pile on the table due to the reverse count. The Five of Spades is on top of the selected card, the King of Spades.

The spectator then riffle-shuffles the cards and finishes with a square cut. The performer then takes the deck of cards and looks for his key card, the Five of Spades. The first Spade below the key card or to its right (when fanned facing the performer) is the spectator’s King of Spades, the selected card. From here, the performer can reveal it any way he likes.

To do this over the phone, you obviously won’t have a setup in the deck. However, as the effect is underway, you can create a “setup” using the JDH Principle. Here is how you would do it:

Before making the call to your intended audience, you write on your notepad the numbers 1 through 13 (Figure 1). Allow plenty of space next to the numbers — enough to write four suits. You ask that the cards be shuffled and then ask for a “cold-reading” of the cards. As the first card is called out, you write the suit next to the value written on your notepad and add a mark to remind you that this is your key card.

Here I am using an asterisk. For example, say the first card is the Seven

of Clubs. You would write a C (for Clubs) right next to the number 7 (Figure 2).

Notice that an asterisk identifies your 7C, which is your key card. The “Club” suit is written to the right of the number 7. Jotting down the order of the cards during the “cold reading” is not essential other than the first card (which is already identified by the asterisk). You can choose whatever marking you like — a checkmark, circle the number, etc.

However, you must keep writing the cards as they are called out. In our example below, the King has two suits among the first thirteen cards, a Spade and a Club. The Spade card was called out first, so it gets written down next to the number thirteen. The Club was called out after the King of Spades, so it gets written to the right of the Spade on the same number line.

Let’s assume that the rest of the reading is as follows: KS, QC, 3D, 4C, 5H, 9D, AS, 10D, JD, KC, 6S, and 9C. Your notepad would look like Figure 3.

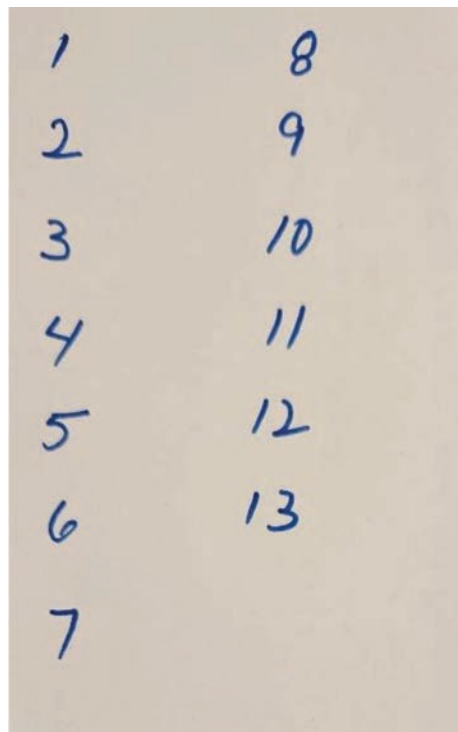


Figure 1

1	8
2	9
3	10
4	11
5	12
6	13
7 C* (1 st CARD READ)	

Figure 2

1 S	8
2	9 DC
3 D	10 D
4 C	11 D
5 H	12 C
6 S	13 SC
7 C* (1 st CARD READ)	
LHT LHT	

Figure 3

1 S	8
2	9 DC
3 D+	10 D
4 C	11 D
5 H	12 C
6 S	13 SC
7 C* (1 st CARD READ)	
LHT LHT	

Figure 4

Notice there are thirteen cards written on the above list. You continue to allow the reading of the cards for at least two or three more after the initial thirteen cards from your group. This additional reading is just theatrics, adding a layer of deception to the effect. All you need is to write the first thirteen cards called. Keep a tab of the count because writing beyond thirteen can be confusing. I do slashes for every five cards until I have thirteen cards (see the lower right-hand corner of Figure 3). As you practice, this becomes easier. What you do not want to do is write anything less than thirteen. Doing so may cause you to miss a selected card.

Once you have written the first thirteen cards, you allow a few more cards to be called out. You then say, "Okay, please stop. Please take the cards you have just called out, turn them face down, and place them on top of the deck. I have a good feel for the cards, and your reading has provided me with enough of your energy to help me with my intuition."

The spectator is asked to think of a number between one and twelve. Then he is to deal the number of cards that equals his thought-of number from the top of the face-down deck. The spectator is then to look at the card at his chosen number, remember it, place it back on top of the deck face down, and

then pick up the face-down pile and put it on top of the selection.

You then say to the spectator, "Please riffle-shuffle the cards." Once the spectator has done so, you can say, "Please riffle-shuffle the cards again to make sure they are well-shuffled, and when you finish, give the cards one square cut. Thank you!"

You need to have the cards read once again. "I have a good feel for the cards, but I need you to read them aloud again to help me identify your selected card. Please begin with the cards face down in the dealing position and deal them face up one at a time from the top as you read the cards to me. Please read them slowly so I may have enough time to get a feel for the pasteboards."

Read the instructions carefully to follow: As the cards are being called out, several things can happen. One of the cards among the twelve from your initial group of thirteen may be called out first before the key card. Make a note of this first card if it was not your key card. If none is called, you continue to listen to the cards being called out and match it with your list until either the first card of your group or your key card is called out.

Again, if a card from your group is called out before your key card, make a note of it. If not, and your key card is

called out, then note that it was called out (I merely circle the key card once it is mentioned). The next card from your group that follows your key card is the selected card!

