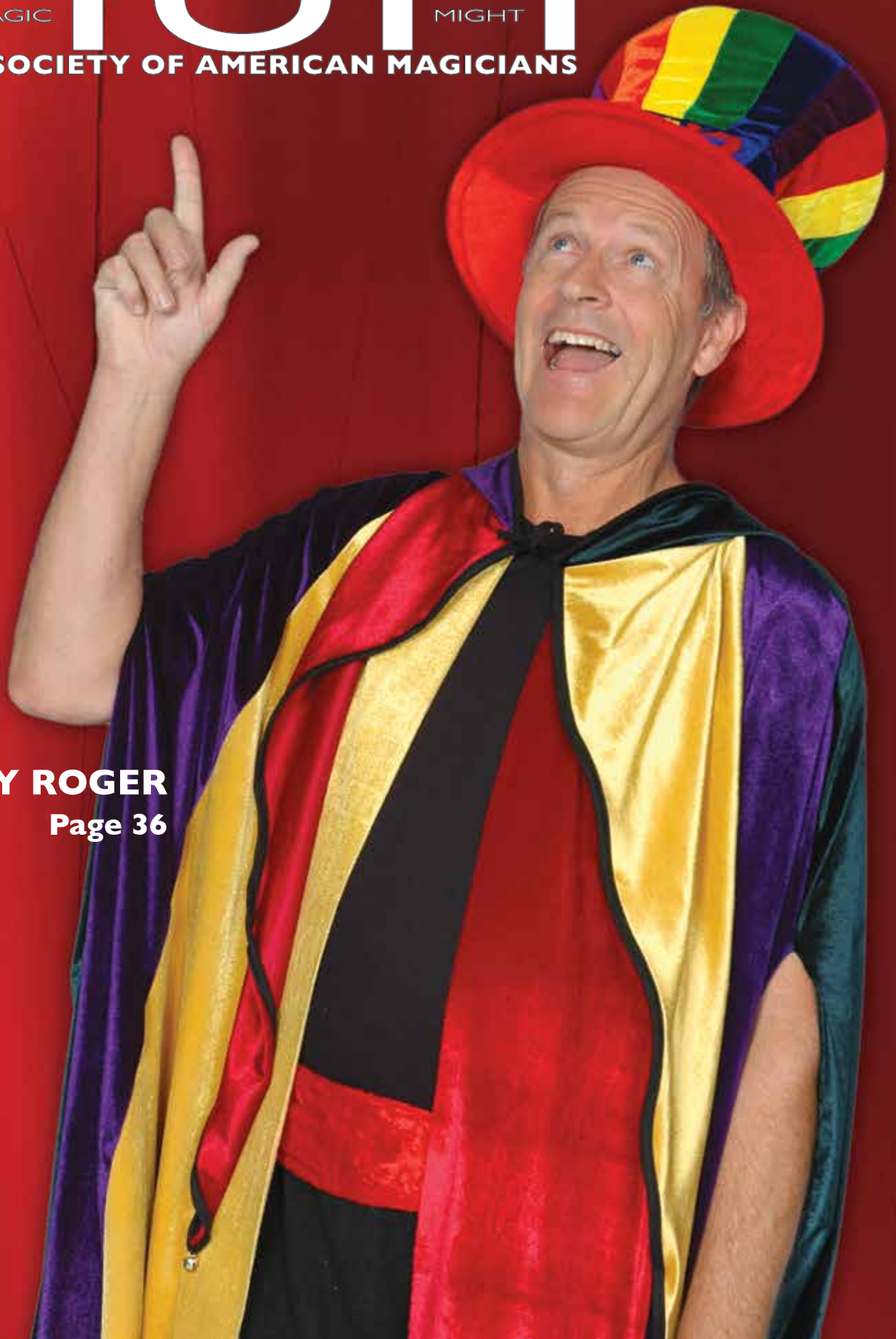


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DECEMBER 2013



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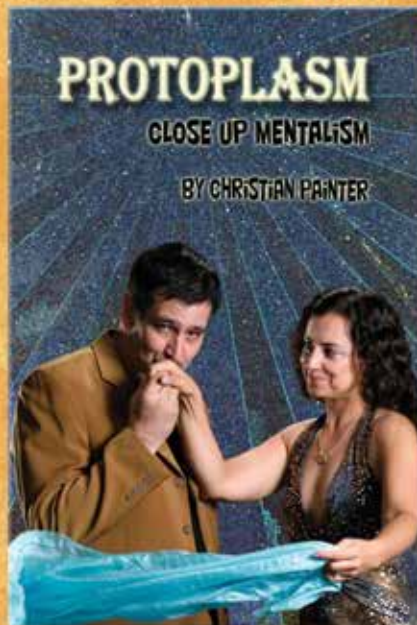
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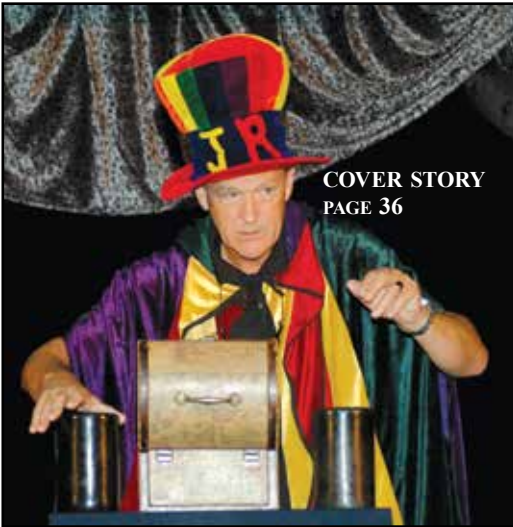
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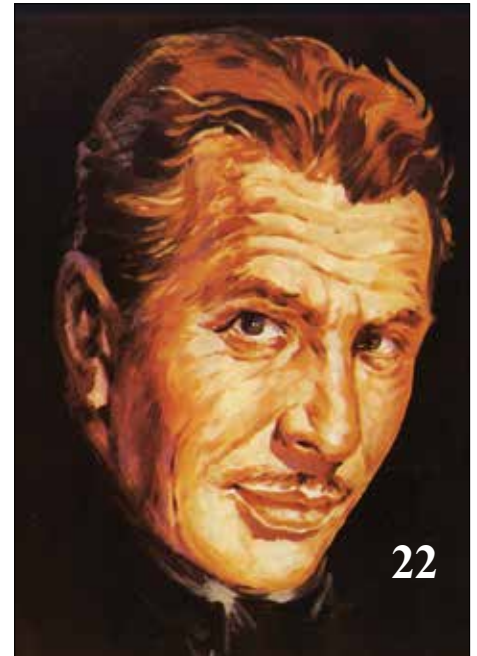
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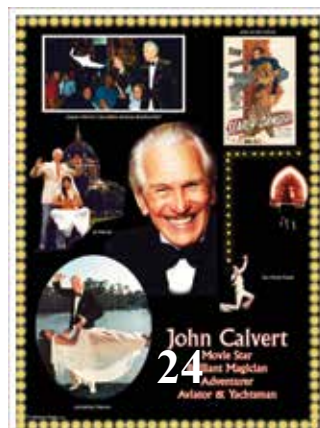
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**Editor's Desk**  
Michael Close

In the January 2013 issue of *M-U-M*, we ran the final column of the three-year run of Roger “Jolly Roger” Blakiston’s excellent Unlimited Possibilities column. In my editor’s column of that issue I mentioned that we would be featuring Roger on the cover later in the year. Well, that time is now.

Roger Blakiston has had great success in various fields of show business, including acting, stage magic, cruise ship magic, kid show magic, and entertainment booking. He has made his home in both the UK and the United States, and his magic performances have taken him around the world (many times). James Munton (who was also an *M-U-M* columnist) interviews Roger this month, and their conversation reveals how Roger has sustained his energy and passion for magic throughout a long, busy career.

With this issue, we wrap up another year’s worth of *M-U-M* magazine. As often happens at the end of the year, I have to say goodbye to a few of our regular columnists. This is never easy, and this year in particular, several columns are wrapping up that I am really going to miss.

Levent’s Stage 101 column ends this month. In the fall of 2011, as Ian Kendall’s Basic Training column was coming to an end, I knew I wanted to provide the same type of foundational instruction for stage magicians as Ian was offering for close-up magicians. I had been rereading Levent’s fantastic book *Roy Benson by Starlight*, and I asked Levent if he would tackle a column on the basics of stage magic. Happily, he said yes. Rather than focusing on specific manipulative techniques, Levent discussed the general principles that are at the core of artistic, deceptive stage magic. At my suggestion, this past year Levent expanded on his Fundamental Rules of Stage Magic, which had originally appeared in the Benson book. The twenty-four columns of Stage 101 provide essential information for any magician, whether or not you plan on doing a stage act. Thanks, Levent, for your great contribution.

Also ending this month is *On the Shoulders of Giants*, Scott Alexander’s examination of the stand-up repertoire of Denny Haney. Getting Denny’s routines recorded for posterity was an important project to me, and I am very grateful to Scott and Denny for putting in the many hours required to produce these twelve columns. Combine Stage 101 and *On the Shoulders of Giants* and the budding stand-up/stage magician has more practical, commercial, and essential information than can be found in a hundred one-trick DVDs.

Thank you Scott and Denny.

Steve Marshall is wrapping up his “celebrity edition” of *I Left My Cards at Home* this month with a trick from Penn & Teller. Steve writes, “I would like to personally thank all of the great magicians who so graciously gave their material and their time to appear in these pages. Doing this has really changed my thinking over the year. I have decided to support ‘Smile Train,’ a charity that provides free operations to children with cleft palates in developing countries. It’s an amazing feeling when you step outside yourself and do something for someone else. I wish you all a most wonderful and magical season filled with love, laughter, charity, and lots of gigs!”

Matt Field was kind enough to identify the “unknown” man on the lower right in the photo of Doc Swan on page 39 of the October *M-U-M*. It is escape artist Thomas Solomon.

This wraps up another year. There are lots of surprises ahead in the year to come, which I will tell you about in the next issue. From all us here at *M-U-M*, have a safe and happy holiday season. ♦

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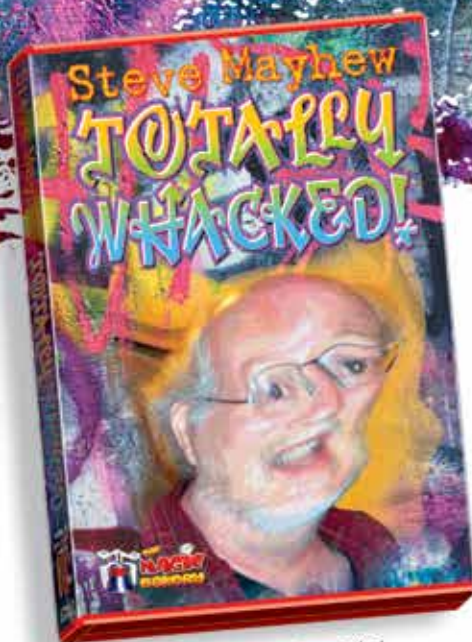
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## President's Desk

Dal Sanders

This month I have made our editor very nervous. I have pushed the deadline for this issue to the very last minute so I can tell you about a couple of the important resolutions and decisions The Society of American Magicians made at the fall National Council meeting. I want to thank Michael Close for his patience.

Before we discuss the resolutions, I want to thank the members of the National Council who joined me at The Club at Boca Pointe in Boca Raton, Florida, for a sold out performance. I felt very fortunate to share the stage with President-elect Kenrick "Ice" McDonald, Second Vice President Jeff Quinn, National Treasurer Eric Lampert, National Secretary Marlene Clark, Canada Regional Vice President Rod Chow, and National Deaf Magicians Deputy Simon Carmel. We all had a great time performing in this benefit show. Proceeds went to the Magic Endowment Fund.

One of the important issues we took up at the National Council meeting was how the S.A.M. stands on the problem of cyber bullying. The National Council of The Society of American Magicians has determined that various chat rooms and social media have been improperly utilized as outlets for cyber bullying. This in turn targets magic, magicians, and young people who are interested in magic. Many magic forums serve the good purpose of sharing ideas and thoughts that help to improve the skills of the performer; yet some websites allow, tolerate, or permit performers to be the victims of absurd, hateful, and hurtful attacks from fellow performers.

The National Council of The Society of American Magicians hereby adopts the following resolution condemning Cyber Bullying:

The Society of American Magicians opposes and condemns cyber bullying in any and all forms, including but not limited to all forms of hate speech, the use of words that attack physical appearance, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, or nationality.

The National Council also opposes all kinds of needless and hateful cyber bullying resulting from the publishing of private information on magic related websites.

Many bullies hide behind online pseudonyms to verbally attack and belittle others. The S.A.M. has worked hard to not to let these attacks occur in our own online vehicles, but the problem has become so intense and so perverse that we now feel the need to condemn the bullies that lurk online across the various platforms.

Our mission statement states that the purpose of this Society

is to advance, elevate, and preserve magic as a performing art, to promote harmonious fellowship throughout the world of magic, and to maintain and improve ethical standards in the field of magic. It is clear that if we are going to do this, we must stand against cyber bullying. This resolution was passed unanimously.

The National Council also voted to finance the maintenance of gravesite of Past National President Harry Houdini. While the S.A.M. had financed the upkeep of the site in the past, that had funding had been discontinued. Dorothy Dietrich and Dick Brookz took on the responsibility of maintaining the site with the help of local assemblies.

Harry Houdini is an icon as revered as Elvis Presley or Marilyn Monroe. He is not only a magical icon; his gravesite bears the seal of The Society of American Magicians. That seal is our brand and we as a Society should be proud to protect it. This gravesite is clearly our responsibility and I'm proud to report that the National Council unanimously voted to maintain Houdini's final resting place. In addition to this, I have appointed North Atlantic Regional Vice President Eric DeCamps to establish and chair a committee that will oversee the maintenance of the Houdini gravesite and be a contact for those who wish to visit the site to pay their respects.

There were several other issues taken up and resolved at the fall National Council meeting. The minutes of the council meeting will appear here in a future *M-U-M*; you can read about everything then. I thought you would enjoy some of the highlights now. In addition to the issues taken up at the council meeting, there are also many other things that came up in caucus that will be presented and voted on in future council meetings. Some of these things will be beneficial to the members of the Society and others will help to elevate and advance the art of magic in ways that Harry Houdini could never have imagined. I want to take this opportunity to invite any and all members of The Society of American Magicians to participate in our next National Council

meeting. The next meeting will be March 8, 2014, in Tucson, Arizona. Officers and committee chairs will meet in Caucus on March 7. We are planning some great magical entertainment for this weekend.

Finally, I want to thank all the National Council members and all the S.A.M. members who attended this meeting. I truly appreciate all of your support. I especially want to thank National Secretary Marlene Clark and National Administrator Manon Rodriguez for their help and for being so good at their jobs. I would have been lost without either of them. ♦



National President Dal Sanders



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**Roy Horn**  
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 1639 N Valley Drive,  
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**Frank J. McNaughton, Sr**  
 1926 Apple Street,  
 Williamsport, PA 17701

**Larry Poague**  
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**Mario Susi**  
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## 1 COLOMBINI LECTURE AT PA 1

**NEW YORK, NY**—In October, Dean George Schindler and his daughter Dee joined us at the Magic Table. She had come in from Vegas to visit her dad and was taking photos in the Big Apple. Also, PA 1 Trustee Bruce Lish attended on a rare day off from his hospital practice. Scott Mero did a new four Ace effect he was working on. I think he got too much advice, because I think he did a very good job. Richard Bossong, Marvin Putterman, Jerry and Lee Oppenheimer, and Rene Clement were also at the Table this month, which meets at the Edison Café on 47th Street in Times Square. We start around 12:30, sharing magic and lunch.

Our monthly meeting occurred on October 4. The business meeting was called at 7:15 but we only had sixteen in attendance, not a quorum, so PA 1 President Throwdini was not able to have a business meeting. Instead he made announcements and went right to the after-meeting event. We had a great lecturer – Sandy Marshall. He told the assembly about his father Jay Marshall and many interesting histories of our community. It was a great time for all. I am very sorry I missed it; I was on a family vacation in Cape Cod.

On October 9 Rachel and Aldo Colombini lectured for the Parent Assembly. As usual, it was a charming and funny lecture by both of them. They said it was a little strange to be back at Mount Sinai, because it is where Rachel had her life-saving surgery. She is in the pink now and we all had a wonderful time at the lecture. Aldo thanked Co-Lecture Chairman Scott Mero for setting up a group of lectures in the North East for them, making the tour possible and much easier. No one could thank Aldo enough for the gift he is to all of us in magic.

On Friday evening October 18 Doug Edwards presented a wonderful workshop at the Gemini Dinner. The topic for the workshop was “Magic with Unusual Apparatus.” He

performed several effects with the apparatus and then taught them. He spent careful time showing new members how to perform new effects. His workshops are terrific. —Tom Klem

**Parent Assembly One meets at Mount Sinai Hospital on Madison Avenue in Manhattan Contact Tom Klem [tpk47@aol.com](mailto:tpk47@aol.com) (212) 7255258 [www.sampal.com](http://www.sampal.com) for more details.**

## 2 SPOOKY MAGIC

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**—Mages and guests gathered for the October meeting, grateful the spirit forces were emerging and affording a night of magical marvels. Hippo Lau gave tonight’s teach-in: paper magic involving a paper wand that changes into a paper tree. After presenting the routine, Hippo demonstrated the making of a wand/tree. Watching the process, members recognized the prop’s potential and mentioned utilizing different colored paper and purposes.

Tamaka described problems that occurred during an outdoor performance. His presentation of multiplying bottles had been impaired by weather conditions. Based on his experience, he offered suggestions for preventing future problems.

Celebrating Halloween, we staged acts of spooky magic. Corky LaVallee, after lighting a candle and setting the mood, had members select four cards from a tarot deck. These cards were placed face down unseen by anyone. Members then narrowed the cards to one. Corky held a piece of paper over the candle’s flame and behold a name appeared on the paper: the Devil, which was the remaining tarot card. Rob Shapiro displayed four cards with blank faces. After he shuffled the cards, the faces had a spider web design. He placed three cards, now blank, on an assistant’s palm. Waving the card with web image, Rob asked the assistant to cover the cards with his other hand and on its back was a big spider. Rich Seguire adeptly performed Mark Mason’s Die-Lema, twice iden-

tifying the number on top of the large die. As a finale, he placed a regular size die on a small platform, putting a plastic cover over it. The die flipped and its top number corresponded to the third chosen number.

Quoting Einstein, Walt Johnson discussed quantum entanglement or “spooky action at a distance.” Walt proceeded to demonstrate the idea. He rubbed his S.A.M. membership card over a small sauce packet and then inserted the packet into a bottle filled with water. With his S.A.M. card he controlled the movement of the packet, causing it to rise and sink in the water bottle. Stu Bacon amazed us with his version of Daryl’s Odd Quad and its wondrous climax: the backs of the four Aces were different colors. Invoking spooky power, John Caris discerned the selected tarot card and then gave a reading of it. Mary Caris enjoyed the entertaining evening and assisted in vanishing the chocolate cupcakes. —John Caris

**Golden Gate Assembly 2 meets first Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at Community Room of Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Avenue, San Francisco. Contact Tamaka [Tamaka3715@aol.com](mailto:Tamaka3715@aol.com) (415) 531-9332 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/249018441875771/> for more details.**

## 4 ALDO & RACHEL COLOMBINI LECTURE

**PHILADELPHIA, PA**—Our October meeting featured a wonderful lecture by Aldo and Rachel Colombini. Assembly 4 President Brian Hurlburt got the evening underway by extending a warm welcome to the record number of members and their guests who came out for this very special evening.

Following a brief business meeting, our very own Joe McHugh gave an excellent Teach-a-Trick Mini-

Lecture on the Sponge Balls, during which he taught a number of sleights as well as his own routine, which was both funny and practical.

After Joe, the incomparable Aldo and Rachel Colombini took to the stage and gave one of the best lectures we have ever had the privilege to attend. This delightful couple enthralled us with two solid hours of comedy and magic during which they took turns presenting many of their signature effects. Aldo started things off with a wonderful Ring and Rope routine. Rachel then performed a strong, visual card effect aptly named A Mental Trick, in which she used colored silks and goblets to divine a card freely chosen by Ralph Armstrong. Many excellent effects were taught throughout the evening, which was laced with humorous anecdotes by Rachel and Aldo about their magical life together.

Aldo had everyone in hysterics with his pet effect: The Vanishing Thumb Tip. He also shared with us some of his favorite packet tricks inspired by his late friend, Nick Trost. Rachel concluded the evening by performing her very own Cups and Balls routine, which utilized three different colored balls of crumpled up tissue paper. The effect, which was an homage to Aldo’s own award-winning FISM routine, made for a perfect ending to an exceptional presentation and was capped off by Rachel’s recitation of her poem “Wishes and Dreams.” Needless to say, Aldo and Rachel earned and received a standing ovation. Any Assembly lucky enough to convince this enchanting couple to pay it a visit will surely



Rachel Colombini (left) and Aldo Colombini (right) with Joe McHugh (center)



experience an evening that will never be forgotten. As always, a number of our members and their guests visited their favorite diner, where the fun continued. —Peter Cuddihy

**The James Wobensmith Assembly 4 meets third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the Bustleton Memorial Post, 810 (American Legion) 9131 Old Newtown Road. Contact Information: [www.sam4.org/](http://www.sam4.org/) for more details.**

**6**

**RIPPED, TORN, CRUMPLED AND RESTORED**

**BALTIMORE, MD—** Paper Magic was the theme for our October meeting. Although attendance was light due to several members attending the MAES convention, it was a great meeting and everyone performed. Dean Joe Bruno got things rolling on theme with a classic newspaper tear. It didn't turn out quite the way he intended, which then kicked off a discussion of which is the best newspaper to use (the consensus: *USA Today*). Joe followed with a complex origami routine (not hexaflexagons, which a couple of us expected from how it began). Eric Hoffman resurrected the classic oldie Fresh Fish Sold Here Today and followed with Tenyo's Burglar Ball, under cover of a paper napkin. Howard Katz demo-ed Flicker Coin, slurping it through a paper straw and back again in the blink of an eye. He had to do it several times before we'd believe it. Mike Schirmer performed a nautical-themed paper tear of an eight-spoke ship's pilot wheel and string of sailors (in *Paper Folding Magic* by Chen).

Cardician Jeff Eline, who insists that pasteboards count as "paper," practiced his upcoming MAES poker-tells contest entry on us, to good effect. We then managed to talk Eddie Robinette into doing again for us his version of Out of This World, even though we had all seen it before. Eddie's incredible "sleight of mouth" helps make this a real magician fooler. Jeff returned to close the show with a card prediction trick that looked up until the last second like it was going to fail badly. But, of course, his prediction was correct. It used a side steal reverse move that we mortals can only admire. After the meeting, discussion continued about several iPhone magic apps. We all concurred that once the iPhone comes out it's no longer "real magic." —Eric Hoffman

**The Kellar/Thurston Assembly 6 meets every first Thursday at 8:00 pm at the Magic Warehouse, 11419 Cronridge Drive suite #10 in Owings Mills, Maryland.**

410-561-0777. Contact Andy London [alondon@comcast.net](mailto:alondon@comcast.net) [www.baltimoresam.com](http://www.baltimoresam.com) for more details.

**7**

**SPOOKY MAGIC REAPPEARS**

**OMAHA, NE—** The Omaha Magical Society took advantage of the need for seasonal magic by presenting Spooky Magic for this month. Before starting the program, S.A.M. Second Vice President mentioned our Wizard's Banquet coming up in January and special guests Dal Sanders and Ice McDonald. This should be a "doozy"! Also, Larry Brodahl gave some preview of how next month's Warren Mattes sale of 1583 items. We have also scheduled a lecture by Daryl for April 24, 2014. Officers for next year were announced: President, Professor Emeritus Tom Zepf; Vice President, Jerry Golmanavich; Second Vice President, Jeff Sikora; Secretary, Scott Klinger; Sergeant-at-Arms, Bob Gehringer; and Treasurer, Dean Walter Graham. Congratulations!

The Spooky Magic started with an effect in the absence of a Mystery Magician who controlled the action of the entire audience by giving instructions over the phone. Will we ever know the secret? Pete Petrashek shocked the audience by shoving a pen through his ear. Dick Sanders presented a card effect in which a chosen card resulted in a transposition of its mate from the blue deck to the red deck. Bob Charleston drove in from Sioux Center to perform a prediction of the sum of numbers chosen by three volunteers from a set of holiday plates.

Travis Newcombe changed the pace by playing Russian roulette; he hid a very sharp broken bottle underneath one paper sack out of four and then smashed three sacks without impaling himself on the bottle. This followed a nifty



**Bob Charleston with his prediction plates**

juggling bit with some very sharp knives. Dean Walter Graham then shook tumbler of two different colored beads and magically unmixed them. He also threatened the front row by setting up three eggs on top of paper rolls then briskly pulling their cardboard platform out from under without spilling the eggs. Jeff Sikora created an image of Frankenstein from his bag of tricks and demonstrated a wand production that surprised all by catapulting five wands into the air. Steve Cotariu made his farewell performance by producing a large coin and then showed us a card trick that turned into a coin trick that turned into a card trick. Our finale was Scott Klinger, who showed us his pet raccoon that he "killed" in front of our very eyes because no pets were allowed on stage. —Jerry Golmanavich

**Omaha Magical Society meets generally on the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Southwest Church of Christ near the intersection of 124th St. and West Center Road- right across from where Hooters used to be. Contact [jerry.golmanavich.golubki@cox.net](mailto:jerry.golmanavich.golubki@cox.net) (402) 390-9834 [www.omahamagicalsociety.com](http://www.omahamagicalsociety.com) for more details.**

**8**

**HALLOWEEN MAGIC**

**ST. LOUIS, MO—** September 26 – Self-working Card Magic. Randy Kalin had giveaways donated by John Apperson and George Van Dyke – lots of great stuff. Randy demonstrated and taught several self-working card effects with Jill Schmitt, John Apperson, and Greg Lewis. Greg Lewis taught us all a clever rubber band vanish and performed the Cell Phone in Balloon! George Van Dyke pointed out the value of magic magazines and the gems found in them. This week's feature came from the February edition of *M-U-M: Magic for the Blind*, with a blank-faced deck! PNP John Apperson causes a pencil and coin to vanish. Paul Rygelski taught an interesting mechanical "cut to their card" using a rubber band. Columbus Smith had someone remove magically remove a knot. The Great Todd performed Matt Marcy's Silence is Golden.

October 10 – Learning the Ropes. After the brief meeting, we all went "to the ropes." New member Jill Schmitt assisted Steve Barcellona by cutting the white stuff, not the pink stuff! Regional Vice-President, Shawn Rivera came to the meeting via Facebook's video chat and performed the classic Professor's Nightmare



**Dan Todd Catches the M&M bullet!**

and then explained the techniques he uses. Paul Rygelski explained his handling of knots in a rope. Michael Long pulled out all the stops with a *Tarbell* classic. Steve Barcellona and Chuck Levy were at the ends of their rope. Mike Hindrichs showed us how to deal with loose ends. Greg Lewis three-knot routine was not to be missed. PNP Harry Monti explained his close-up version of the Professor's Nightmare. John Davit weighed in with big knots and Dan Todd added color for the kid show versions of ropes and knots. Columbus Smith silently slipped a ring into the mix of ropes for the night. George Van Dyke gave everyone tips, but he gave a Dove Pan to Jill Schmitt! Gregory Green caused silver dollars to transpore. Randy Kalin has the gift to puzzle and confuse us, but we liked it!

October 24 – Halloween Magic. After the brief meeting, Michael Long started off the evening with several spooky yet entertaining magical effects. Paul Rygelski performed and explained his handling of Picked/Not Picked jumbo cards. The Great Todd performed the M&M Bullet Catch with "Dr" Michael Long and sharp shooter Greg Lewis! —Dan Todd

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

**17**

**WHAT'D YOU DO THIS SUMMER?**

**SPRINGFIELD, MA—** Our September meeting was a packed house, with a new face coming for the first time, a familiar face coming back after a long hiatus, and nearly all of our members stopping in before the night was through! Peter Lennis basically dragged the dealer's room from *MAGIC Live* to the meeting, showing off some of the great magic he learned there. Two



standouts were a “fingertip sensitivity” routine that had him identifying the denomination of borrowed bills simply by touch, with his hands behind his back. The other was Bill Abbott’s Stabbed and Shot, a card stab with a kicker that you have to see to appreciate!

Bob Carroll did a super-clean card transformation in which four Jacks changed into four Tens...in the spectator’s hand! He followed this up with nice clean card magic! Joe Bednar performed a Spectator Cuts the Aces routine and a travelling paperclip trick that he’s been working on for quite some time now. Rich Pinsonnault, our monthly host, did a super-quick four Ace production, followed by a very clean four Ace Triumph effect. Rich Gilbert, also showing off his *MAGIC Live* haul, performed Joshua Jay’s Inferno. A thought-of card appears inside a matchbox, folded and paper clipped. He followed this up with David Regal’s Passport routine, in which a signed card was found clipped inside Rich’s passport.

PJ Pinsonnault was next with his take on the recently released Tiny Plunger. Our newcomer, Logan, performed a nice take on a four burglars-type routine. Well done, Logan, and welcome to the club! Finally, we discovered that Peter named his lizard Schmedley, but that’s another story altogether.

In October, we hosted a lecture by Jay Scott Berry, who was a big hit! He shared plenty of interesting, useful material that was within the grasp of everyone who came. The ring and ribbon routine alone was worth the admission price! The following week, Aldo and Rachel Colombini came by to offer a lecture to benefit David Oliver. All of the money collected for the lecture fee was donated to David. We had our largest crowd ever at the shop, so a huge thank you to everyone who came out and supported Dave and to Aldo and Rachel! — PJ Pinsonnault

Dr. I.R. Caulkins Assembly meets the first Friday of every month at 7PM at RP Magic Shop, 69 East Street, Ludlow, MA Contact Rich Gilbert rgilbertmagic@yahoo.com (413) 210-5725 www.assembly17.org for more details.

## 21

### CARD STUFF

**HARTFORD, CT—** Tonight was “Card Stuff” hosted by Roy Lorenzo. Norm St. Laurent performed a Monte-like routine using four jumbo cards. Rick St. Pierre told a story about the strange idiosyncrasies of

language and illustrated it by using two decks of cards. Norm selected a card from the blue deck, and Rick revealed that the red case contained only one card – a match to Norm’s chosen card.



**Rick St. Pierre**

Jason Abate gave Jon Cap an envelope to examine. When Jon was satisfied, Jason put the envelope in his pocket. Jon then chose a card and signed it, put it in the deck. In an instant, the deck changed into the envelope, which contained Jon’s card. Charlie Hayden performed an entire routine for us. He tore a napkin and gave half to Chris White. Charlie challenged Chris to roll his half into a smaller ball than his. Of course Charlie’s proved smaller, before it disappeared completely. He burned the center of another napkin, but when Linda Granger touched it, the napkin was restored. Charlie then took a straw from its wrapper, tore the wrapper, and rolled it into a ball. After a “magical pass,” the wrapper was restored. He performed the “coin through table” gag with the salt-shaker and napkin covering. This naturally led into the salt-vanish-into-fist followed by the salt-pour. Charlie then magnanimously taught us all the complete routine. —Dana T. Ring

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

## 22

### NATIONAL MAGIC WEEK IN LOS ANGELES

**LOS ANGELES, CA—** The late October meeting of the Southern California Assembly 22 has always been a celebration of National Magic Week. Also, with the proximity to Halloween, it has featured the performance of supernatural, mental, escape, and unusual magic. Assembly 22 has a special association with

National Magic Week because it was incorporated into the S.A.M. constitution through the efforts of the late PNP John U. Zweers of Los Angeles.

The program for the evening was produced and emceed by Tom Meseroll. Tom also brought and had available his recently published book, *Magus: Master of Martial Magic, Lessons for the Novice*. Before the show began, a first reading of the application for assembly membership of Brian Regalbuto was conducted. All in attendance were also invited to attend the S.A.M. Hall of Fame & Magic Museum show being held on October 27, 2013, at the Whittier Museum.

Opening the show was Mike Perovich with Words of Wanda, a nice prediction effect gleaned from the writings of the late Glen Gravatt in *Genii*. Mike also did a spooky spirit assisted presentation of the Slydini silks, the Haunted Key, and Glorpy, the ghost in a silk. John Richmond next performed several feats of mental magic. Matt Savin briefly discussed the Magic Square effect and then presented a number prediction. Peter Winch, a guest and prospective assembly applicant, entertained us with a color-changing deck and his ability to find selected cards from a deck placed in a water filled jack-o-lantern.

After a short intermission, the show resumed with John Engman performing several very nice card effects, divining selected cards. He concluded with his presentation of the classic Key-R-Rect effect. Jim Callen called upon Casper the Ghost to help find a selected card. Jim closed with the classic 20th Century Silks, using black and orange silks with a Casper the Ghost silk appearing tied between them. Elroy Coddling, in full Western attire, presented an act as the Cowboy Gambler, winning every poker hand and throw of the dice. PNP Ed

Thomas demonstrated the ability of Houdini to escape in the form of a red silk from a sealed glass and a red rope tied to another rope. Ed closed with the Siberian Chain Escape. Closing the show was Henry Springer finding a selected card inside a package of M & M’s, ala card sword. He closed with the “geek” presentation of Wayne Houchin’s Gypsy Thread. —Steven L. Jennings

Southern California Assembly 22 meets the third Monday each month at 8:00 PM, St. Thomas

More Parish Hall, 2510 South Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, California Contact Ed Thomas magicmred@earthlink.net (213) 382-8504 for more details.

## 31

### HOLIDAY FRIVOLITY

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN—** The compeers of Assembly 31 were in a festive mood as we celebrated our October theme, Holiday Magic.

Jeff Higgins kicked off the festivities in order, as he said, to guarantee that he was “the best you’ve seen thus far tonight.” Jeff first magically rearranged a skeleton without laying a hand upon him, leaving him first standing on his head and then removing his head entirely to another location, and then causing it to invisibly fly across space and reattach itself to the body. Jeff concluded his presentation with a Christmas-themed effect inspired by David Ginn involving Jack Frost, Nick the Christmas reindeer, Santa Jerry, and Mt. Jim.

Mike Root demonstrated his hatred of spiders with his presentation of Tommy James’s Come Back Spiders. Mike demonstrated how one giant jack-o-lantern seed can quickly be transformed into a jack-o-lantern and a dozen other giant seeds. Mike concluded his part of the evening by relating the story of a town named “Celebration” and how Christmas was saved through love. Taylor Martin demonstrated an “1890 version” of



**Higgins Saves Christmas**

Color Vision whereby he not only demonstrated how he could divine the color placed face up in the box but later he could divine the spectator’s chosen color, which was placed on the bottom of the closed box.

