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THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS

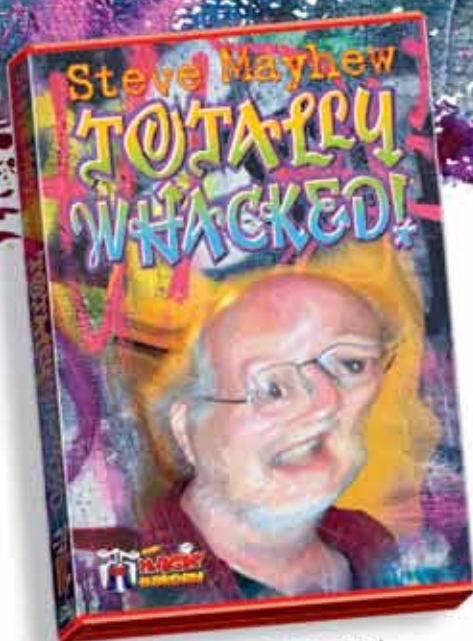
AUGUST 2013



MICHAEL  
GOUDEAU:  
THE BEST FRIEND  
A MAGICIAN COULD HAVE

PAGE 36

# He's Erdnase with an arrow-through- the-head.



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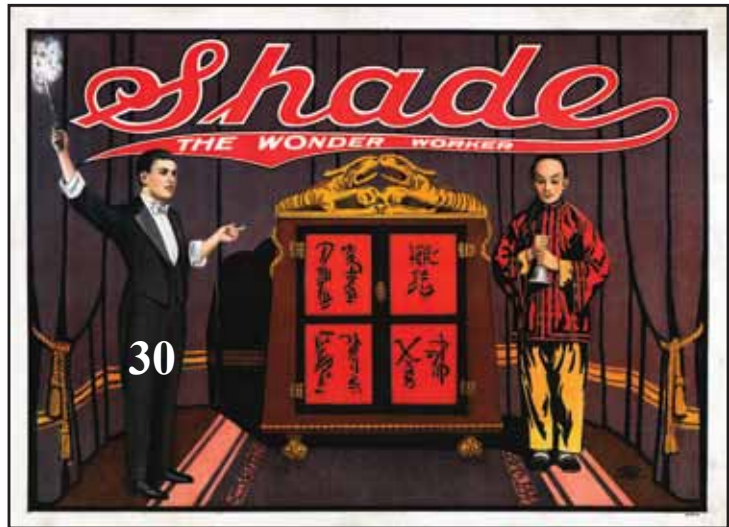
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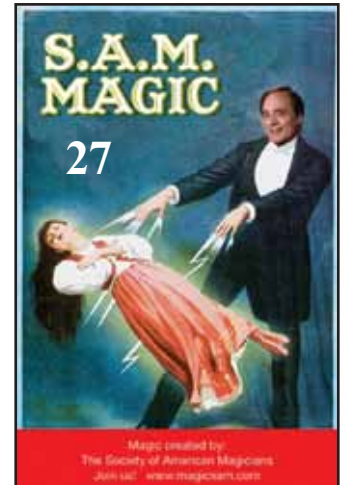
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Photo by Bret Sohl



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## Editor's Desk

Michael Close

You may be wondering why there is a juggler on the cover of a magic magazine this month. The answer is simple: This is no ordinary juggler. Not only was Michael Goudeau a major part of Lance Burton's Las Vegas shows at the Hacienda and the Monte Carlo for almost twenty years, he has been (and continues to be) a writer, consultant, and all-around go-to guy for many of the top magicians in the world, including Penn & Teller.

Over the years I have spent time at Michael's home, enjoying the company of him and his family (and especially enjoying his marvelous cooking). I have worked with him on various writing projects; I have had him hand my butt to me in games of ping pong at Mac King's house. And I have seen him remain cool, calm, collected, and cheerful in the most stressful of situations. He is a remarkable human being.

Lisa, Ava, and I saw Michael perform during the Christmas season last year as he traveled through Canada as part of the Murray Hatfield tour. Although he was hobbling slightly (right after the tour ended Michael had hip replacement surgery), his act was as fresh and funny as ever. We caught up at dinner after the show, and as we chatted it occurred to me that Michael would be the perfect cover subject for *M-U-M*. Just before the S.A.M. convention we spoke via Skype. You'll find my interview with Michael (and some thoughts from Lance Burton, Penn Jillette, and Mac King) starting on page 36. As you read it, you'll understand why Michael Goudeau is the best friend a magician could have.

The Close family traveled to Washington, D.C., for the S.A.M. national convention. I had the opportunity to hang out with some old friends, including Denny Haney, Scott Alexander, Stephen Bargatze, Rick Merrill, Levent, Steve Marshall, Bill Herz, Bob Sheets, Christian Painter and Katalina, and Dale Salwak. I also had the opportunity to make some new friends at the Underground Sessions, which were held in an open-air area just above the bar in the hotel. These sessions were very popular and were a great addition to the convention.

At the S.A.M. convention it was also my pleasure to present the Leslie Guest Award for Excellence in Writing to Levent for his "Stage 101" columns. Levent gave a very thoughtful acceptance speech, touching on a topic that is one of my crusades – the importance of leaving a written legacy. He has certainly done that with the material he has generously shared with the compeers of The Society of American Magicians. Coverage of the Washington convention will appear in the September *M-U-M*.

In the July 2013 issue of *The Magic Circular*, Mathew Field published an article titled, "The Magic Circle Five-foot Shelf

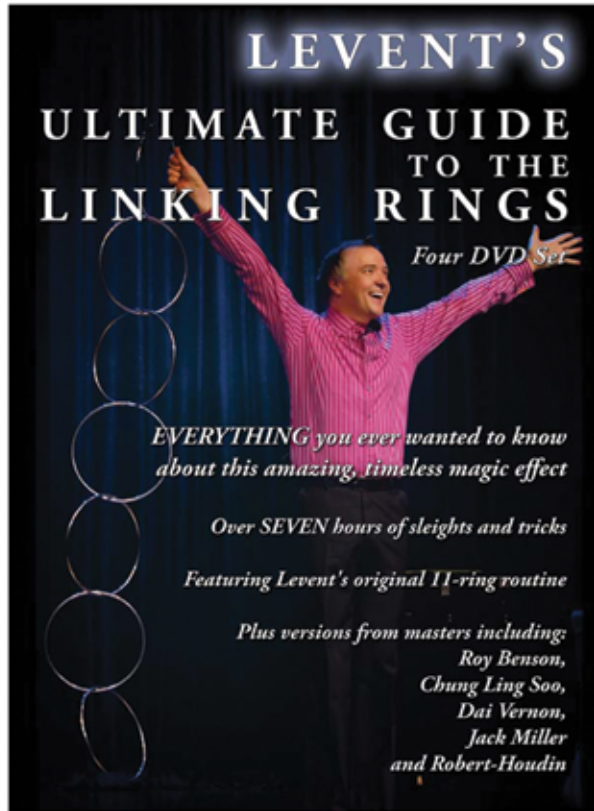
of Magic." The idea was to update Ted Annemann's Five-foot Shelf of Magic, which was published in *The Jinx* in May of 1935 and which Annemann described as "a working library on the art of mystifying." In September 2012, Matt wrote to twenty-three members of The Magic Circle, asking them for help in compiling a similar list. The list was not to be "my ten favorite magic books," but rather "books that would give an overall grounding in magic as a whole." Here is that list of books:

Harlan Tarbell – *The Tarbell Course in Magic* (now 8 volumes), Edwin Sachs – *Sleight of Hand*, Maskelyne and Devant – *Our Magic*, Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin – *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic*, Eugene Burger – *Mastering the Art of Magic*, J.B. Bobo – *The New Modern Coin Magic*, Henry Hay – *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*, Bruce Elliott – *Magic Made Easy*, Tony Corinda – *13 Steps to Mentalism*, Jean Hugard and Frederick Braue – *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, John Northern Hilliard – *Greater Magic*, Various – *Stars of Magic*, Milbourne Christopher – *The Illustrated History of Magic*, Dr. Edwin A. Dawes – *The Great Illusionists*, John Fisher – *Paul Daniels and the Story of Magic*, Hyla Clark – *The World's Greatest Magic*, Paul Curry – *Magicians' Magic*, Mark Wilson – *The Mark Wilson Course in Magic*, Lewis Ganson – *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic*, Dr. Edwin A. Dawes and Michael Bailey – *Circle Without End*, Martin Gardner – *Encyclopedia of Impromptu Magic*, Patrick Page – *The Big Book of Magic*, Henning Nelms – *Magic and Showmanship*, Jim Steinmeyer – *Hiding the Elephant*, Ken Weber – *Maximum Entertainment*, David Kaye – *Seriously Silly*, Juan Tamariz – *The Five Points in Magic*, Tommy Wonder and Stephen Minch – *The Books of Wonder Vols. 1 and 2*.