If your key card is called out and no other cards after your group's key card are mentioned, and the spectator has called all the cards in the deck, then the very first card from your group of cards that you noted before the key card was called is your selected card.

Let's go through some examples to clarify the above. Say the Three of Diamonds was called out before the key card (the Seven of Clubs). You note the Three of Diamonds; place a plus sign next to the letter at the third position on your notepad (3 D+ in Figure 4) and continue to listen for your key card.

If the key card is not called out until the very end, with no other cards from your group called out after the key card, then the first card from your group that was called (the Three of Diamonds, in our example) would be the selected card. All the other cards in your group that were called out after the first group of cards were called and before your key card can be disregarded.

On the other hand, if after the key card is called, another card from your group is called, then that card named after the key card would be the selected card.

As an analogy, think of cutting the deck in half with your key card at the bottom of the deck. The card on top of the deck is the selected card. You make a full cut, and your key card will be on top of the selection. If the key card were to be on top, the selection would be at the bottom; if the key card would be on the bottom, then the selection would be on top. If the deck of cards were cut again, the keycard would either remain above the selection or be on the top (first) or bottom of the deck (last).

FINAL THOUGHTS: It reads long, but you will see how easily it works once you practice it. This trick is diabolical and cleverly constructed. The JDH Principle can be used in many effects over the phone, where a setup is required. In this particular effect, you can see the value and strength of this technique.

A way to keep the trick from becoming too long is by requesting the spectator use only approximately half to two-thirds of the deck. This is my preferred method.

Be creative with how you reveal the card. Don't just say, "Stop. That is your card." Build it up a bit. Once you learn this effect, you will probably consider it your favorite phone trick. I have fooled many knowledgeable magicians with this effect.

Note: You must ensure that the spectator knows how to riffle-shuffle a deck of cards. If in doubt, do not allow the spectator to overhand or perform any other type of shuffle. You are better off asking that the deck of cards is given several cuts.

You can also first request a cut of the deck, followed by a riffle-shuffle, followed by another deck cut. This will not change the selection from being the first card after the key card.

Remind your audience of the impossibility of this revelation. Mention how the deck of playing cards was initially shuffled, a card was chosen, then shuffled again (or cut multiple times), followed by a complete deck cut. These are impossible conditions, yet you successfully reveal the selected card. Take your bows! ♠

Joe Hernandez is the author of Phone-tastic, a book collecting 52 magic effects that you can do over the phone, from which this effect has been excerpted.



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Kien Meng Wee

LEARNING EMPATHY

A big part of learning magic is understanding empathy — the ability to see things from another person's point of view and understand how the audience feels is important. I realized this is especially difficult for children. Humans are born egocentric. For instance, when a baby grabs another's toy, they don't know that this will make the other baby sad until he or she starts to cry or retaliate.

As we grow up, we learn to empathize with others and become more aware of how others see and feel. The amazing thing is that magic helps to train us on the tangible and intangible aspects. This is because a magician

may say things like, "I am going to put this ball in the hand" but yet he doesn't and has to believe so!

Try to video your students' performances as they are practicing and let them review it by themselves first. After that, you can add your feedback. This gives them a different perspective and they will learn not only how the audience sees the magic, but also how they think. When they start performing for family members, encourage them to discuss with them how they feel at each part of the magic and check if this is the same feeling they want to portray.

Most magic lessons are great in teaching empathy. A good example to learn this aspect is using Cups & Balls.

Tips When Teaching Cup & Balls

1. As per my magic workshop process, I would **demonstrate the effect first**. In other words, they see it from the audience's point of view.

2. Then I will **show the secret** by using transparent cups. With this, they can see it from the magicians' point of view.

3. Since Cups & Balls is usually a long routine, **demonstrate step-by-step**. Do not attempt to teach the whole routine at once. Make sure they understand each step before moving on to the next one.

4. **Start with the basics**. There are many moves that are within reach of many kids; do those first.

5. **Explain the one-ahead principle**: It may be confusing to kids for them to think one or two ahead of their audience. Hence this teaches this disparity between when the magic happens versus when you *make* the magic happen.

6. **Emphasize misdirection**: Cups & Balls rely heavily on misdirection. This is a great magic routine to teach the kids how to use misdirection effectively to enhance the illusion.



Student rehearsal of a Cups & Balls sequence.

7. **Teach them the why**. I explain why Dai Vernon revealed the "secret" to the audience and why he said those words. For instance, saying that there are too many balls give the magician a reason to ditch the ball, which in fact was to reach into the pocket to take the big load. This also gives your students a chance to think about if every presentation or action makes sense when you think from the audience's perspective.

8. **Encourage creativity**. Magic is a form of self-expression, so encourage the kids to add their own flair and personality to the trick. They can come up with their own patter or presentation style to make the trick uniquely their own. ♣

Send me your feedback at info@kidsparty.com.sg.



One of Mr. Bottle's students performing at a magic meeting, attaining a goal they had set.



A young student practicing a Cups & Balls routine.



Sparks of Creativity

Emerson Rodrigues

MY EVERYDAY CARRY SPIRIT SLATES

EFFECT: Two bills are taken out of a wallet. Both sides are freely displayed and yet, magically, a mysterious message appear written on the bills.

MATERIALS: Two bills, one wallet, and a Sharpie pen.

SETUP: Take two bills and write your secret message, one part on each bill. Place the bills together with the secret message face to face, and place inside your wallet.