Jay Newby suffers from Auditory Coin Recognition (“ACR”). Jay was able to discern how much change a spectator had in his pocket merely by having him shake the coins in the spectator’s hand. Jay concluded with a J.B. Magic effect by pulling a chosen



card that the spectator placed back in the deck, not out of his hat but, rather, out of his shoe.

A first-time visitor, Nick Geigle, shared a Halloween-themed effect that he first saw in David Seebach's column, "Illusions of Grandeur" in the December 2011 *M-U-M* magazine. He chose a "six-year-old" played by Jeff's lovely wife, Kristen, from the audience. By answering two simple questions and putting two silk handkerchiefs into a bag which magically were transformed into candy she won all of the candy from a second bag.

David Kirby topped off the evening with a little rubber band magic. As an added bonus, President Taylor Martin briefly informed us of the plethora of Halloween magic that can be found in *Tarbell Vol. 2*. —Steven A. Spence

Assembly 31 meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Irvington United Methodist Church, 30 Audubon Rd., on the east side of the city unless otherwise announced. If the first Monday conflicts with a holiday weekend, we postpone the meeting one week. Contact Taylor Martin Kazoo23@aol.com (317) 431-1320 www.sam31.com for more details.

## 32

### HOUDINI REMEMBERED AND SPOOKY STUFF

**LYNCHBURG, VA**— A fun time was enjoyed by all attending the October meeting of Assembly 32. There was a two-part theme this month: either "Halloween Spooky Stuff" or something with a "Houdini Element." Bob Wallin got things started by having a "ghost card" vanish. Bob Staton followed by demonstrating how a rope passed through his body. Bob Wallin returned with a presentation of a selected "Houdini Card" that was put back in the deck, inserted into its card case, secured by rubber bands, and then, under cover, managed to escape.

John Jennings offered his presentation of the haunted key with an accompanying ghost story. Mike Kinnaird then performed Wayne Houchin's effect Houdini Influence. As the story goes, Mike successfully duplicated a card trick performed by Houdini many years ago using photos of cards owned and used by Houdini himself.

Glen Rae closed the open forum by performing a series of effects from his "Book of Spells" (a cleverly constructed box made to look like an old book) including flexible wands (black rope with white tips for a Professor's

Nightmare routine), a ghost wand with a life of its own and a card trick from last month's Paul Hallas lecture.

The meeting's highlight was a most unique escape. In commemoration of the memory of Harry Houdini, an escape never before attempted at an assembly meeting was featured. Compeer John Jennings successfully managed to free himself from being shackled by an eight-foot long chain that was locked around his body. The entire escape was made while under water — continuously for 9½ minutes. It should be noted that no hidden keys or picks of any kind were used. Due to the recognized magnitude of the risk, fire department and funeral home representatives were standing by during the escape.

If anyone reading this would like to view photos of the escape, please visit our assembly's Facebook page at "Society of American Magicians Assembly #32 Lynchburg." There might even be a clue or two of behind the scene secrets. I could tell you, but suspense is a key element of escape artistry, right?

The Hersy Basham Assembly 32 meets the third Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at Tharp Funeral Home, 220 Breezewood Dr., Lynchburg, VA. Contact John Jennings investigatefire@aol.com (434) 851-6240 for more details.

## 37

### AN EVENING OF OCTOBER ODD

**DENVER, CO**— Host Mark Strivings decided that our typical spooky magic night should be more appropriately called "an evening of odd." The festivities were odd too. More voodoo, more alien abductions, more communication with the dead. "It will be dark and ridiculous and everything in between," Strivings proclaimed.

Guest Rich Nakata started the evening out with a card trick done with an odd thing in a box that he found in a back alley one night. Fred Betzner chose a card and several creatures in the box tried to find it. Mark brought out a poison ring trying to resurrect Lucrezia Borgia with the help of Bruce Spangler and nifty sound effects. Gregg Tobo then came on and had Elliot Baskin shuffle a random deck of cards. He then chose Glenn Prouix and David Schultz to split and shuffle the deck back and forth. The cards produced were odd indeed as they were a Three, an Ace, a Ten, and an Ace, Nine, Two, and Six, all representing October 31, 1926, the

day of Houdini's death.

"The Dragon" aka President Chad Wonder sprayed his magic breath on hilarious Jeff Wake. Jeff thought the dragon was saying "inconsiderate," when he was really saying "incinerate." Jeff then stayed on, only to be offered a "Sweeny Todd" shave and slaughter by his most beloved Karen Wake. Before a marvelous eating frenzy occurred at break with an array of gobbled up gook provided by Karen herself, Rich Nakata picked four accused men — Lewis, Dave Elstun, Scott Oetken, and Bruce Erickson — to find Bruce as guilty. The membership enjoyed the seven oddities table while Gregg Tobo recruited Karen Wake to prove the truth of the "Prestige" theory that one can be in two places at the same time (in the dark of course). He then had a ghost child write words upon a chalk board. Rich came out with a top hat filled with eye-balls while Karen recited a dark yet comedic E.A. Poe's "Tell Tale Heart."



**Gregg Tobo recruits David Schultz and Glenn Prouix in mystery and mayhem**

Mark then did his dead flies in a lipstick case miracle to the delight of member Marty Jewell. Even though accidentally and on purpose one was dropped on her. One fly ended up in Mark's right ear, one on his tongue, and let's face it, the one up his nose was a very bad idea. Odd enough for you? —Connie Elstun

The Doctor Earl Reum Assembly meets at the Riverpointe Senior Center the second Thursday of the month. Contact Chad Wonder chad@ldomagic.com (303) 933-4118 www.milehighmagicians.com for more details.

## 47

### RECORD ATTENDANCE AT HALLOWEEN!

**ROCHESTER, NY**— Wow! We had twenty members and guests attend the Halloween meeting! After the business meeting and a quick break, Joel Greenwich

performed a stunning entrance show. His Ambitious Card routine was flawless, along with a phenomenal card counting and Three-Card Monte demonstration. Not only adept in cards, Joel changed a single one-dollar bill to a five, ten, and twenty! Probably a trick in everyone's junk drawer is the Mylar Hot Rod, which Joel elevated to a new level. Finally, he did a mystifying mentalism trick. Easily, Joel was voted into our club! Congrats!

Here is a brief summary of the other performing magicians/guests. Brian Cicero made us gulp with a story of a serial killer with body parts to match! A written item was cleverly revealed by the magi. Don Aman's prediction was found to be the bullet-torn Ace of Spades (Card of Death). Jeff Blood made a card fly from a locked deck to a haunted house at the other end of the room. Future member Laurie Guerin had a card selected and upon spreading out the deck, it was found to be the only card with a different back! Well done! JP Lacey pulled Halloween items out of a paper grocery bag. The empty bag then filled with a pumpkin that was loaded with candy! Yummy's were passed around as magic continued.



**Vern Massey Helps Joel Greenwich**

Dan Grayson, using the two red Queens had them find their mates in the deck. Very spooky! John Guerin performed a Monte routine using the tarot cards of Death, Wheel of Fortune, and the Devil. He tied it in with some of our town's history. Nicely done. Professor Rem placed twelve tarot cards onto the table face up. After elimination of all but two, their total value was added and it matched an enveloped prediction. Well done! Jimmy C had a card selected and after some shuffling, displayed three cards (one of which was the selection) and placed them onto the table. He then held a voodoo doll; when the selected card was held over it, the doll rose! Very sticky! Nick Young gave a look of astonishment,



borrowed a cell phone, and took a picture of a wall. It was revealed that there was now a mysterious "shadow" in the picture. Ghost in the school? Finally, I taught the jumping rubber band using Halloween rubber bands, torn and restored napkin from Mark Wilson, gave out Fortune Teller Fish, and performed an effect by Anthony Lindan. A fun time was had by all. We went into overtime, too! —Mike Ihrig  
**Assembly 47 meets the third Tuesday of the months September - May at 7:00 PM at St. Joseph's School, 39 Gebhardt Rd., Penfield, NY 14526.** For more information contact Mike Ihrig - ihrigmagic@aol.com - www.sam47.com Contact Mike Ihrig ihrigmagic@aol.com (585) 377-1566 www.sam47.com for more details.

## 49 SHOW AND TELL

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL—** Assembly 49 held its monthly meeting on October 9, 2013. The theme for the evening was Show and Tell, but we first had a dramatic skit performed by member Joe Freiman with the accompaniment of actress Judy Goodman. We want to showcase the other talents of the membership, not just their magical side.  
 First up for the Show and Tell was Ron Lubman who demonstrated various card color changes and his Genii Tube type of invention. Sid Marcus performed a Book Test using three spectators to create the page number. Mark Horowitz followed with an impromptu version of the Book Test wherein any book can be used.

Henry Epstein found a selected card even though his back was turned. The next three performing members each carried out a variety of "card finds": finding three, four, and in one case five different cards selected by different people. They were: Joe Rosenzweig, Lou Stern, and Anthony Medina.

Mark Roszbach uniquely combined a "card find" while escaping from a straitjacket. Mel Panzer had red and black cards "jumping" back and forth, alternately, between two piles and finally winding up with all the red cards in one pile and the black ones in the other.

Mike Cartagena had two spectators find each other's selected card while apparently doing nothing himself. —Billy Byron  
**Assembly #49 meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7PM at the Northwest Focal Point Senior Center at 6006 NW 10th. Street in Margate, Florida.** Contact Billy Byron billyby-

ron@comcast.net (954) 522-1466  
[fortlauderdalemagicssociety.com](http://fortlauderdalemagicssociety.com)  
 for more details.

## 52 SOMETHING YOU DISCOVERED

**SAN ANTONIO, TX—** October 3, 2013, Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 held its monthly meeting at LaMadeleine Restaurant. President Don Moravits welcomed members and wives.

Michael Tallon, our lecture coordinator, reviewed upcoming lectures. We have several scheduled lectures in the upcoming months. Among those are Roy Zaltsman, David Gabbay, Nathan Kranzo, and Chris Manos.

Tonight's theme was Something You Discovered, in honor of Columbus Day. Starting off the performances was President Don Moravits, who entertained with a gospel presentation of Any Rock Will Do. Ray Adams performed a Die Box routine and Geoffrey Sadowski did the classic effect Glorpy. John Murphy performed an effect titled Hybrid, and Ed Solomon told an original scary story about The Coins of Molly Mac. Michael Tallon performed a twist on the classic children's Coloring Book and Doug Gorman performed Michael Skinner's Ball Vase routine with a beautiful vase manufactured by Angelo Iafrate.

James Dusek, our featured close-up performer for the evening and the youngest member of Assembly 52, delighted us all with a hilarious presentation filled with well-timed clichés and expertly performed magic. He began with Sweet and Low, in which a signed sugar packet was opened, emptied, and destroyed, only to reappear completely restored. He next caused a signed card to change places with another, and closed with a story trick inspired by Claude Crowe, in which he emphatically admonished us all never to drink and drive! Great job, James. You are a very funny guy and a true asset to the assembly.

Door prize winners were Geoffrey Sadowski, James Dusek, and Michael Tallon. Geoffrey won 8 Diamond Dollar Bill from SEO Magic, James won Bammo's Alice's Revenge, and Michael won Thumb Tip Blendo.

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

## 59 BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

**PORTLAND, OR—** Assembly 59 met for the first time in the new season on September 23. A swap meet is usually the first item on our agenda for each new cycle and this year was no exception. Members dug into their collections and decided to part with items for pretty fair prices.

Showtime, a regular feature of our meetings, included the following performers: Randy Stumman, who performed an effect in which, using a borrowed deck, he found a selected card exactly where an audience member predicted it would be. Tom Waldrop performed a cut and restore rope effect. Jay Fredericks performed the mentalism classic "which bag has the spike?" making that determination in a rather gripping fashion. Past member Don Burns did a postcard prediction and John Edsall performed an effect that he's been teaching to S.Y.M. members, the square-circle.

It had been anticipated that we might change our meeting location to the newly remodeled German-American School, but that has not materialized. Assembly 59 was also planning on a "Mysterious Magical Tour" of the Willamette Valley, but we were unable to connect with the venues. We will return to this project later, I'm sure. Perform we must! Are we not magicians?

Our October meeting is scheduled for our annual Desmond Close-up Contest. —Glen L. Bledsoe  
**Assembly 59 meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month except Jul/Aug/Dec at the Beaverton Elks 3500 SW 104th, Beaverton, OR Details at [www.sam59portland.org](http://www.sam59portland.org) Contact Glen L. Bledsoe [glenbledsoe@mac.com](mailto:glenbledsoe@mac.com) (503) 967-9151 [www.sam59portland.org](http://www.sam59portland.org) for more details.**

## 69 FESTIVAL OF MAGIC 2013

**BAKERSFIELD, CA—** The Bakersfield Magic Circle Assembly 69 Magic Club is proud to announce this year's Festival of Magic 2013. Fifteen professional magicians (all from Bakersfield) will be taking the stage for a one-night-only show of fun and magic. The evening will begin at 6p.m. with cocktails being served, drawings to win prizes, and a trip to the Magic Castle in Hollywood, California, and magicians performing magic that is inches away from your eyes. Then at 7p.m. the main show will begin with every



Festival of Magic poster

type of magic being performed. Close up, Illusion, Comedy, Mentalism, Classic, Children's, and an Escape like never seen before!

We meet every 1st and 3rd Monday of every month at the Bakersfield Veteran's Hall. Located on Mt. Vernon Ave. (across from Heritage park.) Contact 661-496-8160 [chrislopezmagic@yahoo.com](mailto:chrislopezmagic@yahoo.com) (661) 496-8160 for more details.

## 77 THE COLOMBINIS ARE BACK!

**MASSAPEQUA, NY—** Of all the months that forced us to start off on a very low note, October 14, the darkest and gloomiest month, made this meeting bittersweet as we said goodbye to one of our fallen brothers, Darren Devan, with an S.A.M. Broken Wand Ceremony among his family and friends. Presided by President Phil Levy, this was very eerie, since Phil usually speaks with humor in every other sentence. That night, he certainly wasn't his usual happy self.

During the meeting after a few updates from last month, we went into certificate central as three presentations were made: Eric DeCamps presented to John Reid an Award of Excellence for his efforts in helping the youth in magic at his store Tricky Business. DeCamps also gave to President Phil Levy a plaque for his fifteen years of service to the S.A.M. Finally, Vice President Mitch Goodkin bestowed to DeCamps the first new S.A.M. lapel pin.

Our chairs (along with our attention) turned to Aldo and Rachael Colombini and their Farewell Lecture...again. It's named Still Around, and we were all very lucky that both of them are in good health. Rachael began with Color Psychology based on a idea by Stanton Carlisle, Quadraplex from Nick Trost, and Around the World (a mentalist's dream for forcing something other than



**John Reid and Northeast R.V.P. Eric DeCamps**

a playing card). Interrupting her lecture throughout was the humorous Aldo and he was in top form. Two effects with rope (one from Tabary) and two card tricks were never more entertaining and the methods were ultra simplified.

These two have more comedy skills than most sit-coms on TV. There were laughs and funny stories at every turn and Aldo's bits with a handkerchief and the old Six Card Repeat were never this funny! Thankfully Rachael was there to bring us down to earth with her take on Aldo's Cups and Balls routine. It was a total reverse of what he does with them and she calls it Cups and Balls with No Balls. It was a musical and wonderful way to end the night. Look for it and many more of their routines on their website.

We're looking forward to next month's meeting titled The Magic Railroad, with different stations for learning. Until then, see you at the diner. "All aboard!" —Lou Johnson

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

## 88

### TRICKS YOU CARRY

**ANN ARBOR/YPSILANTI, MI**—Every magician I've known has always been prepared to do at least one trick, either that they would have in a pocket or even improvised from the area that they are in. Some of the members always have on them two or three different close-up tricks, because when people want to see the trick again, which isn't always a good idea unless it resets itself, you will have a back-up trick. So this month we went through our members' pockets to see what their favorite

close-up tricks are!

President Dan Jones says he always has a few card tricks up his sleeve, his favorite being Thanks Pal! You display five picture cards with food such as pizza, chicken, and burgers, going through the cards until only one is left. Then you let your "victim" go through the cards in the same manner; he ends up with a card with the check! Jim Placido showed us an easy to do trick, Two Card Monte. Marvin Mathena brought with him a Wayne Dobson trick called Pocket Money, in which he brings out five coins – an English penny, a Chinese coin, an American quarter, and a couple other foreign coins. He then has the spectator put them all in his (empty) pocket. Marvin then asked him to bring out any two in his fist, saying that neither is the quarter, which they were not. He then brought out two more, neither being the quarter again, because the quarter had vanished! A very good pocket trick!



**Dan Jones with Pocket Magic**

Bill Brang showed a few tricks; one was the Mini Pom-Pom Stick, a kids favorite! We also had visitors Jack Markely and his wife Shirley stop in to show and sell some of the newest magic that he has been working on, my favorite being the No Holey in the Crayoly, in which you put a crayon in a brass tube and stick a toothpick through it. Of course, there was no holey in the crayoly! We had a lot of fun doing what we like best, magic! —Randy A. Smith  
Hank Moorehouse Assembly 88 meets the second Wednesday at 7:00PM at the Faith Lutheran Church, 1255 East Forest Ave, Ypsilanti, Michigan Contact Randy A. Smith [remarkable@gmail.com](mailto:remarkable@gmail.com) (313) 562-3875 <http://www.aamagic.org> for more details.

## 95

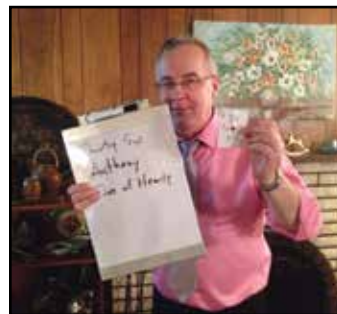
### SUPERNATURAL MAGIC

**VANCOUVER, CANADA**—The October 2013 meeting was

held at the home of Assembly 95 president Lon Mandrake. Members were treated to a dining room table full of delicious snacks and beverages, prepared by Linda Mandrake, including the Mandrakes' famous hot coffee.

The evening of Supernatural Magic was started off by Rod Chow, who performed MI Dal Sanders's Great Magicians are in S.A.M. packet trick, which he gave as a gift to all the attendees at the Washington, D.C., convention this summer. Jens Henriksen was next with a mysterious rope penetration using two different colored ropes. Dennis Hewson performed a multiple one-hand cutting routine to end up with the chosen card. Ray Roch showed supernatural rope knot tying. Glen Labarre performed a mind-reading card effect with great patter for Jens and Dennis. Henry Tom showed a crystal wand by Tony Chris, and upon waving it over a deck of cards in a box, made the box move by bringing life to it, and taking life away from an inanimate object. This was Haunting by Tony Chris.

Shawn Farquhar showed "spirits," which was a bottle of wine. Shawn placed a block of wood on top of the wine bottle and caused it to mystically tip over as if it was a spirit walking across a plank. As a kicker, Shawn leaned the block against the bottle and caused it to fall over the opposite way. Shawn said that this ordinary block of wood is Bob Koch's Telekinetic Timber sold under



**Rick Mearns with his accurate triple prediction**

his Palmer Magic company. Rick Mearns showed a bottle of spirits as a joke. Rick tossed a ball out to get a random person and ended up with Ray Roch. He asked Ray for a number, Henry for a person's name, and Dennis for the name of playing card. Rick amazingly showed that a prediction card in a glass box which was in plain view was perfectly accurate. Lon showed a Houdini coin that he caused to penetrate through two coins and a coin box. Tony Chris closed by showing a box from his

grandfather. Tony told a story of three shrunken heads from a tribe, one of which he actually brought along. Tony said this was paranormal, supernatural, and magic combined into one. Glen led the shrunken head, which led him to one of three piles of cards in which the number of cards in that pile matched Tony's prediction on a scroll exactly. —Rod Chow  
The Carl Hemeon Assembly No. 95 meets the first Tuesday of each month at members' homes. Contact Rod Chow [rod@rodchow.com](mailto:rod@rodchow.com) (604) 669-7777. [www.sam95.com](http://www.sam95.com) for more details.

## 104

### OF RINGS AND THINGS THAT GO BUMP FROM A WALLET

**WITCH CITY, SALEM, MA**—The October 2 meeting of Assembly 104 was preceded, as usual, by Len Lazar's teaching. This time the Bill Towne School of Magic highlighted rope magic. Eddie Gardner would have called it a knotty night. We would have forgiven him. Len promises "knuckle busting" next month. We picked up a new member this evening. Pat Mulkern, a local educator and magic enthusiast, will be joining the S.A.M. Jim Loscuttoff reported that attendance at the last S.Y.M 124 meeting was healthy and new members are also joining up there. Final plans for SAMCON, our November 9 magic convention, were outlined by Producer Evan Buso-Jarnis.

Our guest lecturer for this evening was Garrett Thomas. Thomas is a coin, ring, and card master, and a columnist for Kosmo's *Reel Magic* DVD magazine, as well as a consultant to David Blaine. Garrett had been providing input for Kayla Drescher for her new competition bartender routine. Before Garrett began his lecture, Kayla performed her act to the approval of the house. We approved even more when Kayla later performed this bartender act at the recent MAES convention, snagging for



**Garrett explains the fine points of ring things and more**



our young compeer three awards for senior close-up, originality, and excellence.

Garrett Thomas was a welcome lecturer, covering a broad territory, from magic theory to performance and audience management. Garrett is a well-known creator of original effects and among those he taught were: Stand-up Monte, an outstanding series of transpositions with black cards and Queens; Banded, Garrett's refinement of his Ring Thing that convincingly allows a finger ring to apparently pass through finger after finger; and a killer effect producing a cue ball from a wallet. Jaws dropped as the ball did the same, dropping hard enough to make its point on the floor and then bouncing back again. Just as casually as he impossibly produced the ball from a flat wallet, Thomas casually slipped it back again, tucking the wallet back into his back pocket—very nice. —Bob Forrest

Assembly 104 meets the first Wednesday of each month, September-June, 7 p.m., at the First Baptist Church of Salem, 292 Lafayette Street, Salem, Massachusetts. Contact Bob Forrest [captainalbrights1@comcast.net](mailto:captainalbrights1@comcast.net) (339) 227-0797 [www.sam104.com](http://www.sam104.com) for more details.

## 110

### AFTER MEETING

**NEW CUMBERLAND, PA** — “It was a dark and stormy night” when fourteen members and guests gathered at John’s Diner for the “Alone Again” lecture by Danny Archer. It was a truly magical night as Danny provided us with a professionally crafted, professionally delivered lecture that contained excellent material for all levels of skill and interest: restaurant, stand-up, walk-around, and stage; kids and/or adults; cards, coins, silks, and mentalism with notes available on DVD or paper. It was all there and not a “bummer” in the lot. If you get the chance, do not miss seeing a lecture by this man.

Danny began with a disappearing silk that morphed into a color changing silk. The latter used a special dye tube (you can make it) that allows a very clean finish and reset. Then he performed a marketed effect (again you may design your own) that was a card effect and “eye” exam combined. Next, a humorous and baffling, yet easy to do, marked coin among many coins in an un-gimmicked (private joke for magicians) “change” bag. A stack of your business cards allows the duplication of a drawing (no, not that

method) called Drawn Again. The final effect in the first half of the lecture was Card Archer, which is a well credited cards across effect requiring both skill and some daring but it packs a real wallop.

All of the above were performed one after the other as a group, which made for an entertaining show; each was then explained in detail.



**Danny Archer Lectures**

After a short break, Danny again performed a short set consisting of his marketed effect Animental, which is suitable for almost any type of performing venue and audience. Once again Dan suggested how we could produce our own versions. The same is true for his Happy Birthday Banner. This was a quick, yet highly versatile, “tool” that is adaptable to other occasions. A Coins Across routine and another mind reading effect using business cards with movie titles this time, including Dan’s thoughts on why this effect might be better for men than women and why the other mind reading with business cards and designs might be better for women than men. Next there was That’s Nuts, using a metal, metric jigger, cherries, and peanuts. The last effect was a card effect called Olympic Aces. Once again all effects were thoroughly explained and all are available on the lecture notes, either written or DVD. Can’t say more, the lecture was great!!

Joe Homecheck, Assembly 110, Meets 2nd Thursdays, 7:00pm, at John’s Diner 146 Sheraton Drive, New Cumberland, PA 17070. Email: [Secretay@SAM110.com](mailto:Secretay@SAM110.com)

## 112

### FLEA MARKET

**PLEASANT HILL, CA**— Where would you go to buy anything from a silk hankie to a straitjacket? A flea market for magicians, of course. This month we held our annual flea market, and it was a good one. The VFW Hall was filled to near capacity with tables displaying a large variety of magical items and

books, some of them brand new and many treasures from years gone by.

That’s one of the things that makes a flea market special, the nostalgia and sentiment evoked by some of the items on sale. While taking a look at the items President Doug Kovacich had on sale, I found a Windsor’s Dye Box, a nifty little popcorn box used to change a silk from one color to another, or other such miracles. I owned one of these many years ago, mail ordered from Douglas Magicland in Dallas, the shop where Mark Wilson once worked.

We were honored to have some special guests at the sale, members of Assembly 72, including President Dale Lorzo and wife Elaine, who were here for the benefit of the Dennis Loomis family, offering for sale a great number of items from Dennis’s estate. As would be expected, there was a great bit of buzz around this table.



**Bill Marquardt examines one of Doug Kovacich’s items**

Not far away was the silent auction table, manned by Rod McFadden. Prospective buyers wrote down their bids on a bid sheet, with the item naturally going to the highest bidder at the end of the bidding hour. The way the auction operates is that each item has a set minimum bid. As long as there is a bid matching the minimum, that amount goes to the seller; anything over that amount goes to the assembly treasury. This is a good way to generate a little income for the club.

PNP Loren Lind was on hand to sell his grab bags of magical goodies for the benefit of the Society of Young Magicians assembly sponsored by our S.A.M. assembly and named in his honor. Along with Loren and the others already mentioned, there were several other sellers, each eager to sell a few no-longer-needed items, including Ric and Kara Ewing, Larry “Zappo” Wright, Timothy James, Roy Porfido, and Ray Andrews.

All in all, it was a fun and rewarding evening. —Bill Marquardt

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

## 115

### BOBBY SPENCER LECTURE

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**— We enjoyed a very special evening with the founding member of our assembly. Thirty-seven years ago, Bobby Spencer along with several other magicians (some in attendance) established The Hocus Pocus Assembly of Charlottesville, Virginia. Bobby’s lecture for the sixteen people in attendance included a retrospective of his sixty-eight-year-long journey as a magician. He shared with us many great pieces of magic history such as some of the early magic catalogs, original Blackstone comics, and some fantastic magic effects that are no longer available. Bobby’s contribution to magic includes authoring *Fetsching Magic*, a book documenting the life and legacy of Hen Fetsch. It was a great evening and a wonderful way to commemorate this important event. —Mark Davis

Assembly 115 meets the first Friday of the month at 7 PM at the Forest Lakes Pavilion Building. Contact Mark Davis [whiteoakcanyon@gmail.com](mailto:whiteoakcanyon@gmail.com) (434) 962-3019 for more details.

## 118

### GRANITE STATE CONJURORS

**NASHUA, NH**— Assembly 118 has been busy performing and planning events for the fall. Joseph Caulfield hosted our October meeting at Black Sword Estate, where the theme for the evening was spooky and bizarre magic. The assembly performed at the YMCA Camp Sergeant Spooktacular.



**Bob Bodman at the YMCA Camp Sargent Spooktacular**

Assembly 118 meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Black Sword Estate, 126 Perham Corner Rd Lyndeborough, NH 03082 Our venue rotates, so contact us first. Contact Robert Granville [sam.nashua@gmail.com](mailto:sam.nashua@gmail.com) (603) 505 8749 <http://sam118.com> for more details.

## 120

### A VARIETY OF MAGIC

**CHAMPAIGN, IL**— Our October gathering was a small yet very lively meeting with great food and service at Manzella's Italian Patio. Topics were many and magic was plentiful. Discussion ranged from restaurant magic, the official topic, to Dr. Who's companion representing the audience in the telling of the story, to memorable mishaps. Mark Carlon also showed us his Couples Monte routine. At the end of the night, we were left entertained, informed, and happy that we were not Professor Higgin's roommate. He has led an exciting life, let me tell ya.

See ya at the meeting.  
—Ken Barham

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

## 127

### ALDO AND RACHEL COLOMBINI LECTURE A FUN NIGHT

**WALLINGFORD, CT**— It has been several years since Aldo and Rachel lectured for Assembly 127, but they are back in good form, as entertaining as ever, playing off each other's personality and having a good time. The audience has a good time, too. On October 15, our regular meeting night, the Colombinis showed commercial, entertaining magic interspersed with comedy lines, along with helpful hints about presenting magic. All their material is available in their lecture notes and DVDs.

The lecture included magic with cards, ropes, mentalism, cups and balls, and comedy/MC bits. Perhaps most important were the suggestions that Aldo gave about making magic entertaining and using comedy as misdirection. "Our business is about entertaining. It's the effect that counts. It's what they see, not what they don't see," he said, in commenting on using simplicity of method.

Rachel Colombini presented several strong prediction effects, including an effect with color cards, an interesting ESP card routine, a prediction effect with dice, and an unusual road atlas map prediction: Adam Parisi chose two playing cards at random and the numerical total was 15. When guest Paul Kilmer turned to that page in the atlas – the state of Georgia – it matched her prediction. In explaining the method, Rachel said it could also be used as a book test.



**Aldo Colombini "shoots" a knot off a rope at his lecture for Assembly 127**

Aldo combined "commercial" effects with "inside" comedy bits. His "serious" magic (although no magic he does is completely serious) included routines with rope and ring, variations of cut and restored rope, and Professor's Nightmare. He also showed several card effects that used subtlety rather than difficult sleights. A cup and ball routine using a glass covered with a paper cup was very effective. Aldo showed all the moves and sleights necessary for this routine.

His comedy bits included a thumb tip vanish – a vanish of a thumb tip in a handkerchief, which was great trick for magicians. Also a comedy Six Card Repeat using jumbo cards combined with regular size cards. Another was a large prediction envelope that Aldo showed, along with a number of cards containing phrases. Mike Nabel chose a card that read, "You have an empty envelope." Aldo opened the envelope....of course it was empty!

Rachel ended the lecture with an impressive cup and ball routine using red, white, and blue tissue paper balls, done to music. She then read a poem she wrote that ended about not "losing the magic of childhood."

Thanks, Aldo and Rachel for an entertaining evening of good magic and a fun evening.  
—Dick Hodes

Assembly 127 meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the First United Methodist Church, Wallingford, Conn. Contact Dick Hodes [richardhodes@att.net](mailto:richardhodes@att.net) (203)

287-1635 [www.magicsam127.org](http://www.magicsam127.org) for more details.

## 129

### SEPTEMBER MEETING

**PENSACOLA, FL**— The September meeting was called to order by President Nate Nickerson. The theme for this month was "Do the trick you don't perform very often." Guest included Luke and his mother Lisa. We hope Luke will become a member next meeting.

It was sadly reported that a former member of the Gulf Coast Magician's Guild passed away on September 6, 2013, at his home in Georgia. Joe Digacomo will be missed.

It was announced that our annual public show will be held at the Pensacola Little Theatre his year, which will be a big improvement over previous years held at the Bayview Senior Center.

Nate had some magic trivia question for raffle tickets. The questions were all related to the dangerous "bullet catching trick," which has claimed the lives of several magicians. A short break was followed by the raffle of magic prizes. Several members took home some new effects to play with.

Beau Broomall performed Brain Sell by Peter Duffie. Gene Burrell performed Ribbon beyond Measure. Adam Cope performed Sensational with three volunteers who each selected a card. Nate Nickerson produced four-of-a-kind one at a time from a shuffled deck and then used the cards to perform a neat Matrix with them. Jeremy Sperling performed a card trick called Take Your Chances in which a spectator finds his own selection. Last but not least was Dave "Basket Case" Kloman with his rapid-fire magic. Dave started with a production from silks, then performed a jumbo coin release, Silk Cabby and frame, appearing flower in a flowerpot, and finished with Zebra silks. —Beau Broomall  
Assembly 129 meets the third Thursday of each month at the BayView Senior Center 2000 E. Lloyd Pensacola Florida at 6:45 PM Contact Beau Broomall [beauamagic@bellsouth.net](mailto:beauamagic@bellsouth.net) (850) 994-2446 [www.gulfcoastmagiciansguild.com](http://www.gulfcoastmagiciansguild.com) for more details.

## 131

### ASSEMBLY 131 AND SYM 42 MEETING AND JOSHUA JAY LECTURE

**DANBURY, CT**— Our October

meeting was just over, and we all had the good fortune to have our new member Joe Lantiere lecture on the Okito box. Joe had a full evening of moves and various boxes to show and sell. It seems that the Okito boxes were to magicians back then as sponge balls are to us today.

Get well wishes to our re-elected President Magic Mo. Mo busted up his foot and will be resting up for a few weeks.

Our Joshua Jay lecture with SYM 42 in Stamford, CT, went exceptionally well. Josh is a fantastic magician and lecturer. He worked really well with our young magicians and left us all feeling proud to be involved in magic. A birthday cake was in order for Joshua's birthday, following the singing of "Happy Birthday" by us all.

VP Magic Marty presented a plaque to Joshua for the lecture to both our assemblies. Our annual Christmas party will be at Chuck's Steak house January 2014. The third annual Magicians Gathering will be the first Saturday in February, 2014. Info to follow.

Assembly 131 meets at the Methodist Church, Clapboard Ridge Rd, Danbury, CT. Contact Magic Marty 845-797-8363 for more details.

## 150

### THE MAGIC COMES TO THE MOUNTAIN

**FORT MYERS, FL**— As increasing numbers of magicians – particularly youthful ones – get props via the Internet, magic dealers have had to deal with reality. Owners of bricks-and-mortar stores with shelves laden with books, DVDs, and sundry magical items have to pay rent, hire a salaried staff, shell out for inventory, and spend for advertising. Dealers who sell via a website, on the other hand, typically incur minimal expenditures. Our October meeting benefited from the presence of one dealer who mulled over the old saw about Mohammed going to the mountain. Tony Chaudhuri, who operates Tin City Magic some thirty miles south in Naples, determined that instead of luring customers to his colorful shop, he'd take his shop to them...er, us.

He packed up dozens of items from his shop and spread them across several long tables. The result was to turn the club meeting into a "dealer room" like at one of the major conventions. Notified by email that Tony would have fantastic special prices on some



much-sought-after effects, about twenty guys were on hand with their wallets at the ready.

In less than two hours, Tony demonstrated and pitched several dozen items, many of which are big sellers to adults and youngsters alike at his site in the Tin City Shopping Mall. One was that old favorite, the Comedy Light Bulb, which found lots of takers at a \$5 price. To draw buyers, each item was demonstrated with gag lines that worked more often than not. (Tony joked that when he visits a friend's house, he flips a wall switch as the comedy bulb blinks in his other hand, and says, "It's okay, you have power.")