I'm reprinting Matt's list here because not everyone will agree with the choices on this list and it will thus provide an excellent starting point for discussions at your assembly meeting. This list is also a good way to judge your own progress through the world of magic. How many of the above books have *you* read?

I was very sad to read of the passing of Amos Levkovich on June 27, 2013, after a long battle with lung cancer. Amos performed an exquisite dove act, was twice-awarded Stage Magician of the Year from the Magic Castle, and was simply one of the nicest human beings I have ever met. If you saw his act live, you know that the sight of his recently vanished doves flying to him from the back of theater is an image that will never be forgotten. Aloha, Amos. You were the best. ★





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## President's Desk

*Dal Sanders*

Wow! The 2013 S.A.M. national conference was fantastic. There were so many incredible memories I don't know where to begin. I enjoyed every minute of this convention, from the Opening Ceremony to the final stage show five days later. I especially enjoyed the late night Underground Magic Sessions, the Variety Show, and the Comedy show. I also thought that Twistionary (a variation of Pictionary using balloon sculptures) was great fun. Our convention committee is certainly to be congratulated for a job well done.

Certainly the most noteworthy part of the week was when (now) PNP Chris Bontjes and I laid a wreath at the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier. It was a very moving experience that left me choked up. I want to thank Chris for including me in that ceremony, and I also want to thank Phil Milstead for setting the

whole thing up.

We often refer to our conference as "the world's friendliest magic convention," and I believe this is true. As I've said before, I love magic conventions; I generally go to ten or more every year throughout the world. I'm not always lecturing or performing either, usually I'm just another attendee. Rarely do I see the camaraderie that I see at the S.A.M. annual conference.



**Laying the wreath**

In Washington, D.C., I saw the famous, the experts, and the neophytes sharing and enjoying each other's company in friendship and fellowship. I don't see this everywhere. Many times you see the close-up guys hanging with their peers, the illusionists hanging together, and the dealers in another group, while the people who paid to be there are milling around at the periphery wishing that they could be part of the groups. This is just one of the things that set The Society of American Magicians apart from other groups. We call each other "compeers," a formal word whose first definition is "equal" and whose second definition is "companion." That's what we are, equal companions. I hope that we display this attitude wherever we travel, not just at our national convention but also at other magic conventions, the shows we attend or perform, and even our local assemblies. The people who founded this organization were brilliant to call each other compeers and to charge those who followed them with upholding this lofty goal. They made our motto "Magic-Unity-Might." We are brought together by the magic, but we can only achieve the might through our unity.

## GETTING INVOLVED AND NATIONAL MAGIC WEEK

I wasn't home from the convention twenty-four hours before I was doing the thing the S.A.M. does best, giving back to the community. This year members of the Dallas Magic Club (Assembly 13) are volunteering their time and talents at the Dallas Advocacy Center. This organization offers assistance and counseling to children who have suffered abuse. One of the things we are doing is conducting summer magic camps. Led by Dr. Reade Quinton, (Dallas County medical examiner and our assembly secretary), the children are learning an art that they may choose to pursue for their entire life. The counselors are thrilled when we talk about magic secrets, saying it opens the doors for them to talk to the children about "good secrets and bad secrets." Reade and I are also planning to work with the Advocacy Center's counselors to develop magic scripts and routines that enable them to establish a dialog with the children in their care. This is just one of the things that Assembly 13 will be doing for National Magic Week (October 25-31).

As you know, the objective of Magic Week encompasses the spirit of giving. S.A.M. members donate their time and talents to those who might never experience the wonder of live magic. In recent years, the focus has changed from a one-week event to a celebration of a year of charity and service. That being said, a performance of this type during Magic Week might be an excellent opportunity to get some media exposure for yourself, your assembly, and the S.A.M.

We should be planning Magic Week performances right now. Deciding on a performance date, time, and place at your August assembly meeting will allow you two months to line up performers, organize the show, and contact the news media before show time.

It is also important that you let us know what you are doing in honor of Magic Week so that we can share your accomplishments with compeers around the world. Reporting your activities couldn't be easier. Just send an email to Jeff Sikora (chair of the Magic Week committee) at [jqmagic@cox.net](mailto:jqmagic@cox.net). Please let us know what you are planning as soon as you decide, so that we can share your ideas with other compeers. Jeff would also love it if you would send him a second email when your performance is finished, including information like the names of the performers and some pictures from the show.

If your performance happens to get media attention, let us know. Send us a link to the story so that we can share your success and inspire your compeers. Be sure to mention the S.A.M. during your interview – it is a great way to let the public know about The Society of American Magicians and it a great opportunity to showcase your local club, letting those interested in magic know that your assembly is there, ready and willing to accept new members.

## ON THE ROAD

Less than a week after our convention, I got to visit Assembly 138 (the Bruce Chadwick Assembly) in Fort Worth, Texas. This was my first visit as the president of the S.A.M. and I was very touched by the warm reception they gave me. Geoffrey Grimes wrote a tremendous biography of me in their newsletter, President



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Larry Heil made me an honorary member of the club and Hal Hudgins presented me with a special badge that has my name and my office in The Society of American Magicians. One of the things that makes this different is the fact that this is modeled after a sheriff's badge. They had been planning this for months and somehow no one spilled the secret, even though *several* members of Assembly 138 were at the convention in D.C.

August is also going to be very busy. It starts at P.C.A.M. in Southern California. From there I'll go to the KIDabra Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, followed by *MAGIC Live* in Las Vegas. Then I go to Orlando for a working conference (yes, I'm still working). The month of travel will be capped off here in Dallas at the annual Texas Association of Magicians convention (T.A.O.M.) over the Labor Day weekend. This year the S.A.M. will have a high profile at T.A.O.M. I can't tell you more...it's a surprise. ★

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## 1

### PRESIDENT MAGIC HONORED BY PA 1

**NEW YORK, NY**— The Magic Table residing at the Edison Cafe on 47th Street in Times Square had lots of visitors this month. Josh Kane and Max Drogen stopped by as well as Ronnie Reckseit and his wife. Albert Callas and I enjoyed sharing stories about magic history and his life in magic. The Magic Table meets for lunch on Fridays at 12:30 in the Edison Cafe. Come and join us if you are in town.

Our monthly meeting was held on June 7, 2013, at Mount Sinai Hospital. After the minutes were read and approved by the quorum in attendance, committee reports were given. One was a very complete trustees report by Bruce Lish outlining the past four years of our funds and everything being in order. It was announced the workshops that Doug Edwards is giving are terrific and all should get to one.

With reports finished it was time for our annual elections; the new officers were sworn in by President Richie Magic. David Adamovich (Throwdini) is the new president of the Parent Assembly. Then a beautiful plaque was presented by Throwdini to President Richie Magic from the board of directors for his outstanding year of service to the club and the creation of the Gravesite Restoration Committee and its activities. With the meeting



Plaque for Richie Magic

coming to an end we turn our attention to our after-meeting event.

This month we were treated to a lecture by the wonderful Albert Callis. So we intently watched the professor as he took us back to the days of the midway and pitchman selling tonics that could cure what ails you. It was a historic lecture with beautiful bits of magic and insights into this world of “the pitch.” In was in three parts. We all stayed till the end and had a great time. —Tom Klem  
**Parent Assembly No. 1 meets at Mount Sinai Hospital on Madison Ave, NY, NY.**

## 2

### A MAGICAL MEDLEY

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**— Present at the June meeting were Stu Bacon, John and Mary Caris, Safire, Rich Seguire, Luke Perkocha and his young daughter Lilly, Dr. John Langdell, Bill Langdell, Walt Johnson, and Buzz Lawrence. As we had two new members visiting, we introduced each other to the guests and talked a little about our history in magic. Rich lectured about coin tosses for Coins through the Table and palming bottle caps for the four caps Matrix. Walt talked about rubber bands passing through each other. Lilly Perkocha ably assisted him. Walt showed her how to do the trick. Walt then explained that he carried blank business cards, empty on both sides. He tapped the card twice and mysteriously printing appeared on one side.