EXPLANATION: Remove the bills from inside the wallet and execute this sequence similar to a flushtration count; change hands and turn your hands and wrists simultaneously, at least three times in a row, showing “front and back” of the bills that are together. At the same time lift up your arms, leaving your hands and the bills in front of your face. Now turn the left wrist and split the two bills, but at the same time turn around the back bill (Photos 1 – 5). Doing this sequence you apparently showed both sides of both bills, but in reality, you are still hiding the secret messages that are now in front of your eyes (Photo 6). I

recommend you watch the quick demo video for a better understanding of this handling.

Place one of the bills on top of the wallet (Photo 7). Turn the wallet together with the bill and place the other bill on top of the wallet (Photos 8 and 9).

Holding this “money wallet sandwich,” turn your right wrist to show casually both sides once again and toss the wallet to the other hand (Photos 10 and 11).

Rub the bills together and slowly open the bills to reveal the secret message (Photos 12 and 13).





NOTES: Optionally, during the procedure you can use a Sharpie to mimic the writing, or imply that the black ink from the wallet was somehow transferred to the bills.

This is one of those simple effects that we end up using more than the props we buy in magic stores. In the photos here I am using a card revelation just as an example; as you can realize, you can reveal any desired message using this maneuver. I think it's great to reveal a serial number from another borrowed bill by using this method but this time I will leave you only with this spark of creativity for you to create your own routine. 🌀



Magical Facts, Fallacies, Wit, and Con-fabulations from "America's Foremost Foolosopher"

- Do not think small — but if you do, make it big.
- Why does working as a full-time magician still make you feel like you are unemployed?
- I have yet to think of most of the new ideas I have.
- Seeking perfection will grind you to a halt.
- A mirror has no eyes but sees what you see.
- The paradox of creating magic is that we need both the discipline of good technique and the freedom from it.
- I am amazed at how Harry Houdini packed himself in a small milk can. Every time I think about it, I can hardly contain myself.
- Did you hear of the magician with plastic arms but real hands?
- When you liberate your persona and surrender to your imagination, you open up spontaneously to creative surprises.
- Mistakes are reservoirs of hidden energy that can power your creativity to seek new solutions.
- Student magician: "I cannot remember any of the moves you showed me yesterday. It's like having amnesia." Mentor: "Do not sweat it; just forget about it."
- Only in conjuring do you need money to buy a money trick. Why is that? You do not need milk to buy milk.
- The correct way to perform a trick is by not performing it incorrectly.
- Wife: "When will you stop procrastinating and get a real job?" Husband: "I'll tell you tomorrow."
- It is not that magicians are lazy; they keep their work hidden.

The above quotes are excerpted from the books Conjurer's Wisdom, volumes 1 and 2.



On Second Thought...

Paul Draper

INDIANA JONES AND THE AMULET OF AKANPA

With the release of the final Indiana Jones movie, in a series that has run forty years, I have had fun performing at release parties and returning to an old premise that was first inspired when I read Dr. Spencer P. Thornton's 1950s era book, *Secrets of Mental Magic*. Thornton taught how to turn a *Reader's Digest* into a switching device to have a bank of force items that were all the same force for a single reveal. Truly devious, but ever since I was in high school, I have used my trusty Indiana Jones hat — purchased at Disneyland in the mid 1990s, soon after the ride opened — as a switching device for billets. It is a great tool to bring out whenever an appropriate themed event has presented itself: *Guys & Dolls*, classic

Vegas, 1950s cars, *Back to the Future*, *Indiana Jones*, speakeasy, roaring '20s, *Casablanca*, *Great Gatsby*, etc. Basically anything 1890s to 1970s, when these hats were popularly worn.

Indiana Jones ironically wore a kind of hat known as a fedora, and a style more specifically known as a poet. A poet is a wide brim fur felt hat with a tall, straight-sided crown. That height and the brim size help with the secret move in this routine.

EFFECT: The performer tells a story that takes place in a time period mentioned above and has several props that fit the theme; not just the hat, otherwise it will feel out of place. Five small slips of paper and pencils are handed out to five different individuals in separate areas of the audience. The performer asks spectators to write down secret

information about themselves that no one could know, like the job they wished they had as a child, their childhood phone number, the vacation destination they have always dreamed of traveling to, or the person they would kill — if they could get away with it. Any person is welcome to reveal any bit of information they wish, to see if the mentalist can retrieve it. They are now asked to fold their slip in half or in quarters along the pre-folded line and to drop them in the empty hat. By pre-folding you will have a consistent look to the final slips.

One person is selected to help onstage and to actively communicate mind-to-mind with the performer. The slips from the hat are dumped into a clear bowl onstage or directly into the assistants' hands. They are asked to select three of the slips that we will use to transfer knowledge from mind to mind and two slips that we will destroy or use as an offering, and their secrets will remain secret.

The mentalist then asks the spectator to open the three slips and to concentrate on the ideas. One by one the mentalist reveals all of the secret information in incredible detail to great applause and sends the spectator back to their seat.

METHOD: Pre-write five slips with really fun and theatrical secrets to reveal; secrets for which you have pre-planned stories, insight, comments, jokes, and byplay. Think of these as the dream Q&A slips that you wish would come up every show. I fold them each slightly differently, bend corners, edge mark them, etc. so I can tell them apart. That way I know which three are in play. But you could also get this information through the byplay with the onstage spectator. It is important that the five slips come from different places in the room so the people can't immediately get together



Billets are dropped into one side of the upturned hat.



Prepared billets are on the opposite side, hidden when the hat is gripped from beneath.

and discuss, since you aren't actually revealing any of their information at this moment. I choose to use three of five so that if two people post-show spoke with each other at some later point it would feel as if they were the two who had thoughts that weren't shared.