**Gretchen Chaudhuri**

Laughs, of course, started even before the demos, when Mrs. Chaudhuri was introduced and members heard that she was in charge of checkout: "We'll be checking her out ourselves," jibed one wag. Matt Price, who works behind the Tin City Magic counter at times, used his manipulative skills to show what can be done with sponge balls (\$5) and a set of Scotch & Soda coins (\$20). A wilting bouquet naturally brought out the Viagra lines, and as the supply of close-up pads, Rainbow decks, finger choppers, and gimmicked wallets dwindled, one member wanted to buy the shirt off Tony's back. (It had a white-on-black pattern of dancing skeletons.)

At the end of a fun evening, members learned that the next two meetings will be every bit as interesting. Upcoming lectures feature Tom Craven and Daryl. —Donald Dunn

Assembly 150 meets at 7 p.m. each second Tuesday of the month at Myerlee Manor, Winkler Road,

Ft. Myers Contact Richard Payne donhdunn@yahoo.com (239) 9639104 for more details.

**157**  
**BUSY TIMES AHEAD**

**BEAVER, PA—** The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (Assembly 157) are entering a busy season. The GPMN picnic was very well attended with much magic, fun, and food. The December meeting will be the club's Christmas Dinner. 2014 is looking to include several lectures, attendance at the MagiFest in Columbus in January, plus other possibilities.

Teach and Learn this month was on "Silks" with Ray Lucas hosting and several other members adding their ideas. Dick Recktenwald was in attendance after open heart surgery, looking very good, and doing a great job as emcee for the performances.

Don Moody had three envelopes which he gave to three helpers. Each one was to put something personal into the envelope. Don was able to guess what was in envelope. Jime Tate showed two extra large safety pins; he rubbed them together and they joined and separated. He showed three ways to do this. Tom Chidester performed a prediction with a paper with numbers. Ray Lucas performed a card trick with a "money" card. Bill Cornelius showed a deck of cards face up. His helper chose a card. On back it stated "I Knew You Would Pick (name of card chosen)". Eric Davis started with a comedy routine with a blank business card. He then performed Joshua Jay's Inferno. —Judy Steed

The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley, Assembly 157 meet the second Thursday of every month at the Towne Square Restaurant in Beaver, PA. Contact Judy Steed heyjude1943@msn.com (330) 525-5389 for more details.

**172**  
**TRICKY TRAY AUCTION**

**PORT SAINT LUCIE, FL—** In August, following a brief business meeting, four tables were piled high with the magic of "Professor. EM" (Ed Malinowski). For health reasons, Ed has retired from performing and had, therefore, donated



**Mr. Ron Dawson, "The Amazing Eugene"**

a huge collection of magic to the club. Four tables full of amazing stuff went on the silent auction block; everybody left happy and Assembly 172 added \$130 to its coffers. Thanks, Professor, for the magic, for the fun, and for instigating some real cut-throat bidding wars.

On a more serious note, a Broken Wand Ceremony was conducted on September 14 for "The Amazing Eugene" (AKA Ron Dawson). Ron had been a compeer of ours for years and will be sorely missed for his great personality, sense of humor, and most wonderful performances around the Treasure Coast.

Our own "Amazing Chiaverini" headlined September 27th's *Casey and Spaz* variety show with his amazing mentalism show. A great crowd saw a great show. Thanks, Al!

In October, after a brief business meeting, we started a "Trickey Tray Auction." Over fifty special decks of cards were available, from a McCombal Deck to Fa-Ko cards, to double-face or double-back cards. There were also several small illusions that were offered, all being donated to our assembly by our compère, Edmund Malinowski.

After the auction, it was mystery and magic. Jay Rene demonstrated Contact Mentalism, which mystified everyone. Leave it to Jay to do something really over the top. Jay then repeated the feat using a different premise, which had us all scratching our heads.

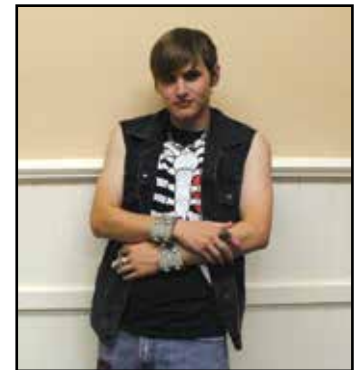
One of our goals is to have the new members build their magical persona and develop their magic techniques. Tonight, two of the newer members, Dan Warnke and Matthew Musgrave, performed admirably. Dan Warnke performed a great routine using the Dizzy Arrow concept culminating with the revelation of a full-size policeman with Dan's face in the cut out section. Matthew Musgrave stepped up

and demonstrated his abilities by performing his version of the torn and restored card. To round out the evening, Paul Hilko did an Add-A-Number routine with a few unexpected laughs when the prediction did not match the total that the spectators arrived at. Fortunately it all ended well. Tonight we welcomed back Jack Durjan into our assembly after a short hiatus.

We meet the fourth Tuesday of every month (except December) at 7:00pm at The Saint Lucie Lanes. Contact Dean F. Devitt quindar46@yahoo.com (772) 332-8412 for more details.

**181**  
**SHOCK MAGIC**

**HIGHTSTOWN, NJ—** There is no better theme for an assembly meeting and workshop in October than "Shock Magic." The workshop presented by Rocco Giovacchini was rather shocking, in a good way. He started the workshop by pushing a pen up his nose until the entire object disappeared. If that isn't shocking enough for you, Rocco followed that by swallowing a toothpick, pushing the toothpick shape under his skin until he was able to pull the entire toothpick from his nose.



**Rocco the MindBender**

Rocco continued with a method for penetrating the side of your cheek with a pen. Open wide, because the pen seems to be traveling straight through to the inside of your mouth. Best of all, this method works with any object. For his grand finale, Rocco swallowed a quarter, pulled it down his arm, and, using a pen knife, cut the quarter out of his arm, pausing with the quarter protruding half way from the cut. This workshop was better received than

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most, partly because magicians do not usually get to see these kind of presentations and because of the skill Rocco demonstrated in his craft.

After the workshop Dean Hank Strasser presented a short séance with the Fox Sisters. If you know your magic history, you remember that the Fox sisters were three sisters from New York who played an important role in the creation of Spiritualism. Tonight, they assisted Hank in presenting a great effect. Reba, a Philadelphia area based magician, performed the Black Widow packet trick. Starting with four cards with spiders printed on them, each card turn blank and then reappeared in the wallet they originally came from.

The Book at Midnight effect that our President Stephan Sloan performed was a bit of bizarre magic in which two people go back in time to an old bookstore and independently relive the same experience, an example of dual synchronicity. Dennis Thomas, a full-time professional magician and balloon sculptor, did the Dracula's Haunted House effect that he uses in his Halloween show. The poor old vampire is looking for a date for a night out and only with the help of the children can he find his Vampyress date. In December, Dennis will be sharing his professional expertise by conducting that month's workshop on Magic for Children. Hope to see you there. —Dave Zboray  
**Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets the first Thursday of every month, September thru June at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00PM. Contact Stephan Sloan lands10@optonline.net (732) 757-5337 <http://www.magicsam181.com/> for more details.**

## 184

### JOINT CONVENTION

**ISRAEL** — The joint convention of Assembly 184 members and the Israeli Society for Magicians took place in Tel Aviv's ZOA Hall On October 14-15. The convention was opened by Harel Pepo, who lectured on birthday party magic. Eyal Bayer gave a lecture on bending spoons, forks and keys. Lior Rocman lectured about the magician as an actor. Pinky gave a humor lecture. Meni Lindenfeld gave a splendid lecture on cards, iPhone tricks, and rubber bands. Joachim Solberg from Denmark gave a show with cards, coins, and Cups and Balls. The first day was closed with a very good



Assembly 184's Gala event

show by Olmac from France, who performed a very good close-up show with bills and cards.

The second day was opened with Olmac's workshop, Joachim Solber's lecture, and a marketing lecture.

The convention was closed with a very high level gala show. Shay Nasy gave a nice doves routine with doves from fire, feather, glasses, and confetti. Eran Gafner gave a mental show with finding chosen cards and songs. Meny Lindenfeld bent coins and spoons and surprised us by bending a big saw! Daniel Harel found a chosen number, which was the convention's date. Olmac performed a dancing bill and card routine. Gostavo the magician was awarded with a prize for his magic shows volunteering.

The gala was closed with an amazing young and talent magicians show: Idan Kaufman performed with a new amazing Taki game cards routine, Lior the magician filled the stage with many umbrellas, and for the final Lior and Idan gave the Zig Zag illusion. It was a great professional friendly convention. —Yosi Notkowitz

## 200

### OCTOBER MAGIC

**SEATTLE, WA**— The October meeting was full of magic with a lot of members present and performing. Michael Jacobs presented some nice card magic in which a spectator's card as well as one he chose were the only two cards shown to be reversed in the deck after a spread. Ben Eskenazi continued the card magic with a great performance of Search and Destroy by Aaron Fisher. Ben is the youngest member of the group and continues to get better each meeting; it is always fun to see him perform.

Roger Sylwester tried to show us a trick involving certain cards, but his deck kept changing to blank cards, or cards with all backs. It was a very funny routine in which cards just kept turning blank. He had the whole club laughing.

Danny Dragon presented a couple of spooky tricks for the October meeting, including a Haunted Key and Haunted Deck routine set to a nice story.

Roger Needham continued the Haunted Deck theme with a very funny *Wizard of Oz* story that ended with the witch's hand cutting the deck. It was a great

visual to add to this routine.

Dan Kennedy continued the Halloween theme with a very cool trick from Peter Marucci called Victim of the Vampire, wherein a spectator chooses a victim that is then revealed to have been bitten. It is a quick trick, but very powerful. Mark Paulson performed a scary knife stab routine; he had a spectator pick what cup he crushed under his hand. Lucky for Mark the spectator picked the right empty cup, because all the other ones had cupcakes under them.

Chuck Kleiner showed the group a bit of magic he did for a sales presentation that involved a quite clever visual illusion. Chuck always comes up with great presentations for his magic. John Cameron performed a unique card to impossible location involving a bagel and some very interestingly shaped cards. Even adding the "lox" (locks) to the bagel couldn't keep the card out.

Larry Dimmitt continued to show his mind-reading abilities when he was able to divine the words that two spectators had picked randomly from a book. Reymarx Gereda showed a very cool iPhone application that made it possible to use the phone as a X-Ray machine to look down through the deck to reveal a selected card. The app lovers in the room were immediately downloading. —Jim Earnshaw

**The Emerald City Wizards Meets the 1st Thursday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., at the Mercer Island branch of the King County Library, WA. Please check website for change in meeting locations Contact Jim Earnshaw [jimearnshaw@live.com](mailto:jimearnshaw@live.com) (206) 225-6715 [www.emeraldcitywizards.org](http://www.emeraldcitywizards.org) for more details.**

## 206

### MOVIE NIGHT IN AUSTIN

**AUSTIN, TX**— What do Steve Martin and Ricky Jay have in common? They're both actors, they're both magicians, and taped performances of both entertainers were featured during Assembly

205's first annual movie night.

With the assistance of A/V professional James Caldwell, the Austin club gathered together on October 21 to watch a series of fascinating magic clips, everything from stunning close-up to just plain weirdness.

The October meeting format was somewhat experimental. Members emailed their favorite YouTube magic-related clips in advance to Vice President Mike Brewer. Mike acted as the evening's emcee. Caldwell projected each of the videos onto a big screen, and members had the opportunity to discuss what they liked, and what didn't work.

Probably the biggest hit was the Steve Martin clip in which the comedian performed his famous "Flydini" routine on the *Tonight Show*. Ricky Jay also was a crowd favorite. Numerous clips can be found online of Jay performing card magic, including my favorite, "A Correctly Structured Drama."

Other featured performers included Doug Henning, performing his Origami Box; David Copperfield, performing his big saw illusion; and Britain's Dynamo, who performed a series of miracles. —R.A. Dyer

**Omni South Park Hotel, 4140 Governors Row Austin, TX 78744 Contact Jake Dyer [jakedyer@yahoo.com](mailto:jakedyer@yahoo.com) (512) 658-0017 <http://sam206.com/> for more details.**

## 215

### THE GRAND MAGIC OF DUANE LAFLIN

**LOUISVILLE, KY**— Duane and Mary Laflin have a wondrous, new grand magic show they have opened in Custer, South Dakota; it is an outstanding success. No wonder, it is the classy magic of Duane and Mary that always brings smiles, gasps, and astonishment. The Laflins have closed the show for the season and have embarked on a tour for magic clubs, giving lectures and advice gleaned from years of performing.

Duane is known for his spell-binding presentations of silk handkerchiefs, both producing them and making them vanish. His new lecture takes his magic to new levels, using some of the most common things we have purchased in the past and giving them new life.

Duane gives more than a dozen different routines with explanations. These include changing a rope to colorful silk scarves, a new twist on the old Ball and Vase, Nest of Boxes, several different uses of sponge items, card routines, and more. He gives most excellent advice for setting up for a magic



show, and most of all about the presentations of magic. Duane said it best when he says, "It is not about how good you are, it is about how you make people feel." The lecture is one that is valuable, inspiring, classy, and just...magical!  
—Tom Creelius

Anyone wishing to visit Assembly 215 may do so by visiting our website ([www.lcmagic.com](http://www.lcmagic.com)) for dates, times and places. The Louisville magic club usually meets on the first Tuesday of the month. Other meetings are scheduled as they are available for us.

## 226 POOL PARTY!

**WILLIAMSBURG, VA**— Instead of a formal August meeting, we opted for a pool party. We had four magicians perform for our wonderful Stonehouse audience. Most (if not all) of the audience was at the January 2012 magic party we held at Stonehouse, and they do love magic!

Mike Heckenberger led off and performed Cut and Restored Rope/Professors Nightmare, Doc Eason's All Screwed Up, What's Next, Tonte, Three Coins and a Hat, and Linking Rings. After that, Michael Ostrowski impressed the audience with his amazing card skills! Next up was "The Poor Prestidigitator," also known as Ron Grossman (our gracious host)! Let me tell you, Ron is going to have to let go of "The Poor Prestidigitator," because he is becoming the "Pretty Darn Good Prestidigitator!"



**Bill Baber Prepares for Sheep and Thieves Lecture**

Our closer for this year's show was Watt Hyer, who impressed everyone with his Ninja Rings! They are amazing because they are close up! Watt followed that with a series of rope tricks, including a version of the Crazy Man's Handcuffs done with rope! He also did several linking rope tricks that everyone enjoyed. When it was all said and done, the show went about one hour and ten minutes!

In September, Bill Baber gave a mini-lecture on the classic effect

Sheep and Thieves. Bill noted that the effect has many titles and that it can be performed with different objects.

Michael Heckenberger opened with his Ring on a Rope routine. Guest Finn Hulse followed with his version of Two Card Monte. Watt Hyer came up with an effect called The Fear of Thirteen. He stated that thirteen was a powerful number and then demonstrated how with his imaginative patter.

Alexander Goldberg performed a self working card trick. Harold Wood punched a hole in each corner of a bill. He folded the dollar bill until it was a tiny square. When he unfolded the bill the four punched holes had moved to one corner. Penn Russell stated that "magic comes deep inside one," and then expanded on this theme. He pulled out a small doll that stands up and comes to life. Michael Ostrowski used his iPhone and "iDeck" in his imaginative effect. — Michael Heckenberger and Phil Thorp

Baker-Temple Assembly 226 meets the 4th Wednesday of the month (except December and August) however the location has changed to either the James City County Library or the Williamsburg Library depending on availability. Recommend visiting magicians contact Michael Heckenberger at [heck\\_mike@verizon.net](mailto:heck_mike@verizon.net) for latest information. (757) 812-3299 or <https://sites.google.com/site/samassembly226/Home> for more details.

## 266 TRICKS AND TREATS

**LAKELAND, FL**— After enjoying the treats of IHOP, October brought out many tricks from the talented Lakeland magi. Our business meeting was ably helmed by President Jerry Kardos and we discussed our lecture schedule for the coming year. Jerry stayed on stage to start of the magic with one of his hand-crafted miracles. He had Harry Houdini escape from handcuffs and chains for the appreciative crowd. Jerry then showed his version of Hydro Die in which a selected die did mysterious things in a tube of water.

Next, storyteller Beverly Kenemuth showed us a Halloween tale about the five rituals of magic and followed with her version of the same trick, a trick or treat story about two kids trying to get the most candy. Scribe Al D'Alfonso was next with a show and tell by showing off the new line of Hello Kitty magic kits available at Toys R Us. Al then showed an updated version of the Wizard card trick in

which a selected card was revealed by a mystery man via a phone call.

Guest Justin Landers showed his skills by revealing Bob Macey's card with a fiery ending. Bob stayed on stage and led the pasteboards through an entertaining and baffling trick in which Elmo Bennett's selected card was divined by Bob.

Ed McGowan then took Bob's deck and with the help of the Jokers revealed a card only thought of by Bob. He then did a four Ace effect that wowed us. Clean-up batter Elmo revealed Beverly's card by using her mother's name and then by popular demand closed with his multiple selection effect in which everyone in the room got their card revealed.

Halloween is always a fun time, especially with the magical tricks of the Lakeland team. Come visit when your plans bring you to Central Florida. —Al D'Alfonso  
**Jim Zachary Assembly 266 meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7PM at the Lakeland I-HOP, I-4 & US 98. Contact Al D'Alfonso keeper0499@embarqmail.com (321) 437-3814 for more details.**

## 274 ROPES, COINS, ORIGINAL EFFECTS

**BOCA RATON, FL**—At our September meeting members showed us we have a lot of talented performers. Manny Risken again became our emcee for the evening. He did a splendid job. Our former president Mel Panzer opened the show with some excellent coin effects. Simon Carmel showed us some nice moves with coins and ropes. Next was Herb Arno with some original rope moves. Phil Labush entertained us with several original effects. Manny Riskin showed us some of his favorite rope moves. Warren Kaps did a nice rope effect followed by a most interesting handling of an effect involving dice. Rochelle Klein showed us a wonderful coin through bottle using an ungimmicked bottle and no folding coin! She brought with her John Balaun, who performed several outstanding rope tricks. The highlight of the evening was his effect in which he held a long lit candle and twisted a rope around it. The candle vanished and the rope fell. A very pretty illusion! I hope we will be seeing more of John; he is most talented!

Ari Silver, the youngest member of our performers, proved he has great talent for his age. He performed a mental effect with

his father, who was out of the room. He also showed us a coin move Marshall Johnson followed with an effect called Jumping Ropes, in which two different colored ropes change places. Lou Stern produced a chosen card in a sealed deck. Sheila Skidmora, a new member, performed a rope through thumb effect. It was good to see long time member Gene Fein; he has a wry sense of humor! Gene performed a nice trick with four coins. Giovanni Abrate did a ring off chain move. —Marshall Johnson

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

## 291 THREE CORNERS

**VENICE, CA**— The meeting started out with the order of business being addressed by President Bill Bedecarre. We were informed of the schedule for the upcoming S.A.M and S.Y.M. meetings and what lies ahead for our assembly. We were proud to welcome new members into our family: Stephanie Chase, Richard Checansky, and Phil Goodman. Phil and Stephanie had just passed their auditions to the Magic Castle. Congratulations! In addition, we also welcomed a new S.Y.M member – Satori Adler. Welcome, welcome, everyone!

October's theme was called The Three Corners, which consisted



**Our Dumbledores**

of mentalism by Stephen Levine and fancy card manipulations by Les Cooper and Raul Fernandez. During the after-meeting we enjoyed our raffle and we were entertained by Howard Paris's Halloween Magic, which was his rendition similar to a '70s Lava Lamp and Ghouls. So, what did we learn? Don't lie to Stephen. Don't play poker with Les. Raul will manipulate your mind. And call Howard to raise your spirits and ghouls. At the very end of the meeting, Phil showed us his winning audition to the Magic

Castle. Last, but not least, came the fourth corner, with our group enjoying Denny's. —William Dow Jr.

Assembly 291 meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month at The Boys and Girls Club of Venice, Community Room, 2232 Lincoln Blvd, Venice. Parking at The Boys and Girls Club is limited but can also be found on Lincoln Blvd. Contact Les Cooper Cooperl@ucla.edu (310) 473-1820 www.westsidewizards.org for more details.

**292**  
**MAGIC**  
**IN THE ROCKIES**

**GREELEY, CO**— In October, following our custom of prior

autumns, instead of having a regular meeting we met informally at the regional Magic in the Rockies convention. It is produced with enormous yearlong effort by our sister group, the Presto-Digitators of Fort Collins, CO. Not only is the cost of MITR very reasonable for what it provides, but also attendance is free on the first day for members of the area's magic clubs. That lets everyone sample the convention's ambiance (like a joyous family reunion), several of its eleven lectures, and the opening of the dealers' room.

This was the MITR's twentieth anniversary, so the talent line-up was even more formidable than usual. All the visiting stars mingle continuously with the attendees at the three included meals and

throughout the convention. We enjoyed an interview with Walter "Zaney" Blaney, the Junior Showcase Show, and two very different and excellent public shows. We learned from distinguished and expert lecturers such as Paul Gertner, John Mendoza, Michael Weber, and Asi Wind.

Everyone had favorite moments. Your scribe's highlight was the carefully crafted lecture by the September 2013 *M-U-M* cover subject, Autumn Morning Star. In the accompanying feature article, Lindsay Smith made clear her multiple talents. So did her wonderful upbeat lecture. She balanced the personal convictions she teaches with exuberant samples of her performing persona. She added entertaining snippets of her

autobiography, such as, "I left to perform in Europe as an Indian, and came home having become a Native American."

We all appreciated the quality of the performances in the Headliner Close-Up Show, which came to a stunning climax with Suzanne's dazzling gem of a Cups and Balls routine. What a fabulous way to have an assembly meeting! —Ron Dutton

The Dr. Ronald P. Dutton Assembly 292 usually meets at Kenny's Steak House, 3502 West 10th Street (corner of 35th Avenue), at 11:00 A.M. (lunch optional), on the second Saturday of the month. Contact Dr. Lloyd Worley [lloyd@worleythewizard.com](mailto:lloyd@worleythewizard.com) (970) 356-3002 [www.SAM292.com](http://www.SAM292.com) for more details. ♦

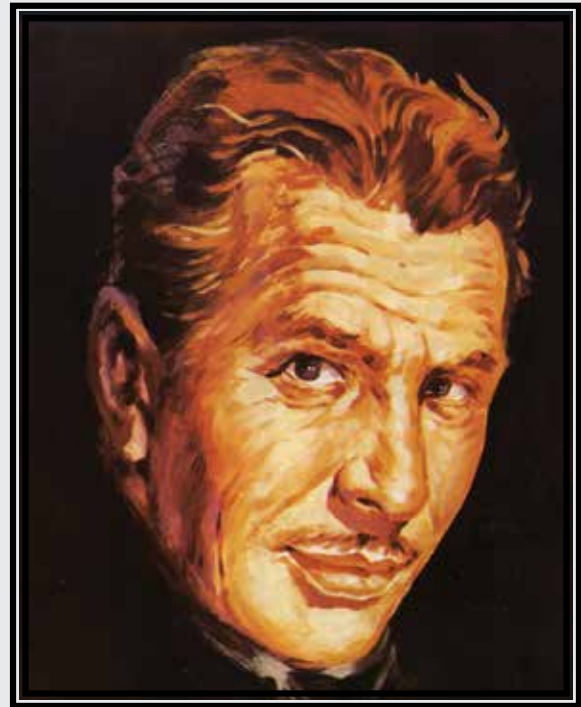
## REMEMBERING JOHN CALVERT

### *John Calvert and the 1981 S.A.M. National Convention*

*By Ray Goulet*

The Society of American Magicians fifty-third annual convention was held at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel on July 1-4, 1981. This was the Society's sixth national convention to be held in Boston; it was sponsored by Assembly 9. It would also be the last national convention to be run by a local assembly. The National Council had decided two or three years earlier that effective with the 1982 convention there would be a National Convention Committee, then chaired by Ed Campagna, who would take over running the national conventions.

I spoke to Cesareo about the possibility of having the Le Grand David show perform for two nights in order to accommodate all of the registrants. Cesareo was perfectly agreeable to do this. Then I thought how great it would be if I could book John Calvert for the same two evenings to do his full-evening show. He had not performed in the U.S. for thirty years. He was living on his yacht in Gran Canaria, Spain. I corresponded with John for nearly two years; he was excited about doing this but, being the perfectionist he was, he had lots of requirements. I knew if we wanted his full-evening show we would need to have a theater or maybe even the John Hancock Hall Auditorium for him to perform in. This was going to be quite an added expense to our budget. After a lot of discussion, the committee agreed to go for it. We did not have any luck in booking a theater, but we were able to put a hold on John Hancock Hall for the three days and nights we needed (the extra day of course would be needed for



set-up and rehearsing.

Attendees would be assigned which night they would attend the Calvert Show and which night they would attend the Le Grand David show. Of course, they were bused to Beverly. In the end, it all ran very smoothly.

The Calverts flew to Boston. On the evening of his arrival, Cesareo and several members of the LGD Company joined my wife Ann and I and several of the local magicians at the airport to welcome John and Tammy to Boston.



John brought a lot of his equipment with him on the flight, but the larger and heavier equipment was shipped as cargo prior to John leaving Spain. John naturally expected this shipment would already be in Boston when he arrived. That was not to be the case. After spending considerable time trying to track it down, we left the airport certain we would locate its whereabouts the next day. Three days later we still had not found it, so we decided we better start figuring out what John would need to do the show just in case it did not arrive in time. Eventually, three of the five pieces arrived, but the shipment that never did arrive had some very important pieces of equipment in it.

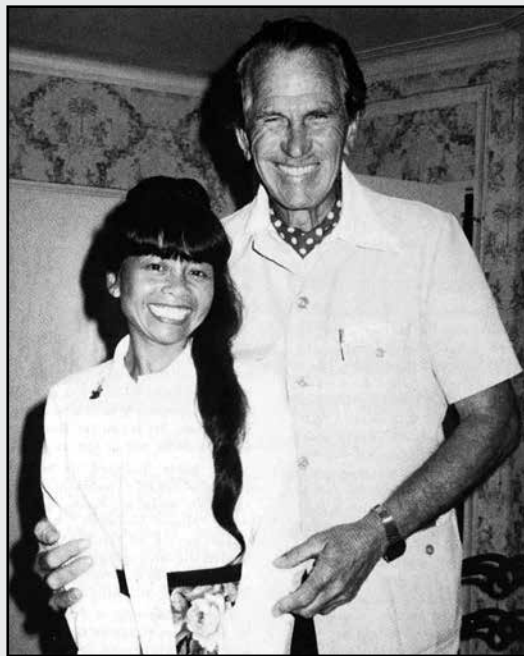
One of the important pieces that John had not shipped, assuming it would not be a problem, was an organ. John said "All you have to do is call one of these organ companies and they will be glad to loan one to you just for the publicity." He had brought the framework used for the levitation, which to him was the most crucial part. We had no one in our group who had an organ - or at least not one that they were willing to transport to and from John Hancock Hall to watch it fly out over the audience. Dick Chalmers was not on the committee, but as a good friend was willing to take on this task.

To my surprise, a few days later Dick had a commitment from Conn Organ Company in Framingham, Massachusetts. They would deliver the organ to John Hancock Hall on Wednesday and pick it up the following Monday, only requiring a deposit that would be refunded if the organ was returned in good condition, which it was, of course.

We also needed to have the following illusions for John to do his full show: The Drum That Can't Be Beat, The Boudoir Illusion, and The Spirit Cabinet.

Another of John's signature pieces was his audio sharp-shooting. For this he needed a rifle, live ammunition, and a target. My younger brother owned a Marlin rifle that we were able to borrow, but of course we knew we could not allow John to fire a rifle without a permit, so we had to take him to the Boston State Troopers Division of Permits to apply for a permit. After purchasing the supplies needed, I made the target in my workshop.

John had all of his music recorded and very well organized, including cue sheets, but he needed a sound



**John and Tammy Calvert at the 1981 S.A.M. convention.**  
(Photo courtesy of Genii Magazine)



**Calvert performing a levitation in his show**

technician. We checked around and finally recruited Mike Bent, one of our young local magicians, who was thrilled at the opportunity to be involved with the Calvert Show. John was very happy with Mike's handling of the sound and the music cues.

John needed assistants, so we recruited four attractive young ladies, daughters of our friends. The assistants would need to have costumes. Ann took Tammy and Lillian Foshey out to buy material per John's instructions, while he rehearsed the girls around our pool along with Mike Bent and the music. When the girls returned with the material, John immediately started draping it around the assistants and giving Lillian her instructions for whatever sewing was necessary. In a couple of days the assistants had beautiful costumes and there were more rehearsals by the pool.

In the meantime, we had located both a Drum and a Doll House that we could borrow, but they were in New Jersey. We managed to find a couple of fellows willing to make a quick one-day round trip to Jersey to pick up these two pieces. When we took a look at the drum, we found the interior was in need of repair. It had to be completely relined with felt. Another job was tackled and completed in my workshop.

John carried the pipes and curtains for the spirit cabinet

with him, but had the floor shipped and one of the pieces still had not arrived. I built the floor and added the pipes and flanges. John had the curtains, so now that illusion was all set.

A couple of hours before the first show was to begin and we thought everything was set, we found that the wiring for the lights that went around the organ were European wired and were not workable on U.S. current. John said the lights were very important for the effect of the organ floating and said he would not begin the show without the organ lights working, which I could understand. We quickly sent one of our stagehands out to find a hardware shop to buy what was necessary to re-wire the lighting. Though not an electrician, I knew enough about it to have the organ frame rewired before the curtain went up. I breathed a loud sigh of relief and said, "Now the John Calvert Magicarama is ready to go on!"

The 1981 S.A.M. national convention was a great experience for me and one I shall never forget. ♦

# The Nielsen Gallery

## John Calvert Portrait

Dimensions: 16.5" x 21" • Printer: Nielsen Magic Giclee Print (Designed by Norm Nielsen)

Date: 2006 • Nielsen Rating: Available

In the firmament of magic history, no star shined as brightly, or as long, as the late John Calvert, who passed away September 27 at the age of 102. Perhaps the *Las Vegas Sun* captured it best in their obituary of this master magician when they described him as "...one of the last shining beacons from both the Golden Age of Magic and the Golden Age of Hollywood."

By almost any measure one uses, Calvert performed more magic shows, toured the world more widely, appeared in more capital cities and top flight theaters, and generated greater publicity for magic than Houdini, Thurston, and Blackstone combined. And while he and his wife Tammy rubbed elbows with movie stars, moguls, and royalty, they always treated everyone they met, especially young and aspiring magicians, with genuine warmth and affection.

The best source of information on Calvert's extraordinary life and times is Bill Rauscher's wonderful 1987 biography, *John Calvert: Magic and Adventures around the World*. Here are just a few highlights of his amazing career.

Calvert was born August 5, 1911, in Trenton, Indiana, and began touring as a magician at age eighteen. The first professional magician he saw was Howard Thurston when he appeared at the Palace Theater in Cincinnati in 1919. He also got to see Blackstone's full evening show and was very impressed with it.

Calvert started doing magic professionally while in college; he toured in a Cadillac pulling a baggage trailer. That trailer was replaced with a ten-ton semitrailer as the show grew.

His entry into films came by accident. While on a trip to Hollywood, he stopped to visit his friend Jack Gwynne, who was in California consulting for pictures. By chance, Calvert happened to answer a telephone call from an MGM casting director who wanted to speak with Gwynne. Gwynne had left for an engagement and, posing as Gwynne's secretary, Calvert informed the studio that in Gwynne's absence, he recommended a young man named John Calvert who was staying at the Roosevelt Hotel. Racing back to the hotel, he found the phone message from MGM. He called them back and ended up doubling for Clark Gable doing a Three Card Monte routine in the film *Honky Tonk*.

Calvert went on to perform in at least thirteen films between 1943 and 1956; his most famous feature role was as the suave detective Michael Watling (aka "The Falcon") in three movies: *Devil's Cargo*, *Appointment with Murder*, and *Search for Danger*. During his time in Hollywood he was feted at parties by columnists Elsa Maxwell and Louella Parsons; he used Gary Cooper and Cary Grant as his assistants in magic routines.

Historians generally agree that Calvert was the first magician to bring a large-scale magic show to Las Vegas and Broadway. He always loved airplanes, and ended up piloting his own DC3, which carried his entire show and cast across the United States.

He also loved boats; in 1957 Calvert purchased his first yacht, which had been built by Henry Ford as a gift for his son Edsel. Calvert loaded his show into it and sailed to Tokyo, where he opened with a gigantic illusion show featuring fifty-two lovely girls. He went on to own four more yachts and at various times battled typhoons in the Pacific, pirates off the coast of China, and

gunboats in the Straits of Taiwan. Once, after his speedboat sank off the coast of Borneo, he swam for nearly sixteen hours in shark-infested waters until rescued by local fishermen.

His illusion shows – and there were several different incarnations – were bright, colorful, filled with lovely girls, and featured everything from a cannon that shot a woman into the smallest of three locked trunks hanging above the stage, a buzz saw that cut off the head of an audience member, to levitations of Tammy rising from a couch and even while seated at a levitated theater pipe organ. He also owned a circus, performed a spook show, and starred in one production titled, *John Calvert, King of Hypnotic Magicians*.

He was also a master of small magic, which played big in his capable hands, including the Nest of Boxes, cigarette productions, pick pocketing, Torn and Restored Magazine, the Dancing Handkerchief, and many others.

When Calvert was only in his nineties I saw him perform Eyeless Vision, in which his eyes were covered with borrowed coins and adhesive tape. People in the audience held up objects and he described them as he walked up the center aisle. He didn't just describe objects held by people in the aisle seats, either. Calvert not only identified a pack of cigarettes being held by a gentleman at the far end of a row, but also the brand. No object was too small or unusual.

I also assisted him on stage with Audio-Sharpshooting. Calvert, once again completely blindfolded, took a 22-caliber rifle and hit objects and targets guided, not by sight, but by a metal clicker that Tammy snapped that guided his shots. At the beginning of the routine, the sightless Calvert first "mistakenly" aimed at the audience until Tammy clicked him back in the right direction. The finale came when Tammy placed a World War I helmet on the head of an audience member (me) to which a balloon was attached. Tammy clicked, Calvert shot, and a target board behind me absorbed the bullet after it broke the balloon. There was no trick gun; the bullets were real; and flecks of gun powder dusted my face. This complemented other stunts, including him driving a car, a speedboat, and an airplane blindfolded.

Calvert received many honors over the years, including the Milbourne Christopher Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998. At the age of one hundred he appeared onstage at the London Palladium and was still performing until the end. In the hospital, Calvert's doctor came in to see how he was doing and shook his hand. Calvert told him he was doing fine but wondered what time it was. The doctor looked and found Calvert had lifted his watch.

Asked to divulge his secret to long life, he said, "Every morning when I wake up, I say 'The world is my stage. I'm an actor and I'm going to play the part of a young man all day long.'" He further added, "Don't be a pessimist. Expect to live one hundred years or more. It can be done. It's not magic." No, it's not, but Calvert certainly was.