Buzz Lawrence did a routine in which he predicted which person had a gold coin that was taken from a purse; he found out which person had the gold coin. Next, Buzz had a calculator; he had spectators put random numbers into the machine. They were given the choice to hit +/- etc. He had made a prior prediction as to what the total would be. Luke did a card trick where two individually chosen cards were placed into a deck at different locations and when the deck was spread, the two chosen cards were the only

ones that were upside down. Rich did a mini-illusion named The Pencil Without a Middle. A pencil was placed into a box. The box’s top was lifted and the sides were taken off. The pencil’s middle was missing. The crowd was shown the box and then the pencil was mysteriously put back together.

John Caris did a prediction called Wager, in which a prediction was made as to which coin would be left on the table after people made choices of coins to remove. Lilly did a trick in which a penny mysteriously appeared and reappeared. Ah to be ten again. Safire took a bunch of candies and had Lilly choose candies from a pile. Safire had made a prediction as to which one would be left. The color of the prediction was found on Safire’s tongue. Bill used a napkin that was placed into his right ear and then came out of the left. Members and guests enjoyed an evening of excellent magical entertainment. —Rich Seguire

**Golden Gate Assembly 2 meets first Wednesday at 8 p.m. at Community Room of Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Avenue, San Francisco. Contact Tamaka Tamaka3715@aol.com (415) 531-9332 www.facebook.com/groups/249018441875771/ for more details.**

## 4

### ANNUAL BANQUET FEATURING DENNY HANEY

**PHILADELPHIA, PA**— In June, we held our annual banquet which featured the one and only Denny Haney. Following the cocktail hour during which we were treated to an array of music by our very own Kurt Garwood, who is an exceptional D.J., everyone enjoyed a sumptuous buffet dinner. After dinner S.A.M. National Historian Tom Ewing handed out the trophies to those individuals who placed first, second, and third in the close-up and stage contests this year. He then presented the Dick & Joan Gustafson award to George Hample for his dedication to Assembly 4 and the art of magic in general. Thereafter, Donna

Horn presented the President’s Outstanding Service Award in honor of Jerry Remenicky, a.k.a. Professor Rem, to Peter Cuddihy. A round of applause was then given to outgoing President Donna Horn for all of her hard work this year as she passed the gavel and wand on to incoming President Brian Hurlburt.

After the award ceremony, the stage show began for which Jeff Carson ably served as the masters of ceremonies. The opening act consisted of a beautiful dove routine set to contemporary music performed by Helene Schad. At the conclusion of her performance, Helene enlisted the aid of her adorable granddaughter, Sidney Matthews, in executing a colorful Square Circle silk production. Following Helene, we were treated to the magic and comedy of Denny Haney. Denny, whose commitment to the classics of magic has been chronicled in Scott Alexander’s *M-U-M* column “On The Shoulders Of Giants: Stage Magic And Theory From Denny Haney” over the past several months, delivered a performance that baffled, entertained, and made it clear why he is one of the top magicians working today. As an extra added treat, Scott was on hand to enjoy and film some of Denny’s routines.



Denny Haney performing “The Egg Bag” with the assistance of Sherri Lampert (L) and Michelle Lampert (R)

Denny started things off by performing the classic Torn and Restored Newspaper. Next, he wowed the crowd with his very entertaining take on the Egg Bag,

in which he enlisted the aid of audience members Sherri Lampert and Michelle Lampert, (the wife and daughter of Assembly 4 Treasurer Eric Lampert). Denny performed many fine effects and ended the evening on a high note with Ken Brooke's wonderfully comical Multiplying Bottles routine. Needless to say, Denny Haney was a big hit. Without question, the 2013 banquet was one of the best we have ever had. —Peter S. Cuddihy

The James Wobensmith Assembly 4 meets the third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the Bustleton Memorial Post, 810 (American Legion) 9151 Old Newtown Road. Contact: [www.sam4.org/](http://www.sam4.org/) for more details. for more details.

## 6

### KNIFE, FORK & SPOON NIGHT

**BALTIMORE, MD**— Heavy rains from advancing tropical storm Andrea did not keep us from “Knife, Fork & Spoon” night. A few of us even stuck to the oddball theme. Before the meeting started, though, we all viewed the levitation by Special Head on *America's Got Talent* and then vigorously debated the possible method. A quick business meeting (electing new officers) was followed by our *raison d'être*: to perform magic.

Tony Anastasi kicked things off by pulling his punched business card off of a cord held by a spectator, adding his own subtleties to this old classic. He followed with a poker chip color prediction. Mike Schirmer performed an entertaining Chinese flavored Ben Son Bowl routine with a lacquered red bowl, “Chinese meatballs,” and, of course, a chopstick for the wand. Oneil Banks borrowed a \$20 bill and used his pocket knife to show how to double your money, balance the budget, and cut spending. Howard Katz pulled a quarter through a sealed plastic bag (Bag4Life) and followed with a smooth silk through cup handle and the self-untying silk.

Joe Bruno, our walking encyclopedia of magic, performed an interesting card effect from the previous month's *M-U-M*. Eric Hoffman did an ESP card match (Zenvelopes, his favorite Max Maven effect). Our resident cardician, Jeff Eline, performed two card effects, including a Do as I Do way beyond what we all learned as kids. Joe Harsanyi came back to the theme with mental spoon bending, with a surprise

(to him!) ending. The magic continued even after the meeting, and Jeff showed off his newly acquired Animated Alexander Knows Poster, acquired at auction and restored by electronics whiz Joe Harsanyi. —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

### KID STUFF

**OMAHA, NE**— Tonight's program was to be our annual contest. The theme was “Children's Magic.” The rules were the same as those of the Outback Steakhouses. The program included seven performers arranged in alphabetical order according to height (a la Casey Stengel). The audience included invited children.

First up was Joyce Chleboun, a real competitor. She's always well prepared for our contests. She combined many of the aspects of children's magic with an effect that included a rabbit, some cards, and chocolate chip cookies. It was a most clever presentation that concluded with *everyone* getting a chocolate chip cookie and an Oreo. Next was Steve Cotariu who told us about a trip to Scotland to see the Loch Ness Monster and met Duncan Lennox at his candy shop who baffled us with a coin vanish and a coin/marshmallow transposition. Travis Newcombe pulled Josh out the audience to help him vanish a Coke bottle and produce a glass of the stuff out of an “empty” sack.

Pete Petrashek told us the story about a treasure chest in a castle that started out empty and somehow produced silks and a



Donna Roth in the barnyard with Ryan Thomas

long string of jewels that heaped up in a pile in front of the stage. Donna Roth invited Ryan Thomas to act as a “clucker” in her barnyard while she produced an egg from a bag. Of course Ryan couldn't do it. Dick Sanders showed us his Book of Imagination and turn by turn showed us how a black-and-white coloring book transformed into a full-color book with Presto the rabbit. We had to imagine a carrot that was partially eaten and then the finale in which a full-color clown was produced. Jeff Sikora was the “caboose” and invited Tucker (one of our children in the audience) to help demonstrate the powers of the “man of steel,” turning coal into diamonds. He had success on the second try. He finished with effects using scarves and then red and yellow loops. While the audience votes were counted we were treated to juggling by Jody Fratelli, plus color changing silks and coin magic by Dean Walter Graham. Each performer received a grab bag of magic recently donated by a recently deceased local magician.

The winner of the \$50 grand prize was the one who laid an egg. —Jerry Golmanovich

Assembly 7 meets, usually, on the third Monday at the Southwest Church of Christ near 124th St. and West Center Road, right across from where Hooters used to be. Contact [jerry.golmanovich@cox.net](mailto:jerry.golmanovich@cox.net) (402) 390-9834 Contact [omahamagicalsociety.com](http://omahamagicalsociety.com) for more details.

## 13

### MAGIC ON TELEVISION

**DALLAS, TX**— Newly elected President Derrel Allen welcomed the DMC back to Crosspointe after last month's officer installation banquet. First order of business was to swear in Brad Ingle, who was unavailable for the banquet, into the Sergeant at Arms position.

The first portion of the meeting was devoted to a discussion about magic on television, hosted by Frank Seltzer and Dal Sanders. This discussion was aimed at the do's and don'ts of performing magic for television or YouTube. The lecture was very detailed and informative, covering everything from studio lighting and makeup to floor directors, time limits, and preparedness.