Walking around with the hat collecting slips I can show the hat empty in a casual and open way, even bouncing the slips around. The bounce is important to eventually get them all on one side. I select my audience stage participant and when we start heading back to the stage is when I switch my grip from one area of the hat to another, so the billet switch can happen and my pre-prepared slips fall onto the table and the actual slips stay inside. I then put the hat on my case. (More on this in a moment.)

In my Indiana Jones routine, I am an American-born museum curator friend of Sallah, *"He has delivered this incredible artifact to me, because it belongs in a museum. And I paid the right price. We are going to sacrifice some of your secrets to the amulet or to the spirits — two of the secrets, to give us the power to read the other three."*

In some venues I can burn them, in some I tear them up and stuff them into a translucent liquor bottle with a little

liquid in the bottom and swirl them. *"The spirits! This amulet belonged to Akanpa. They say it gives the possessor the power to peer into the thoughts of others!"*

Now it is all about the theater of revealing fun, secret information.

"You had a pet pig as a child, and it has haunted you to this day that you ate him for Christmas. But you'll never give up morning breakfast bacon. Would any of you?"

"Your childhood love was a romance your parents would never have allowed. You still think of them. I am seeing the initials SG? And yet there were some secret meetings by the tree in the park. But I don't want to reveal it all!"

"Why would you write this in such a public place?! Knowing that I might share it with everyone! Let's just say the city is Montréal and you better be quick about it."

Et cetera.

BONUS EFFECT: The really great thing is that at the end of this routine, as I'm moving props around, I casually dump the real slips into my bag so the hat can be examined or used for other things. At intermission, or even during the show, while grabbing other props



Paul Draper poses with John Rhys-Davies, who portrayed Indiana Jones' friend, Sallah.

from my bag, I can secretly get one of the slips and reveal more information. This can be used at any part in the show; when I bring one of these people up from the audience as part of another routine, I can reveal these bits about them. It's important to have a way to know which slip went to which person if you want to have it hit in this specific way; otherwise, you can toss it into the audience and broadly ask who is sending me this thought. *"You were unhappy that I didn't reveal your thought."*

What I love about this version versus the original is that in Dr. Thornton's routine he had the same piece of information on all five slips and only revealed one of them. I like being able to have more reveals. He also just revealed a five-digit number and I think you can have so much more fun with it than that.

FINAL THOUGHTS: I'll always remember in my first archeology class, when I was an undergraduate, the professor said on the first day, "Do you know why there are no archeologists who act like Indiana Jones? Because they would be dead!" Ha!

Stay cool this summer; stay safe. When we meet again, may I meet you as Sallah once met Dr. Jones and friends by saying "Oh, my friends. I'm so pleased you're not dead!" 🍷



The hat is gripped on one side to hide the prepared questions, then switched to the other hand to retain the legitimate billets when the known questions are visibly dumped out.



Nudging the Needle

Dr. Jay Ungar

HOW'S IT DONE?

So, you've just finished one of your sterling routines that's taken you years to perfect — people's jaws are still on the floor and you're basking in the warm glow of self-satisfaction. And, then, from the back of the room you hear... "Come on, how's it done?" Or, "So, what's the secret?" Or, "Be a pal, give it up, just this one time?" Or any of the hundred other ways they try to whittle us down.

What do you say? How do you get off the hot seat? Is there an appropriate response that can protect the magic, their sense of wonder, and your dignity all at the same time?

This one's tricky. It's crunch time.

Because at that moment you could kill your connection with your audience, turn a lot of people off, and make it a "lose-lose-lose" situation for all parties involved.

Or you could spin it around, and have everyone "win" in the process.

"Okay, big shot. How?"

That's kind of like *The \$64,000 Question*, don't you think? That's, of course, for all of us of that vintage. For any of you a tad younger and more familiar with *Family Feud*: "The survey says..."

I'm sure everyone has his or her own approach. Let me share mine with you. First of all — I don't tell. Ever. Well, maybe at times, with other magicians, when I'm wearing my "professorial garb" and in "teaching-mode." But even then, I feel somewhat skittish about shortcutting the actual learning process by revealing "the secret."

Next, I avoid glib responses, such as, "Practice, my friend, practice," or "Very well, thank you," or "If I tell you, I'll have to kill you," ad infinitum. I think all of these "answers" cheapen the question. They all deflect the situation for a moment, but in the process, I think, they also act as a wedge between you and your audience. It alienates those who ten seconds ago were

your biggest fans; making them feel like outsiders, voyeurs — sneaking a peak, trying to look in.

After years of wrestling with this, I've decided that the best response, for me, was to just be sincere. And to respond in a way that incorporated my own feelings and sense of wonder when I was smitten by magic as a kid.

In essence, I tell them, "I'm sorry. Believe me, I'm not trying to be a hard guy, or one-up any of you, but I really think that by doing so, by telling you, I'd be cheating you. I'd be stealing, in a way, your sense of wonder, similar to what I felt when I was a kid umpteen years ago. I'd be bursting that bubble, which I still yearn to feel. And even though I know you'd like to know, I'm trying to preserve something that I think is important and wonderful. Believe it or not, in the end, it just wouldn't be as much fun for you. Please, I hope you understand. Maybe you'll thank me in the morning."

It probably all sounds long-winded, but it is heartfelt. Usually when they hear that message, rarely will anyone ask "the question" again.