Copies of Norm Nielsen's touching tribute poster (including eight autographed versions) are available from [www.nnmagic.com](http://www.nnmagic.com). ♦

—Tom Ewing





*Casper Calvert's Incredible Dancing Handkerchief*

*John as the Falcon*



*In Mid-Air*



*The Flying Organ*



*Levitating Princess*

**John Calvert**  
Movie Star  
Brilliant Magician  
Adventurer  
Aviator & Yachtsman

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## JOE GARSETTI AND THE SPARTA AVENUE STAGE MAGIC THEATER

Assembly 168 member Joe Garsetti, his wife Diane, daughter Daiva, and son Joseph have spent the last two-and-a-half years transforming an old Sparta, New Jersey, firehouse into a delightful performance-arts theater. The Sparta Avenue Stage is an intimate theater that is tailor-made for magic performances. It is also the home base for compeer Garsetti; he opened the venue in October 2012 with his Halloween-themed magic show, Haunted Cabaret.



An old Sparta, New Jersey firehouse transformed into The Sparta Avenue Stage Theatre.  
Photos depict the exterior and interior of the theatre and Joe and Diane Garsetti

To enhance the theatrical mood of any performance, the Sparta Avenue Stage features a state-of-the-art lighting system. In front of the theater is a large marquee that lists upcoming shows and events. The space can be configured as cabaret seating fifty or in theater rows seating seventy. "The Close-Up Corner," a separate area in the theater, has both raked theater seating and spotlights; it is perfect for showcasing sleight-of-hand magic.

In college, Garsetti majored in chemistry at State University of New York in Oswego. He uses his knowledge to produce magical effects for his show. "I really enjoy the creation of magic," Garsetti said. "To create wonder, that's what I love the best about magic." While in college, Garsetti said he made spending money by performing magic at local bars. As he jokingly described, "My audiences were mostly tipsy college students." That was where he learned how to deal with unruly crowds.

Over the past twenty-five years, Joe has performed magic all around the country, including Atlantic City and Las Vegas. Every spring, Joe travels and performs to raise money for charities, including The National Cancer Institute. With the opening of the Sparta Avenue Theater, he hopes to increase aid for regional charities.

The Sparta Avenue Theater is not limited to magic shows. It is also available for other events, such as community theatre. Compeer Garsetti is certain that the theater is both an asset for the community and for magic. The theater is located at 10 Sparta Avenue North, Sparta, NJ, 07871 Phone: (973) 769-2893. You can obtain additional information at [www.spartastage.com](http://www.spartastage.com).



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## AWARDS PRESENTED TO ASSEMBLY 1 COMPEERS

On October 9, 2013, prior to the evening's lecture by Rachel and Aldo Colombini, RVP Eric DeCamps presented two Assembly 1 members with the first North Atlantic Region Awards of Excellence for their many years of selfless dedication to the S.A.M. and the New York magic community. Congratulations to Dr. Jerome Wayne MD and Rene Clement for embodying the S.A.M. spirit!

### 'TIS THE SEASON

By Michael Smith – Senior Pastoral Counselor at the Pastoral Counseling Center of Dallas

Recently, when I was in the Center late one night, a long distance phone call came in from a kindly old man asking if we were the best counseling center in Texas. I said that I thought we were. He then asked if I were little "Sigie" Freud. I said no, that I was little "Mikie" Smith. I said that I did have a beard and had smoked a cigar from time to time. I explained that the operator had connected him to a wrong number and that his timing was off by about a hundred years. He apologized, saying that where he lived the days and nights are six months long so he often loses track of time.

I explained that I was a counselor (and also a magician) and asked if I could help him. He would not make an appointment, saying that he lives too far away. When I suggested that he seek a therapist in his home town, he revealed that nobody lives there except him and his wife, a herd of reindeer, and a work crew of elves. He also said that he only gets away once a year, and that is a flying trip that allows no time to stop for counseling. So, he wanted counseling over the phone.

"Well," I said, understandingly, "I can see why you would want to talk with someone. All those elves and reindeer could drive anyone crazy after a while."

"Oh, no!" he answered. "You don't understand. Life is great up here. I like my reindeer. I don't even mind being knee-deep in elves. What's driving me out of my mind is the crazy stuff people are saying about me."

"Oh no," I thought. "Is he getting senile or paranoid and having delusions of persecution? If old Kris Kringle goes off his rocker, what is left to believe in?"

"They are telling lies about me to their kids," he continued. "They have been telling them that I only bring goodies to children who behave like angels. I know why they do it. Some of them just aren't very bright and keep repeating the same nonsense they grew up with. But some of them do it to blackmail their kids into behaving. 'Be good,' they say, 'or Santa won't bring you anything.' Just look at what they are doing to me. Instead of a kindly old soul who really loves kids, they are making me look like some kind of dirty old man who goes around bribing kids to be good. I do it because I love them. Why can't those parents understand that? It looks like they just don't know much about love...or about kids either, for that matter."

His voice seemed to grow a bit more calm and reflective. "Then again, maybe those parents aren't really trying to do me in. Maybe they can't teach much about love because they never learned much about it. I guess that's one of the reasons your center exists – to help parents and kids understand more about love. I think it's sort of like what religious types call 'grace.' If they ever get that message, maybe they'll see that I don't deliver goodies because their kids are good. I do it because I am good."

He sighed deeply, as if glad to get something off his chest. Then he said, "Well, it's been good talking to you, sonny. I really appreciated all the help you have given me. Now, how much do I owe you?"

"Well," I replied, "considering that yours is a rather unusual case, we'll let this one be on the house. But, I do have one request and one question."

"What's that, sonny?" he said, resuming his former jovial tone. "I would like your permission to tell my magician friends about this conversation." "You got it! You magicians understand this season is really magical and wonder-filled. What's your question?"

"What are you going to bring me for Christmas, Santa?"

My hope is that this holiday season, we truly believe that our "magic" can bring joy and wonder into people's lives.

[ "'Tis the Season" first appeared in the December 2012 edition of the Dallas Magic Clubs' e-newsletter, *The Wizards' Scroll*.] ♦



I first met Max Howard in the late 1990s at a lecture in Philadelphia. While I had known that Max was an Emmy Award-winning actor and magician, I wasn't fully prepared for the evening. That night Max stunned and thrilled thirty seasoned, knowledgeable magicians as he demonstrated that the real magic of magic is not the tricks and secrets, but rather, as he says, everything else.

"What is *everything else*?" you ask. In brief, it is acting, character, intention, honesty, words, build, lighting, music, and the overall effect of a show. And they are all at work in *The War Wizard*, the historically based magic show that Max and Diane Bray have co-created over the past thirty years.

**Max Howard and Diane Bray, *The War Wizard: A Tale of Magic & The Civil War*, Austin College Arena Theatre, October 5, 2013, 7:30 p.m.**

**Pre-show:** The stage is set with a red backdrop and a banner that reads, "The Great Southern Sleight-of-Hand Show." Civil War era music plays.

1. After the introduction, The Actor (Max) takes the stage. Well spoken and of good bearing, The Actor welcomes the audience. While he openly applies spirit gum and a mustache, he introduces the audience to the man they are about to meet: the historical figure William Augustus Reich, Gus Rich, a Southern veteran of the Civil War who made his living afterwards as a traveling magician. He then tells the audience how all the magic tonight will be done: by the art and act of transformation through conscious will – the actor's work!

2. Instantly, music kicks in. The Actor turns his back and musses his hair, Jim Bailey (Diane Bray) hands him a tall, black hat; the music ends with a downbeat, and the figure onstage quickly turns around to address the audience, "How do ya do? I am Professor Gus Rich!" The transformation is stunning. This is the first and foundational piece of magic in the show.

3. Gus is funny, endearing, and smart as he performs An Experiment in Alchemy. That is, he magically transforms a cylinder so that animal, vegetable, and mineral substances freely pass through it but a liquid substance will not. (The audience gasps.) Passing an empty glass up through the bottom of the cylinder, Gus removes it from the top – now full – and drinks to everyone's health.

4. After introducing his young partner, Jim Bailey, and talking about how they met, Gus discusses "the two kinds of people who ever does come [sic] to a magic show: those who think it's all tricks and those who think it's all m-a-g-i-c." Playing with these two attitudes, Gus fools the pants off everyone with an exceptionally clever non-disappearance of a large red handkerchief followed by its actual disappearance.

5. Telling about his experiences as the bass drummer in the 26th North Carolina Regimental Band, Gus performs, "General Robert E. Lee's favorite conjuration." That is, three Morgan silver dollars fly from one hand to the other. (Trust me: because of Max's superlative technique and "everything else," the audience is gasping, utterly astonished.)

6. Bailey hands an orange to a member of the audience. Gus has another person select a playing card and then tear it into pieces. Returning one piece to that person, Gus uses a magical key to vanish the other torn parts, which appear, restored, in the middle of the orange, except for the corner the person has been holding.

7. Playing with the audience's suspicions, Gus performs a piece of magic with his hat, a little wooden chest, and a bright red die, which visibly moves from the hat to the chest and invisibly flies back to the hat.

8. Jim Bailey is invited to perform a piece of "conjuration." Smartly dressed and waving his special wand, Jim causes a rabbit to suddenly appear in Gus's empty black hat.

9. Gus reflects upon his time in the war and how terrible it was to see young men die. He then tells the story of how he happened to come by this: "a slave chain." Dancing on the knife-edge of tension that this theme has introduced, Gus repudiates slavery, yet he insists he was "proud to serve" on the issue of states' rights. He has an audience member bind him in the chain and then demonstrates how he escaped

a Yankee firing squad by magically escaping. (Please note: no brief description can convey the extraordinary thematic and theatrical complexity of this climactic routine.)

10. Hot on its heels, Gus performs the show-stopping "Wand in the Bottle." After calling on the spirits and with exquisite fairness, Gus's wand rises out of the bottle and floats in many astonishing ways before both objects are handed out to the audience. This is Max Howard's signature masterpiece.

11. With great feeling and significance, and to remember "the men of the North, the men of the South, and those who didn't come home," Gus and Jim perform "The Transformation of the Nation." While rousing music plays, Gus draws a Confederate flag from an empty bag. The flag is returned to the bag and it dissolves into large red, white, and blue silks tied together at the corners. The silks are returned to the bag and out comes the American flag – a nation reunited.

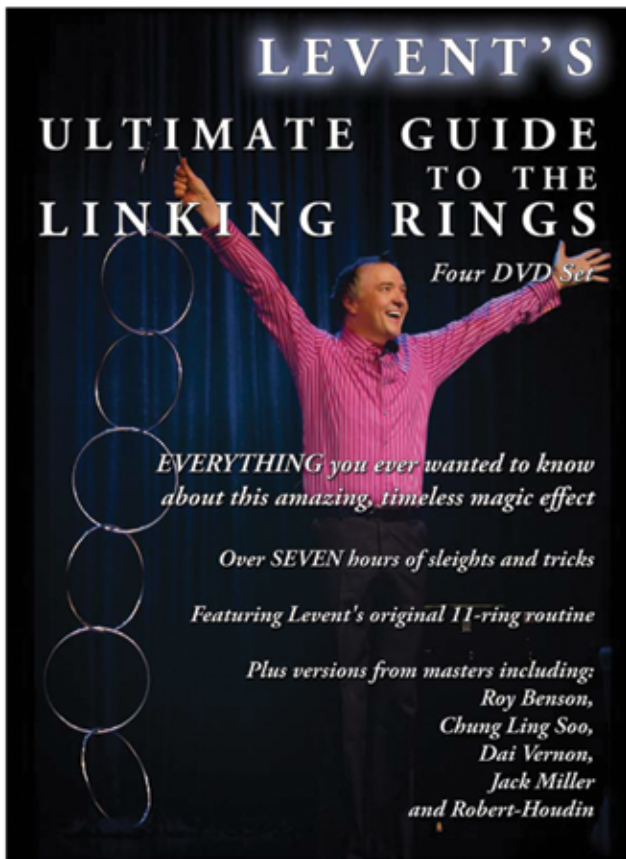
12. Gus shares some final words. While placing a lit match into his bare hand, he says, "The flame we hold / within our hearts / is the power of love, life's breath." The match vanishes. Bailey and Gus take their bows. They leave the stage as if in a puff of smoke. This is followed by an instantaneous standing ovation from the audience.

**Observations:** Max Howard says it is by design that the props and effects – the tricks – in this show are all ones that Gus Rich could have performed. And he freely admits that many of the methods come from familiar sources such as *Tarbell*. But neither of these facts matters in the least, as you would know if you had seen the audience's overwhelming response. Why? Because, again, the "real magic" of this show comes from "everything else."

So let me ask: how are you doing in relation to everything else? How is your acting? How well developed is your performing character? Is your magician-character vulnerable? How clear-sighted is your overall intention for the show? Do you take the audience to unusual, even uncomfortable, places on the way to other developments?

These are just a few of the challenges and inspirations that Max Howard's work brings as we seek to build better shows. ♦





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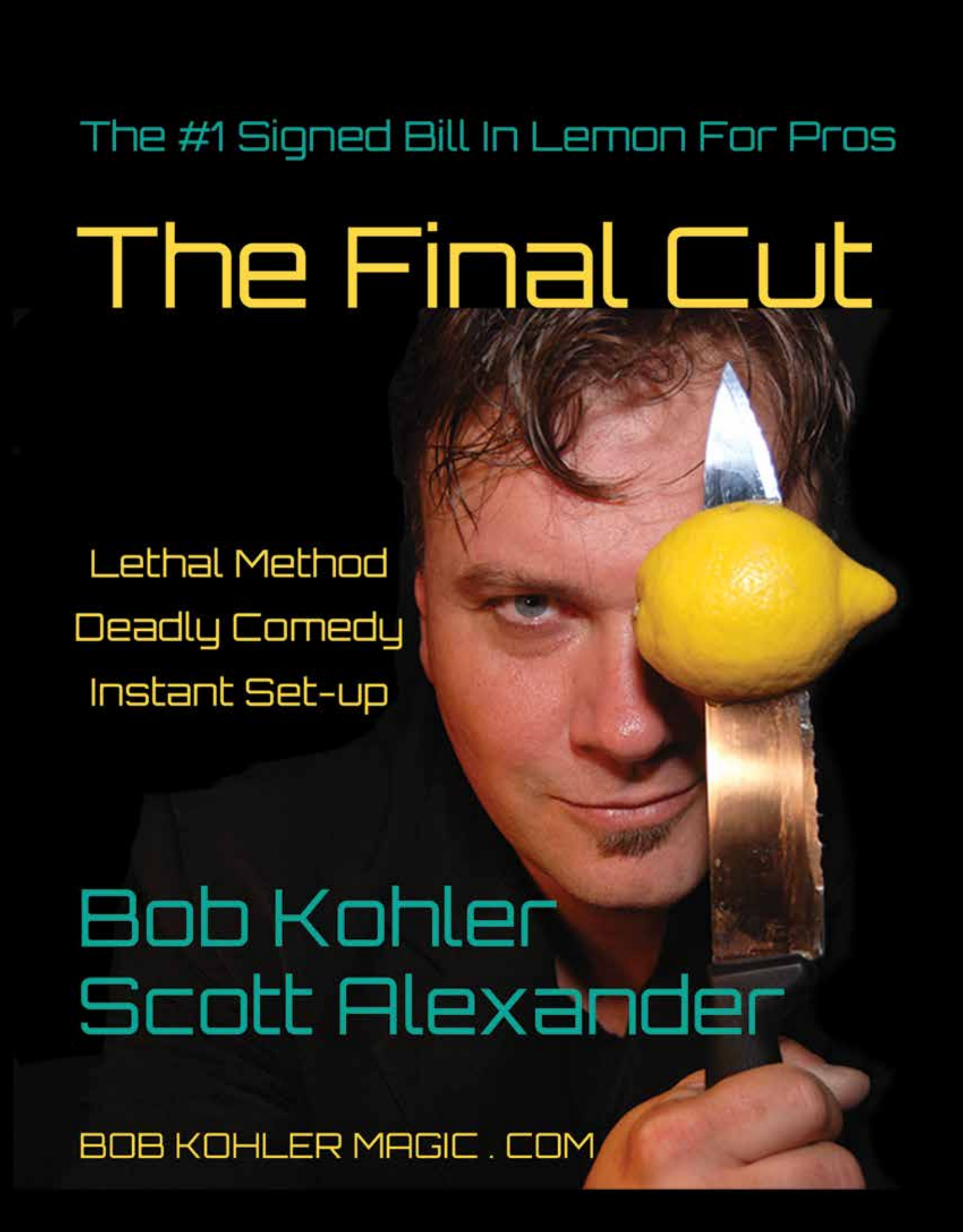
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# The Final Cut

Lethal Method  
Deadly Comedy  
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In this, my last Stage 101 column, I will cover my final fundamental rule of stage magic. But first I think that it would be best to once again list all ten rules.

## LEVENT'S FUNDAMENTAL RULES OF STAGE MAGIC

1. When performing a sleight, the visible movement should have a natural motivation.
2. The big movement masks the smaller, secret movement.
3. When palming an object onstage, you have only a few seconds before you must either produce the object or add a visible object into the fingers of that hand.
4. The easiest way to secretly dispose of a palmed object is to discard it under the guise of picking up a visible object at the fingertips.
5. The simplest way to steal and palm an object is under the guise of picking up a visible object at the fingertips.
6. Secretly maneuvering a palmed object from one hand to another is better if the procedure employs a visible object.
7. Deception can be enhanced by lengthening the time and/or the physical distance between the secret move and the magical effect.
8. When stealing an object from inside a coat under cover of misdirection, it is more deceptive to have the object travel to the palming hand than the other way around.
9. When performing a routine with a repetitious effect, it is more deceptive if you vary your methods.
10. You should only break these rules if you fully understand the rules and can offer an intelligent reason for breaking them.

The tenth rule basically means that these rules are not written in stone. The fact is, my rules are merely the product of observations that I've made after

carefully studying the techniques of the great magicians from the past. Perhaps a more accurate description would be to call them "guidelines" rather than "rules." But I use the word "rules" because I feel that they *should* be followed scrupulously. That said, these rules or guidelines *can* be ignored, provided that the quality of the deception is maintained. The key to disregarding these rules is to do so in an intelligent manner.

Let's take a look at the vanish of a single playing card combined with the application of rule number three. Imagine that you are holding a card in your right hand and seemingly place it into the left hand. Actually, you secretly palm it in your right hand. You then show your left hand to be empty. According to the aforementioned rule, you have a window of only a few seconds before you must reproduce the card that is concealed in your right hand, otherwise the spectators might correctly deduce that you have retained the card in your right hand and merely faked putting it in your left hand. Furthermore, according to rule three, you could mask the presence of the palmed card by placing a visible object such as a magic wand into the palming hand.

One way to avoid using rule three while still making the sustained vanish of the card deceptive would be the application of a gimmick. For instance, in the year 1908 the clever magic inventor Theodore DeLand (1873-1931) marketed a prop called the Fadeaway Card. This was a specially printed single playing card on the back of which was a flesh-colored illustration that looked like the palm of a hand. This allowed the conjurer to vanish a card by hiding it in the palm of the hand by means of camouflage. The original DeLand prop was optically crude, but today a magician could either photograph or scan the palm of his hand and attach a life-sized photograph of his palm printed on matte finish paper onto the back of the card. This allows you to vanish a card while allowing the palming hand to be briefly shown to be empty. Thus, the need to use rule three is eliminated.

Another example of ignoring the rules would be in rule six, which covers the move

that is typically called a "change-over palm." I wrote up rule six because it seems that attempting to move a palmed object from one hand to the other is usually not deceptive, unless there is a clearly logical reason (from the spectators' point of view) for the hands to be brought together. Typically the inclusion of a second visible object in the hands provides the apparent logical reason for the hands to be brought together. For instance, you can have a red ball palmed in your left hand and at the fingers of the same hand you have a green ball in full view of the audience. Then you show your right hand to be empty. Next you can visibly transfer the green ball to the right hand. This action provides the logical reason for both hands to come together, which then allows the palmed red ball to be secretly transferred to the palm of the right hand.

But a magician could ignore rule six and avoid the use of the visible secondary object provided he creates a logical reason for the hands to come together. An example of this was the magician Jerry Andrus (1918-2007), who in a trick called Accusteel, did a barehanded production of a large and heavy steel ball bearing. The basic handling required Andrus to secretly transfer the metal ball from his left palm to his right palm. At its core this is a type of change-over palm, yet Andrus was able to do it deceptively without the use of a secondary (visible) object. This was because he prefaced the trick with a discussion about "acupressure" points on his hands. So the trick begins with an apparent medical demonstration of pressure points, which gives him the logical reason for the hands to come together, thus allowing the secret transfer and production of the steel ball.

As you can see, as long as the mystery and deception is not diminished, these rules can sometimes be circumvented. But in general, unless you have a good reason, it is best to learn these rules and apply them.

Regarding the entire list of rules, I fully expect that over the course of time the rules themselves will be modified and refined; it is entirely possible that newer rules will be discovered and codified. If any reader



can think of such a rule, please feel free to contact me via my website. Speaking of which, on the bottom of the home page of my [www.LeventMagic.com](http://www.LeventMagic.com) website there is a small American flag. If you click on that flag, it will take you to the latest English language version of the rules.

Sadly, this will be my last and final monthly Stage 101 column for *M-U-M* magazine. Two years ago, when our esteemed editor Michael Close first asked me to do this, I assumed that the process of writing two thousand words a month on a deadline would be relatively easy. As it turns out, for me the task was surprisingly difficult. To some extent this was because of my busy performing schedule, but the really tough part was that before I committed words to paper, I had to fully internalize my thesis and find a logical way to express it. Ultimately this experience was exhausting, exhilarating, and something that I am truly proud of.

The title Stage 101 implied that this was sort of a college course in magic. To a great extent this is true, because I sought to give the reader the foundational knowledge of what makes the conjuring art magical. If you have read all of my columns from the past two years and applied the lessons and advice, I think you will be a better magician for doing so. And for those of you who have taken this two-year journey with me, I congratulate you on graduating my little course on the art.

Back in 1997, a writer named Mary Schmich wrote a column in the *Chicago Tribune* that was presented in the form of a fictitious university graduation commencement speech. Later her words were made into a popular song called "Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)". In the spirit of what Ms. Schmich wrote, I conclude my Stage 101 column with the following message:

## **EVERYBODY'S FREE (TO WEAR MATCHING UNDERWEAR)**

Ladies and Gentlemen of *M-U-M's* Stage 101 class of 2013: If I could only offer one tip as an entertainer, it is that if you wear trousers on stage, make sure that your underwear is the same color as the trousers. The fact is that if you perform long enough there will certainly come a time in which you will develop a tear in

the seat of your pants during the show. And having matching underwear is the surest way of hiding the tear until the performance is over. The rest of my advice is just the ramblings of a guy who's done a lot of shows over the years. I will dispense this advice now.

Learn how to read magic books. The technique of translating the written word to an actual trick is something that takes practice. If you can master that, then you will eventually watch less magic videos and read more magic books, especially the old books. Most magic tricks are actually based on stuff that was figured out over a hundred years ago. That means that the old timers were pretty wise; reading their actual words and advice can give you insight to their genius. Most new magic videos teach old tricks that have been disguised in new clothing. It's usually best to learn from the originators.

Keep a band-aid with you on stage; you never know when you will cut yourself. Putting a band-aid on an injury moments after it happens can keep your show going and keep blood off of your props.

If you make a spectator the brunt of a joke, then make sure that before the show is over you treat him or her with respect and thank them for helping entertain the crowd. To you that spectator might be a prop, but they are a real person with feelings, so always treat them right.

When packing up your props, try to put fragile items in zip-lock bags or watertight containers. A few years back, longshoremen accidentally dropped my act case off of a cruise ship dock and into the Delaware River. A lot of my props were damaged, but because many items were in individual zip-lock bags, the damage was not as bad as it could have been.

Learn to love rehearsing. In order to be a good magician, it helps if you have carefully rehearsed your tricks. If the process of rehearsing is painful and boring, then you are doing it wrong. Try putting on some cool music and make the practicing fun!

If you have to do a microphone sound check before the show, it's important to speak in the same volume and manner as if you are doing an actual performance. For this reason I have an actual extra trick that I don't usually do in my act, but which I do during the sound check so that the sound man can have an idea about how loud I

will speak during the show. Speaking of extra tricks, always have a few extra tricks ready to go in case you have a problem during your act.

Avoid tricks with fire. Every year, fewer venues allow the use of open flames on stage. If you do use fire, you will eventually get burned.

Learn to love your audience. If you view the crowd with disdain, they will sense it. But if you love them and truly want to entertain them, then you will be a better performer. This was the real secret of the great Jose Frakson.

Avoid tricks with live animals. The dove-eat-dove life of an animal is tough enough without having to be jammed into a secret compartment. Now that international travel with animals has gotten tougher, it's best to make animals your pets and leave the show to humans.

Get to your show early. There is nothing worse than rushing to set up your act.

If you use recorded music in your act, have a backup of the recording with you on stage. You never know when a CD or audio file will go bad; a back-up can save your show.

Remember that "what you're doin' ain't Shakespeare." Don't be afraid to do something new in your act. If you're a talking performer, try to do a silent routine. If you're a silent performer, then try to do a talking routine. Experimenting is the only way to grow as an artist.

When traveling to a strange place, pay attention to the surrounding area on your way from the airport to the hotel or theater. You never know when you might need something; knowing the shops in the area can be beneficial.

Have a flashlight handy. Sometimes you will need a backstage light or a way to get out of a dark building in an emergency.

Learn to love performing magic. The art of magic is unique in the world in that it readily gives people the sense of wonder. That alone makes it a lovely gift for all mankind.

You can readily dismiss all the advice that I have just imparted, but trust me on the matching underwear. That old tip literally saved my behind in the summer of 1992.

Class dismissed. ♦

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# *Illusions of Grandeur*

*by David Seebach*

## *From Rags to Riches*

For those of us who are drawn to the performance of magic's grand stage illusions, our dreams are made of spectacular presentations with a lady rising up high in the air, exotic jungle cats materializing, and a gleaming motorcycle, automobile, or aircraft appearing from nowhere. Oh, and pretty girls surrounding us, too, of course!

But the reality is that even if you had gear like that, where would you perform it? Most magicians work lots of venues that do not offer precise lighting, overhead rigging, or even curtains. There are lots of appearances in school gyms, civic halls with a "bare-bones" stage that has no wings, and so on.

So, go ahead and dream big, but make sure your actual purchases are of a more practical nature. You will learn there are many fine illusions that can be done in these venues that are just as impressive and baffling to the lay audience. But, choose wisely!

I am going to introduce you this month to an illusion that I never had any desire to present, but that now has become a frequently used prop in my repertoire. And I must confess, it is a little item that I have grown to appreciate.

Abbott's Magic Company catalogs it as The Invulnerable Lady. Owen Magic Supreme calls their version Where Does the Head Go? In all my visits to their Azusa facility I have never seen one or even seen a photo of one.

This very portable and practical invention is really just a miniature sword cabinet.

## *Sword Box 101*

The concept of a performer thrusting one or more weapons into a container that has a human being inside of it comes from Asia; the effect is done with a woven wicker basket. The basket is not gimmicked in any way. There is no "secret"; it just looks impossible when it is well done.

In the early twentieth century somebody replaced the basket with a rectangular cabinet on slender legs and a new illusion was born. There was no gimmick, because the cabinet was never opened to show that the assistant had vanished. That was the next development. For that improvement, the cabinet became much smaller (since her legs were now concealed in a deceptive base). Two mirrors allowed the prop to be opened with swords passing through in every direction. Where did she go?

The Abbott and Owen mini-illusions mentioned above are cabinets with two mirrors (or, in Abbott's case, two pieces of very shiny metal) that are large enough for an individual's head. As you can see from the photo, the assistant kneels below the head box and her body remains in full view, even though her head is gone. This fact alone is why I originally did not care for this concept at all. I figured that if an audience could see a person's body they sure knew just where the head had to be. You can make the same

argument for the illusions that offer a head but no body.

This act was not on my magic bucket list.

## *Enter eBay*

About three years ago, an Abbott's The Invulnerable Lady showed up on eBay as an auction item. The minimum opening bid was very reasonable, and the seller described the prop as being in very good shape.

For years my go-to illusion for small venues without facilities has been the Broom Suspension, but I often am invited to return with the request, "Can you do something different this time?"

I looked at the photos on eBay and thought that this might fill that requirement. It looked portable and had the "flash" of gleaming daggers, danger, action, etc., so I thought I'd offer the minimum bid. It turned out that mine was the only bid. I got it at a very reasonable price. The current Abbott price is \$3,500.

The seller, however, decided that the two UPS cartons that it was packed into ought to both be insured for the full price I had paid for the unit. And that much insurance – or so I was told – required some sort of double layer wrapping. I will attest that someone spent a lot of time with bubble wrap (there are fourteen individual daggers!) and Styrofoam peanuts. I believe I paid more for shipping the prop from California to Wisconsin (with that insurance) than I paid Abbott's for my original Temple of Benares!

When it arrived, I eagerly unwrapped it and found that all that extra secure, padded packaging was not needed. It appeared to me this illusion had been driven around in someone's trunk with the unprotected prop in pieces and with a tire iron, jack stand, and other heavy items knocking and bouncing about. My description of its condition would have differed from the seller's.

My immediate decision was that I would not present this illusion until it had been refurbished. But who could accomplish that project with care and integrity?

## *Super-Hero "Chezaday" to the Rescue!*

Many readers may know Chicago's very likeable Steve "Chezaday" Cesare. In addition to his love of Twinkies, the rock band KISS, and all things magical, Steve is a very accomplished craftsperson. He has a very well-equipped home workshop that is amazingly compact and amazingly neat, with everything in its proper place. Sadly, though, the thing he does not have is the time to take on many projects. But because I gave him no deadline, he said he'd "have a look."

I do not know why Abbott's painted the entire illusion – every last piece – Chinese red, but they did. I didn't care for it, but maybe the original owner requested that motif. I thought the box should be red so it would "pop" under the lights and draw attention to itself. However, I thought the wheeled platform, the four uprights,



and the sort-of tray upon which the head box sits should be glossy black, and Steve agreed.

As it turned out, Steve had additional ideas. He found some bad hinges and at least one repair job that had been poorly done. He obtained new hardware and puttied up some holes from misguided modifications. He added some black fabric for the assistant to kneel upon. Four half-rounds, lacquered gold, were affixed to the uprights, and for additional dimensional detail Steve routed them out with some nifty grooves. Finally, he preserved the characteristic Abbott “starburst” stencil design.

It was returned to me months later; I suspect it now looks better than when it was showroom brand new! I was, of course, obligated to compensate Steve for his time, talent, and materials. That seemed fair, but my “bargain buy” had again become an expensive prop.

With an illusion in such fine shape, I couldn’t imagine hauling it around unprotected. So I turned to Milwaukee’s King Kase, a firm that has produced custom ATA cases for me, Brett Daniels, Julie Sobanski, and other magicians. They decided to give me a truly deluxe pair of cases for this illusion, which included a tray of stiff foam, all routed out for the packing of all fourteen daggers and the top-to-bottom spear that conceals where the reflective panels meet.

I do not need to explain to other illusionists that custom ATA cases are never cheap, but they are a necessity.

Would knowing all of this have kept me from initially placing that minimum bid? I guess we’ll never know. I do not regret my decision, because at about the time you’re reading this I’ll be performing *The Invulnerable Lady* in Singapore, Bahrain, and Diego Garcia. This and the *Broom Suspension* were below size and weight limits for such an undertaking.

I still believe the audience has a sense of where Mary’s head is in the accompanying photo. However, all those intersecting blades seem to leave no room inside the head chest. And their somewhat oversize handles protruding from the chest add to the “pincushion effect,” making it seem there is no concealed space in its interior. I am of the opinion that audiences know magic is “all done with mirrors,” but I do not believe they actually have any idea of the mirror principles.

Fourteen daggers may seem a bit much for such a small enclosure (a *Temple of Benares* only has twelve swords). I’ve wondered if fewer daggers might improve the illusion. You’d certainly see more of the “empty” chest’s interior.

I decided to link this illusion with the practice of voodoo. The music is a very jazzy, “bachelor pad” version of Grieg’s well-known “In the Hall of the Mountain King.” If the assistant can enter “feeling” the music (not quite dancing, but more than just walking on), it adds to the effect. I like it when the assistant wears a headscarf in the Caribbean fashion.

The two reflective panels have latches outside the chest and we’ve routined it so the assistant releases them at the beginning and locks them at the end. Her movements continue throughout the routine so these “moves” are disguised. At the outset, however, the magician must move those released panels from the chest’s sides to the proper orientation. Holes in the top of the chest facilitate this. Plunging the spear down through the chest holds them in place.

This action was very difficult for me at first. Either one side or the other wouldn’t be positioned properly and I would have to



*The Sword Box*

adjust it. Since I do not have three hands (one for each panel and another for the spear), this was a challenge; I couldn’t justify why I was messing around with the top of the prop. But, like many other things in magic, what seemed difficult became easy and I cannot explain how or why that is so.

Ten longer daggers go into the prop, all in front of the mirror panels. Four shorter daggers go behind and they go right in where the assistant’s head is. Of course they are not sharp and only an idiot would shove them in with any force. Your assistant’s hair style (and quantity) will dictate using the holes at the back of the sides or in the actual back door of the prop. You have options! A slippery head scarf can be a help here if you follow my explanation.

Although I am generally against home-made illusions for anyone serious in magic, an enterprising, talented carpenter could manage this project with Abbott’s *Workshop Plans* and the blueprints in Owen’s *Keep the Wheels Turning* book. I’m confident Paul Osborne also offers drawings for this effect, which would be another wise investment.

But I think most magicians will pass this one up because it’s not the kind of thing you’re likely to see on *America’s Got Talent* or a Las Vegas stage. That’s part of magic’s problem. Chances are, you’re not performing in those venues. And the public, who only see a real, live magic show once every six to ten years, doesn’t know that.

After all, this is just a prop, an inanimate object that cannot do magic, amuse, or entertain. That’s what the magician is for. And, a talented magician can take almost any prop and get something out of it.

I’m using it regularly, making money with it, and getting a very nice audience reaction. I enjoy doing it because it is compact, lightweight, and requires only eight nuts-and-bolts and a few minutes to set up or strike. What more could I ask for? ♦

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# JOLLY ROGER: A LIFETIME OF MAGIC BY JAMES MUNTON

**F**rom palaces to prisons and bomb shelters, for royalty and for those who have been outcast, Roger Blakiston has traveled across the world's oceans and walked over minefields to perform his magic. His ancestors were famous explorers, pirates, and even royalty. He was born into a family of writers and travelers with a deep sense of imagination. He has walked in the steps of both great leaders and prophets, and over lands that have witnessed terrible wars.

His inexhaustible energy and individuality makes him a one-of-a-kind phenomenon. It would be laborious to try to copy his style and enthusiasm in a performance. His interest in magic started when he was nine years old, and he gave his first public performance at the age of fourteen. After leaving school, he trained for the stage at The Birmingham School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art and the Webber-Douglas Academy in London. After college, he worked for a short time as an actor in repertory theater before branching out into variety in his early twenties.