After this mini-workshop Frank initiated a Skype interview with Joe Tyler Gold and Tammy Caplan, who co-wrote and directed the movie *Desperate Acts of Magic*.

The movie was recently shown as a special event in Dallas (which raised money for the Dallas Young Magicians Club), and will soon be released to DVD and video-on-demand.

Joe Gold has directed many plays for the theatre including Dario Fo's *The Pope and the Witch* and Oyama's *A Hopeful Interview with Satan*. An award-winning magician, Joe also directed *Nouveau Magic*, which was a unique blend of magic, theatre, and improvisational comedy. Tammy Caplan's screenplay, *8th Grade Sucks*, was a Nicholl Fellowship Quarterfinalist as well as a Script Savvy Screenplay Contest first place winner. She recently had a recurring role on Showtime's *Weeds*, and is currently working as an associate story producer on History Channel's *Ancient Aliens*.

Joe and Tammy generously took the time to discuss the making of *Desperate Acts* and how the reaction to the film is so far. Joe discussed how his own experiences in magic influenced the story in the movie and how it all came to be.

The Dallas Magic Club, Assembly 13, meets at Theatre 166, Crosspointe Community Center in Carrollton, TX every third Tuesday of the month (see [www.dallasmagic.org](http://www.dallasmagic.org) for directions). Contact Reade Quinton [reade.quinton@gmail.com](mailto:reade.quinton@gmail.com) (972) 400-0195 [www.dallasmagic.org](http://www.dallasmagic.org) for more details.

## 17

### GOODBYE FOR THE SUMMER

**SPRINGFIELD, MA**— June is typically our last meeting of the summer, and we celebrated with a cake brought in by Vice President Lenny. We had a smaller turnout than usual this month, due to vacations and the Unknown Magicians' Conference taking place over the weekend, but we had fun all the same.

Jeff Pyzocha brought in some of his Tenyo collection, and as usual they were impressive. First was Eye of the Idol, in which a plastic head would rotate itself to point to a named color. Next was Mini-Metamorphosis, which is exactly as it sounds. Finally, Jeff showed us Oh No, an odd effect in which Jeff's finger was cut in two, shown to be separated, but magically restored a moment later.

Bob Carroll performed something he doesn't remember the name of, and sort of remembered how to do,

but did a nice job with anyway. Two cards were shown, and placed together. Somehow, the entire face of one of the cards vanished and ended up printed on the back of the other card!

Lenny Nadeau performed a four-person suspension, first having volunteers sit in a square, and then having them lean back over the legs of the person behind them. One by one Lenny removed their chairs, and everyone stayed put like a scene out of *The Matrix*!

Rich Pinsonnault performed the Whole Deck, a wonderful new effect in which a sticker placed on a card to make it look like a hole is going through it somehow turns into a real hole in the selection. Then, the hole itself is pulled off the selection and into the deck, which is then shown to have a hole running through the whole thing. Awesome new magic from Rich's magic shop!

Finally, P.J. Pinsonnault performed his take on Dr. Daley's Last Trick. He's turned the effect into a game for the spectator, but later shows the game to be rigged against them from the start.

All in all, we said goodbye to our 2012-2013 season in style! —P.J. Pinsonnault

Dr. I.R. Calkins Assembly 17 meets the first Friday of every month at 7 pm at Rich Pinsonnault's RP Magic Shop; 69 East Street; Ludlow, MA Contact Rich Gilbert rgilbertmagic@yahoo.com (413) 210-5725 www.assembly17.org for more details.

## 19

### BAR BETS AND SCAMS ABOUND IN HOUSTON

**HOUSTON, TX**— The teach-in session for June was by hosted by Frank Price and centered on the bar bets and scams. All of them involved getting the victim to believe that something that was possible was not, or the other way around. Jamie Salinas actually won some money in one bet, but ended up losing it in another. It was all in good fun. Thanks to Gene Protas, Jeff Lanes, Johan McElroy, Scott Wells, and Frank Price for sharing their swindles, cons, and bar bets.

Angus shared an endless chain routine using Frank Price as his victim. You already know who ended up the winner on this one. Scott Wells showed us how easy it was to use jumbo marked cards without his victim any the wiser. The card was so clearly marked it was amazing that nobody saw it,

or was it?

Jamie Salinas had Jerry Paul's selected and torn photo predicted from the beginning. Even the tear marks appeared to match very closely. Marti Stein used Charlie Dodson to prove a point about calling 911 numbers. Her variety of phones at the end was rather amazing.

Miles Root presented his ring and chain, ring and rope, and then large ring routine. Jerry Paul had America call out a card, which was then revealed to be the same one as Jerry had placed on the table earlier. Johan McElroy used some quick finger maneuvers to deceive guest David Coffey into knowing what two cards he had in his hand. Shane Wilson had Gene Protas help out in a gentleman's game cards, which ended up showing us that neither were the gentlemen we thought they were.

Gene Protas cleverly used a deck of cards with no two backs alike as he matched cards freely selected by Marti Stein. He also "showed" us how the Queens are chosen from a deck of cards that otherwise contained only Threes. Alex Rangel used the power of suggestion to scam Dick and Lindsay Olson into "feeling" decks of cards gain and lose weight at will.

David Rangel revealed Johan McElroy's selected card under a coin, literally. Thanks to all who participated in June's magical performances. We are taking a break from our regular lecture schedule for the summer, but Scott Wells has promised that our fine lecture series will return this fall. Hope you can stop by and visit our meetings when in town. —Miles Root

Assembly 19 meet the first Monday of every month at the IATSE Local 51 Meeting Hall, 3030 North Freeway, Houston, TX. A teaching lecture begins at 7:30 pm with the meeting beginning at 8:00 pm. Contact Miles Root milesroot@aol.com (281) 3347508 houstonmagic.com for more details.

## 21

### MAGIC FROM THE HARDWARE STORE

**HARTFORD, CT**— Tonight's theme was "Stuff I Got at the Hardware Store." Theme captain Norman St. Laurent chose this one, since outside of magic he's a carpenter and does tricks for his fellow craftsmen. He started with a trick he calls Border Crossing, in which four washers travel from

one hand to another one at a time. Jason Abate had Norm name a card, which proved to be the only red card in an otherwise blue deck. (Not sure what this had to do with hardware, but we didn't care; it was a good trick.)

Norm then showed us Triplets, in which three washers in his hand vanished, to re-appear at his elbow, knee, and neck. Dan Sclare had two washers of his own, and placed one in Barbara Scully's hand. Dan made the hole in his washer disappear and when Barbara opened her hand, her washer had two holes.



The big finale

Norm then had Cal Vinick choose a card and rip a piece off. The rest of the card went into the deck and into a paper bag. A utility knife stabbed the bag and punctured a card – but not the chosen card. That card was a note saying to find the card inside the utility knife.

Soll Levine had Barbara put several colored silks into a large tube, and then cover the tube. When uncovered, the silks had changed into a multi-colored feather boa. Norm then asked Dan to put a zip-tie on Norm's thumbs, securing him to his table. Norm did some very funny bits while so "secured."

Cal showed us a model "door" he says he got at Home Depot. He was able to push a large nail through the door's glass panel without harm. Dave Garrity had on his table about half-a-dozen nail guns of which only one was loaded with a nail. Dave then proceeded to play Russian Roulette, and fortunately lived to play this game(!) another day.

To close out this constructive evening, Norm opened a box of huge nails and performed Blockhead. —Dana T. Ring  
Assembly 21 meets at Angelo's On Main, 289 South Main Street, West Hartford CT 06107. Contact Dana Ring dana@danaring.com (860) 523-9888 www.ctmagic.org for more details.

## 22

### 82ND ANNUAL BANQUET

**LOS ANGELES, CA**— The annual awards and installation banquet has been a long tradition in the Southern California Assembly. In the early years of the assembly, several very formal banquets were held each year to welcome and entertain visiting magicians and as social events for members, their wives, and guests. The annual installation banquet, then as it is now, was a time to install newly-elected assembly officers and to recognize members for outstanding accomplishments and service to magic and to the assembly. This year marked the 82nd anniversary of Assembly 22.

John Engman, president of the S.A.M. Hall of Fame & Magic Museum, served as toastmaster for the event, introducing our honored guests: S.A.M. National President J. Christopher Bontjes and his family, S.A.M. First Vice President "Ice" McDonald, and S.A.M. National Treasurer Eric Lampert. A "Turning of the Plate" ceremony was then conducted by Steven Jennings assisted by Kim Hallinger to commemorate the passing of assembly member Louis William "Bill" Chaudet. The ceremony dates back to the earliest years of S.A.M. annual banquets in New York City.