Who knows? I'm not sure that there are any universal right answers to it. There very well may be others that are better. At least I feel that my response lets me respect myself in the morning.

All I can add is at that moment, when "How's it done?" is posed to you, it is important — if not critical — for you to know how *your answer* is done. You should be as prepared as you have been with everything else you've worked on.

"Practice, my friend, practice." Do it "very well, thank you." Please, don't blow it or, "...I'll have to kill you." ❄

Dr. Jay Ungar, a.k.a. Ragnu the Ok, is a magician/physician; his specialties are internal medicine and close-up. He loves to schmooze, and would be delighted to hear your thoughts at magicju2@gmail.com.

Test Your Magic IQ: Magic 1400s – 1950s, Part One

By Dick Bowman

The quintessential treatise on the history of magic by Caveney, Jay, Steinmeyer, and Daniels (ed.) provides a treasure trove of information about conjurers and magic of the past. Example: The chief of the Siberian police stripped him naked and locked him in a Siberian transport cell, only to witness his escape (1903): Houdini.

Each answer is worth 3 points; total possible points: 30.

1. Scottish conjurer who supplemented his income by presenting novelties like the Aztec Lilliputians (ca. 1853): _____

2. Master of deception, "Gift from the Gods to Mortals on Earth", Chung Ling Soo (ca. 1912): _____

3. In 1769, he performed magnetic tricks before Empress Maria Theresa of Austria and her court, which she called "supernatural phenomena" in Vienna: _____

4. His Ethereal Suspension quickly became a standard illusion among magicians on both sides of the Atlantic (ca. 1879): _____ - _____

5. His illustration *Children of the Planets* includes a striking drawing of a Cups & Balls magician (1404): _____

6. "Hocus Pocus" is a common magic phrase today but was originally the stage name of (ca. 1600s): _____

7. Their first performance as a duo included a presentation of the Mascot Moth at St. George's Hall (ca. 1900s): _____ & _____

8. The Dutch artist's oil painting (ca. 1480) *The Conjurer* portrays a magician presenting, as a pickpocket works behind the crowd. His last name is synonymous with a popular TV show: _____

9. Before the magician in #2 above arrived on the scene, this British magician created a Japanese-style magic act as Okita with his wife Julia (ca. 1885): _____

10. This Belgium-born magician was so skilled that the great Howard Thurston feared this rival (ca. 1900): _____

See answers on page 65.



tech tricks

APPS, GADGETS, AND MORE

BY BRUCE HALVER

MAKING YOUR IPAD MAGICAL

I recently purchased a new iPad Pro and wanted a nice case to carry it in that would be durable, protective, and magical. I found it. It is called the Book Book Case for iPad.

Designed and manufactured by Twelve South, this hardback leather case looks like an antique book. It has a zipper that resembles a bookmark and a nice pocket inside that holds a mini keyboard. I use the



Keys to Go keyboard that fits perfectly. The iPad pops up and slants to make it easy to type, and pops out the other way to turn the whole thing into a display holder for your iPad.

I get lots of compliments when people see it and it looks great onstage. The Twelve South Book Book for iPad sells for \$69 to \$99 depending on which iPad you own. It is available on their website, www.twelvesouth.com, or on www.amazon.com — sometimes for a cheaper price.

On the subject of making things look magical, my plain white Apple Pencil needed a magic touch. At first, I was going to put black electrical tape on it to look like a magic wand with white tips. While visiting the All Things Magic group and telling them about my pencil idea, guest Michael Dokken suggested that I just stretch a black 260 animal balloon over the pencil and trim the ends to show the white tips. Brilliant!



It looks like a magic wand. It now has a nice grip to it because of the rubber. It is thin enough to be magnetized to the side of the iPad and charge properly. Cost for the balloon: three cents.

TRIVIAL TIME FILLER

Besides magic, magicians are always looking for add-ons to either lengthen the show or become more useful for those corporate events. I found something fun and useful that plays big, costs very little, and is extremely easy to use. Let's talk about TriviaMaker.

TriviaMaker is an app that makes it easy to create game shows for the crowd to participate in. You create the game on the app and then have people take out their smartphones and go to the website. They put in a game code and they are participating. They type in answers or press buttons on their own phones and it shows up on the screen.

The app keeps score, plays applause or wrong answer sound effects, and you control everything from you iPad or iPhone.

Games to create include an *A, B, C*, or *D* answer game, a Spin the Wheel Game, a "Jeopardy Style Game," and even a "Family Feud Style" game. They are easy to create and easy to access online.

Some examples of how you can use this:

For a birthday party, talk to the parents and ask them questions ahead of time such as, "What is Joey's favorite flavor ice cream?" or "Where did he fly on his first plane ride?" As a warm-up, you can play Birthday Trivia with the kids on the parents' big screen TV.

For corporate events, hire yourself out as an emcee for a game show that you create and present.

Use the game show as a survey. There are lots of uses for this app. TriviaMaker is available in the iPhone app store as well as Google play for Android. Free to download and a very low yearly fee of \$20 to \$30 to take advantage of all the features. You can also check it out on their website, www.triviamaker.com.



A STIFFER SURFACE

There are times when magicians need a surface to work from — not the foamy soft surface, but rather a hard surface that defines a space. Take a look at the Artistic Antimicrobial Black Desk Pad, 12" x 17".

This ultra-smooth desk pad is a nice rich black surface that is ideal for mentalists who need people to write on papers and things but need a solid surface. Originally made as a desk pad, I'm sure you will find times where it will be very useful. Available at your local Staples Store, you can also find it on www.amazon.com.