As a comedy magician, he has performed all over the world, visiting over thirty countries, entertaining in nearly all of them, including television shows in five countries, six months touring Australia, numerous trips to the Persian Gulf, and fifteen different cruise ships. He has also worked extensively as an actor, master of ceremonies, presenter, and voiceover talent for radio, television, commercials, industrials, and live performances.

Roger has been a member of The Society of American Magicians since his arrival in Arizona twenty-three years ago. He was the first lecturer for Assembly 248 in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he served as president for three years.

What follows is an interview with Roger and fellow magician James Munton.

**James Munton:** Roger, first let me say that I love your stage name and the name of your website [www.ComicMagician.com](http://www.ComicMagician.com), because it describes absolutely perfectly who Jolly Roger is.

**Roger Blakiston:** Thanks. However, I do have a real name, and that is Roger Blakiston. I have been through various metamorphoses calling myself Roger Blakiston, Roger Blake, and Roger Rainbow, among other things. There was a time when I did an illusion act on cruise ships with my wife and we were known as "The Blakistons." Then I did a solo act for a time as "The Sorcerer." I used to think I needed a different name for adult shows than for

children's shows, but I now realize that "Jolly Roger" works well for both. It also makes marketing much easier.

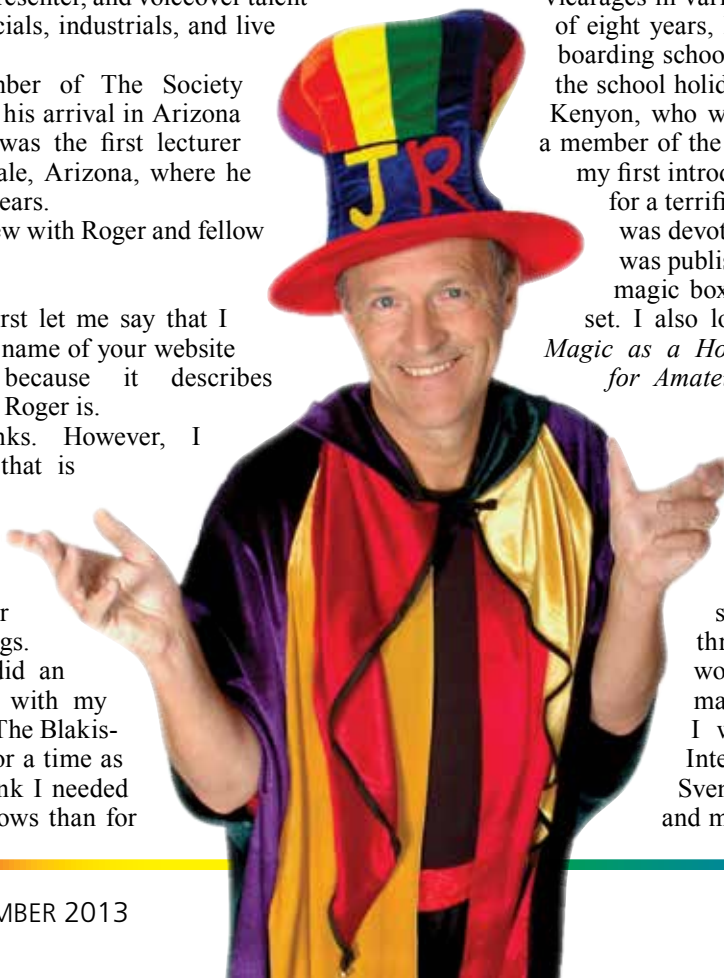
**James:** Many people know of you through your *M-U-M* column, your *Kidabra* column, and in the UK through your writings in *The Magic Circular* and the now defunct *Abracadabra*, where I recall you had a column titled "Jolly Roger goes West." Some children's entertainers will have seen your various lectures at Kidabra, the Kapital Kidvention, and the Blackpool conventions. You've had a very interesting life, so I think it would be nice to go back into the past because now you are in America living in Arizona. You obviously grew up in England, so tell us first a bit about your childhood.

**Roger:** I was born in Corbridge, Northumberland, which is the old Roman town of Corstopitum, right on Hadrian's Wall. The wall was the old dividing line between England and Scotland.

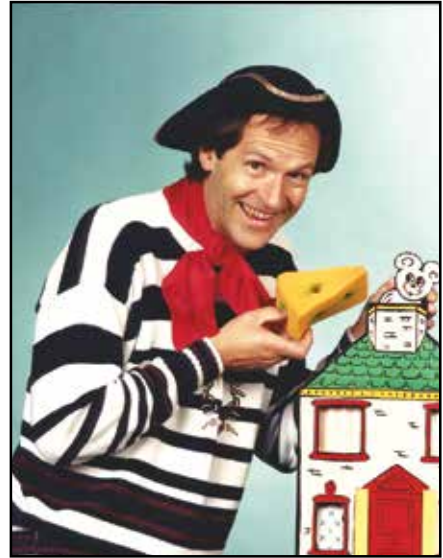
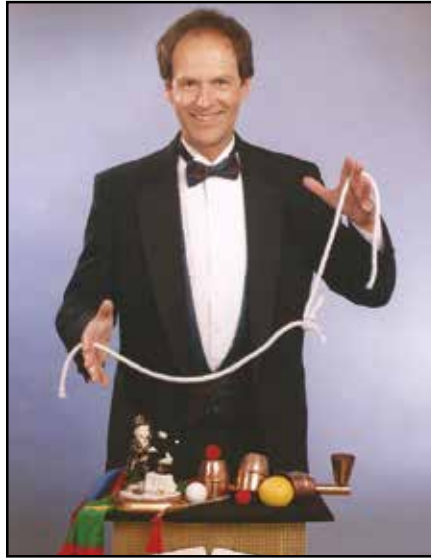
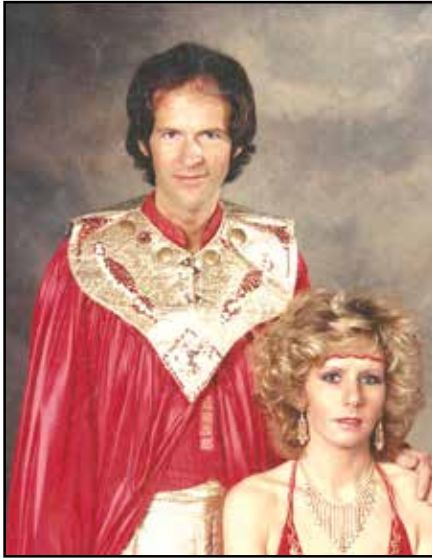
I could call myself a Northerner by birth, but I don't have a northern accent. Some people might say I speak with a London accent, but that is incorrect. I actually speak what is known as "The Queen's English." The whole business of UK accents is hard to comprehend, so I will not attempt to elaborate.

My father was actually a fifth generation Anglican clergyman, so I spent my childhood living in vicarages in various parts of England. At the age of eight years, I was shipped off to an all-boys boarding school, so I only lived at home during the school holidays. It was there that I met John Kenyon, who was the French master. John was a member of the Inner Magic Circle, and he was my first introduction to magic. He was famous for a terrific book called *Thumbs Up*, which was devoted to tricks with a thumb tip and was published by Supreme Magic. My first magic box was The Magic Star conjuring set. I also loved *The Boy's Book of Magic*, *Magic as a Hobby*, and *Successful Conjuring for Amateurs*. To this day I show my original copies of these books to the students when I do my "Magic of Reading" school assemblies.

I never thought I could make a living as a magician, so I went to drama school for three years to train as an actor. I worked for two years in the legitimate theater. When I was "resting," I worked for Ron MacMillan of International Magic selling Svengalis. I was quite a good grafter, and made a lot more money than I did







Early promo photos

as an actor! I was offered a summer season in Italy as a compère (master of ceremonies). I presented the first Italian barbecue evening for British tourists at a remote countryside location not far from Venice. I did this for three summer seasons, followed by a summer season variety show, *The Amazing Penny Whistle Show*, in the English seaside town of Margate. During the winter months, I continued to sell Svengalis.

In 1973, after Margate, I auditioned at the famous London Palladium for a new television talent show called *New Faces*. It was like an early version of *Britain/America's Got Talent*. I passed the audition and was booked to appear on the first ever series of *New Faces*. As a result of my appearance on this show, I was booked to work the northern clubs. The act I did was a comedy magic act involving a recital from Shakespeare and a twelve-foot skeleton. I bought the skeleton from the late Pat Page, who worked behind the counter in Davenport's. I was with my old friend Michael Vine at the time, and he said I had to buy the skeleton. Michael worked with me in those days selling Svengalis; his name may be familiar to some because he is now Derren Brown's manager.

I was then booked on a cruise ship for seven months, doing a series of weekly cruises from New York to Bermuda. This was my first trip to America. It was a wonderful experience; I spent just a few hours each week in New York City, and three days a week in the tranquility of Bermuda. Each week my time in New York was always so exciting. I got to see Doug Henning in *The Magic Show*, which had just opened on Broadway, and it was inspirational. I got to see Jeff Sheridan and Chris Capehart busking. I would regularly visit Tannen's in Times Square. I also remember the great occasion when I went with the comedian on the ship to visit the Hornmann Magic Company. There was the great Al Flosso behind the counter. The shop was packed, but he threw everyone out and said he was closing for lunch. The truth was he just wanted to talk show business with us, and we did that for a memorable two hours at a neighborhood coffee shop. Al was a truly wonderful character and raconteur.

On this ship I met my first wife. She was a nurse from Boston. I introduced her to show business and she became my assistant. We lived in Australia, followed by New York City, and worked on a number of cruise ships with an illusion act. We did lots of standard stuff like the Zig-Zag and Sub Trunk. We then moved to the UK to have children under the National

Health Service. We had three wonderful kids, and I naturally entertained at all their birthday parties when they were little. I recently had my first grandchild, so no doubt I shall be doing her parties over the coming years!

**James:** When you started out you were really doing all adult stuff?

**Roger:** Yes. I foolishly had a superior attitude to children's entertainment. It was not until I got a little older that I realized I needed to bring my ego down a notch or two, and that children's entertainment was the way to go. With that branch of magic I had really found my niche! When we first moved back to England, I still did adult shows full time, and actually had a residency for about a year at a medieval banquet in the heart of London. I had a dramatic medieval illusion show built for me by Peter Hart, who was the brother of award-winning magician Johnny Hart.

In 1982, there was an opportunity for a magician to represent a hamburger chain called Huckleberry's. Over four hundred magicians auditioned for the job, and I got the gig.

**James:** Was that a bit like a Ronald McDonald?

**Roger:** Yes, except that there was only one of me. I was known as Chuckleberry the magician. I was on contract, paid a nice salary, and went around the country opening up hamburger restaurants! It was a big promotion. I was produced out of a giant milkshake outside the restaurants by a celebrity, and I would walk into the restaurant and do a magic show for the kids. They even stopped the traffic on the street! I wore a yellow wig, green spectacles, and had a shiny blue cloak with hamburgers on it!

The contract was initially for one year, but I was told it would be renewed each year, and could go on indefinitely. I thought I was made, and finally had a secure job. However, after a year the chain sold out to another hamburger giant called Wimpy's, and I was out of a job. This is when I decided to see if I could make a living as a children's entertainer. I advertised in the Yellow Pages, got on the books of the London agencies, and the first year I had over three hundred shows. This is how I have made the bulk of my earnings ever since. After a few years, I was so busy I opened up my own agency in North London. It soon became the biggest agency in that city booking



**Jester promo photo**

children's entertainers. There were many days I had over thirty entertainers booked at birthday parties.

**James:** Why do you think you were able to do that? You weren't the only agency in London, so why were you able to rapidly become so successful?

**Roger:** I think it was because I had built a name for myself as Jolly Roger, and when clients called me up to do a show and I was unable to accommodate, they trusted me to send a good entertainer in my place.

I was so busy with the agency and doing shows every day of the year that I felt if I could be as busy as this in London, then I could probably do well in America. In 1992, I sold the agency and moved to Phoenix, Arizona, with my wife and three children on a one-way ticket to start a new life.

**James:** Before we move on to America, during that time in London I know you had a few interesting clients along the way. I understand you actually performed for royalty. Is that correct?

**Roger:** Yes. I was booked to perform an illusion act at a nightclub called Zenon in London's Piccadilly. The club had only recently opened. As I was about to go on stage, I was told that some celebrities would be arriving in a few minutes; I was asked to delay my performance. The celebrities turned out to be Prince Andrew, Prince Charles, Princess Diana, and Sarah Fergusson. I never saw them afterwards, so I hope they enjoyed the show! I was especially excited by this, because it had the consequence that I would in future be able to say I had performed for royalty in my publicity. The act that went on stage before me was somewhat controversial, because they used a live black panther. This was the first time that a wild animal had ever been used at a club right in the heart of London's West End. I was told it caused a line of animal rights protesters outside the building. My greater concern was that there was very little room backstage; I had to climb over the panther's cage with my props before I could make my entrance on stage.

Another encounter with royalty was when I performed at a memorable birthday party for boys in Kensington. These boys went to a private school in central London called Wetherby. The party took place in the basement of the house. I got to the party early and changed into my costume. There was a knock on the door. Before I had time to say, "Wait a minute," the door had been pushed open. There were three boys standing there. One of them I recognized as Prince William, son of Prince Charles and

Princess Diana, and a future King of England. I asked them their names and commanded them to kindly leave the room. They did not obey, so I ended up having to close the door in their faces. The party itself was quite dramatic. It was a two-hour party so I started by organizing games with the children prior to my magic show. Prince William was seven years old at the time and quite excitable. He got into a fight with one of the other boys (as boys do), and he ended up being pushed over. He landed on my PA system, and his eye was bleeding. There was a bodyguard there, and William was immediately taken out of the party (and home to Kensington Palace, I presume). It was a shame, really, because he never got to see my magic show. The next day, it was the Trooping of the Color ceremony in London. This is a big event, and the prominent members of the Royal Family come out on the balcony at Buckingham Palace to give the traditional wave. Prince William was among them. I saw a picture in the *Daily Telegraph* the following day of the balcony scene. On close inspection, I could see that William had a black eye. The press never picked up on it, but I knew the source.

**James:** You decided to move to the United States. Why Arizona?

**Roger:** I actually narrowed the choice down to Denver, Phoenix, and Dallas. These are three large metropolitan cities. I was looking for a large city where my business would support me and my family.

I also observed that Phoenix was a city that many Americans were moving to from other areas, so it seemed like a good choice. I had also worked quite a bit in the Middle East – Doha, Bahrain, and Dubai – and I was rather attracted to the desert climate. Home prices were also very cheap in Phoenix compared with London. At that time it was the seventh largest city in America; it is now the fifth.

**James:** I'd like to get into the actual performance of Jolly Roger and what makes you so successful. You have strong opinions on performing, especially for children. Your philosophy is that it makes sense to do the whole party packet: magic, games, bake a cake, pick the kids up from school, and so on.

**Roger:** That is a slight exaggeration, James, but I do think that if the two-hour birthday party package does not appeal to a performer, then he or she shouldn't do it. It has certainly worked very well for me on both sides of the Atlantic. I basically do forty-five minutes of games and competitions with the children, and then there is a break in the middle for cake or pizza. This is followed by my magic show.

**James:** I get exhausted just thinking about doing games, so it is definitely not for me. However, I will admit that these days it seems that parents are clueless when it comes to organizing games.

**Roger:** I agree with you, and that is why when I offer the two-hour party package it is always so popular. In these days of the working mother, the last thing they want to do is to have to spend extra time trying to figure out what games to play at little Johnny's birthday party.

**James:** Let's talk about the magic show. What kind of tricks are you personally drawn to?

**Roger:** I focus far more on the silly bits of business in my shows than I do on the magic tricks. This was discussed at length in some of my *M-U-M* columns. There is naturally a stronger magical context as the kids get older, but they still like to laugh a



lot as well as be deceived. I have plenty of light and shade in my shows, and usually include one of the classics like the Linking Rings, which I perform to music. I also do several of my own marketed routines in the show, like Ridiculous Ravioli and my Cloth of Invisibility.



**Performing at the Kidabra International convention**



I think the secret to being a successful children's entertainer is to be yourself and allow the children to be themselves. I have never had a problem with control; I think it is because the kids have respect for me and know they have boundaries. They also realize that I am allowing them to have fun. I have done shows where the kids are in hysterics, and the mums and dads have blank expressions on their faces. That is because they are kids. Kids and adults have totally different senses of humor, and they also perceive magic tricks very differently. Try doing Run Rabbit Run for an audience of adults and you will see my point! Do card tricks for kids, and they are unlikely to understand what you are doing.

**James:** Exactly! Let's move on to your present situation. I believe you have recently arrived at the great age of sixty-five, and your mother is nearly 101! Obviously you have longevity in your family, so I am interested in knowing about the present and the possible future of Jolly Roger. I understand you are writing a book?

**Roger:** This is correct. It is called *The Spiritual Stage*; I have been writing it for a number of years. It is now more or less

complete, so I am at the editing stage.

This is a book for everyone and anyone. The fundamental truths presented in the book apply to all genres of entertainment, and the spiritual principles and practices will manifest themselves in extraordinary ways, regardless of the reader's chosen journey. Because I am a professional magician and children's entertainer, the book will have a special significance to those in the world of magic. However, even if you have no desire to ever perform before an audience, I hope you will still benefit from the eclectic wisdom contained in the book. My intention is for this book to be a positive and thought-provoking thesis on why you become entertainers and how you can best achieve all of your goals, your dreams, and desires.

**James:** I understand you have also recently produced your first DVD. Tell me about that.

**Roger:** It is a two-hour DVD titled *Merry Mayhem and Magic*, in which you will learn about the true secrets of entertaining children. You will see me preparing a library show, setting it up, and then performing the show. I then talk about many of the terrific bits of business that you can incorporate in your shows using minimal or no props. The DVD ends with an exposure of my famous Cloth of Invisibility, with a clear explanation of how you can make this simple prop yourself. In this illusion, you float in the air behind a cloth, vanish, and reappear. The effect is a terrific ending to any show! Anyone interested in this can purchase it from the products page on my website, [www.ComicMagician.com](http://www.ComicMagician.com).

**James:** What else will Jolly Roger be up to in the foreseeable future?

**Roger:** I am very blessed to have a home in Sedona, Arizona, as well as one in Phoenix, so I plan on spending more of my time up there. It is one of the most beautiful places on the planet, and the scenery of the red rocks and the vortices inspires me to greater creativity! I also have a wonderful wife named Artha, who is truly an inspiration as well as being a tremendous help in my career. She created my website and is a computer genius. That is a real help because I am hopeless in that department! We have been married for fourteen years. I will still continue to do shows for both kids and adults, but I also hope to spend more time writing, hiking, gardening, and exploring spirituality and the mysteries of the universe. I may do a lecture tour when my book is published. I am also teaching myself ventriloquism, believe it or not! I have several ideas for new magic products I hope to launch. I am excited about the future, and I never forget how blessed I am to have made a living out of magic for most of my life. Along my journey, I have met so many wonderful people in the world of magic. Thank you fellow magi!

**James:** It has been a pleasure talking with you Roger, and I wish you continued success and happiness.

**Roger:** Thank you, James. It was great fun! ♦

This interview with Jolly Roger was conducted by James Munton. Readers of *M-U-M* will know of James through his columns in this magazine. Like Roger, James is a native of the United Kingdom. He currently resides in Dallas. James is a successful magician and the author of a book about scams, *The Con*. James and Roger first met when they were both invited to lecture at the first Kapital Kidvention in Washington, D.C., in 2009. Since then they have become great friends.



## THE AMAZING JEFFO – COMIC MAGICIAN (AND AMAZING PERSON)

Jeff Smith, aka The Amazing Jeffo, brings comedy and magic to schools, scout groups, and corporate events throughout the U.S. He's based in Minnesota and his specialty is a motivational speech on disability awareness. Young and old are fascinated by this presentation of funny and amazing magic that discusses overcoming obstacles and achieving success.

You see, The Amazing Jeffo is a blind magician. Jeffo bills himself as, "Not Your Typical Blind Magician." When Jeffo holds up a blue handkerchief and he states that it is red, the audience will correct him. Jeffo then quips, "You mean I'm color-blind, too?"

His wit and wisdom are well taken by groups that invite him to do his motivational speech or his comedy magic. He is also an author with a new book that chronicles his life while encouraging the reader with heartwarming stories. The chapters are all short and Jeff's sense of humor is heavily sprinkled throughout.

Jeffo's life is a fascinating story of an over-comer who will not let anything keep him down. In addition to blindness, he deals with crippling arthritis and a few other maladies. But he'd rather talk about possibilities or looking at the sunny side of the street. He is a natural wit and can also play a very mean harmonica.

I have seen The Amazing Jeffo present his captivating show many times, including a performance to a room filled with excited Cub Scouts. This group of scouts was wound up and full of energy, yet Jeffo kept them focused and glued to his every word.

We can learn a lot from Jeffo. When magicians are developing a new trick or routine it can sometimes feel like we are at a dead end. Jeffo suggests that in any situation, "rather than looking at how impossible things are, we need to focus on what is possible."

Jeffo has a comical way of looking at

life, and it has helped him stay positive. Recently he presented a lecture for a group of magicians. As an opener he stated, "Before I get started, I just wanted to say to those of you in the back of the room who can't see...join the club!" His casual style coupled with a sharp tuxedo and perfectly well-coiffed hair endears him to audiences. But it's his humor and outlook on life that make audiences really love him.

Among Jeffo's challenges is that he has to wear a lift on one of his legs because it is shorter. He wryly remarks, "Without that special shoe, I'd have to call myself 'Eileen.'" Jeffo loves to fool people with magic; he uses his special challenges to help with the task. For example, his hands show his arthritic condition, and he jokes it off by saying, "Because my hands look like a Picasso painting, they actually help me with my magic. I say to people, 'Look over there!' and they have no idea where I'm pointing. It fools them every time."

Magic has helped him overcome some difficult challenges. It gave him the confidence to get up and speak in front of an audience, something he never would have enjoyed in school. "With all the physical conditions that stressed my body, I began to stutter. I never raised my hand throughout school to avoid potential embarrassment. When I was a kid I hoped the Cub Scouts had a merit badge for tying a tongue into a square knot."

If you find yourself in need of a breakthrough, try Jeffo's Two-step Solution:

"I discovered a two-step method that helped me begin to overcome my challenges. As a kid I began thinking, 'How can I get people to see me as a person first, instead of focusing on my differences?' Subconsciously, and consciously, I discovered that the key was humor and magic!"

## AMAZING JEFFO'S ADVICE TO FAMILY ENTERTAINERS AND MAGICIANS

1) Be polite to the client and everyone you meet. Jeffo says, "All of us in the family entertainment profession have had unexpected challenges at one time or another. And even if the challenge is not of our own making, if not handled correctly it

## FOCUS ON FUNNY

BY NORM BARNHART

can make us look to be the goat."

2) In an intergenerational show, Jeffo likes to keep the parents mixed in with the kids; at the very least the adults should sit right behind the kids to be a part of what's going on. Otherwise, the parents think of you as an expensive baby sitter and, without thinking, will talk among themselves, which is distracting to you and the kids. Before the show begins, mention that the show will need some adult volunteers. Say, "If you feel uncomfortable in front of a crowd, I'll only choose volunteers from those adults who are not paying attention."

3) Stay calm with difficult volunteers; it makes you look professional. Be prepared by having a few good emergency lines or jokes. This makes you appear more talented than you really are. "I've had all kinds of unusual volunteers, including: a deaf person who didn't read lips and (unknown to me) a blind volunteer, who I asked to pick a card and memorize it." Jeffo has even had kids or drunken adults unexpectedly dig around in his change bag.

## FUNNY THINGS KIDS HAVE SAID TO AMAZING JEFFO

Once after a show, a little boy placed a quarter on Jeffo's magic stand. Jeffo told him, "You don't need to give me any money." The little fellow replied, "That's okay. There's plenty more where that came from."

During Jeffo's show at a school he commented to the audience, "I do birthday party shows, so tell your parents." A little girl piped up, "My birthday is in two weeks." Jeffo answered, "Well, be sure to tell your parents." The little one then impatiently replied, "They already know!"

Jeffo has written a very fun book that he offers after his shows and motivational speeches. In it he shares the perspectives, principles, and practical strategies he used to triumph over seemingly impossible circumstances. It is a very good book; I highly recommend it. It's for people who have been discouraged or been judged unfairly by others. You can learn more about Jeff's new book at: [www.AmazingJeffo.com](http://www.AmazingJeffo.com). ♦



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# THE HIGH ROAD

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

BY MICK AYRES

### A GIFT FROM THIS MAGI

As this year comes to a close, please accept this gift of scripted conjuring. The following drama is a joy to perform and has helped put a lot of food on my family table. Plus, it gives you a chance to practice all those theatrical dynamics we have discussed while traveling The High Road.

Happy Holidays to you all.

### CAST AWAY

For generations, conjurers have exploited the equivoque process to have a guest identify an isolated playing card. Performers such as David Berglas, Greg Arce, and Bryn Reynolds have all created presentations that easily make the jump from the “clever stunt” category into “showpiece” status.

Cast Away begins with a legendary story of conjuring’s grander days. The tale describes an unbelievable revelation of a single card that was performed only once by a master magician. This event is recreated – sort of. The guests are guided through a quirky adventure of the imagination and, unbelievably, every decision they make leads to a single, astonishing, humorous conclusion.

You will need an old Five of Spades from any non-essential deck and a plastic sandwich bag. Crumple the Five of Spades into a loose ball so only the back is showing. Hold it under water for a few moments until it is soaked thoroughly. You want it dripping. Put the card in the plastic bag and then put the bag in your right pocket mouth up. The bag simply keeps the card wet and protects the lining of your pocket. Practice retrieving the card smoothly – sometimes the bag wants to tag along with your hand as it leaves your pocket. If so, you can weigh the bag down with your key ring or an old Okito box.

The entertainment begins as you share an intriguing story.

*“One of the most recognized masters of the art of magic is a man you have probably never heard of. His name was Dai Vernon and his magic remains legendary to this day. I can only describe one of his best mysteries.*

*“In the late 1930s, Vernon was enjoying an evening boat cruise around the Statue of Liberty. During the excursion, a fellow passenger asked Vernon to perform a miracle – any miracle would do. Vernon brought forth a pack of cards and had one chosen, noted, and returned. The deck was shuffled and handed back to the gentleman. Vernon stood quietly at the rail of the ship until the ocean breeze came up a bit. Suddenly Vernon called out, ‘Now! Throw the pack straight into the wind!’ The fellow reluctantly did as requested and pitched the entire deck of cards over the rail. Vernon then turned to his companion and quietly said, ‘Look.’*

*“The fellow leaned over the rail and saw the cards spread out over the water. Then he noticed that all the cards were floating face down, except the one he had selected. Amazed, he watched his chosen card slowly sink into the depths along with the rest of the deck.*

*“Vernon only performed this trick one time for one person. Why? The amazed companion was a newspaper reporter who wrote an enthusiastic column about his experience for the morning edition. The story spread and quickly became legend. Was Vernon just a lucky performer in the right place at the right time? The sea-island boy in me thinks Vernon was on that boat to do some publicity fishing and he certainly hooked one.*

*“Being patient and willing to wait for the perfect audience to come along at the right time seems like a good idea to me.” Pause and smile. “I’m so glad you guys are here.*

*“Tonight, I’d like to recreate that event.*

*Now, I cannot possibly take all of you out on a cruise, though that would be a hoot, wouldn’t it? However, with a bit of imagination, we can come close to recreating that same waterborne mystery.”*

Approach a gentleman seated in the front row. Ask him to stand and face the audience. Say to him, “Work with me here. Open your mind. Imagine you are the proud owner of a house along a river. We are standing out on your boat dock. You can almost hear the water babbling underneath your feet.” Lean toward him and stage whisper, “Babble, babble, babble.” Look a bit sheepish and in a normal voice, say, “Sorry, I’m not any good at sound effects. But my wife, she’s great at babbling.

*“I am with you on the dock. I give you my deck of cards. A quick examination of the pack tells you a few cards are missing. But that’s no surprise; I’ve never claimed to work with a full deck.” This will get a small laugh. Embellish it however by saying, “The values of the cards are important in this drama, so I have removed the court cards and Aces so that we are only dealing with actual numbers.*

*“The wind is blowing steadily. We can hear it whistling past our ears.” Look across your eyebrows and scan the audience. Trust me: somebody will start making a wind-like noise. Lean toward your guest again and in a stage-whisper, say, “Aren’t you glad I didn’t say the wind was breaking in our ears?”*

### ODD OR EVEN

Continue in a more serious tone, “Hold the cards tightly. We’re about to get rid of half of them. In your mind, take the pack, pretend to throw it high into the air, and call out **odd or even!** Do it now!”

He will mime throwing cards into the air and will shout out an answer. No matter what he calls, dramatically say, “The deck explodes into the wind. The even cards



are being carried away on the breeze. The odd ones are floating back down onto the dock. Hurry, pick them up!" While the guest mimes picking up the cards, point out a few he "missed" and say, "Bet you're glad I'm not working with a full-deck now, buddy. Got 'em all? Good."

Say, "You've done great. But why should you have all the fun? Hand the cards to another guest, please." He hands them to a lady sitting in the audience.

## RED OR BLACK

"Ma'am, I know you're jumping into our world here, but imagine you're on this boat dock, too. He just handed you most of the odd cards from my deck; do they look odd to you? The water's babbling under our feet. The wind is blowing. For some reason, there's a bunch of cards stuck in the trees way over there...go figure. Are you with me here?!" She'll say yes.

"Good! We're going to toss half of these into the water. Please hand me all the red ones or all the black ones." As soon as she mimes doing this, ask, "Which color did you give me?" If she says black, tell her, "Okay, then scatter your red ones on the water." Wait for her to mime this action. If she tells you red, then you mime throwing the red ones on the water.

(When using equivoque, you seriously lessen the possibility of the audience perceiving this as a process-of-elimination technique simply by adding another person to the mix.)

Say, "Can you see the red ones drifting away on the current? You can? You realize we aren't really over water, don't you? Thank you for your help. You have been a great sport." Lead the audience in brief applause for her cooperation.

Turn to your first guest. "It's too windy out here. Let's get off this dock and back in your house."

## SPADES OR CLUBS

Pretend to hand the cards back to your guest. Say, "Sir, so far our adventures on your dock have left us with a bunch of black cards and they're all odd. Take a look if you don't believe me." Pause. "The whole pile consists of nothing but Spades and Clubs. Our imaginations have brought us out of the wind and into your home. Hey, nice digs! To keep in the spirit of things, we need water. Uh...which way to your bathroom? There's always water in a bathroom." Motion to the left and right as

you ask this last question. If the fellow is any kind of sport at all, he'll point out a direction.

Say, "Okay, we're standing over your tub and your kids have left a few inches of water in it. How convenient. Give me either the Spades or the Clubs. Which ones did you give me?" If he answers with Spades, say, "I'll shuffle 'em while you toss the Clubs into the tub." If his answer is Clubs, make a throwing motion and say, "There they go – into the water." Bend down and touch the floor for a second. As you straighten up, he'll look at you funny so tell him, "I just pulled the drain plug to let the water out. We don't need those cards anymore either."

## HIGH OR LOW

Ask your guest to choose another helper. Look at the new guest and say, "Ma'am, let me catch you up on the facts here. In our little drama, we started out on his boat dock with a deck of cards." Point out the other guests appropriately. "He got rid of the even cards, and she had the red cards thrown into the water. We came inside to his bathroom. He decided to let the Clubs go down the drain. This is where you come in."

Pretend to hand her the packet of cards. Say, "You and I are standing in his bathroom. (Do you think he got a bargain on this wallpaper?) You are holding what's left of the deck. They have left you with exactly four cards. They are all black, they are all Spades, and they are all odd: a Three, a Five, a Seven, and a Nine of Spades. Let's split them up in pairs – the high pair in one hand and the low pair in the other. We need to drop one pair. Hand me one. Did you give me the high pair or the low pair?"

If she answers low pair, then say, "The only standing water left is...in the toilet. So, I will drop the Three and Five into the porcelain throne." However, if she tells you she gave you the high pair, just eliminate the words "I will" from the above patter line. The major difference here is whether you mime doing it or she does. Thank her for her assistance.

## THREE OR FIVE

Now address your initial guest and recap briefly by saying, "One by one you all have discarded cards until, for some reason, we are standing here looking at a Three of Spades and a Five of Spades

floating in your toilet. Tonight, one of those two cards is getting a tour of the local water-treatment facility and one of them gets a stay of execution. Please shout out 'Three' or 'Five' while I flush."

Lean forward and pretend to press down on a toilet handle (if someone doesn't volunteer a flushing sound, then you are not doing this right). Simultaneously dip into your pocket and finger palm the wet card.

No matter what number your guest calls out, move your head in small circles and say, "Round and round they go. There goes the Three! Is that Five hanging on for dear life or what!? The Five of Spades is the sole survivor! It looks a little damaged but it's still in one piece. Here, hold your hand out."

He will hold out his hand but will have no idea why. Just stand there silent for a moment.

Say, "You know what this means, don't you? One of us has to rescue that card." This declaration will get a shake of the head from your guest and a laugh from your audience.

Smile and say, "No worries. I'll fetch."

Bend down and pretend to retrieve something from a spot about a foot above the floor. As you straighten up, bring the card into view at your fingertips. Don't make a move out of it. Just allow it to be visible. Give it a little shake and then drop the wet card into his open hand. His reaction will be obvious and dramatic.

In all seriousness, quickly recap the events: "Our wild recreation of a famous legend has been achieved through decisions made by all of you. Everyone's choices came down to the Five of Spades." Point to the card your guest is holding. Say, "Please open that card. I know it is wet; blame the guy who owns the toilet."

As he reveals the Five of Spades, remind him, "You're not likely to forget this moment as long as you live. But, just in case, you can keep the card. Seriously – I don't want it back."

With just minor tweaking of the script you can easily direct the finale of Cast Away toward another target card, but only if you are comfortable with the ebb and flow of the dialogue. The presentation must be smooth with no hesitation in your responses. ♦

*Cast Away was originally published in Noetic License (c. 2008). Mick Ayres welcomes input at mick@mickayreswares.com.*



# ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS STAGE MAGIC AND THEORY FROM DENNY HANEY

BY SCOTT ALEXANDER

## BUYING MAGIC VS. LEARNING MAGIC

*"I was aiming for show business from early days, and magic was the poor man's way of getting in: you buy a trick for two dollars and you've got an act."*  
– Steve Martin

As sad as this quote is, it is painfully true. It may not be a good act, but it is an act nonetheless. Since Denny has all but retired from his touring show days and has opened up a magic studio (notice store or shop is not in the title), he has become, by default, a merchant of magic – a dubious demonstrator of effects he is trying to get you to buy. Yes, a dealer! Jim Steinmeyer points out in his terrific booklet *Allow Me to Give You Some Really Awful Advice* that "...magic dealers are not your friends. Their job is not to make you a better magician, consult on your act, offer advice, or correct your mistakes. Their job is to sell you magic tricks."