After the always-excellent meal served by Stevens Steakhouse in the City of Commerce, California, the newly-elected assembly officers were duly installed by National President Chris Bontjes. Our immediate past President Jim Callen, opening with some humor from his joke file as usual, gave his final presidential address. Tom Meseroll, our newly installed president, then gave his inaugural address.

Speeches and formalities having concluded, it was time for the show. The opening act was Ted "Suds" Sudbrack, a Los Angeles area professional for the past forty years; Suds always has an act filled with fun, laughter, and comedy. Next was Phil Van Tee, another very funny act. Phil is a frequent performer in the parlor at the Magic Castle and presented a fast-moving and very funny act filled with unique rope magic and gags. Closing the show was our third comedy magician, Kerry Ross. Kerry Ross is another Los Angeles area professional magician and was mentored by the late Bill Chaudet. Kerry uses some of his inherited Chaudet apparatus

during his very funny act.

The final event of the evening was the awarding of various trophies the assembly has for the highest scoring performances of magic during the competition nights at assembly meetings. Some of these trophies date back to the 1940s and were won by some legendary names in magic. It was another great evening of magic for the Southern California Assembly.

—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](mailto:magicmred@earthlink.net) (213) 382-8504 for more details.**

## 23

### JULY NIGHT PROVIDES MYSTICAL MAGIC NIGHT

**WASHINGTON, DC**— A full house of Assembly 23 members provided a night of whirlwind magic on the eve of the S.A.M. national convention on our doorstep in Washington, D.C. The theme was walk-around magic. President Noland Montgomery opened the evening's entertainment by doing a slick two-card transposition.

When noted author of medieval history Eleanor Herman dropped by our magical gathering briefly, it gave Lars Klores an opportunity to make a penny she initialed disappear and reappear from a silk he held in his hand. Arnie Fuoco managed to bring a card placed in a deck to rise back to the top with a simple wave, then exchange places with a second card.

Larry Lipman asked an assistant to draw a fish on a chosen card that he then caused to leap up from the floor into his hand. Sam Brothers performed a combination of Triumph and four-Ace production, mixing the cards back to front multiple times before coming up with only the four Aces facing the viewers. Laurie Curry offered an old favorite, the Gemini Twins, using just four cards to tell the story of a King and Queen on a night out. Jim Flanigan changed two Kennedy half dollars to Chinese coins before pulling an elongated snake out of the center of one of the oriental coins.

Matt Hiller demonstrated a magical Chinese coin and string routine in which three coins with holes in the center were magically removed from the string, one by one. Dwight Redman turned a

hand-drawn set of playing cards he said his grandchildren drew into real cards, and then performed a stunning two-card transposition. Augie Arnstein offered a comedy green sponge ball routine. Buddy Smith challenged everyone with a coin set using Peruvian and East African coins.



**Lars Klores dazzles author Eleanor Herman**

Jonathan Walker demonstrated how he could provide answers to complicated mathematical exercises far faster than a calculator held by Sam Brothers. Theo Rushin charmed the group with an up-close restoration of a stir stick from Starbucks that sounded like it was being broken into pieces by audience members. He also did an eye-popping ring and string routine with a borrowed ring that showed up in a set of "nested" wallets. —Jim Flanigan and Laurie Curry

**National Press Club, 529 14th Street NW, Washington, DC 20045 Contact Jim Flanigan [jflanigan@aol.com](mailto:jflanigan@aol.com) (202) 554-3775 for more details.**

## 25

### DOT, SPOTS AND COLORS NIGHT

**ELMWOOD PARK, NJ**— It was "Dots, Spots, & Colors" night, plus four-Ace routines. Richard Bangs brought in a lot of back issues of *Genii* magazine to share with anybody who wanted to take some. Paul Cohen spoke about "Magical Healing," a new program he has initiated. It's a magic teaching program, currently at Parsippany High School. It's a ten-week program, about an hour long. Paul is looking to expand to senior centers, hospitals, and elsewhere. He's looking for volunteers.

Our first performer was Richard Bangs. He showed us a beautiful color-changing routine, Eddie Gibson's Casino Coins, a Spellbound effect. He concluded with Doc Daley's Last Trick, from *Stars*

*of Magic*. Rich has his own presentation. John Mintz was next, with what he said involved the speed of light and the speed of sound. Four signed Aces transported to four different pockets with the last one inside a zippered wallet compartment. He was decent enough to explain it all (no speed of light or sound).

Ron Wohl showed his favorite four-Ace routine, a nice Al Leech effect. Then, we were treated to The Emerald Isle Aces, a Herb Zarrow effect, although Hugh Lambert took credit for it, after seeing Dai Vernon perform it in England. The effect is also called Revolving Aces in Lorayne's *Close-up Card Magic*. Meir Yedid performed a Wild Card routine with a really wild ending: five Tens that had dotted labels on each changed into court cards and an Ace! Meir then showed a die in a small box, which predicted the number of an invisible die that Phil Schwartz rolled.

Del Dixon performed (W)hole, based on the original Emerson & West effect, now made in jumbo size by Daryl. Then I did Gordon Bean's Time Card to see how good a mind reader Gene Nebel was... he was a good one. His freely named time appeared printed on a selected card.

John Henderson did a far-out effect with four dots drawn on the back of a selected card. The spots all moved magically to one corner. This was John's handling of Matrixxxx2 by Mike Powers and Aldo Colombini.

It's summertime, and the Jersey Shore beckons. It seems some people would rather go swimming on sunny days than do coin and card tricks. Go figure! See you on the third Friday of July, if you stop by the Elmwood Park VFW Hall. —Del

**Assembly 25 meets the third Friday of each month at the Elmwood Park Veterans Hall, 6 Veterans Place, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407 Contact Phil Schwartz [quackmagicphil@aol.com](mailto:quackmagicphil@aol.com) (973) 263-4419 [www.livemagicguide.com/sam25](http://www.livemagicguide.com/sam25) for more details.**

## 30

### SPONGE PANTS SQUARE BOB

**ATLANTA, GA**— Dan Garrett presented our professional development this month on sponge magic. Dan presented methods to make sponge items appear and disappear using the Sanada gimmick. Various items that were

presented were sponge balls, sponge eggs, and Dan's newest effect on the market, sponge hearts. Care and use of the Sanada gimmick was explained. Dan's method for switching a sponge egg for a real egg was demonstrated.

During our business meeting, our newest member, West Evans, was voted into the Atlanta Society. Congratulations, West!

Rick Hinze served as emcee for our evening of magic presentations. Jim Driscoll presented a children's effect with clever rhyming patter using the Strat-o-Spheres. Martin Baratz took us into the Bermuda Triangle with coins from his pocket. The coins were placed in a triangle shape and a crystal pyramid of sugar was placed in the center. When the coins were counted, each side added to thirteen. When a coin was added to a side, they still added up to thirteen. Even with my poor math skills, that was pretty strange.

Dan Garrett did a mini Miser's Dream with a large coin for the ending. Jim Mangham did an Al Baker effect from 1946 in which a red card was chosen and a card name had been written on a black card. A prediction had been made and set aside before the performance. Jim had a deck with half red backs and half blue backs. He had Gene Hendrix choose a card from each half while it was face down. The chosen cards were placed in opposite halves. The prediction revealed that it was Gene's chosen cards. When the other cards in the deck were revealed, it was found that they were all Jokers. —Carol Garrett

**Assembly 30 meets the second Tuesday of the month at Piccadilly Cafeteria, I-85/North Druid Hills Road, Atlanta, Georgia. President Jim Driscoll [jim.driscoll@gmail.com](mailto:jim.driscoll@gmail.com) or Secretary Carol Garrett [carolmswiz@aol.com](mailto:carolmswiz@aol.com)**

## 31

### A JOURNEY UP THE ROYAL ROAD

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN**— The evening began with the installation of newly-elected officers for the 2013/2014 year. Incoming President Taylor Martin announced that this will be his second tour of duty as president of Assembly 31. His first was in the '87/'88 year, twenty-three years ago! Rounding out the officer corps for this year are: Don Miller – 1st Vice President, Aaron Kalinowski – 2nd Vice President, Dale



**Newly elected officers for Assembly 31--MC Joseph Fuller, Jay Newby, Dale Benson, Don Miller, Taylor Martin, Tom Winterrowd, and MC Joseph Fuller**

Benson – Secretary, Jay Newby – Treasurer, and Tom Winterrowd – Sergeant at Arms. Joseph Fuller led the ceremony.