A PUZZLING GIVE-AWAY

I have been noticing that micro jigsaw puzzles are becoming very popular; 150-piece puzzles in an oversized test tube are everywhere. There are a few companies that can make them to order are all over the Internet. Let me recommend www.everythingpromo.com.

Search on their site for "jigsaw puzzle" and you will see them. The minimum order is 300 for \$2.89 each.

These are great giveaways for the birthday child or promo material for clients. Order more and the price goes down. Put your promo poster or any photograph on these puzzles. Check it out! 🎉



Pricing and details are accurate at the time of writing but are not guaranteed and are subject to change.

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

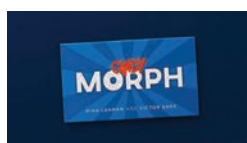
Reviewed This Month

TRICKS

- Candy Morph
- Miracle One

DOWNLOADS

- Leaky
- The Crane



CANDY MORPH

By Rian Lehman

Available from your favorite dealer; dealers contact Murphy's Magic

Price: \$25

Review by Jim Kleefeld

Why do we need another gum/candy pack trick? There is Gumpack, Gum Bite, Gum to Anything, Gum, Flash Gum, Triple Gum, Gumfounded, Split Gum, Uncaged, Oh So Juicy, Red Mint, Sweet Changes, Revise Five, Quickmint, Candy Factory, Candy Flash, Candy Pop, Candy Crash Candy Factory... and more. Well, maybe this is the one that will knock your spectators' socks off.

CandyMorph is an effect that works like it sounds. You hold up and show a pack of Orbit gum and it instantly morphs into a roll of Peppermint Lifesavers. You can flash and show the roll on all sides and even produce one piece from it to hand out. You get a complete gimmick that switches from a flat rectangle to a round cylinder in an instant. It comes with three vinyl labels so you can formulate it as Orbit Gum, Trident Gum, or a Kit Kat Bar. (Well, close approximations, anyway.) It is tight, solid, and very easy to work.

Any caveats, you ask? Yes — it is a short

bit. I mean, very short. Like, two seconds. Show gum, swish hand, show Lifesavers, done. And you have to quickly put it in your pocket because you cannot hand it out or even allow a cursory inspection. You could palm a Lifesaver and pretend to produce it from the pack, but since you cannot open the pack or unwrap the foil, spectators might find that suspicious. Depending on your situation, some people can use this quick effect. The gimmick is sturdy, well made, and works well.

The instructions are sharp and clear, although they felt a bit rushed. Someone who did not invent the trick shot the directions in one take, flaws and all. But they work. Do remove the inner paper liner before you put on the inner sticker or else it will not work correctly, I discovered.

If you already have a dozen other gum/candy quick-bits, you won't need to replace them with this, but if you are in situations where you can show it and move on, it's worth the price.



If you wish to have your product reviewed, please send it to:

Alan Howard
M-U-M ShopTalk
600 Las Roblas Grande Dr.
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

MIRACLE ONE*By Christian Grace*

Available from your favorite dealer; dealers contact Murphy's Magic

Price: \$74.95

Review by Marc DeSouza



Upside: this is a fantastic version of the Any Card At Any Number plot. Downside: it's \$75!

Okay, get over the sticker shock. It's worth the price. You get two specially made USPC decks of cards and over an hour of online video instructions, plus some other stuff as well.

Christian Grace is a UK magician who has been creating and marketing some really fine card magic over the last few years. This is a very clean looking handling of the neo-classic plot, but there is a price to pay, and not just the purchase price. This uses two decks that must be dedicated to the effect. The reset time is three to five minutes, so this is not for table hoppers. This is a one-off, ideal for formal close-up and parlor performances. And it is not the same every time. You need to do some thinking when you perform it. Although the best way to do it requires some memorization, it is not necessary to perform it effectively.

The effect? Two decks, one red and one blue, are introduced and your participant is asked to select one of them. One card is selected from the red deck and placed aside. The participant is asked to name a number from 1 to 52. The blue deck is removed and the cards are counted to the selected number. The card you arrive at is also placed aside in full

view. The remaining cards are shown face-up and all are different. The two cards placed aside are turned face up and they match. It looks very clean, but how it all works out specifically depends on the number given.

Okay, this does not adhere completely to the original ACAAN plot. The card selected from the red deck must be forced, but boy, does Christian give you some great work on this. There are several versions taught and some of this work almost qualifies for its own publication. Even if you are an experienced card man, you will learn a few things of value here. Next, it doesn't work with any number called, but most do. Christian gives you some great ways to get around this and makes the selection seem very natural. The outcome from this point forward is different depending on the selected number.

The gaffed deck allows you to get the required card to the required number fairly easily. The deck does the heavy lifting, but there are several ways you learn to count the cards. There is a crib that takes all memorization out of this, but with a small amount of work, you won't even need to depend on the crib. In watching the teaching video, Christian covers this in detail and I think that if you begin to perform this regularly, you will find yourself less and less dependent on the crib. In some

cases, you count the cards. In other cases, your participant counts the cards. In all cases, you are able to show many indifferent cards and "prove" the deck is normal. These all look very clean. There are some instances where a minor move is needed, but I wouldn't even really consider it a move. You will be doing it in a matter of minutes.