Denny seems to be the only exception to this rule. He will tell his customers, "There are two ways of doing magic. You can either buy magic, or you can learn magic." Despite his chosen path of dealing magic, Denny (much to his own detriment) has endeavored to create a studio that, of course, sells you magic tricks. But he also tries to do the right thing by building a relationship with his customers, trying to get them really learning magic. Denny reflects, "When I got off the road and opened a magic shop, after a while I felt really low. I remember talking to another magic dealer who shall remain nameless who told me, 'Denny, one thing you gotta learn about this business is to just stop trying to sell the customers what you know they need; just sell them what they want.' Well, if that's what I have to do to survive in this business, then I might as well just close up and get out of it, because that was not my

intention when I opened my studio. My intention was to move magic forward and to teach younger guys how to learn magic." Indeed, Denny has turned out a lot of professionals from his shop over the years. Denny says, "These guys learned magic the right way. You see, when you just buy a trick, it's just this one trick or that one trick; you're not really learning magic. But when you actually learn magic, you can do magic with anything. Then, you go to the magic shop and buy the tools you need to do the magic."

## GETTING YOUR FIX

Now Denny is the first to admit that we all like to have the latest little toy that comes out. There is a ton of stuff offered up each and every week, and most of it ends up in "that drawer" (Photo 1). But how do you know that you can trust a slickly produced thirty-second trailer? It looks so cool; we just have to have it. Denny jokes, "Let's imagine that you're hooked on heroin. You can buy from the dealer you trust, or you can buy from many unknown dealers and eventually you will get the poison and you will die."



**The magic drawer**

We all want that new rush or high of performing the latest slickly produced miracle peddled on the market, which is certain to make us as famous as Criss Angel. But sometimes when it comes to magic, you must utter those immortal words of Nancy Reagan from the glory days of yesteryear: "Just say no!" With a glut of magic in the

marketplace, how can we tell the good from the bad, since we know all ads (especially for magic tricks) can be purposely deceiving? For example, here's an ad you'll never see in a magic catalog:

*"This brand new effect is actually a copy of an old effect that you can find in your classic magic books. Although not very effective for laymen and impractical to do in most working situations, it is made from cheap materials to keep the price down. Although it may not last you very long, it is cheap enough for you to keep buying them as they break and no longer work. It won't fool anyone, won't catch them by surprise, and has virtually no entertainment value whatsoever. Be the first in your magic club to show the members this worthless piece of junk. Be ready the next time they say, 'What's new?' Take your time ordering, because there are plenty to go around; we're stuck with five gross of these things!"*

Denny says, "I receive many calls at this studio asking about ads that our customers have read. We must remember that all ads concerning tricks, books, and videos are designed to sell that product, whether that product is good, bad, or indifferent. That is why you will never see an ad similar to the one above. Unfortunately, we have all bought the newest or the latest and it sits on our shelf until we unload it at a magic flea market or an online auction site."

## YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Growing up in magic, we've all been sold some junky trick from a catalogue. For me it was Moon Glow. What was promised to be an ethereal floating orb of mystery ended up being a Styrofoam ball on a piece of piano wire. This happens readily on the Internet now, instead of in print, like the old days. Steinmeyer points out that, "As for the Internet, here's the genius of the new system: if they don't have to look you in the eyes, it's easier to sell you that stuff without feeling guilty." Like in life,



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if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Buying quality stuff can be well worth the investment. If you are a professional performer, would you want to walk out on stage in front of an audience wearing the cheapest suit you can buy? Why then is it when we buy magic that we try to get the cheapest stuff we can find. We often spend a lot of money on cars or caring for our lawn or our clothes because it makes us feel good and we value the way others perceive us. You should think about your magic in these terms as well.

Denny remembers, "If I decided I needed a prop or a tool, let's say it was a Dove Pan or a Tear-apart Vanish, I would look through the magic catalogs and check the prices. It seems like today when we go to buy something we are guided by the Walmart mentality and always go for the cheapest. I did totally the opposite. When I needed a prop, I found the most expensive one I could find and bought that. You might say 'Why would you do that? You're wasting money.' No, I was *saving* a lot of money. I figured if I bought the most expensive one, odds were it was the best one being made and it would last me the longest. Over my lifetime, that has proven to be true. I remember once buying a set of Owen Linking Rings for five hundred dollars. Now some might say, 'Five hundred dollars for Linking Rings, you must be out of your mind. I can get a set of Linking Rings for \$27.50!' Yes, but if you perform them often, you are going to buy a lot of those sets for \$27.50. But when you buy a set for \$500, chances are it won't break, it won't get dinged up, and the chrome won't crackle and peel off. In other words, you'll never have to buy another set. I always went for quality and that usually means expensive. I knew and relied on Owen Magic because of their reputation for quality. I could trust them. So dropping that kind of cash on my rings seemed to me a safe investment. I got to personally know them and therefore trust them." These types of companies are still around. If you are serious about magic, seek out people in the industry you feel comfortable relying on. Denny says, "Buying cheap magic is the most expensive thing you can do."

## GET WHAT YOU NEED

Denny recalls, "A kid about eighteen years old came into my shop and told me

he wanted to get more into magic. I asked him what kind of stuff he was interested in. He said he really liked cards, but he didn't think he could do cards, because as he put it, 'Cards are too hard.' I showed him a few Harry Lorayne tricks and he said, 'Yeah, that's the kind of stuff I'd like to do.' I asked him if he had any books on cards. He said, 'I only have one, it's Jim Swain's *Miracles with Cards*.' And I said, 'Where did you get that book?' Well, he went on the Internet and bought it, and naturally he was lost, because that is a really advanced book.

"There's the problem. The Internet cannot filter your needs. They don't know you, where your level is, or what you would most benefit from. There is no interaction; it's very impersonal. All they do online is take your credit card number and send you what you order. There is no relationship between you and the online store." This kid was stuck, and wanted to learn card magic, but he was actually learning to hate it. No one gave this kid any guidance. He just bought that book at random from an online store. Denny said, "Bob Sheets and a bunch of pros were sitting around a table at a convention and they were trying to come up with how many magic shops were owned and operated by a professional performer who could really offer you real world performing advice from decades of performing experience. They could only come up with two at the time: Magic Inc., back when Jay Marshall was still alive, and my shop. They couldn't come up with anyone else. Anyone can be a magic dealer today. Anyone can man a website and sell magic tricks. They can sell them out of their basement or their bedroom or just have a distributor drop ship the thing to you and not actually have anything in stock."

Let's take a look at some of Denny's thoughts about how to learn magic and how to buy magic.

## HOW TO LEARN MAGIC

1. Magic is a social art; it is a performing art. When you are performing for an audience, it is live. The best way to learn magic is to actually do magic for real people in a live situation. Denny said, "Jeff McBride pointed out something to me. He said that often you will see magicians sitting at a convention or in a magic shop,

and one guy says, 'Hey, what are you working on?' The guy says, 'I'm working on Vernon's Cutting the Aces; would you like to see it?' Then he picks up his phone, scrolls around, and plays a video of himself doing the trick. They are not doing it live! They might as well be halfway across the country watching it on YouTube. No learning or interaction is going on there. There is nothing as educational as a real brick-and-mortar magic shop or a magic convention hotel lobby session, where you can sit and discuss things live. Magicians of all ages and skill levels came in to jam and discuss magic. You see the young kids today at the same table and they are texting each other right across the table. We are losing the ability to socialize with each other because of the overuse of technology.

"You can see this beginning to show drastically in many of the younger magicians. When I watch some of these kids begin to perform, they cannot verbally communicate with the audience. They could text the patter for the trick, but they have difficulty in speaking to an audience. This is just the beginning of it. Magic is a social art and it should be learned socially, not electronically. When you perform live for someone, it is the only time the routine will happen that exact way, and thus it becomes special. When something is already shot and up on YouTube, it will always look the same. There will never be an adlib or a funny audience moment. It is there, permanently fixed in time. There is very little chance for any growth." The point is, make an effort to go to a convention, visit a real magic shop, and perform for your peers live. This is how we discover new things, not just from surfing the web. I loved hanging and discussing magic with all the magicians when I ran Denny's shop in Vegas (Photo 2).

If you just can't get out to those things or have no real magic shop to hang in and session, then take advantage of Skype or Face Time and at least share and exchange ideas using this medium face to face. Although, in a sense, it is still learning magic electronically, it is better than trying to go it all on your own.

2. This is the biggie: Pick something you want to learn and read everything you can get your hands on about it. Unearth everything you can on that particular subject and make an informed decision based on your own research. Denny says,



Photo 2

### **Denny & Lee shop in Las Vegas, Nevada**

“Guys ask me things like, ‘I want to learn dove magic. What’s the best DVD; what’s the best harness?’ Well, there’s no such thing. Ask Lance Burton, he’ll tell you one thing; ask Shimada, he’ll tell you something else. All of these guys were great acts, but each one is going to give you a different opinion. Therefore, gather as much information as you can on the subject you want to learn. Don’t overlook books, pamphlets, and magazine articles. A lot of good material gets buried in print; it is hidden in plain sight in an easily glossed-over magazine article.

“Let’s say I wanted to do the Egg Bag. I would take any information in print, from books, articles, etc., anything I could find on the Egg Bag and Xerox them. I would put them in a binder labeled ‘Egg Bag.’ When I wanted to study a trick thoroughly, I would go through it and get ideas and thoughts that would spark my imagination. That’s how I worked on my stuff. All the information was there at my fingertips. When I was learning the Bill in Lemon, I heard Jarrow did a tremendous version. I hunted down everything I could find in print on Jarrow, and put it in the ‘Bill in Lemon’ binder.” You have to research everything you are going to do or you just end up being shallow, one dimensional, or repeating mistakes others have made in the past. By knowing everything about an effect, there is also great opportunity for you to develop a presentation or method that is original to you.

3. Get in front of a video camera and rehearse. The camera does not blink. If you can fool the camera, you can fool your audience. Just make sure to shoot it from various angles to make sure you are covered. This way you can objec-

tively just sit back and watch yourself the way an audience would.

4. Let’s not forget the old chestnut of practicing in front of a mirror. Yes, certainly take advantage of video technology and tape your act and evaluate it that way. That can be a valuable tool, but remember, learning from videos can be a lengthy process. Denny says, “In a mirror, you can correct your mistakes instantly.”

You are learning in real time, without having to go back and keep scanning a video file to see what you did wrong. Your learning improves exponentially. Remember to also have a mirror on the left and right of you. This helps you get a good grasp on your angles.

5. Try it on your peers. Go to a magic meeting or club function. The next convention you go to bring your stuff, find an empty room and some willing audience members, and do some of the act for them. You will be sure to get tons of advice from your fellow magicians. Not all of it will be good, but at least you will get knowledgeable feedback from other artists who will give you their opinions. Then take from them what you like and discard what you don’t.

6. Once you have it mastered, try it out on your family and friends. Have a few friends over and try your new material out on them at a party or a dinner. The next time you are out socializing at a bar or restaurant put that new trick in your pocket and bust it out after dinner or at the bar. These people are the hardest to fool because they know you. They can more easily pick up on your tells and your idiosyncrasies that may give away some sleight or move you are trying to conceal. If you can fool them, you’re ahead of the game.

7. Take it and put it out there for real people. You have to start doing it. So many guys have been working on something for twenty years and have never done it live for anyone. I had been working on card manipulation for years; it was Denny who finally pushed me out there and said just do the damn thing. He said just get out there and do it; and he was right. I wondered to myself what the heck I had been waiting

for. I felt that it was not perfect yet and that I didn’t have it down. But let’s face it; if you can do a credible performance for yourself, your peers, and your friends, it’s time to put it in front of the public. The only way to do it is to get it out there. Slydini once said that you haven’t mastered a trick until you’ve done it five hundred times in front of an audience.

## **HOW TO BUY MAGIC**

Here are a few suggestions from Denny that will help you make wiser decisions on the magic you buy in the future:

1. “Know the creator, inventor, or manufacturer of the product. If you have had other products by that person or company and you have liked them, odds are you will be pleased with your new purchase.”

2. “Get to know and trust your dealer. Find a dealer that you can trust and perhaps even talk to about your intended purchase. There are dealers who will give you an honest personal appraisal of a book, video, DVD, or effect. They can be reached by phone, email, or letter. If you have been pleased with their products, their service, and their recommendations in the past, then by all means stick with them. If you have been burned in the past, odds are you will get burned again.”

3. “When something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be wary of glowing descriptions of impossible effects at cheap prices. That only makes sense, doesn’t it? Now don’t get me wrong. Many inexpensive effects are very deserving of glowing reviews. Just be careful of where the review comes from. Almost all magic has merit; even a weak effect can be made into a masterpiece by a great performer.”

4. “When many versions of an effect are offered, your best bet is to get the highest quality you can afford. There are many manufacturers known for the high quality of the items they produce. Although the cost is more, the quality is usually in direct proportion to the price. There is a reason for this. If you honestly want to stand in front of a group of your friends or a paying audience and perform an effect, why on earth would you want to show them the cheapest one you can possibly get? Confidence in your equipment comes across as confidence in your performance. If at this moment you can’t afford to perform with something that is of quality, it is better not



to perform that particular effect rather than show a piece that is poorly made and not reliable in operation. Wait until you have saved a bit more and buy the best you can get. It will serve you forever, rather than showing up at the next auction.”

5. “Read! Read! Read! Develop that library and read everything you can about your magic. Knowledge is power. The more you know about magic, the wiser your purchases will be. The more you know, the less likely you will be taken in by a flowery description of the world’s greatest magic trick for only \$3.99.”

6. “When in doubt, go for the classics. It is very difficult to make a bad purchase when the effect has stood the test of time. If an effect has been proven to please audiences for a hundred years and is still pleasing them today, don’t you think this just might have some merit? New and improved often means that the initial simplicity of a classic has been destroyed, only to make it different to impress other magicians who are already familiar with the effect.”

7. “Learn to think like a layman. Although very difficult to do, try to imagine watching this effect from the seat of a layman. Sometimes our knowledge of magic and its principles can get in

the way of seeing an effect for its pure entertainment value to an audience of non-magicians.”

8. “Treat your magic purchases with respect. Don’t settle for junk. Strive to use the best props, read the best books, and perform the best you can by practicing and rehearsing. Give your chosen art the respect it deserves. If you don’t, then you don’t respect the art you have chosen as a hobby or a profession. If this is the case, then I highly recommend collecting stamps or coins. It is far less demanding of your time and effort. If only a small percentage of the magic buying society will learn from these words, magic will be better off for it.”

9. “If you see an effect that normally retails for a high price advertised online in a shop or on an auction site for a surprisingly low price, do some investigating and ask questions of the seller. You may be purchasing a rip-off or a poorly made copy of the product. It is always best to buy directly from the creator.”

In this series we have tracked Denny’s career from the stage to the store (Photo 3). Over these twelve months we have explored one man’s routines, philosophies, opinions, and approaches to magic, his long and successful career as an en-

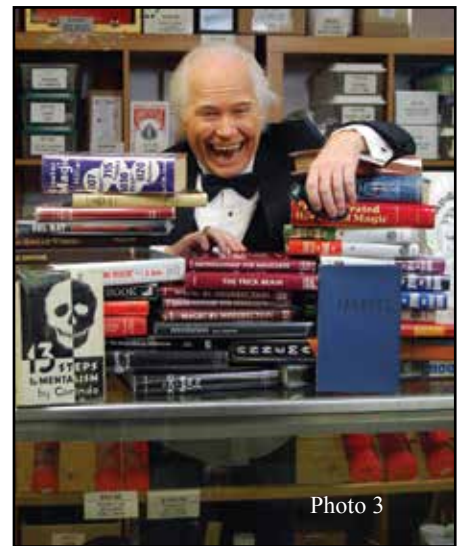


Photo 3

**Denny in his shop**

tertainer, and his new fledgling career as a magic store owner. I hope his insights and attitudes can help you in some way to become a better magician. I know for sure they have helped me. If this is the case, I think that Denny would be delighted to know that you now stand on his shoulders (as he has stood on those giants who came before him), pushing our beloved art form forward into the future, while being always mindful of the past. ♦

## S.A.M. SPOTLIGHT

### ALESHIA SPIERS

Life Member Aleshia Spiers is enjoying a spell of success after winning the Variety Artists Club of New Zealand’s Pat McMinn Rising Star Award. The fourteen-year-old New Zealand magician received her award at a black-tie event in October at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Auckland.

Aleshia is a fourth-generation magician and has been mentored by her grandfather Alan Watson, who is a DRAGON Award winner. Her great-great-great-great uncle Oswald Ashton also performed magic during World War I and was one of the four founding members of the New Zealand Society of Magicians in 1920.

A passion for magic was sparked for Aleshia at age four, after walking out on stage for the first time, eagerly assisting her grandfather on stage at Rainbows End. Ever since that day she has had a genuine interest in being a magician. “I like making

people feel happy; it makes me feel happy to bring a smile to peoples’ faces,” she said.

Aleshia continues a family tradition by winning the prestigious Rising Star Award. Her mother Melanie, along with twin sister Larissa Watson, won the same award sixteen years ago. Her aunt Nicole Watson also won the award nineteen years ago.

In the last year, Aleshia also won the under-seventeen close-up magic competition and was awarded the funniest magic routine prize in the adult category at the thirty-first New Zealand International Magicians Convention in Christchurch.





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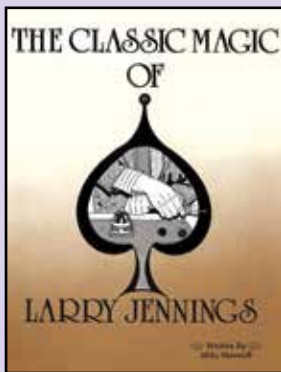
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**Excerpt From:**  
*The Classic Magic of Larry Jennings*

**Written By:**  
Mike Maxwell

**Description:**  
Ebook, 284 pages

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

The years from the early 1960s through 1980 were fertile times for the creation of close-up magic. Much of the magic that was discussed and performed by card and coin enthusiasts around the world came from the Magic Castle and the group that had gathered to be near Dai Vernon. Of that group, two names became prominent – Bruce Cervon (whose book, *Ultra Cervon*, was featured last month) and Larry Jennings.

Jennings had moved from Georgia to meet Vernon. In the Dedication of *The Classic Magic of Larry Jennings*, he explains why, “I told myself that if I didn’t go see the place and meet the ‘legend’ now, I would never get the chance again. He was already into his seventies, and I would soon be tied down for good! Off I went to Hollywood, California, and the Magic Castle...never to return!”

Larry’s creations appeared in the magazines of the time, including *Genii*, the *Pallbearer’s Review*, and *Epilogue*, but it was not until 1986 that a large collection of his tricks was published. Written by Mike Maxwell, *The Classic Magic of Larry Jennings* is a feast for lovers of close-up magic.

The two tricks in this month’s Ebook Nook are representative of Larry’s approach to card and coin magic. Peripatetic Coins is an elegant handling of the Coins Across plot that first appeared in Charlie Miller’s “*Magicana*” column in *Genii*. It requires only basic coin technique. Ambitious Classic is Larry’s handling of a Bruce Cervon plot that took the magic world by storm when Derek Dingle performed a version of it on national TV. It is a refreshing change from “take a card” tricks and is not too difficult.

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

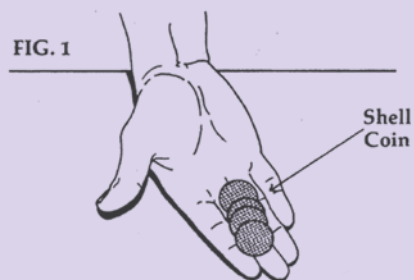
## PERIPATETIC COINS

1965 was a very good year for magic. In that year, Larry released two routines that were destined to change the face of magic. The first was his famous Chop Cup routine. Shortly after, Peripatetic Coins was published. Peripatetic Coins is a Coins Across routine that is exceedingly clean. It first appeared in *Genii* magazine’s “*Magicana*” column. There are no quick moves to arouse the spectator’s suspicions. It can even be performed in slow motion and still look great. The routine has the added plus of having the last coin travel to the spectator’s hand in a startling manner.

**Effect:** Four coins invisibly travel from one hand to the other in a mystifying fashion. For the climax, the last coin travels to join the others in the spectator’s hand.

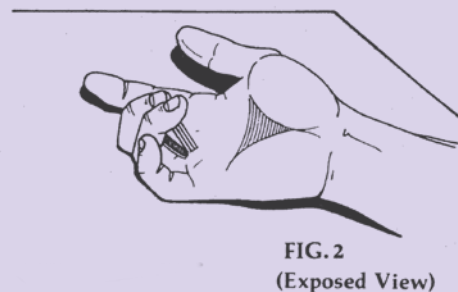
**Requisites:** Four half dollars and a matching shell.

**Method:** Begin with the shell on the second coin from the bottom in the stack of four. Place the stack on the base of your right fingers so that the lowermost coin is at finger palm position. Slide the top three coins forward so that four coins are displayed. The shell is still on the second coin from the bottom. The top three coins should be spread forward so that about three-quarters of the lower coin is visible (Figure 1). Display these coins to the spectator on your right, patterning, “*Four coins, correct?*” After displaying the coins, close your fingers, squaring the coins.

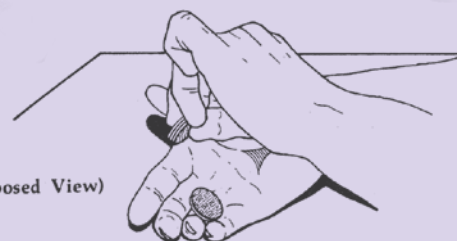


Due to the forward shelving of the coins, the fleshy portion of the second joints of your second and third fingers should be trapped between the lower coin and the three upper coins (Figure 2).

Tilt your right palm toward you as your left thumb goes into this coin break from the little finger side so that you can grasp the



three coins (and the shell) above the break with your first finger and thumb. Lift the three coins away from your right hand as you execute a wrist turn to conceal the coin you have left behind in finger palm position (Figure 3). Continue to revolve your right hand until it is palm down and use it to grasp the stack of three between your first finger and thumb in edge grip. Once done, revolve your left hand palm up and place the coins singly onto





your fingers, first allowing the lower coin to drop out of the shell into finger palm position, and then overlapping them toward your fingertips. Display the coins on your left hand to the spectator on your left. Patter, "Four coins, right!" After the affirmative reply, patter, "You see, this trick is not only entertaining, it's educational as well!"

You will now have four coins displayed on your left fingers and one coin concealed in right hand finger palm. Close your left fingers allowing the coins to nest. Turn both fists palm down and make a slight tossing motion with your left hand toward your right. Turn your left hand palm up and open it slowly. Allow the coins to slide forward, displaying three. The shell should be on the lowermost coin, which should be in position to be finger palmed. Turn your right hand palm up and open it, displaying that one coin has traveled across. Dump this coin to the table. Close your left fingers, squaring the coins. Turn your hand palm down, allowing the stack to turn over onto your fingertips. Place your thumb on top of the stack pinning it against your fingers which now straighten so the stack is held between your fingertips and thumb.

Place the stack onto your right fingers at finger palm position. Allow the top two coins to slide forward and once again display three coins to the spectator on your right. Grasp the three coins in left first finger and thumb edge grip while they are still in a spread condition. Lift the two coins and the shell as you execute a wrist turn to hide the coin that remains behind in finger palm position (Figure 4). Turn your right hand palm down and grasp the stack between your forefinger and thumb (Figure 5). Reverse count the three coins (two coins and a shell) onto your palm-up left hand, with the first coin counted going into finger palm position. The shell should now be on top of the stack. Display the coins in this condition to the spectator on your left.

Reach for the single coin on the table with your right hand, and as you do, classic palm the finger-palmed coin (see **Comments**). Close your left hand, allowing the coins to nest. Turn both

hands to a fist down position. Patter, "You'll hear this one go." Make a tossing motion from your left hand to your right, during which you release the classic-palmed coin so that it falls onto the coin on your fingers, indicating that a second coin has traveled across. Patter, "You always hear it, but you never see it!" Turn your left hand palm up and open it to display two coins. Turn your right hand palm up and open it to display two coins, and then dump them to the table. Take the uppermost coin (the one with the shell on it) into your right hand.

Move your right hand forward to display its coin, and then move it back as your left moves forward. As you are displaying the coin in your left hand, your right hand executes Larry's shell steal. The coin with the shell should rest on the second joints of your second and third fingers. Turn your palm slightly toward you as your thumb moves to the inner edge of the coin. Move your thumb upward, pivoting the shell forward and off the coin, which stays on your fingers (Figure 6). Curl your second and third fingers inward to conceal the coin as your thumb and forefinger hold the shell in a display position (Figure 7). Place the shell so that it overlaps the coin in your left hand.

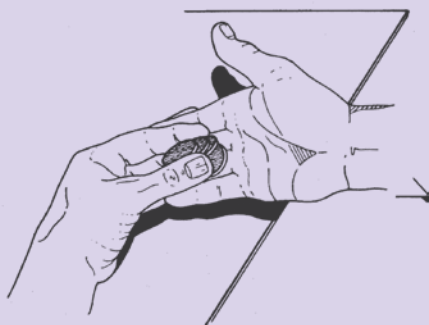


FIG. 4 (Exposed View)

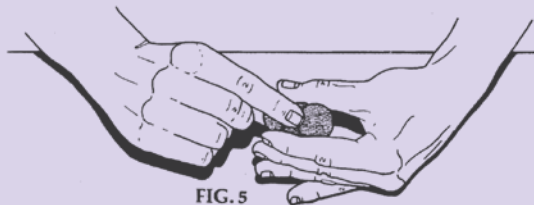


FIG. 5



FIG. 6 (Exposed View)

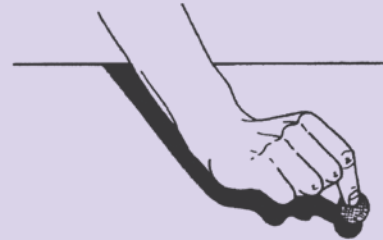


FIG. 7

Your right hand now picks up the two coins on the table, classic palming the concealed coin in the process. Close both hands and turn them palm down, allowing the shell to nest over the coin in your left hand. Make a tossing motion towards your right hand allowing the classic-palmed coin to fall audibly onto the other two. Open your left hand to display a single coin. Turn your right hand palm up and open it to display that the third coin has traveled across. Dump the three coins to the table. Pick up the three tabled coins and stack them on a spectator's outstretched palm. Patter, "You've seen me cause coins to travel from my left hand to my right hand. Now would you like to see the last coin travel visibly from my hand to your hand?" She will always answer in the affirmative.

Place the single coin (shell side up) onto the stack in her hand and look at her in mock triumph. This will invariably get a laugh. It not only gets a laugh but also sets you up for the climax. Close

her hand and patter, "I will make the last coin go invisibly just for you." As soon as her hand is closed, look for a coin as though you had misplaced it, then realize that you left the fourth coin in her hand accidentally. Patter, "Oh, I need a coin to work with." Ask her to open her hand. When she opens her hand grasp her fingers with your left hand and remove the shell from the top of the stack with your right fingers (Figure 8). Immediately close her hand for her. You are now set to go into the climax. The spectator already has four coins in her hand.

Place the shell onto the base of your right second finger in preparation for a purse palm. Execute the purse palm vanish, pretend-

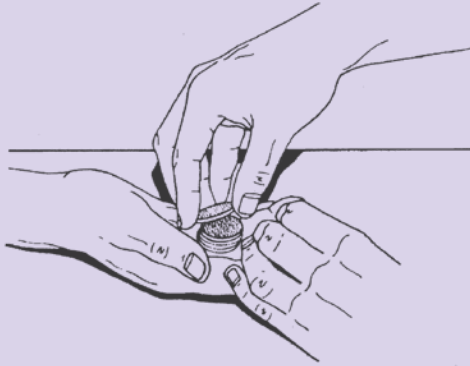


FIG. 8 (Exposed View)

ing to place the coin into your left hand but actually retaining it in right hand purse palm (Figure 9). Rub the back of your left hand with your right fingers. Rub the back of her hand with your right fingers. Patter, "I'm going to make my coin disappear. Sometimes I get lucky; when my coin disappears your three also disappear." Open your left hand to display that the last coin is gone.

Ask her if her three coins have disappeared. She will say that they have not. Ask her if she still has three coins. She will say

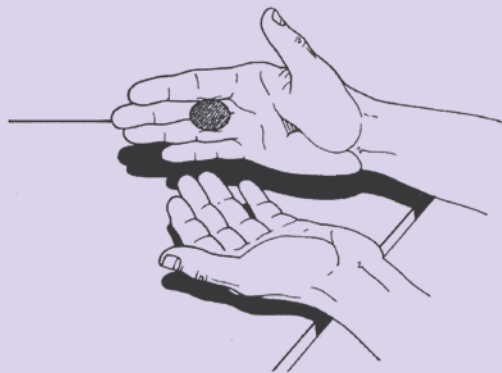


FIG. 9 (Exposed View)

yes. The reason that Larry does this is to get her to admit that she has only three coins, thus making the revelation of the fourth coin more effective. If you simply ask her how many coins she has, she could say four, making the revelation of the fourth coin anticlimactic. Have her now open her hand to display that the fourth coin has travelled across. Go south with the shell at your earliest opportunity.

**Comments:** A note should be mentioned concerning the classic palming of a coin as you pick up another from the table. When

you reach the point in the routine where you must do this, execute the classic palm as your fingers touch the tabled coin to pick it up. Your second, third, and fourth fingers will close naturally, making this easy. In this way the palming action is masked by the action of picking up a coin. The audience cannot become suspicious because you did the dirty work under cover of a natural action. So remember, press the coin into classic palm as you pick up the coin from the table. These little touches can make all the difference in the world.

## AMBITIOUS CLASSIC

This is Larry's Ambitious Classic routine, a series of Ambitious Card moves with a small packet. Just about every cardman in the world has some work on this timeless piece of magic. It is so straightforward and magical looking that it cannot fail to entertain. The impromptu double-backed card is utilized effectively for several wonderfully convincing penetrations. You might be interested to know that Larry did not give this routine its name. At first, it had no name and circulated among the underground. By the time it saw print however, others saw fit to call it Ambitious Classic.

**Effect:** The Ace through Five of Spades are displayed. Each of the cards repeatedly rise to the top after they have been placed elsewhere in the packet. For the climax, the Five of Spades changes into a red Five.

**Requisites:** A deck of playing cards.

**Method:** Spread through the face-up deck and cut a red Five to the back. Next, run through and up-jog the Ace, Two, Three, Four, and Five of Spades. Strip out the Spade cards and flip them face down. Place the Spade cards to the back of the face-up deck. Turn the deck face down, bringing the Spade cards face up on the top. Spread the face-up Spade cards and obtain a left little finger break below the top face-down card of the deck (the red Five). Arrange the Spades in Ace-to-Five order from the face. Square the Spade cards against the base of your left thumb, adding the card above the break to the back of the packet. Immediately lift all six cards above the break at the inner right corner with your right hand, fingers below and thumb above. Table the deck.

As you carry out the preceding actions, patter, "Most of you are too young to remember the entertainment medium called vaudeville, but I'm sure that you've heard of it. In vaudeville, entire families used to travel and perform together. We'll let the Ace through Five of Spades represent the Spade family; they are ground and aerial tumblers."

The packet should be in the following order from face to back. Ace, Two, Three, Four, Five of Spades, and then the face-down red Five. Hold the packet face up in left hand in dealing position. Pull down on the lower card of the packet so you can obtain a left little finger break above it. Your right hand now comes over the packet and takes it in overhand grip. Peel the Ace of Spades and the card below the little finger break into your left hand with your left thumb. This is a Veesser move. These two cards must stay in alignment so the audience believes that you have only peeled the Ace into your hand. Patter, "The Ace of Spades is the youngest son of the family. Even in the early days of vaudeville they had child labor laws. The younger son wasn't allowed to be overworked. In fact, he was only allowed to perform one trick."

Next, peel the Two into your left hand, simultaneously stealing the two cards from your left hand back under the packet. Patter, "The Two of Spades is the middle son." Immediately follow this

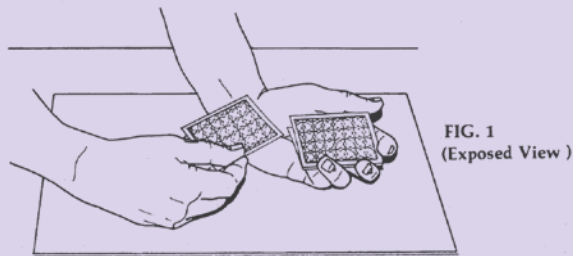


by peeling the Three onto the Two. Patter, *“The Three of Spades is the beautiful young daughter.”* Next, peel the Four onto the Three. Patter, *“The Four of Spades is the eldest son.”* Set the remaining triple card (the Five of Spades, the Ace of Spades, and the face-down red Five) on top of the Four. Patter, *“The Five of Spades is the old man himself.”* Flip the packet face down. The order of the cards from the top down is as follows: face-down Two, face-down Three, face-down Four, face-up red Five, face-down Ace, face-down Five of Spades.

Continue patterning, *“The Spade family is a traveling troupe of tumblers. As I stated earlier, the youngest son, the Ace, can only perform one feat of acrobatics.”* As you patter, execute a block turnover of all the cards above the bottom one. This will display the Ace. Take the Ace off the packet with your right hand as a single card. This is possible due to the impromptu double-backer situation.

You will now place the Ace second from the bottom of the face-down packet. Larry has a way of accomplishing this that differs from the standard little finger pull down. Hold the packet in left hand dealing position. Your forefinger should be curled around the outer end. The inner left side of the packet should lie along the fleshy base of your thumb. Your second, third, and fourth fingers are on the right side of the packet. By applying downward pressure with the left forefinger you should be able to pull down the bottom card of the packet with the fleshy base of your thumb. Turn the Ace face down and place it into this break (Figure 1). Square up.

Grasp the packet in right-hand overhand grip and revolve it palm up to show that the Ace is not on the bottom. (By the



way, when you revolve the hand palm up the spectators will see the Five of Spades. This is the card that will change into the red Five at the conclusion of the routine. The more times the spectators see this card, the more it is subliminally reinforced. Larry has designed the routine so that the Five of Spades is logically displayed a number of times.) Revolve the hand palm down and replace the cards into left-hand dealing position. Patter, *“The Ace is not on the bottom, and it is not on top.”*

Snap your fingers (or make whatever gesture you deem appropriate). Execute a block turnover (all the cards above the bottom one) using a push-off technique to show that the Ace has jumped back to the top. Push off the Ace as a single card. This is possible due to the impromptu double-backer. Table the Ace face up.

Patter, *“The middle son, the Two of Spades, is a little older than the Ace. Thus, he can perform his trick twice. You’ve heard it said that a magician never repeats a trick. Well, the Two of Spades is going to do it twice.”* As you patter, turn the top card of the packet face up (the Two) and take it into your right hand. Pull down on the lower card of the deck with the heel of your thumb as already described and insert the Two face down into the break created. Square up.