The focus of the magic was Jean Hugard and Frederick Braue's *The Royal Road to Card Magic*. Several members performed card tricks from the book and then Don Miller led us all on a *Royal Road* teach-in.

Daniel Lee, not being able to decide which trick to perform, did three: Design for Laughter, Do As I Do, and Three Cards Across. Tom Winterrowd preceded his card effect by surprising Phil Dubbs with his own "American Express Credit Card." After doing a mental credit check, the card was mysteriously found to have Phil's name on it...an immediate approval! Taylor Martin then performed his own variation on McDonald's Aces using an Ask Alexander deck from Conjuring Arts. While telling us stories about Alexander, the four Aces each appeared. Taylor made a point of reminding us that he was using a move which he learned from our namesake, Harry Riser.

The final card trick of the evening was performed by Rocky Raccoon and his trainer, Mike Kohrman. Rocky astounded Karen Miller by finding in the fanned deck the card she had previously randomly selected.

The performances were then followed by an excellent *Royal Road* teaching session led by Don Miller. Warning us that it would be ambitious, he proceeded to demonstrate techniques taught in the book including ideas for how to use the overhand shuffle, key cards, and various lifts. —Dale Benson

Assembly 31 meets the first Monday of the month at 7:00 PM. If the first Monday conflicts with a holiday weekend, we postpone the meeting by one week. Unless otherwise announced the meeting location is the Irvington

United Methodist Church, 30 Audubon Road, on the east side of the city. Contact Taylor Martin [kazoo23@aol.com](mailto:kazoo23@aol.com) (317) 894-2554 [www.sam31.com](http://www.sam31.com) for more details.

### 32

#### MAGICIANS BUILD THEIR ACTS

**LYNCHBURG, VA—** President Patrick Hubble called the Assembly 32 June meeting to order; a couple of brief business items were handled quickly, including the consensus to go forward on securing a visiting lecturer for the September meeting. More information will be provided in coming months.

The theme for this month was "Planning and Building an Act," which was covered in part by a group discussion among members of the topic. Patrick talked about how he built his effects from small to large. Bob Staton illustrated how he felt it was necessary for an act to have "moments," and went on to explain what he meant. Bob also mentioned how a "show list" helps to keep the act on track.

Mike Kinnaird touched on ice-breakers and a performer's relationship with the audience. John Jennings performed several examples of good opening effects including a silk to an appearing cane and also a flash of fire from a match; both effects were quick and visual. John then turned the discussion to how a performer should remain in character and a provided a simple way that one could use to better understand what character was being portrayed. Bob Wallin mentioned magic that would capture an audience's attention as an important element.

In addition to the general theme, Bob Wallin also had a DVD that he played for those attending. The video featured several prominent magicians teaching selected

effects. Bob then demonstrated a coin move that was featured in one segment of the video.

Another fine evening of magic then concluded. —John Jennings  
The Hersy Basham Assembly 32 meets the third Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at Tharp Funeral Home, 220 Breezewood Drive, Lynchburg, VA. Contact John Jennings [investigatefire@aol.com](mailto:investigatefire@aol.com) (434) 851-6240 for more details.

### 35

#### THOSE WHO CAN DO, TEACH

**POUGHKEEPSIE, NY—** Our recent Cavalcade of Magic fundraiser was a big success for the assembly. Our June meeting began with a huge thanks to Frank Monaco, Ryan Dutcher, Joel Zaritsky, Michael Bochar, Andy Weintraub, Joe Que, and all the other members who went beyond the call of duty for the club. We're a lot stronger due to their efforts. Our June meeting continued with an election and a big changing of the guard. Joel is our new president. Terry Morgan remains vice president. Ryan is second vice president. Michael is our new secretary and Darryl Bielski is our new scribe. And after a decade of being the scribe, I'm moving to over to treasurer. Long-time members of the executive team, Frank and Derrin Berger, are becoming advisors, now that they're big time movie stars.

Our theme for the night was what trick do you teach those audience members who just won't leave you alone until you teach them something? Derrin showed us a finger trick that got him a big discount on a jacket when traveling in Italy (and no, it wasn't a five-finger discount). Joel showed us a rubber band effect. Sam Patton explained a favorite. A visitor, Drew White, taught us a card flick up that kept students occupied at his college dorms. Michael told us he teaches the floating sausage finger illusion. Another visitor, Braulio Duran, showed us a few of the things he teaches. A highlight of the evening was youngster David Mort performing a couple of effects from his box of magic. Thanks to everybody who had a hand in our fundraiser and taught us something new. See you at the BBQ! —Craig Kunaschk

Al Baker Assembly No. 35 (usually) meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month at the Milanese Italian Restaurant, 115 Main Street, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Check our website to confirm time and meeting location. Contact [www.compumagic.com/sam35](http://www.compumagic.com/sam35) for more details.

### 37

#### SUMMER PICNIC FUN

**DENVER, CO—** The warm days of summer in our beautiful Mile High City enticed the Mile High Magicians Society to throw a grand picnic for its membership and guests. Devoted club member Lewis Peacock volunteered to chair this fun undertaking. He was in charge of grilling both the meat and veggie-burgers along with the hot dogs that the club provided as a perk for being a member. The entire standard picnic fair was then provided pot-luck style by the membership. Items were determined by the first letter of one's last name.

New members and old alike enjoyed the camaraderie that a magic club can offer. Fun members Lynn and Helen Keir along with Dorothy Possum decided to bring their lounge chairs and enjoy an afternoon at the Stonehouse Park in Lakewood Colorado. Lifetime members Bruce and Kitty Spangler sat back and enjoyed a marvelous veggie-burger while visiting with the club's past and current treasurers, Jerry Stoll with lovely wife Louise and Dave Elstun. Members Chris York and Todd Orton were there along with the splendid scenery a Colorado park can have in the summer. Long-time member John Luong brought along his entire family with his neighbors to boot. The children had fishing poles in tow. A wild game of horseshoes ensued and everyone had a wonderful peaceful day. And like any grand magic club event the magic broke out too! —Connie Elstun

Assembly 37 meets the second Thursday of the month at Riverpointe Senior Center in Littleton Colorado. Contact Chad Wonder [chad@idomagic.com](mailto:chad@idomagic.com) or call 303-933-4118 Contact Chad Wonder [chad@idomagic.com](mailto:chad@idomagic.com) (303) 933-4118 [www.milehighmagicians.com](http://www.milehighmagicians.com) for more details.

### 52

#### INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS BANQUET

**SAN ANTONIO, TX—** June 7, 2013, Brother John Hamman Assembly 52 held its installation of officers banquet at Aldaco's Mexican Restaurant in San

Antonio. Many thanks to Doug Gorman for making the restaurant arrangements, and to Paul Amerson for arranging our guest performer. Congratulations to our new officers: Don Moravits – President, John Dahlinger – Vice President, Doug Gorman – Secretary/Treasurer, and Geoffrey Sadowski – Sergeant-at-Arms. Outgoing President Paul Amerson presented three special certificates of recognition: to George Castillo for being named Honorary Sergeant-at-Arms, to Michael Tallon and Doug Gorman for having performed at every assembly meeting, and to Fran Gorman who helps her husband, Doug, with the secretary duties. Newly elected President Don Moravits presented Paul Amerson with a plaque of appreciation for his service as president for 2012-2013.



**Trixie Bond performing for Assembly 52's Installation Banquet**

After a delicious meal, we were fortunate, indeed, to have Trixie Bond perform for us. She did her children's show, and before very long we were all kids again. The magic was enchanting, and the laughs were hardy and frequent. You can see why she is one of the premier children's magicians in the country. Thanks, Trixie, for sharing your talents with us.

President Don Moravits spoke briefly and let us know a few ideas that he has planned for the coming year. It was a great evening of good food, fun, and fellowship. [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 [dougorman@att.net](mailto:dougorman@att.net).

## 56

### JUNE MEETING

**DAYTON, OH**— Our June

Meeting was held on Friday, June 21, 2013 at Fairborn Fire Station #2 thanks to Compeer Carl Day. There were thirteen members and one guest in attendance. During our business meeting we discussed the family show that Matthew David Stanley presented at the Dayton Funny Bone. The show was well attended and another show has been scheduled for October 5. We also discussed the Louisville Magic Festival and several members expressed what a great event it was and how much they enjoyed it.