The instructional video is superb. Great video and audio and Christian is an excellent teacher. He consistently gives some great tips on performing the routine as well as alternate handlings. There is also an additional video of Christian and Mike Rose, the creator of The Grail, discussing both The Grail and this routine. Christian considers The Grail to be his starting point for Miracle One and this is a fascinating discussion that traces much of the history of the effect. Christian's crediting is first rate. I would recommend you watch it. There is also an additional file provided with a PDF of the crib, allowing you to print additional copies in a variety of sizes.

I think this is an excellent effect that will find its way into the working repertoire of many performers. The effect is clear, clean, and impossible looking. The entire project is first class and I consider it a good value — even at \$75. That is a small price to pay for a "worker" that you will use.

Highly recommended.



LEAKY

By Alex Soza

Available from *MurphysMagic.com*

Price: \$10

Review by Marc DeSouza

David Roth caused a sensation with his Karate Coin back in the 1970s. The effect first appeared in the works of Jean Hugard and was called the Finger Gimlet. David popularized it and his performances spawned a bunch of variations on both the gimmick and handling. This latest release by Alex Soza is one more handling. Not better, not worse, just different.

In this eleven-minute video download, Soza spends the first five minutes teaching you how to make your own gimmick. This is all well and good, but you could just purchase a commercial Karate Coin and save the DIY time. The DIY coin has a slightly smaller diameter than the normal half dollar and that may make Soza's handling slightly better or more deceptive. I'm certain you could have someone reduce the size of a "standard" Karate Coin for a pretty nominal sum and have a much better finished product, if you like this handling enough.

For those unfamiliar with the effect, you show a half dollar to be solid and penetrate it through the middle with your index finger. When you remove your finger, the coin is seen to again be solid. As opposed to the Roth version, which is a quick penetration, this one is more of a softer, slower penetration and restoration. There are two different handlings taught. I prefer number one to number two, but neither is significantly better than many versions already in print.

This seems more like something that would be in a book, a set of lecture notes, or in a magic magazine. Certainly, it is not worthy of a separate release as a download for \$10. Save your money and save up to buy the David Roth book.

Recommended only for those who insist on owning every coin trick released.

THE CRANE

By T-Tan

Available from *MurphysMagic.com*

Price: \$9.99

Review by Payne



Where to start, where to start?

Firstly, be advised, as the ad clearly states, this is an effect to "level up your social media channels." Which means that this trick is limited to the realms of YouTube, TikTok, or whatever social media platforms you partake in. Since the only way to clean up after performing this trick is to turn the camera off, you couldn't really get away with this on a live video feed like Zoom and certainly all the limitations of this trick make performing it in person all but impossible. Given that, this really isn't a trick at all, but an in-camera practical effect, which sadly isn't all that practical, especially since this effect doesn't live up to its own hype.

It is pitched as having a dollar bill fold itself into an origami bird. But unlike its predecessors, Stephan Schutzer's Self Folding Bill or SEO Magic's Self Folding Crane, you don't see the bill fold itself. Instead, it vanishes, only to be replaced by a folded origami bird.

Yes, the vanish is visible, but it in no way looks like the bill is folding itself. As a special bonus addition, your magically produced crane floats mysteriously between your hands at the conclusion of the trick.

Did I say float? I should have said dangles, as in the demo it wobbles back and forth as if it was attached to some sort of string. Always a death knell in any levitation effect. Like most magic these days, The Crane is a DIY effect that is easily assembled with items you have around your house — as long as that list of materials contains a magnet, a shim, and some black velour contact paper.

You will also need access to a color printer, as one of the first things it requires you to do is to print three copies of one-dollar bills. I can only assume that this is because the creator of this trick lives in a country where US dollars are hard to come by so he has to print his own. But I strongly advise those who live in the US to skip this step, as it is highly illegal, but also because you will be hard pressed to find a printer or a scanner that will actually allow one to print replicas of currency.

There is no reason why a real dollar, or any other form of local currency, couldn't be used in this effect.

The construction is easy as the instructions on the twenty-minute video download are clear and concise, so this task can be completed in a few minutes. After that, you're ready to perform.

First off, you will need to find a bright window to perform this in front of. Then you will need to apply Instagram filters and then put on a black shirt. Advising your spectators to squint and tilt their heads funny will also aid in the observation of this effect.

All right, I made that last part up. But the first part about the backlight, Instagram filters, and black shirt are actually recommended on the video.

So, here are the standard provisos.

Skill level: Easy; it's almost self-working.

Angles: There are none as long as the camera is directly in front of you.

Repeatability: Hit Replay.

Can I recommend this effect: No. 𐄞𐄟

When ordering products from a magic dealer, please mention that you saw the review in *M-U-M*.

Broken Wands

DON HALLINGER

Southern California Assembly 22 member Donald E. Hallinger passed away on June 5, 2023, after a lengthy illness.

Don was born on October 2, 1939, at a US Army base in the Panama Canal.



Because Don's father was a US Army Intelligence Officer during World War II, Don's childhood was spent in the Panama Canal, Canada, and finally in the state of Virginia.

Don attended Virginia Tech and Indiana State University, earning degrees in geology and paleontology.

Moving to Southern California, Don had a 36-year career with the Southern California Gas Company as a geologist. After retirement, Don became an earth sciences instructor at Cerritos Community College in Cerritos, California.

Don had a brief childhood interest in magic and a later interest developed during his daughter Kim's years assisting Professor John U. Zweers, PNP, in his Southern California magic performances. In 2008, Don joined Assembly 22, took magic lessons at The Magic Castle, and became part of the Southern California magic community.