Tell the spectators that the Two is in the middle, not on the bottom, and not on the top. As you patter, grasp the packet in right-hand overhand grip and revolve palm up to show that the Two is not on the bottom (the Five of Spades will show). Revolve the hand palm down and place the packet into left-hand dealing position. Turn over the top card to show that the Two is not on top (the Three will show). Make sure that you turn over a single card using the same technique that you use for your multiple turnovers. Flip the Three face down on top.

Snap your fingers and execute a quadruple turnover (all the cards above the bottom one) to show that the Two has jumped back to the top. Once again, due to the impromptu double-backer situation, you can push off the Two as a single card. Tell the audience that you will make the two repeat its performance. Pull down on the lower card of the packet with the heel of your thumb and insert the face-down Two second from the bottom. Square up.

Grasp the packet in right-hand overhand grip and revolve palm up to show that the Two is not on the bottom (the Five of Spades will show). Revolve back palm down and place the packet into left-hand dealing position. Snap your fingers. Execute a quadruple turnover to show that the Two has risen to the top again. You can remove the Two from the top of the packet as a single card due to the impromptu double-backer situation. Place the face-up Two on the table with the Ace. These two penetrations are extremely effective.

Patter, *“Next up is the beautiful daughter. She will be assisted by her older brother and her father.”* Turn over the top card of the packet and take it into your right hand. This will be the Three of Spades. Use your right fingers to flip the packet face up. Place the Three onto the Five, slightly fanned to the right, and then single buckle the bottom card at its inner right end with your left third finger and spread off a double. You now have a fan of three cards. The order from the face is as follows: the Three, the Five, and the Four of Spades. The Five is a double card.

Place the Three face up between the face-up Five and Four (between the double and the single), leaving it out-jogged for a moment. Square up and snap your fingers. Spread the Five over to the right. Follow this by single-buckling the bottom card at its inner right corner with your left third finger and spreading off a double (out-jogging it in the process) to display that the Three has magically turned face down between the Five and the Four. Your left hand now takes the double card into dealing position (Figure 2). Turn the Five and Four of Spades face down and insert the face-down double between them. Square up.

Snap your fingers. Hold the packet in right-hand overhand grip. Use your left fingers to drag the bottom card to the left. Follow this by dragging the next card to the left. The Three will have magically turned face up. Lift off the top double card and the Three side-jogged beneath it as a unit. Table the face-up Three onto the Ace and the Two. Place the right-hand double card onto the single. The order from the top down is as follows: the Four of Spades, the red Five, and the Five of Spades.

Hold the packet face down in left-hand dealing position. Remove the top card and flash its face to display the Four. Place the Four to the bottom of the packet. Execute a double turnover to display the Five of Spades. Flip the double face down and place the top card to the bottom. Tell the spectators that it is the older brother’s turn to perform. Execute a double turnover to display the Four of Spades. Patter, *“Now watch the Four.”* Flip the double face down. Deal the top card to the table and drop the remaining double card on top of it. This supposedly places the Four at the bottom of the packet. Hold the packet in left-hand dealing position.

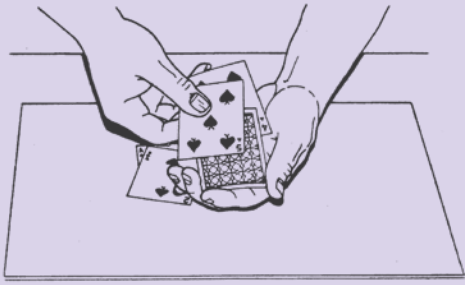


FIG. 2

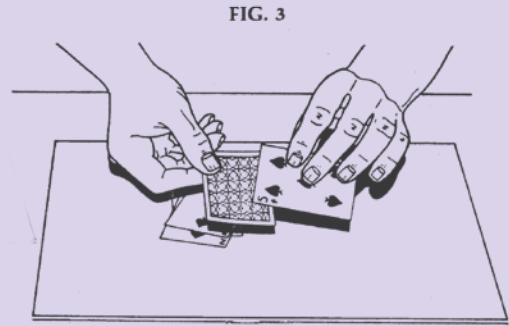


FIG. 3

Snap your fingers. Turn over the top card to display that the Four has come back to the top.

Offer to repeat the effect with the Four. Flip the Four face down. Push off a double card and take it into your right hand. Patter, "This is the back of the Four..." Revolve your left hand palm down to display the face of the Five of Spades (Figure 3). Continue patterning, "...this is the Five ..." Revolve the left hand palm up and use the right-hand double card to point to the back of the Five as you patter, "...and this is the back of the Five." Place the single Five on top of the double and square up.

Snap your fingers. Execute a double turnover to show that the Four has penetrated the Five. Take the face-up Four and the face-up card beneath it (Five of Spades) as one card into a right-hand overhand grip. Table the double onto the Ace, Two, and Three. You now hold only one card. It will be the red Five. Patter, "There is not much I can do with only one card, but it really doesn't matter. The old man has changed his act. He is no longer a tumbler. He comes to the front of the stage and the curtain closes behind him. The house lights dim, the main spot

comes on, there's a drum roll...and lo and behold, the old man has become a quick-change artist!" Conclude the routine by turning over the red Five.

Larry has a method of turning over the red Five at the conclusion of the routine that makes the change more dramatic. The card is held face down in left-hand dealing position. Move your left thumb under the card and begin to lever it to the right. The left fingers now close on the back of the card. As your hand quickly turns palm down, your fingers and thumb complete the turnover of the card. It will be positioned in face-up, palm-down dealing position. The card has merely turned over in your hand as your hand turns palm down. It happens very quickly. Revolve your hand back palm up to show that the black Five has changed to a red one.

**Comments:** Larry feels that this is one of the most entertaining routines that he performs for laymen. It is easy to do and does not require a card to be selected. It is a routine that you should use when someone says, "Do a card trick." ♦

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# I LEFT MY CARDS AT HOME

BY STEVE MARSHALL

## PENN & TELLER

Back in 2012, I heard that Penn Jillette was going to be a contestant on season five of Donald Trump's *Celebrity Apprentice* TV show. I have to admit that I'm not a huge fan of reality TV; after all, I have enough reality in my own life. When I watch TV I want some fantasy! But, I thought, hey Penn Jillette is going to be on, this has to be good.

As I watched the show, it was surprising to see how soft spoken Penn was in the meetings. He didn't engage in the bickering, fighting, and backstabbing like some of the other celebrities did. Penn's weapon of choice was his brain. He's a really smart man and it showed in how well he planned and executed all of the "challenges" with his other teammates. Of course, if a challenge required someone to draw a crowd, Penn was always pushed right up front. Then the loud and boisterous Penn was there to eat

fire, juggle, do magic, or whatever it took to get people to notice his team.

The other thing that I liked about the show was that each celebrity played to raise money for his or her favorite charity. Penn's charity of choice was Opportunity Village in Las Vegas. This organization, as their website states, "is dedicated to helping people with severe intellectual and related disabilities become the very best they can be. Through vocational training, community employment, day services, advocacy, arts, and social recreation, citizens with severe disabilities are able to find new friends, realize future career paths, seek independence and community integration, and unleash creative passions." Whenever Penn won a challenge, it was so nice to see him go to Opportunity Village and present a huge check to them. You could see how much it truly meant.

This is what inspired me to create the "celebrity edition" of my column that you have been seeing in these pages over the last year. Writing this column and hearing about all the great ways magicians are giving back has really caused me to think about what I am doing as well.

Aside from Penn's run on *Celebrity Apprentice* (and then returning in 2013 to be on the *All-Star Celebrity Apprentice*) Penn & Teller also give their time and resources to other organizations, such as United Blood Services where, since 2000, Penn & Teller have offered two free tickets to their show in Las Vegas to anyone who donated blood during their December blood drive. They also support Aid for AIDS in Nevada (AFAN) by leading the Penn & Teller Challenge at the annual AIDS walk and supporting a variety of AFAN fundraising events. They have established a reputation as philanthropists, as well as entertainers, in the Las Vegas community.

I challenge you, especially at this time of the year, to think about how you can give back in some way with your magic skills. There are so many charities out there that can use money or just a little bit of your time.

Happy Holidays to you all!

[Off the Cuff appeared in *Penn & Teller's How to Play in Traffic* published by Boulevard Books, New York. It is excerpted with permission.]

## OFF THE CUFF

Max Malini was a magician who traveled the world in the 1920s, armed with a few props, a snappy wardrobe, and limitless nerve. Wherever he went, he would loiter in the poshest hotel lounges, making friends, doing tricks, and hobnobbing colorfully until some John D. Rockefeller or J. Pierpont Morgan took a liking to him and hired him for a private party. He ended up working for everybody from Teddy Roosevelt to the King of Siam.

A short, portly man with a mug like Nosferatu and a deep guttural voice with a heavy foreign accent, he had the gift of gall. He addressed King Edward VII of England as "Royal Mister," and Ed laughed and offered him a cigar. When a hostess exclaimed that Malini had gouged her precious Louis Quatorze table while performing his card-stabbing routine, Malini pointed proudly to the damage and said, "You may say that mark was made by Max Malini." When a client who had booked him for a full-evening show was startled to find only Malini and a small suitcase instead of the truckload of tigers, assistants, and glitter boxes she expected, Malini declared, "I am the show."

One of his favorite impromptu stunts was biting a button off somebody's clothes, and then restoring it instantaneously.

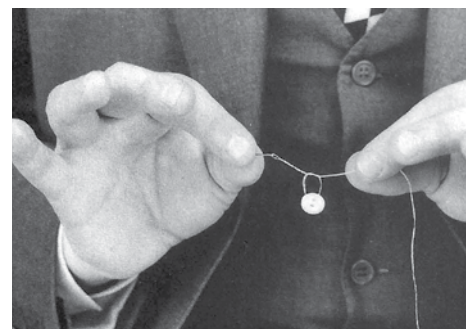
You'll need a small, plain, white button and a needle threaded with white cotton. Run the thread through the button several times until it's well attached.

Then tie a little knot in your thread. Tear off the rest of the thread raggedly, leaving an ugly, torn stub of thread.

Now, wash the button thoroughly, dry it, wrap it in a facial tissue, and put it in a clean pocket. When you spot a person wearing a long-sleeved shirt whose buttons match your prepared button, go to a quiet, lonely place and put the button in your mouth, under your lower lip or wherever you can lodge it comfortably and securely.

**Warning:** Do not try this if you have any trouble keeping a button securely under your lip. If there is the slightest possibility you might lose control and swallow, inhale, bite, or choke on the damn button, find another trick that requires less oral dexterity.

Return to the victim. Chat. In the middle of a thought, stop abruptly and look down at his/her cuff and say in a helpful tone, "Hold still. You have a loose thread. Let

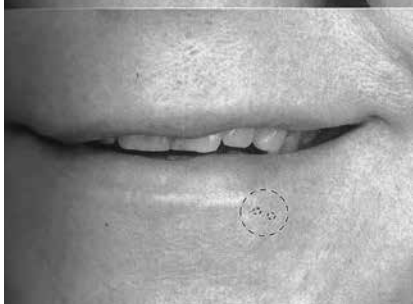
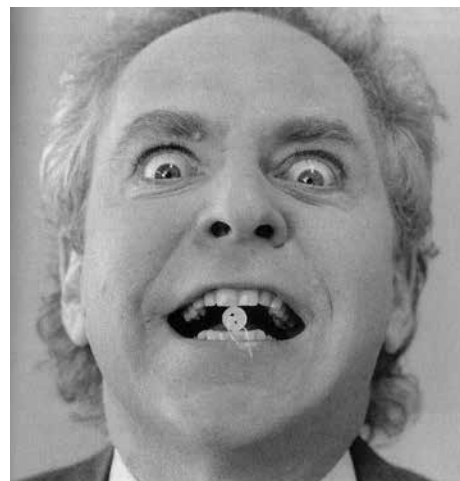
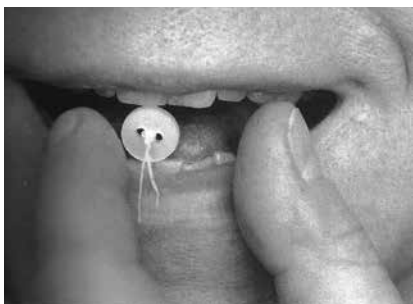
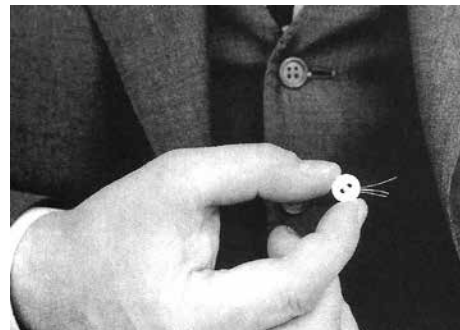




*me fix it.*" Grip the person's sleeve as shown, covering the cuff button with your thumb.

With your teeth, nip a bit of the fabric near the cuff button. Pull the fabric taut, as if the button is resisting being bitten off. Then let the fabric snap free of your teeth.

Immediately display the button in your mouth. Don't do this trick on dates or job interviews. It does not make you



look attractive. It makes you look like Max Malini.

As you display the faked button, continue to hold one thumb over the real cuff button. With the other hand, pick at the area you bit, as if pulling out little bits of loose thread. Still hiding the real cuff button with one thumb, reach to your mouth with the other hand and pretend to take the faked button between your fingertips. Actually, slide the button back under your lip.

Bring the imaginary button down to the cuff and simultaneously slide your thumb off the real one. Grip the real one in the fingertips that supposedly contain the mouth-button.

Allow people to see the edges of the button as you press and

rub it "onto" the fabric. Display the "restored" button matter-of-factly, as if this is the way you always make sewing repairs, and pick up the conversation where it left off.

When Malini bit a button off President Warren G. Harding, he made the front pages of all the Washington newspapers. We hope that you, too, will someday bite a president. ♦



*Button slides back here.*



# INFORMED OPINION

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

### MAGIC WITH A CHRISTMAS THEME BOOK

By MARC DIBOWSKI

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$30.00

#### REVIEW BY PAYNE



Yes, Christmas is weeks away. But it's never too early to think about putting that Christmas (or as we call it here in the States, "holiday") show together. Unfortunately, most people don't start thinking about what their holiday season shows are going to look like until the Christmas decorations go up in the mall in late August. But by then it's far too late. That six-foot silk emblazoned with the four-color Christmas tree that was to be your big finale production is back-ordered. As is

that Santa-hat Egg Bag that was going to be the centerpiece of your *Magic of the Season* holiday extravaganza. So once again, the special "holiday package" you offer your clients is just you performing your standard set in a Santa hat.

This is why you should start planning your Christmas show now. To help you in this task, Marc Dibowski has written *Magic with a Christmas Theme*, a handy guide to get you on your way – well, perhaps more accurately, a *somewhat* handy guide to get you on your way. Mr. Dibowski's manuscript is not so much a "how to" book as it is a shopping list of ideas and avenues to pursue in your quest of building a holiday program. While there are plenty of ideas to build upon, there are few fleshed out routines to be found between the covers. I found much of the material to be rather obvious boiler-plate stuff. Substituting chocolate coins for the silver coins used in a Miser's Dream routine, producing a small Christmas tree instead of a champagne bottle production, or using holiday wrapping paper instead of your usual paper of choice in your torn and restored paper routine.

This isn't to say the book is not worth perusing. Reading through this litany of tips and suggestions does help to trigger Christmassy ideas for tricks of one's own. Stratospheres using big Christmas balls in place of the supplied spheres and Derren Brown's Grave Digger (in which you separate pictures of kids into piles of "naughty or nice" instead of "dead or alive") were just two ideas that came to mind when I read through the book. Still, if you're expecting to find a book that offers you a bevy of fully fleshed out and developed routines, you're not going to find more than a couple of them here. Yet the final chapter includes a very clever prediction routine that employs an Advent calendar. This alone is nearly worth the price of the book, and it is going to be something I'll be making up for this year's holiday party season.

The book is translated from German, so there are a few peculiar turns of phrase and word choices in the text. Also included is a short history of Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus, and the Christ child, as well as how the holiday is celebrated in different countries. Tips

on music, stage setting, and prop decoration are briefly touched on. A small list of marketed Christmas tricks is also provided.

*Magic with a Christmas Theme* is a good start for anyone wishing to create a holiday show or add a Christmassy trick or two to the standard program. But it is far from being an in-depth or overly useful compendium on the subject.

### THE RED ENVELOPE DVD AND DECK OF CUSTOM CARDS

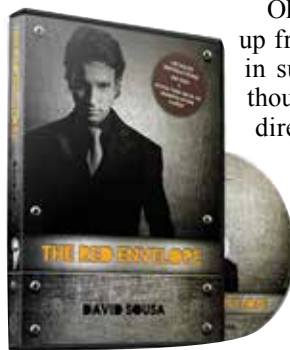
By DAVID SOUSA

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

#### REVIEW BY MARC DESOUSA



Okay, let's get two things out of the way up front. First of all, despite the similarity in surname, David and I are not related, though we are both Portuguese (he more directly than me). Second, every magician should watch this DVD at least once, though ninety-nine percent of you will not do a single trick explained on it. Mr. Sousa has performed this superb act for many years and won numerous competitions (including a FISM award) with it. It is beautiful, poetic, well constructed, and brilliantly

executed, and he is giving it all to you on this DVD, but you will not perform it. Why would you? He's already done it. No, my friend, the lesson is not in learning how to do it or even how it all works. That would merely satisfy the curious. The lesson here is what it took to get it to the point of perfection.

This is a very rare opportunity to get into the head of a world master of manipulative magic. It is even more surprising that he gives away his entire act (okay, ninety-five percent of it). His reasoning is to provide a set of tools for today's manipulators – to learn how he developed the tools necessary to accomplish his vision. The fact that these tools are brilliant is just icing on the cake. Many of them serve as the basis for an entire school of manipulators coming out of Asia, where he was asked to go to teach them. Taking mere tricks and techniques and turning them into an act of this quality is art, and that is what you should take away from this DVD. David goes into great detail describing the gimmicks and techniques so, should you choose, you could learn them and use them. But it is seeing the whys of creating these ideas and the results of that journey that should inspire you to achieve magic on this level. Not being satisfied with what exists, but striving for perfection.

You will indeed learn from this DVD, but what you learn may surprise you. Luis de Matos has done a wonderful job of bringing this incredible project to the market. The audio and video are splendid and the packaging, with a custom deck of cards so you can accomplish many of the techniques taught, exceed expectations. You owe it to yourself to acquire this set and experience



it for yourself, probably many times over. It gets my absolutely highest recommendation.

**URBAN UNDERGROUND:  
THE CLOSE-UP MAGIC SHOW 2-DVD SET**  
By JC SUM

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
Price \$40.00

**REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD**

JC Sum is well-known for his illusion shows, illusion books, and his televised “mega-illusions,” so what is he doing releasing a DVD on close-up magic? Actually, what he is doing is demonstrating a surprising grasp of close-up material and an excellent grasp of routining a show. *Urban Underground: The Close-Up Show* is a full thirty-minute show direct from Sum’s working repertoire, and it is as solid a show as any I’ve seen in a long time. Shades of Goshman and Gertner: every move is carefully orchestrated to flow together into an entertaining performance.



The product here consists of two DVDs, one with six engaging routines and a watchable interview, the other with full explanations for most of the preparation, tricks, moves, and methods. Sum holds back a couple of methods for commercial routines he employs, but for the most part, the explanations are very clear, thorough, and complete. He credits his sources along the way and teaches with both front and back views in regular and slow speeds. You will have no trouble learning all of the effects from his descriptions.

The routines consist of six separate phases or “tricks” that Sum has arranged into a neat and consistent show. He begins with a multiple-phase stand-up version of Three Coins Across. Silver dollars travel from one hand to the other, in the air, one at a time. He segues into a Coins Across variation performed on the tabletop. This one-two combination gives him a solid opening during which spectators can see and focus on him from a distance; he then deliberately draws them to the table surface where he will perform the rest of his set. He follows the Coins Across material with a three-shell game, a nice and logical transition from flat coins to 3D objects. In one nice “sucker” spot he kicks the pea from under shell number 1 to shell number 2. Although his performance character ignores the move, it is always noticed by the spectators, who believe they have caught a secret move. Of course, they still can’t find the pea. After a “guess-where-it-is” game with the spectator, he adds a broader dimension by introducing giant shells and a huge pea. The props add some comic relief after he has teased the spectators who cannot find the right shell.

Replacing the shells with cards, Sum works what appears to be a fairly standard Triumph effect, but he adds some surprising finishes with Ambitious Card, Cutting to the Aces, and a two-Omni Deck finale. Wisely choosing to use cards, but not exclusively, he returns to coins for a Matrix routine with a surprising and very effective twelve-coin production as a closer. He follows this with an Okito Box routine using several international coins. As with the other routines, this one is multi-layered and multi-phased. Coins go in and out of the box, through the table

top, disappear from under a leather cup and shot glass, and more. Finally, he ends with some skill, demonstrating dice stacking, but concludes his dice routine with the production of two large dice, a thousand tiny dice, and one giant die.

Before moving to Disc 2 for the explanations, Sum spends a goodly amount of time showing us his close-up case, how it is divided and set up, what holders and compartments he has made, and where he locates everything for easy retrieval. As I mentioned previously, the explanations are clear and thorough. He simply walks us through each trick, each phase, and each routine, demonstrating the moves and sequences. None of the material is groundbreaking or earth-shatteringly difficult, so most readers would be able to reconstruct the tricks. In fact, many of you will already have some of the basics down pat. After all, this set includes variations of Three-Fly, Triumph, Cutting the Aces, an Okito Box routine, Matrix, the Three Shell Game, and dice stacking. If you focus on learning the new angles on some of these tricks, however, what you may miss is the significance about the sequence and placement of the tricks into routines and the routines into a show. It is the cohesive whole that is the true genesis of this set, and studying the way routines transition from one to another that is the valuable lesson. You may never reconstruct this show, but you should definitely examine what he has done to make it a show. It is an excellent lesson in what to do with the tricks you already know.

Although I found the show and the lessons about routining valuable, know this: putting together this show would not be inexpensive. Giant coins, a unique dollar-size shell gimmick, several special coin boxes, two Omni Decks, giant shells, and an elaborate carry case are all going to add up. Chances are that you have a lot of the props, but certainly no one has them all. Sum nicely provides a thorough prop list at the end of the set, so you can track down what you need, but it will take a bit of doing to replicate this act.

If you just want to learn some tricks, this is not the place to start. If you only do one trick at a time for your office co-workers during a coffee break, this will not help. If you plan to wander the streets and accost random spectators with your other-worldly arcane behavior, this is not for you, either. This product is about putting together an act for a formal paid performance. You can learn the entire act, or you can learn about segues and transitions in a formal show setting from it. Rather than trying to duplicate the set, maybe a better angle would be to restructure your own act following some of Sum’s planning and structure.

**COMEDY TIPS FOR MAGICIANS VOL. 1 DVD**  
By ROBERT BAXT

*Available from: [www.RobertBaxt.com](http://www.RobertBaxt.com)*  
Price \$25.00

**REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT**



“Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.” You may have heard these words attributed to actor Edmund Gwenn on his deathbed.

Robert Baxt attempts to ease the path to comedy enlightenment for aspiring magicians. His DVD, filmed on location in various rooms around Hollywood’s Magic Castle, is full of personal and professional advice along with many anecdotes to get viewers on track and to help them avoid many of the pitfalls.

Baxt has been there and done that, so his advice is fairly well constructed and valid.

I'm not sure what the official title of this DVD is. The splash screen on the disc says "Thoughts on COMEDY for Magicians." The front of the DVD case says "Tips on Comedy for Magicians." The spine on the case says "Comedy Tips for Magicians." Whatever you want to call it, the product is from Robert Baxt. This man knows comedy. He stresses the importance of being original. He offers some exercises to this end.

Baxt even briefly describes his amazing physical transformation. In his early New York days he was, shall we say, extra large. His incredible permanent weight loss is quite inspirational.

If you are expecting a video full of laughs, Baxt admits this product isn't that at all. It contains principles. It has inspirational stories. I believe that it has value, especially for those actors who portray magicians and who wish to be funny in doing so. Needless to say, it is a good start for performers who simply wish to become comedians.

Maybe you will become as funny as humorist Art Buchwald, who parodied the quote from the beginning of this review: "Dying is easy. Parking is hard."

### WORLD'S GREATEST SECRETS OF SILK MAGIC VOLUMES 1 & 2 DVDs BY VARIOUS ARTISTS

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price, each volume, \$19.95

#### REVIEW BY PAYNE



Even though these DVDs are sold separately, I am going to review them as a set, because if you purchase one, you'll probably purchase the other (which was probably L&L's intention all along). I have to admit that of all the discs I have seen in the "World's Greatest" series so far, these two are my least favorite, and not because the content is lacking; it isn't. There are plenty of good effects taught

by top-notch performers on these two DVDs. It is just that the previous offerings I have viewed had material that could be performed without special apparatus. This is good, because these recordings are aimed at the novice or entry-level performer who might not have even the most basic of gimmicks at their disposal.

While there are a few routines featured that could be done with an easily obtained silk scarf, to accomplish everything done on these discs you'll need a Dye Tube, a Sanada gimmick, an Ellis Ring, a good quality reel, a Glorpy, a Himber Wallet, a Silk-to-Egg gimmick, a thumb tip, some basic sewing skills (which I know most magicians don't possess), and those translucent chiffon scarves that are next to impossible to find these days (hint: you can get them online at costume shops or '50s retro clothing stores).

So be forewarned, out of the seventeen routines featured in this set, only six of them can be done with items found around the house or at your local dollar store. Everything else is going to require a trip to your local magic shop or a visit to an online dealer. There is also a bit of redundancy in the set as well. You'll learn the

color changing silk from both Dai Vernon and Fielding West, and two of Henry Evans's tricks are the same effect achieved through identical methods but have minor alterations to the presentation. With the limited number of tricks that are included on this DVD, the publishers might have made them a bit more worthwhile by refraining from such needless duplication.

But it was nice to see some old familiar faces teaching tricks. Jeff Sheridan, Bob Read, Karrell Fox, Paul Potassy, and Dai Vernon are here sharing their valuable knowledge and experience. Steve Dacri's handling of the Sucker Egg and Hanky is probably my favorite routine to be found on these tapes, with Paul Potassy's brilliant handling of the Sympathetic Silks coming a close second. Ammar's classic Coins through Transparent Handkerchief is here as well – a trick that has served me well over the years. And Daryl teaches a card location using a Glorpy that will be perfect for next year's Halloween shows.

All in all, for the price, these DVDs are a good value because there are at least one or two effects on each (or possibly more) that you will use. Vernon's handling of the dye tube is actually worth the price of both discs combined. So if you're looking to get into silk magic, this set is a good place to start; just be aware that additional materials may be needed.

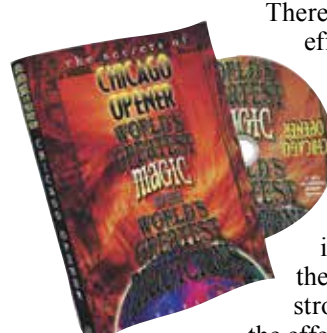
### WORLD'S GREATEST CHICAGO OPENER DVD BY VARIOUS ARTISTS

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$20.00

#### REVIEW BY W.S. DUNCAN



There's a pretty big problem with the effect known as the Chicago Opener.

The first phase of the trick is amazing: Someone names any card, and it's the only one in the blue pack that has a red back.

The problem is that the method doesn't leave you clean, and the impossibility of the effect makes the desire to handle the card pretty strong. The solution is that you repeat the effect with a second (forced) card. And

that's a problem because normally the second phase doesn't offer the freedom of choice. It's a credit to the strength of the second phase that the restricted method of "choosing" the second card is overshadowed by the transformation of the original odd-backed card. Still, things like that bug some of us. How we deal with the "problem" can be a lesson that applies to more than just this one effect.

Bill Malone solves the problem by doing two different effects; the first is an attempt at mind reading, which he explains he doesn't normally do. Then he follows up by doing an impossible card trick, which is the sort of thing he's more comfortable with. It's a great example of how to tailor an effect to your performing persona. Malone's quick and direct method for the effect is followed by our own Michael Close's handling, which takes the opposite approach. This version, instead of being in the over-in-two-minutes-style of the Chicago bar scene from which the effect originates, is a performance piece (more like Michael's The Frog Prince), designed to focus on fairness and interaction, with an amusing conceptual twist to explain how and why the card changes. This routine, called The Dumbest Casino in the World,



was one of the highlights of the ebook *Closely Guarded Secrets*, and it's fun to get to see it performed for real people.

Sadly, after this bright opening, things go downhill. The standard method for the effect is taught twice, once by Daryl as Chicago Opener (using a red pack and a blue card) and finally by Michael Ammar as Red Hot Mama (using a blue pack and a red stranger card). The same handing is taught, forcing the stranger card with a Hindu shuffle force, and having the first card selected face down from a spread. The explanation segments give none of the real work on the plot, and neither explains why the trick is called Red Hot Mama. Hint: The card "blushes" red after the pretty girl you're doing the trick for touches the pack or blows you a kiss. (By the way, if you choose a spectator who is sitting beyond arm's reach for the second selection, the Hindu shuffle force will not seem so glaringly different than the method of choosing a card used with someone who is near you.)

There are three other effects on the DVD, all of which guild the lily to varying degrees. Two versions of Michael Ammar's Bluefield Debut are included. Both use a stranger card in a manner similar to the Chicago Opener (hence the "debut" in the titles) but are otherwise unrelated and considerably harder technically, without providing enough extra impact to justify the extra work. Finally, there's a handing of the signed card to wallet melded with the Chicago Opener that is better than it sounds on paper. This comes to us from Dan Fleshman, who knows a thing or two about commercial magic. If you have a wallet that you can load a signed card into, this routine might be enough to get you to dig it out of the drawer. So the question is, are the Malone, Close, and Fleshman routines enough to justify the twenty bucks for the DVD? Probably they are, if you don't already do a version of the trick but want to. If you want to bring the effect into a formal show, Close's routine is excellent and worth the price of the DVD, and the Malone and Fleshman routines, while uninspired, are professional quality, crowd-tested card magic. Recommended, with some reservations.

### MIRACLES WITHOUT MOVES DVD By RYAN SCHLUTZ

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
Price \$30.00

#### REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS



I am not really what you would call a "move monkey" of card magic, so this instructional DVD looked enticing. I am not familiar with Ryan Schlutz, and so I was eager to check out this DVD. The important question for me was: will the material be great without the moves?

The DVD is laid out in the time honored perform-a-trick then teach-a-trick format. The performance video is shot in a studio setting, as is the instructional portion. Ryan is a very good performer and is very good at teaching the routines on the DVD. As per the title, there really are no card sleights used to perform the effects. One of the things I do hate is a convoluted process to find or reveal a card. The routines here are pretty straightforward for the most part without a lot of this kind of process, but a few of the routines do border on the high process side.

If you are a move monkey when it comes to your card magic, you may not be interested in this DVD, but if you are a card worker who likes to vary his methods, you will find something here that you will probably like and use. There are no special props used other than a deck of cards, however for a couple of the routines you will have to "gimmick" the pack to perform them. You can still use the gimmicked deck for all of the routines.

There are seven total card effects taught here. The first two effects presented and taught are straightforward-looking card revelations that are very clean and direct, while the next two have a little more process involved. Ryan then moves back to a couple of straightforward routines with the latter of the two featuring some very good spectator interaction.

Ryan has good presentational skills and his style is very laid back. He is very good at teaching the effects and it will take just a short time to master the routines presented here. He makes good use of a little known gimmicked deck that you can make yourself for a couple of the effects taught on this DVD. A few of the routines do border on having too much process for my tastes, but overall, this is a very good DVD for the card worker who wants a break from knuckle-busting moves. Priced at \$30 this is a good buy.

### HER MAJESTY'S SPELL DVD AND DECK By DANI DAORTIZ

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
Price \$39.00

#### REVIEW BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL



At this point in time, Dani DaOrtiz's reputation needs no explaining or elaboration. To me, one of the more astounding elements of his performances is how he takes card tricks that most magic hobbyists would deem death on toast for a lay audience and turns them into miracles. He deals, he makes piles, he counts, and he spells, yet somehow the result is applause instead of snoring.

Case in point: his new marketed effect Her Majesty's Spell. This is a three-phase spelling effect; let that sink in for a moment. Three cards are selected and returned to the deck. One at a time, they're located by spelling their names. The third one is even found by spelling to a totally different card named by the audience. For the grand finale, every card in the deck turns into the "wrong" card just named. Hofzinsler would be proud.

You get an hour-long DVD and the special deck, which in truth you could make up yourself. What you probably wouldn't be able to assemble yourself, however, are all the very clever psychological ploys that Dani uses (the kind he's made a worldwide reputation with) that make this effect a miracle. At the very least, if you're not familiar with Dani's approach to the classic force, it'll be worth the price of the effect. On top of that, the way he works his way to the climax of the trick, where every card in the deck becomes an "imagined" card, will likely open some doors for the creative card worker who is looking to create a stone-cold miracle or two. The whole effect is a nice, compact, introductory lesson in Dani's verbal techniques, and should be of interest to any intermediate card worker looking to add another level of subtlety to their material.

The explanations and performance are in Spanish with an overdubbed English translation. The result is a little loose and fluid in a couple of places, so you're going to want to pay attention; the devil's in the details. On top of the main effect, you get an interview with Dani wherein he explains an old, obscure, and yet surprisingly effective trick of L'Homme Masque's that he performed at Magic-Con to great acclaim. There's also an extra short performance-only clip of Dani performing some of his now well known effects that, after learning Her Majesty's Spell and the L'Homme Masque effect, you'll be able to study in a slightly different light – after being amazed, of course.

This is European card magic at its best; if you're looking for an introduction to Dani's style of card magic, this is as good a place to start as any. Recommended.

### PSYCHOMETRY ROYALE

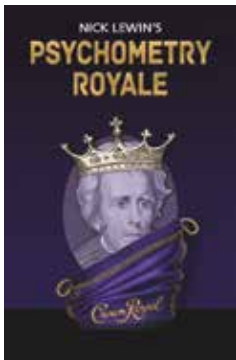
By NICK LEWIN

Available from: [lewinenterprises.weebly.com](http://lewinenterprises.weebly.com)

Dealers contact Lewin Enterprises

Price \$125.00

### REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



The original idea of a mental routine based on psychometry was first published by Theo Annemann. It sparked a lot of interest. It first came to my attention in a booklet published by Tony Griffith of the UK. His routine, called Pseudo Psychometry, found its way into my repertoire, as well as the repertoire of many pros. One of the most notable was Maurice Fogel, one of the greatest mentalists of the last century. Fogel created a great routine for his own use, and eventually allowed Ken Brooke to market it as Second Spot. The

basic effect is that five cloth drawstring bags are given to five volunteers, who are asked to place a personal object into the bag and close it, while the performer's back is turned. The bags are mixed and handed to the mentalist one by one, who removes the objects and hands them back to the owners. A fine effect in and of itself, but what makes it great is the procedure, presentation, and the lines that go with it. In the hands of a great performer, this routine is gold.