After our business meeting, we broke for delicious refreshments provided by Jo Ann Kindler. Our theme was "Can We Do It Too?" Magic was performed by Thurman Smith, Barbara Pfeifer, Jo Ann Kindler, Craig Morgan, Scott Miller, John Love, Bill Hagen, Oran Dent, Jeff Porges, and Executive Officer Paul Burnham. A good time was had by all. —Matthew David Stanley

Assembly 56 meets in various locations, contact Barbara Pfeifer [barbara.pfeifer@att.net](mailto:barbara.pfeifer@att.net) (937) 433-8604 for more details.

## 59

### LONG TIME COMING

**PORTLAND, OR**— Sometimes it just takes forever to make the simplest connection. Such was the case for getting Jeff Martin, the blond, curly-haired magician, to lecture to members of Assembly 59, but it was well worth the wait.

Why did it take so long? Jeff is one busy magician. He says that he and his wife Pam are on the road nine months out of the year performing at a variety of state and county fairs, corporate events, and various other venues.

During the lecture Jeff taught



**The blond, curly haired magician**

several card magic effects, coin manipulations, and gave an in-depth examination into the nuances of his Linking Rings routine. His presentation on the use of threads was an eye opener (and you still couldn't see!). Everyone learned something new.

Jeff makes his home nearby when he's not on the road, and we hope that when he's able to travel a bit less that he can join us as a Assembly 59 member.

The evening was rounded out with ShowTime. Performers included Tom Waldrop, Randy Stumman, and Mel Anderson. —Glen L. Bledsoe

Assembly 59 meets every month except July and August at The Beaverton Elks, 3500 SW 104th, Beaverton, OR 97005. Contact Glen L. Bledsoe [glenbledsoe@mac.com](mailto:glenbledsoe@mac.com) (503) 967-9152 [www.sam59portland.org/](http://www.sam59portland.org/) for more details.

## 76

### RAINING MAGIC

**MIAMI, FL**— Our June meeting took place on a rainy evening; we were surprised and pleased to welcome a full house of members. After the business portion was completed, Ronsted took the stage to introduce the acts. Up first was Alberto Lorenzo, who recently won second prize in close-up in South America at the FLASOMA competition. He performed the prize-winning routine of dice that changed color, size, and quantity before our unbelieving eyes. Rick Del Vecchio was next as he penetrated a bottle cap into a bottle. Then, with the aid of a tiny toilet plunger, he was able to ascertain the number of cards cut from the deck by Amanda and Billy, finally "plunging" out the freely chosen card from the deck.

Ronsted performed his signature ring and rope routine. Roy Allen Fischer had everyone take three cards from the deck: he eliminated all but one person who had the odd card and borrowed a finger ring from him. The ring was vanished and reappeared inside the empty card case. Xavi entered the stage and did a vanishing and reappearing silk routine. Ed Harris had everyone take any four cards from the deck and tear them in half. Everyone then shuffled the half card mini deck and by the process of one down and one under was able to finish with the two matching pieces of a card.

Nelson De La Prida showed us his vanishing and appearing

crayons and the silk to frog trick. He then had Fantasio hold up a target and Amanda threw darts at the numbers, which added up to thirty-one. She then counted thirty-one cards down to reveal the Six of Diamonds, which was Nelson's prediction. Jozeph performed a coin to finger ring routine. Michael Trixx made a bottle cap leap off the bottle untouched by human hands. He then penetrated a jingle bell into a bottle and wound up by teaching us a little thread work.

Cargoba, dressed in his finery, entertained us with his multiplying chrome balls, which eventually enlarged to the size of softballs and finally the size of a bowling ball. Billy Byron performed Monkey in the Middle, and then a can full of links became a united chain. Among several jokes and limericks he finished with ribbon to cane and a bottle vanish in a paper bag with appearing candy. —Ron Olmsted

Assembly 76 meets at the South Miami Elk's Lodge, 6304 SW 78th St. South Miami, FL on the first Thursday of the month. Contact Rick Del Vecchio [rickydee@aol.com](mailto:rickydee@aol.com) (305) 992-0703 for more details.

## 77

### MYSTICS ANNUAL DINNER WAS A HOOT AND HOLLER!

**MASSAPEQUA, NY**— Usually, I don't like writing about our annual dinner, nor our annual auction, but change and improvement is a good thing. However, I'll only punch up the highlights.

We had our dinner at DJ's International Buffet in Garden City, NY. The room had a decent sized stage in the corner that was a bit high but workable. After an hour or so, President John Lepre handed over the gavel to new president Phil Levy and then they surprised me! They called me up and presented a framed certificate of thanks for my dedication to my "Early Bird Lessons" for the year. I would come in early and offer lessons in magic to any members (new or old) to help them better understand the presentations of many classic effects. I had no idea. I am truly grateful. More important, our raffle prizes donated by The Mystics and John Reid's store, Tricky Business, brought in a nice amount to benefit David Oliver. More on how the Mystic's are helping David at the end of the report.

Now on with the show: Chris



**A NIGHT OF HONORED TRADITION AND NEW TECHNIQUES**

Allison emceed the evening as Coney Island Chris, a human lampoon of the sideshow arts, had the audience (and his insides) in stitches. None of us will look at a balloon, a rat trap, or a light bulb



**John Lepre, Lou Johnson, and Phil Levy**

the same way ever again. He was hilarious! President Phil Levy took the stage with two comedy predictions that were spot on. Now that's a sign of a good president: the ability to predict the future. Ben Nemzer transitioned the show to more funny business with a card in impossible location and even a turn of the old vanishing bottle by his assistant Cassandra Ruiz. And just after Coney Island Chris's "light snack" (UGH!), our time-tested formula of a great show: close with a comedian! We had Peter Bales, comedian from channels like HBO, Comedy Central, and a slew of corporate work, who just knocked it out of the restaurant for seventy-five minutes.

The next meeting is September 9, 2013, with a whole new line-up of lectures and fun yet informative meetings. See you all then. —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 [loucirus@aol.com](mailto:loucirus@aol.com) ((516)) 978-7735 [www.limystics.org](http://www.limystics.org) for more details.

**94**

**PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP**

**SILICON VALLEY, CA**— We had a small turnout for our June meeting, so we turned it into an ad hoc workshop on performance and presentation. Each of us performed an effect and received feedback on what the others liked and suggestions of how the presentation might be improved. Discussion topics included the in-

roduction, engagement, and interaction with the audience, listening and responding to the audience, providing "space for the magic" or the creation of a magical moment, and even eye contact and posture. Kim Silverman, Alan Leeds, Hugh MacDonald, Raahul Srinivasan, Joe Caffall, John Jones, and Bill Benson all participated actively. There were a number of card routines, including one with Winnie the Pooh math cards, an empty box from which something mystical and colorful appeared, and a strong work-in-progress based on Banachek's Psychokinetic Time.

Some of our members have been performing on Monday nights at a popular local restaurant, Morocco's in Mt. View, as an extension of our Performance Experience Program. Typically, one or two magicians are available to perform table-side throughout the evening. Participants include Kim Silverman, Alan Leeds, Phil Ackerly, Sy Hoff, and John Jones. The rotating crew is augmented by Xander, not yet a member, but who had performed there in the past. Alan Leeds and John Jones also performed at the opening of an expanded patio dining area at Morocco's on June 25th. Monday Night Magic at Morocco's was a fairly regular gig for another of our members, Hugh MacDonald, and S.A.M. Silicon Valley is particularly grateful to him for suggesting that our members take over while he was traveling. And of course, we thank the Morocco's ownership for providing this great opportunity. —Joe Caffall.

Assembly 94 does not currently have a regular meeting location. Please email [jocaff@pacbell.net](mailto:jocaff@pacbell.net) for information about an upcoming meeting. Contact Joe Caffall [jocaff@pacbell.net](mailto:jocaff@pacbell.net) (408) 5788387 for more details.

**95**

**PENETRATIONS**

**VANCOUVER, CANADA**—

The June 2013 meeting was held at the home of Anthony Young in Vancouver. Rod Chow performed One Night You Cannot Stand by Card-Shark with Tony Chris as the unsuspecting volunteer, and with Rod using a play on words of the theme. Lon Mandrake hypnotized Henry Tom and Trevor Watters and penetrated their minds with a mind-reading card effect, after which Lon then caused their extended arms to go down at will.