WALT UMBERFIELD

Walter S. UMBERFIELD, 96, of South Windsor, Connecticut, beloved husband of 67 years of the late Helen (Dziadul) UMBERFIELD, passed away peacefully on Sunday, June 25, 2023.

Walter was born on July 23, 1926,

in Hartford. Upon his graduation from Weaver High School, Walter was drafted into the US. Army in 1944. He proudly served his country for three years during World War II in the 29th Infantry Regiment, having fought in France and Germany. He graduated from Springfield College, earning a degree in recreation and camping. Walter played on the National Collegiate Volleyball Championship Team. He began his career and became a certified YMCA health and physical education director, working in Waterbury and Stamford. In 1956, Walter changed his profession and became a computer systems designer at Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, a position he enjoyed for over thirty years, before retiring as a data processing officer.

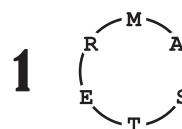
Very active in the South Windsor community, Walter was a former PTA president; Little League player, director, and coach; Recreation Commission chairman; a member of the Republican Town Committee; Safe-Rides co-advisor; and was a co-chairman of the Veterans Memorial Monument Committee.

Walter had been a performing member of the Society of American Magicians since 1956 and a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians since 1970. He served twenty years as treasurer for both local branches.

[Walter wrote his own obituary, from which this is adapted, before he became incapacitated with dementia.] ♫



magic worddoodles



2 1/1/1901 - 12/31/2000 SILKS

3 ACT

4 MARY
NET

SCORING
Regardless of your score, we hope you learned a little bit of magic history this month! This book should be in every magician's library.

1. John Henry Anderson
2. William Ellsworth Robinson
3. Pelleter
4. Robert-Houdin
5. Joseph of Ulim
6. William Vincent
7. Maskekyne and Devant
8. Hieronymus Bosch
9. Charles De Vere
10. Servais Le Roy

Magic IQ Answers:

By Dick Bowman

Test Your Magic IQ:
Magic 1400s - 1950s,
Part One

1. Ringmaster
2. 20th Century Silks
3. Top-notch act
4. Marionette

Diversions Answers



Thoughts on Thinking

Norman Beck

KEEPING COOL

"Who is going to believe a con artist? Everyone, if she is good."

— Andy Griffith

If you have a problem and money will fix it, if you have the money you don't have a problem. On the other hand, if money won't fix it, you got troubles.

My partner recently went in for a medical test. The doctor didn't like part of the results and referred her for a different test. This seems simple enough. Well, it would be if people just did their job. Joan sent a total of three written requests, several phone calls, and one curt email. Nothing. I asked her if she wanted me to try? Her thought was I would have no luck.

In situations like this, my thought is to either go high and talk to the tall hog at the trough or go low and speak to the low man on the totem pole. They can both get it done but one's a lot easier to reach.

My plan was find out where medical records were located, take them a tray of cookies, explain our plight, gain their trust, and BS my way into getting what I needed.

Well, plans change. I found a number for medical records and called just for their address but when the call was answered my plan changed. The lady said, "Medical records, Beth speaking, how may I help?" There was a smile in her voice and sincerity in her delivery. I, on the other hand, was not the patient, had no medical authorization, no power of attorney, and was not certain of the proper protocol in this situation.

I do, however, understand how cons work and a bit about human nature. I responded with, "Sue, I am so glad to get to talk with you; I can tell just from your voice that *you* can fix my problem." I had no idea if she could or would fix my problem.

I was told that she would fix it that day and that she would have it ready by a certain time, but Joan would need to pick it up.

I thanked her profusely and then put a bite in my voice and explained that there was one last thing I needed. (In looking forward, the most important thing I needed.) I told Sue I needed her boss' email to write them a letter to tell them how *great* she was.

The interesting thing about this request is all in the way you frame it. The low man rarely gets looked at, talked with, or shown any gratitude for the job they do.

I took the time to talk to Sue.

I thanked her for helping me.

I informed her that I was going to sing praises to the big boss.

People will gladly give you information when you frame it this way. I never lie and actually do send a nice letter — but I have a second reason for doing it. In the event Sue drops the ball, I have a step up on the ladder in my approach to fix the problem.

When I called I was mad, frustrated, irritated, and at my wits end. None of this was revealed. In difficult situations one needs to keep one's cool. I would like to tell you I always do, but I don't.

Joke: What do you call 100 lawyers skydiving? Skeet.

My ex-wife got a part time job this Halloween — haunting houses. ☹

Comments may be emailed to Norman. Beck@scapromo.com.

Words of Good Cheer

It should be noted that the "Words of Good Cheer" column has not been seen in the pages of M-U-M in several months. This is because we have not received any names or information from anyone; in recent months, no one has contacted us to let us know that they or their friends would appreciate the service this column is intended to provide.

Names and contact information are published here with the hope that readers will please take a minute to spread a few words of cheer with a note to one (or more) of our less fortunate members and compeers who may be going through especially stressful times or health problems. Please send additions and updates to previously printed lists to editor@magicSAM.com; or Anthony Antonelly, Ambassador of

Good Will & Cheer, 1512 Lake Rd., Feasterville, PA 19053 (phone 215-820-3192); or Bruce Lish, Assistant, drmolarmagic@cs.com.

In addition, any donations of money or postage stamps sent to Tony Antonelly to assist in the Good Will & Cheer program will be used for a good cause and greatly appreciated! Thank you. ☹

MAGIC IN AMERICA

THE STORY OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS

by David Goodsell

With Theron M. Christensen • Edited by David Charvet

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