Fogel was such a performer and so is Nick Lewin. Lewin has taken Fogel's routine, which he had received from his mentor Ken Brooke (and subsequently received personal tutelage on from Fogel himself), and honed it to a sharp edge. Within the pages of the accompanying ten-page booklet you will read the history, the original Fogel version, the thinking about the good points (and those aspects requiring improvement), and, finally, Lewin's own four-stage routine.

This is professional magic right out of a professional's repertoire. It doesn't get better than this one. This is not a "cookie cutter" routine like a number that have been released in the last few years. Not to cast aspersions on some of them, but sometimes when you are buying a routine out of someone's act, it has been tailored to fit the originator's act. Most likely, it will not fit you. Not so concerning this routine. There is plenty of space to add the "you" to this routine. In fact, Lewin has given some of the key lines from his own script, but not all. He makes suggestions, but it is up to you to thoroughly flesh this out to fit you. The presentational structure is all there. I am preparing this to go into my own

act in the coming months.

Let's talk about what you receive in addition to the booklet. You get five Crown Royal bags. They have been very cleverly altered to allow you to identify which bag came from which volunteer, under any possible performance conditions. That's the basic secret and there have been various versions that have been marketed over the years. Lewin discusses most of them and talks about the good and bad points of each. These are things you only learn as a professional performer. He then tells you why he created this version and you immediately understand why a professional would want to use this set. The best part is that these bags are immediately recognizable by every "real person" in your audience. They are not contrived cloth bags that have no reason to exist. They are something found in everyday life and they function perfectly.

If you are looking at the price tag and thinking "Wow, this is overpriced!" then you don't deserve it. This is an incredible value for the money and I can't wait to try it out on my audiences. This one gets my highest recommendation.

### BANNER MAGIC TRICK

By MICHAEL MODE

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

Price \$29.95

### REVIEW BY PAYNE



"Be prepared; that's the Boy Scouts marching song," is the opening line of a Tom Lehrer song. (Perhaps I'm dating myself.) Every working pro out there knows the value of being prepared for anything life can (and eventually will) throw at you. That's why those in the know always keep in the bottom of their kit a trick or two that can be performed at the drop of a hat (or that really

expensive prop that probably didn't survive being knocked off your table).

I've heard that David Copperfield keeps a Tenyo What's Next just offstage ready to perform in just such an instance. But this trick is already a feature in many of our repertoires, and it's possibly the one we'll need to cover for because one of the magnetic spots is stuck to the tray your assistant is walking offstage with. So those of us in the trenches may need another filler at our disposal. Enter Michael (the Napkin Rose guy) Mode and his new Banner Magic, the perfect trick to fill in those awkward moments that occur to all of us in this business that is show.

What you receive for your \$29.95 are two (yes, two) custom-printed Mylar banners. Closed they measure 10½ inches by 2 inches. They expand to approximately 27 inches. This makes them large enough to be easily seen in most venues. They are basically Mylar roller shades with plastic handles on either side. The handles allow each to be easily opened and closed simply by moving your hands apart and bringing them back together again.

One of the blinds has the Princess Card Trick printed on it. One side has five court cards printed on it in full color on a black background. Unroll the blind and have a spectator think of one of the cards. Roll the banner back up. The next time it's unfurled the thought-of card won't be among them (as long as you remembered to flip the rolled up banner over).

The second banner has a long card (Three of Hearts/Eight of



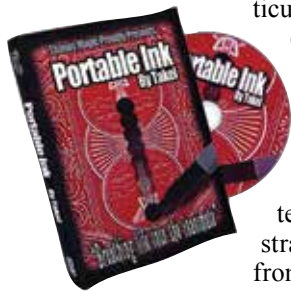
Hearts) printed on one side and a 52-on-1 card printed on the other. So there are a few different routines possible with this one. True, neither of these are knock-their-socks-off reputation makers, but that's not their intent. They're lifesavers, filler bits, and the perfect thing to have on hand if you're emceeding a magic show (or any other type of event) and need to stretch while the next act gets ready.

I know these are going to reside permanently in my performance case, ready to go on a moment's notice.

### PORTABLE INK DVD By TAKEL

*Includes gimmick and extra materials*  
*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
*Price \$35.00*

#### REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT



"Breathing life into the inanimate." I particularly love animation effects, especially ones with moving ink or holes. The effect of Portable Ink is simple and direct. A card is freely chosen. It is signed. The performer draws a visible dot, roughly 3/8 of an inch in diameter, on the back. With no telltale motions, the dot moves in a straight line across the back of the card, from one end to the other. The performer

blows on the dot and it moves even faster. After the dot has made its trek, it is handed to the spectator as a souvenir. The ink dot and the original signature are still intact and copacetic.

There is a card gimmick included. It makes everything possible. The handling is very easy, requiring only a very basic card sleight. Most magicians will be able to perform Portable Ink within minutes after viewing the DVD. For this reason, it would be wise for the performer to pay maximum attention to developing a good presentation while working on the simple handling.

The ready-made gimmick included matches a classic Bicycle (red-backed) Rider Back poker deck. It is gratifying to be able to practice and perform the trick right out of the box; kudos to the producers. There are extra materials included to help you make your own gimmick to match any deck, or repair your gimmick if necessary, though with normal use it shouldn't need repair. Brightly-colored back designs are recommended to best contrast with the black ink.

Other than Takel's brief introduction and closing remarks, the entire video is performed with no talking and English subtitles. I suppose this makes it easier to produce the product in any language. I did not have a problem with that, and was pleased to be able to mute the music once I grew tired of listening to it.

Some notes to mention: The path of dot is a straight vertical line along the center of the card. Some online comments brought up the idea of using another shape other than a dot, such as a small boat. The producer and I both agree that this could be done by the purchaser once the basic effect is understood. I thought about using this with a business card, but there is a visual problem that would need to be solved first, most likely requiring a custom-printed business card. But it would be a great way to give out that business card!

Since the trick is so visual and direct, and it works in just about any performing conditions I can think of, with practi-

cally no re-set, I recommend this product to all close-up card entertainers who are intrigued by the effect.

### THE POP HAYDN HYDRO-STATIC GLASS PROP By WHIT HAYDN

*Available from: www.PopsMagic.com*  
*Dealers contact Pop Haydn*  
*Price \$40.00*

#### REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



I love the Hydrostatic Glass. The late Alan Shaxon inspired me to perform it, and I have closed my act with it for forty years. I have tried to replace it, but nothing else has ever played that strong for me. My own routine is on my DVD set (shameless plug). For most of those forty years, I have used the same set of props, made in plastic, by the old Mephisto Huis company in Europe. I have only had to replace it once. I later switched to a great set made by Steve Dick. The only problem is that Dick's prop is made of glass. After breaking two of them, I switched back

to the plastic set. Now along comes Pop Haydn with a new set that I will be switching to. His prop is a fourteen-ounce tumbler made of polycarbonate. This is heavier, stronger, and more scratch resistant than acrylic. The manner in which the glass has been gimmicked makes it very easy to pick up easily and correctly. The other gimmick has been very well made to fit this glass precisely.

Pop's instructions are superb and will have you up and running in a matter of minutes. He even gives you a few pieces of the proper paper to use. Make certain you pay heed to his suggestion for the proper paper; I recently had a problem when I used the incorrect paper. If you go to his website, [www.pophaydn.com](http://www.pophaydn.com), you can find footage of Pop performing his own routine. The Shaxon routine is in print in his first book, *My Kind of Magic*, and John Booth's routine can be found in his great book, *Marvels of Mystery*. With all of those sources and this great glass, you should be able to thrill your own audiences with this incredible effect for years to come. Highly recommended.

### PORCHOLE DVD, GIMMICKED FELT PEN, AND EXTRA MATERIALS By DARRYL VANAMBURG

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
*Price \$40.00*

#### REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT



Canadian magician Darryl Vanamburg has shot another moving hole effect into the world of magic like the Lone Ranger's silver bullet. There are many variations on this theme to be found. This particular offering has many pros and cons to discuss.

A card is freely chosen and signed. You use a small "silver bullet" on a keychain or a black golf tee (both included) to punch a hole in the signed card. The hole is then made to visibly move,

on its own, from one part of the card to another. The card is immediately given as a souvenir. Sound great? It is!

There is an alternate routine included in which you punch the hole in a card and then visibly restore it. This is also a very cool effect. You'll find the performance not too difficult. The modus operandi are cleverly concealed in a Sharpie pen (also included), which functions as a normal pen. It is even used by the spectator to sign the card.

So, what's not to like? Well, here is one of the biggest drawbacks: You, the customer, are left to construct the crucial part of the gimmick yourself. It is tiny. The work is tedious. You will need good eyesight, a workspace, and enough hand-eye coordination to work with small objects. Fortunately, everything to craft this element is included in the DVD case, other than an extra Joker or card to match your deck.

The good news is that once you spend the thirty-plus minutes to make this gaff, the work is done, and it will last a long time. The bad news is that if you lose either of the two rather tiny gaffs that accomplish the work for you, they are not easily replaced. There will be gnashing of teeth. Even more bad news: if you choose to make the gimmick to work with your business card, you will have to make the gimmick thingy all over again. Maybe the work will go faster after you've done it once, but I doubt it will improve all that much.

As to the DVD itself, I found it odd that when "Play All" is chosen from the menu, you get a checklist of the materials included and dive right in to the making of the gimmick, without seeing a performance of the effect first. Probably most of you will have seen the effect online before you purchase, anyway.

Porthole may be performed under almost any conditions, but in some cases, lighting considerations may have to be addressed. This is fully covered by Mr. Vanamburg. The video is very detailed and complete. So, if you are willing and able to put in the meticulous craftwork needed, you will be rewarded with a very nice version of the moving hole effect that will get you those audible audience reactions that you crave.

### **TO-DO VODOO INSTANT DOWNLOAD** **By Rick Lax**

Available from: [www.PenguinMagic.com](http://www.PenguinMagic.com)  
Price \$4.95

### **REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS**

While staying up late one night browsing the instant downloads on Penguin Magic's website, I found something that looked interesting for just \$4.95. After watching the demo, I really liked the simple, direct-looking mind-reading effect that Rick Lax was offering for less than a fiver, so I made my purchase and downloaded the video file.

The process was quick and easy, and in a short time I had the file on my computer. The video is well produced. Rick walks you through the entire process of performance and the construction of what you will need to accomplish the effect, which is simple and direct. Rick introduces a to-do list with ten different items. A spectator is asked to randomly select one of the tasks; she reads it silently. Without any questions, Rick is able to reveal the selected task. Rick is then able to repeat the same effect with a different spectator.

Rick makes use of an old principle with some added details that take the effect to another level. He walks you through creating your own list and explains how you are able to personalize the list to your needs. As is, you will get away with this most of the time,

but I did have some trouble when first performing the effect. After making a few adjustments in my presentation, I have made this a winner for me. You will be able to make your list very quickly and you will be able to perform this effect within a very short time.

You will be able to make the list from items that you already have around the house. This is a great effect for both the beginning and seasoned mentalist. If you are looking for a closer, this is not the effect for you, but if you are looking for a simple, direct, mind-reading effect that you can carry in your wallet for just \$4.95, I highly recommend you purchase this and add it to your performances.

### **POLYESTER TRICK** **By Zivi Kivi**

Distributed by *Murphy's Magic Supplies*  
Price \$30.00

### **REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD**



Everyone who needs a new way to reveal a chosen card put your hands up. Bueller? Anyone? Bueller? For those of you who want to spend a few bucks to check out the latest unneeded novelty, Polyester is a curious and interesting toy. It's a cute idea and an intriguing prop.

Although basically a simple card revelation, you might find it fun to play with. Since most of the packaging is vague and a bit deceptive, I'll explain the contents here. You get a DVD showing you full instructions on how to handle the gimmick, supplies for 250 (or fewer) performances, and a piece of clear plastic.

Since there is no way you can find, buy, or make up the gimmick on your own, I feel there is no need to conceal what you are getting. Your gimmick is a red plastic sticker about one inch square. It appears completely mundane when you peel it loose from its backing paper and stick it down on a smooth surface. But when you peel it off that surface, an image appears. The sticker set you receive includes basic card notations with one number and one shape; that is, a 2 and a club shape, or a Q and a diamond shape. There are fifty stickers for each card with five cards in all, for a total of 250 stickers. A small crib sheet is included so you can remember which of the identical stickers will reveal what card.

Any card handler will be able to figure out lots of routines, but the basic routine taught here is that you fasten the sticker onto the face of your phone, have the spectator look through your phone's camera to watch you choose a card, and then peel the sticker revealing the name of the card. Yes, you read that right. The basic routine has the *magician* choose a card and then reveal the card that *he* chose. I can think of a dozen or so more magical presentations for the sticker. Kivi's premise for this handling is that the spectator gets to participate by holding the phone and peering through it to watch your card flourishes. This limits the focus of the routine to a single angle for a single person, who hopefully does not drop your phone while you are triple-cutting the deck with both hands. Kivi actually suggests using a QR reader app on your phone, not the camera, but does not give a rationale in the routine. The trailer shows crowds of five to ten people enjoying the street-slick presentation, but it is not clear how they could even see what was happening from their angle. Other routing problems include handling the sticker. You have to get the packet



of stickers, remove one, put the packet away, stick the selected sticker to your phone, remove it from the phone, and then replace it back on the phone. These are the minimum handling requirements for making the sticker work correctly. Plus, you have to do the card trick. I strongly suggest you employ your own good choose-a-card trick that needs a revelation.

About the stickers: they are thin red polyester squares. They stick solidly to any very smooth surface, such as the glass front of a phone. I found them a bit tricky to peel off, because you have to get your fingernail under a corner and pick at it. Once you use a sticker, it changes from blank to having a design so you can only use each sticker once. Like a scratch-off lotto ticket, every trick requires a new sticker. After a few dozen trials, once or twice a bit of residue was left behind. But you get lots of stickers. And you get a card-sized piece of clear plastic so you don't have to stick them on your phone. I wish Kivi had shown some routines using the plastic panel.

About the packaging: the arty graphics hint at the premise of the trick. The packaging does not tell you what you are getting, or even the effect. There is a big orange circle that says "BONUS inside" on the front. The contents mentions 150 stickers plus, in bold yellow letters, "100 BONUS" stickers with "additional" designs. In fact, the trick was made up with pre-printed packages of stickers in a set combination of numbers and card designs. There is no bonus. Refill packs are available.

I found the props intriguing. You will enjoy using the stickers. They look blank and innocent, yet when peeled back reveal a design. It seems to appear out of nowhere. And for the price, you get a goodly amount to play with and five different cards to reveal. But take this for what it is. You are getting a unique and clever way of revealing a selected card. Forget the handling and routines on the DVD and go find your own way to show someone that you knew they would choose the Seven of Spades.

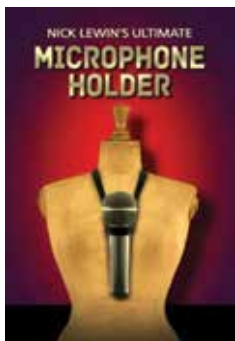
### ULTIMATE MICROPHONE HOLDER UTILITY DEVICE By NICK LEWIN

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

Dealers contact Lewin Enterprises

Price \$25.00

### REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



This is going to be a very short review. Buy it! Okay, you want more? At one time or another, every performer who uses a wireless microphone is going to have it freak out and cease to function as it should. I don't care how much you spent on your mic, it's going to happen. If you are fortunate and plan ahead, you will always make certain that there is a wired microphone in close proximity. If you carry your own sound system, make sure you have one. If you are using a "house" system, they usually do have one.

As magicians, we need to use our hands; you don't want to have to hold a mic. You also don't want to be tied to a mic stand and that's where this handy dandy little device becomes so important. Just pop this over your head and this fully adjustable holder will hold any type of handheld microphone on your chest in an ideal position.

It is light, unobtrusive, and available in several colors to blend in with your stage wear. Made of a durable cloth ribbon and rubber

coated heavy gauge wire, it functions perfectly and is sturdy enough to last for years. I have several similar type devices, but this one is very well made and has some very nice adjustment features. I think it is a better design and is more functional than most of the other devices (particularly those made in silver metal finish, which are a bit flashy). I keep one of these holders in every working case that I have. It's like having an insurance policy against bad wireless microphones. I heartily suggest you buy at least one.

### THE WORKER'S DIARY DVD AND PROPS By MARK ELSDON

Available from: [www.full52.com](http://www.full52.com)

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

### REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA



Here is yet another version of the neo-classic Diary Trick. Superb UK magician and mentalist Mark Elsdon has taken a very different approach to this effect. A diary is handed to a participant to examine.

He will find a different playing card written next to each date. This is truly random with no pattern to the placement of this information. A blue-

backed deck of cards is placed on the table, as the performer informs the audience that there is one red-backed card in the deck. The participant is asked to turn in the diary to his birthday and announce the card written next to it. He can check the other dates on the page and, in fact, other random pages to discern that they have different cards next to them. The performer removes the named card and turns it over to reveal the red back and the words Happy Birthday written on the card. It is the only red-backed card in the deck.

This is a very clean-looking, direct effect. You do not need to have knowledge of the participant's birthday in advance. It will work with any date named. It is virtually self-working and comes complete with the gimmicked deck and the hard-cover diary. Please note that you will need to fill in the diary so it is in your own handwriting, but the proper way to do this is very clearly outlined on the DVD. The DVD is well produced with good clear sound and video. Mr. Elsdon does a fine job of teaching this effect and gives you a number of suggestions for alternate presentations. I really liked this one and give it a high recommendation.

### TICK TOCK PROPS AND DVD By SEAN GOODMAN

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$45.70

### REVIEW BY MARC DESOUZA

Here is a lovely close-up mental effect that uses a unique and engaging set of props. Two nurse's watches are handed to two participants to examine. Each of them pulls out the stem and turns it; they see that the hands turn freely. The watches are now held face down and each of the participants turns the stem until they wish to stop. They then push in the stem. The times set on both watches match. That's the overall effect as the spectators see it, but it is



not quite that clean. This is not to say that the actual performance requirements are bad, but it is just not as direct as the advertising states.

I think Sean Goodman has a fine effect here. In a strolling setting, I believe that this would work great. You are moving around and you have cover for the “dirty work” required. I don’t want to give away what that is, but I will tell you that there are more than the two watches required (but the necessary “something” is provided) and the watches are not gimmicked. I think astute readers can gather the basic method. Do not allow that to deter you. The moves are well covered and I think will play quite well. It’s just not as clean as the advertising suggests. I think it is good value for money considering the props supplied.

The DVD is well produced, and Sean Goodman does a great job of teaching everything you need to know to perform this. In addition, he gives you some alternate handlings and presentation. He does give some credit for previous routines that served as inspiration, but left out the mention of a Roy Johnson routine, Time Bomb, that should have been referenced. I liked this and recommend it to those who like their magic a little mental.

**MINTALIST TRICK**  
By PETER EGGNIK

Distributed by Murphy’s Magic Supplies  
Price: \$45.00

**REVIEW BY JOSHUA KANE**



Peter Eggnik’s Mintalist is a utility device that will permit you to perform a range of effects with a plastic breath mint/Tic Tac box. All of the effects depend upon your having a participant place the box behind her back and pour a number of mints into her hand. Once this gambit has concluded, the box is returned to you and you can then either accurately guess how many mints she poured into her hand, change the color, etc. You receive a well made gaffed box, an extra

gaff and label for you to prep a second box, and a professionally shot DVD that teaches six routines. I would hope anyone buying this would not take the mints back from the participant to reuse.

Mintalist is built off of a real-world item that is as common as keys or a pen. It does not look like a prop and offers you the chance to freshen up your impromptu set while refreshing your breath. Recommended. ♦

If you wish to have your product reviewed, please send it to:  
Bill Duncan P.O. Box 50562 Bellevue, WA 98015-0562



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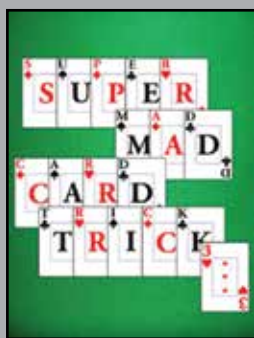
With the holiday season upon us, there will be many iPads, iPhones, and iPods received as gifts. Here are a few magic effects that youngsters will enjoy performing on their new gadgets.

### Assistance from Barbie



Barbie (yes *that* Barbie) has a new collection of dolls called “I Can Be.” Of the five occupations that she says would be great, one is a magician. The dolls are around \$15 in stores like Walmart and Target. There is also a magic set available. In addition, Mattel also has a free magic app called **Barbie Magic**. It performs some easy to do magic tricks, geared for kids under the age of ten. Most of the secrets are accomplished by touching certain areas of the screen. I know your child will have fun with this app. The doll is not necessary, although you can use the wand to help you with some magic. **Barbie Magic** is free on the iTunes App Store. It is also available at the Android App Store.

### Youthful Thoughts



Remember the old 21 Card Trick? A new app for kids introduces them to the concept. Even better, it works with just sixteen cards and has a nice visual ending. It's called **Super Mad Card Trick 3** from alexj17.com

Four rows of four cards are shown. A person merely thinks of a card and tells the app which row it is in. After some shuffling, some face-down piles are made. The spectator eliminates piles and eventually eliminates individual cards. The last card is the selected card. Sure, it's easy. Sure, it's old school. The kids will love it. **Super Mad Card Trick 3** is on the iTunes App Store and is free.

### Tossing Cards to Kill Time

How many times have you waited backstage while a speech is going on and is running late? Yes, the show was scheduled for 9 p.m., but this guy won't stop talking! What are you to do? You could kill some time by playing the **Hat Trick Card Toss** game on your iPad.

Remember the paper toss game app in which you threw balls of paper into a waste basket? Fans would blow to make it harder to throw accurately. Well, **Hat Trick Card Toss** is a nicely designed game with beautiful graphics of a magic, red-curtained stage. A top hat sits on the floor and two fans are going stage left and right. You flick playing cards onto the stage, trying to get them into the hat – wonderful, mindless fun. Score enough points and you will have extras like magic tables and fogs of smoke. Your whole family will enjoy playing this. It will surely keep the kids quiet in the back seat and occupy your time backstage. The **Hat Trick Card Toss** game is on the iTunes App Store for 99 cents.

### Visit from Ghosts of Christmas Past



**Ghost xCam** from GarudaApps.com is going to be a real treat for members of the Paranormal Investigation Committee. You take a picture with your iPhone or iPod Touch and the app “analyzes” the photo to see if any spirits are present. If so (and not always) it outlines the spirits so you can see where they are. Like I said, it doesn't always find them, which makes it more convincing. It also has additional tools like audio signals to help

locate them. You can also scan past photos in your camera roll to check for poltergeists. Sure it's hokum! So is the Long Island Medium, but if you do a séance or spook show or you are at a party as a guest, this will get them talking. There is a free version for you to play with and a more “accurate” paid version that is worth getting for all the bells and whistles. **Ghost xCam** free is on the iTunes app Store and **Ghost Scam** is also there for 99 cents. ♦

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

# TREASURES FROM THE SALON DE MAGIE

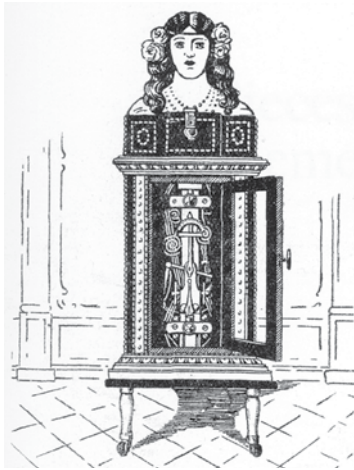
BY KEN KLOSTERMAN



## MYSTERIO

The last column of the year will be devoted to an illusion advertised in the 1940s in Abbott's Catalog No. 6 as The Golin. This was undoubtedly a play on words based upon the 400-year-old Jewish legend of the Golem, an artificial being made out of clay, created by a rabbi who imbued it with life to be a servant. The rabbi had learned to create the Golem by reading the *Cabbala*, the foremost Jewish book of mysticism. The Golem obeyed the rabbi's commands, doing chores and grunt work. But it began to learn about the world, too. When it realized it could never become human, the Golem ran amok and the rabbi destroyed it.

The one in the Salon de Magie was owned by McDonald Birch who billed it as "Mysterio," a sort of mechanical wonder. He described it as an intricate maze of gears, wires, pistons, and engines that, when firing on all cylinders, could actually think for itself. Once activated, the device interacted with spectators by answering questions, playing cards, or performing magic tricks. While the famous Chess Player of Baron von Kempelen caused a sensation across the world, Birch's "creature" was far less astonishing.



The Golin Abbott's ad

whatever reason, the illusion was a fleeting feature in the Birch show. It shouldn't have been.

At the 1993 Magic Collectors' Association weekend in Cincinnati, Ohio, I performed Mysterio and fooled almost everyone

in the room. Such was the case this past November during the Thirteenth Los Angeles Conference on Magic History. Noted collector, craftsman, and illusion designer John Gaughan performed his circa-1920 version of the effect, titled Automata. His version came from the Rigoletto Brothers Circus, which toured with it extensively.

Before a room of two hundred of the most serious and knowledgeable magic historians, Gaughan introduced the machinery, opened the front door to reveal the clockwork mechanism, and then opened the sides and back door of the automaton, rotating it around to provide the audience with a clear view from all angles. The thin corner posts were incapable of concealing any living person. The head and shoulders of the automaton were placed on top of the cabinet and locked into place. Wooden hands were inserted into the front of the body and the machine turned on.

Automata then went into her act. She played music on a small xylophone and picked colored ribbons from an array placed in front of her in any order called out by the audience. She also performed a card trick using Tarot cards. Not only was she able to tell which card an audience member had selected from a small pack of cards, she also matched the order of the cards shuffled by the spectator and known only to him. Just as in 1993, the room was fooled, but of course, magicians are the easiest to fool.

Birch's patter went something like this: "There are stories of strange occurrences in a small European village, somewhere in the region of the German Black Forest, and of a thought-to-be fictional Dr. Frankenstein. Science fiction and space novels tell of androids, humanoids, and mechanical beings. Much research indicated that a doctor, who may have been following the lead of Dr. Frankenstein, experimented with electro-mechanical creatures. In an effort to find the link between brain and body, he was believed to have drawn the soul from a brain and transferred it to the electro-circuitry within an android. It has been said that this is that very machine."

Mysterio's elaborate cabinet and image was enough of a box office draw for Birch to have a special poster printed announcing it in his full-evening show. Eventually Birch moved on and other illusions, such as the Vanishing Pony, replaced the automaton. When he retired, he sold the illusion to Douglas Dean of Lansing, Michigan, who used it for a time. It was purchased from Dean for the Salon de Magie. ♦



Mysterio



## S.A.M. FINDS MAGICIANS

Magicians aren't the only people who visit the S.A.M. website. Many laymen go there to seek out magicians for their parties and events. That is why we set up Find a Magician.

Find a Magician is a free (for now) service for members. On our website's home page, there is the Find a Magician section; it allows anyone to locate a member within a fifty-mile radius of their zip code or state. We get emails from members asking why they are not listed. You are not listed automatically. You have to opt in to be listed. After all, not all of our members are performers.

I will admit that getting listed is a multi-step process. Once it is done, both members and non-members will be able to locate you. To be listed, you have to do a little homework. Here are the directions:

### HOW TO SET UP FIND A MAGICIAN

#### INSERTING THE PROPER INFORMATION

1. Go to [www.magicsam.com](http://www.magicsam.com)
2. At the upper right-hand corner where it says MEMBER LOGIN, sign in with your name and membership number.
3. In the MEMBERS HOME page, click on ACCESS MEMBER PROFILE.
4. Under CONTACT INFO, make sure your email and website information are correct.  
(Note: the website address must contain <http://>)
5. Near the bottom (just above Notes) look for PUBLIC PROFILE and put a check next to ACCESS TO PROFILE BY OTHERS
6. Fill in your STAGE NAME
7. PITCH is where you put in two or three sentences advertising yourself. Things like: "Professional magician Harry Houdini performs for all types of parties. Voted best magic show by *Parents* magazine. Check out his website." Don't make it too long. Think small classified ad.
8. Next is TYPE OF MAGIC, where you put a check next to the type of shows you do.
9. Now click on UPDATE PROFILE
10. Now click on your back browser arrow and go back to the MEMBERS HOME page.

### SETTING UP THE PERMISSIONS

1. On the MEMBERS HOME PAGE, look to the left and click on EDIT MY PERMISSIONS.
2. You will notice two columns: FIND A MAGICIAN and MEMBERS. Put checks in the Find a Magician column for non-members/laymen who are looking you up. I would check just the information they need to know such as City, State, Zip/Postal Code, Phone, Stage Name, Pitch, and Type of Magic. Only these things will show up when they find you. The other column is for members who wish to find you. You can give them much more of your information, such as address and assembly officer position.
3. Click on SAVE PERMISSIONS at the bottom of the page.

Once you have completed the above, write to [SAMtalkBruce@cox.net](mailto:SAMtalkBruce@cox.net) and put the following in the Subject Line: Turn on Find A Magician. In the email include your name as it appears on your membership card.

Once we turn you on, people will be able to find you by zip code or name. —Bruce Kalver

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# THE DEAN'S DIARY

BY GEORGE SCHINDLER

## MAGIC - PAST AND PRESENT

It all began in 1981 when I proposed a small "Magic Week" exhibit to several libraries around New York. One of the libraries I visited was the branch at Lincoln Center, which had a small gallery on Amsterdam Avenue. The chief librarian liked the idea, but the timing was off. He said "Let's do it next year." So I found a few "last minute" glass cases in smaller branches and we supplied them with a few poster reproductions and they added a book or two.

It was not until 1984 that I got a call from the Library of Performing Arts reminding me of our old offer. After meeting with them I found that their small gallery was already promised to another exhibit, and they proposed the gallery upstairs, which was the size of a football field. "Is it possible to fill this with magic?" they asked. They planned to open on October 31 and run the exhibit for a month.

After I said "yes," I quickly called a few PA 1 officers with the news. A small committee was formed and we began the herculean task. Dr. Steve Gross, Nina, and I were the curators; we got the word out that we needed tons of magic props, posters, and ephemera. I set up a luncheon meeting with my go-to guys, Charles Reynolds, Milbourne Christopher, and Stanley Palm. My fellow curators and I were looking for help; Christopher gave me three words of advice: "Don't do it!" He then told us about all the pitfalls he had encountered and experiences with other such smaller exhibits. He explained what to avoid and how he handled the people with whom he worked. Stanley offered to help me evaluate and select material.

The word was out; many wonderful collectors came forward. Mario Carrandi offered a full display of antiques; Marilyn Fries gave us her collection of Houdini photos; Larry Weeks gave us some of his memorabilia; Peter Maloney set up a display of cups and balls; and Harry Blackstone Jr. loaned us his father's



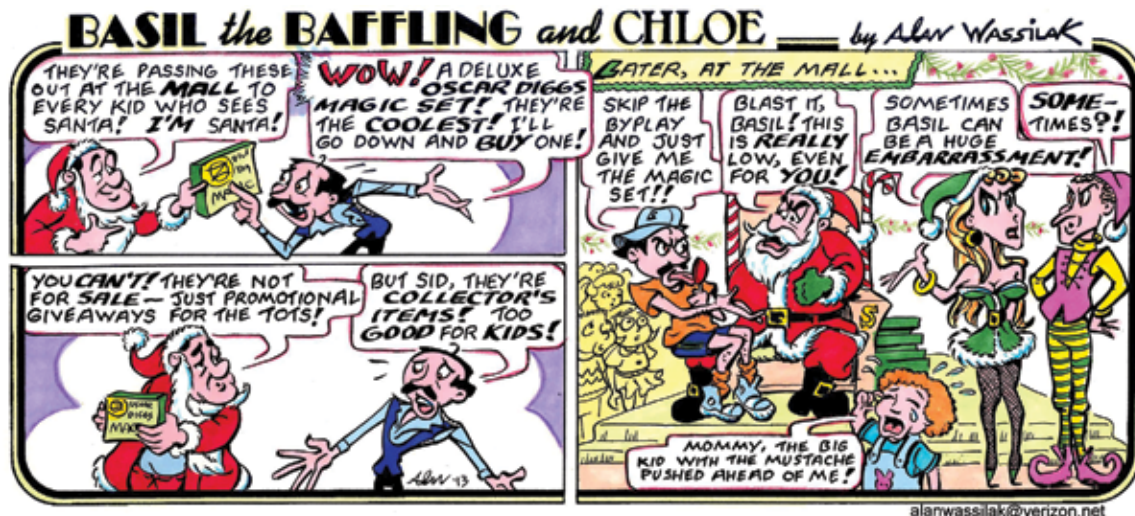
Le Grand David exhibit

vanishing birdcage and a small mock up of the Vanishing Elephant equipment, which floated on a Super X board. Cesareo Pelaez brought in a number of large pieces from his show, including a large elephant figure and a new sculpture of the Broomstick Suspension.

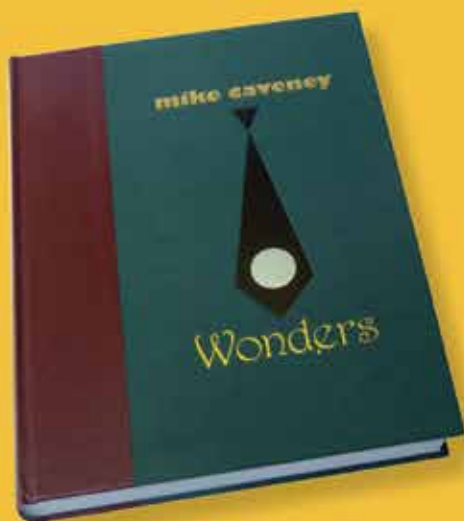
Instead of using the original photos, the museum made copies and in many cases blew them up to large poster panels. We had several walls of old and modern poster three-sheets. Several illusions were scattered around the open areas such as Zig Zag, Ultimate Divide, an Arabian Basket, a Guillotine, and Botanas. A film with video supplied by Mark Wilson and Le Grand David continuously ran in conjunction with a movie titled, *Houdini Never Died*. Sid Radner loaned us the original Houdini Milk Can. An upside-down mannequin of Houdini in his straitjacket hung from the center of the vast hall.

Steve, Nina, and I worked on writing captions. Stanley and I worked in the museum basement with their designer for weeks. And it all came to pass. The exhibit, "Magic Past and Present," was held over into December. More than 25,000 people visited the exhibit. I regret that Milbourne died soon after our meeting and never got to see it. But his predictions were correct. We encountered all of the problems he warned us against. But we were ready.

[You can find the review of the exhibit in the February 1985 *M-U-M*.] ♦







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**Eric Mead - Genii Magazine**

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