Jens Henriksen balanced one nut on top of the other to end with three nuts joined together as if the steel penetrated from one nut to the next.

Dennis Hewson caused a pencil to penetrate through cards. Henry Tom penetrated a signed coin through an un-gimmicked bottle. Dave Watters performed the pen-



**Anthony Young performs on his living room floor as Ed SilvaWhite & Tony Chris look on.**

etrating bill through four ladders of elastic band illusion with Glen LaBarre's bill. Anthony Young caused a freely chosen pistachio nut by Tony Chris to penetrate from a top glass to a bottom glass. Ed Silva White from Victoria had everyone write a number from 1-20 on a piece of paper and penetrate a slot in a box with slip. Ed then had everyone draw a random slip from the box. Upon reading out the lucky number, it turned out that everyone was a winner of two DVDs each, donated by Ed Silva White! Trevor showed a sharp spike, some non-spikes, and several paper cups numbered by Jeff Christensen. Jeff covered the spike and non-spikes with the cups and mixed to lose the location of the spike. In a very tense routine, Trevor smashed cups one by one, and managed not to smash the cup with the spike in it. Anthony, in an encore performance, showed a pile of identical coins in a bag, took one coin out and had it marked by Jens and put back in bag. Anthony mixed up the coins, and without looking, was able to miraculously retrieve only the marked coin from bag. Jeff Christensen finished off this evening of penetrations by causing a coin to penetrate his knee. —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.

**WITCH CITY, SALEM, MA**— On June 5, 2013, Assembly 104 gathered behind the tables at the East Sakura Restaurant, in Salem, Massachusetts. The occasion was the installation of officers banquet. This second return engagement at our old venue proved successful on all fronts: excellent attendance, the rolling thunder at the buffet stations, and the performance by guest magician Shin Lim. Shin kicked things off by providing close-up at the tables while compeers chowed down.

After second helpings, we were privileged to have our officer installation performed by S.A.M. New England Regional Vice President Joseph Caulfield, who came accompanied by wife Kathy, herself a magician. Joe, always a welcome presence, conducted the ceremony with characteristic dignity. The line-up for the coming year: President – Bill Jensen, entering his announced last term; Vice President – Eddie Gardner; Second Vice President – Rob Snider; Treasurer – Jay Fraser, taking over for Kathy Forrest; Secretary – Bob Forrest; and Sergeant-at-Arms – Jon Hubbard.

With tables cleared and members facing front, Shin Lim proceeded to mesmerize us with the talents he has developed for competition-level magic. It became quickly evident how Shin's creativity and style had led him on the path to F.I.S.M. In a dazzlingly smooth parade of effects, cards in Shin's hands instantly transposed into other cards, decks inexplicably disappeared, and smoke eerily rose from cups, cards, and even the fingers and mouth of the young prestidigitator. Called S.S.S., Shin's sleeveless smoke production is his marketed effect that fully complements many of his other original techniques. Another is The Vanishing, a method for causing small objects to apparently melt out of existence in the hands – and then reappear. Experiencing Shin Lim's effects bursting before our eyes in fully formed routines that comprise a truly professional act was inspiring. This was cool stuff and very well received by a jaded audience. Shin provided the perfect eye candy to complete a feast.

On other fronts, plans for SAMCON, our annual convention that will bring Eugene Berger, Bill



**Shin Lim leaves his volunteers speechless**

Abbott, and Andrew Goldenhersh to Peabody, Massachusetts, on November 9, continue to develop; more of them will be announced at our website. Summer 104 activities will be ongoing, including our second annual S.A.M. 104/S.Y.M. 124 bash at Camp Evergreen on August 25, where a magic flea market will be held (so bring your most gifted, magical fleas) and huge quantities of hot dogs will be consumed. Then it's back to business on September 4.

—Bob Forrest

**S.A.M. 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 captainalbrightsq1@comcast.net (339) 227-0797 www.sam104.com for more details.**

## 110

### AFTER MEETING

**NEW CUMBERLAND, PA—** The after-meeting festivities were started with an “open,” i.e. no theme, performance contest. Six members volunteered to perform. Lou Abiattello was up first with his dice stacking routine. The routine ended with the production of various loads from the stacking cup. John Sergott predicted the responses of six members. Al Bienstock was next with a Gilbreath poker effect with Garrick Chow assisting. John Stover offered a Coins Across routine using two coin trays. Izzy Schwab gave us an original rhyming patter story about how his uncle Harry had entered a Three Card Monte game in New York City. The story also included tidbits of interest and history of the game as well as some fine card handling by Izzy. Following Izzy was Frank Bianco, who gave us a Polaroid Money routine in which all four bills are printed on both sides with a change of denomination. By vote of the non-performing members: Izzy Swab was first,

Lou Abbatiello was second, and John Segott and Frank Bianco were tied for third.

The final event of the evening was the Ritter's Grab Bag Challenge wherein Jack Ritter supplied two identical sacks filled with items from his hardware store and other shops around town. The members are randomly split into two teams and are given twenty minutes to look over the items in the bag and come up with magical effects to be presented to the assembly. There is no winner in this fun event except imagination and good humor. Try your luck with the following: six feet of ¾ inch soft poly rope, six Styrofoam Coca Cola cups, a spool of grow grain ribbon, a spool of black poly string, a roll of duct tape, scissors, two plastic doll cloth's hangers, two wooden paint stirring sticks, six squares of cardboard, a pack of index cards, a bottle of assorted buttons, a roll of red white and blue crepe paper, a roll of white crepe paper, two “mechanics friend” razor knives, a five-foot square of opaque cloth plus many more items that escape my memory.

As usual, the group had a fun time cheering each other on as they performed whatever they were able to concoct from the great “stuff” provided. Thanks again Jack!

**Joe Homecheck, Assembly110 meets second Thursday's at John's Diner, 146 Sheraton Drive 17070. Email: secretarySAM110.com**

## 112

### ANOTHER ANYTHING GOES NIGHT

**PLEASANT HILL, CA—** At our May general meeting we were pleased to welcome prospective members John Gyllenhaal, Matthew Hill, and Christopher McConaughy, as well as guests Jaden and Michael Morgan.

First order of business was to complete the auction for Trick of the Month presentation rights. Bill Marquardt, Rod McFadden, and Bob Holdridge successfully bid for the remaining three months on the schedule.

On a sad note, one of our former members, Dennis Loomis, recently and unexpectedly passed away. We shared fond memories of this popular magician and all around great guy. Roy Porfido gave an insight into an early period of Dennis's career, telling how both he and Dennis had been represented by the National

School Assemblies Agency that booked appearances for magicians all over the United States.

Following the memorial, Roy demonstrated the Trick of the Month, a variation of Out of This World that includes a prediction on the number of red cards versus black that will be separated into piles. The trick can be immediately repeated with a different prediction and result.

Rod McFadden then began the evening's performances with a card effect demonstrating how a deck of cards is related to the calendar. A mentally selected card turns out to be the only one with a message, “This is your lucky day,” written on the back. Chris McConaughy then stepped up to perform an extended Ambitious Card routine that ultimately finished with card to mouth.

Zappo followed by removing a match from a matchbook, lighting it, and then vanishing it in a silk handkerchief. The burnt match then reappeared from the empty silk. Then John Gyllenhaal brought out his magician's retirement fund, which consisted of a handful of dollar bills. He magically turned the bundle into million dollar bills, which he handed out to the audience.

Next up was Roy Porfido, who showed the Transformo Cards in which four Jacks into four Aces, and then change back into Jacks. Bill Marquardt followed with another packet effect known as Duplicity.



**Christopher McConaughy offers cards to Michael Morgan as Fred Nelson and Roc McFadden look on.**

Four magicians returned to the stage to perform a second time. Presentations included a psychic test by Rod, Cutting the Aces by Chris, a “right or wrong” card trick by Zappo, and a demonstration of Three Card Monte by John. It was a fun time for all with lots of great magic, made even better with the appearance of several new faces. —Bill Marquardt  
**Diablo Assembly #112 meets on the**

**third Wednesday of every month at the VFW building I, Pleasant Hill, California Contact Doug Kovacich douglassthemagicman@hotmail.com (925) 435-4824 http://sam112.com/ for more details.**

## 115

### BOOK REVIEW AND MORE

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA—** June's meeting was a mixture of book reviews and terrific magic effects. The meeting began with a presentation to our newest member Everett Anderson. Among the books discussed were *The Glorious Deception*, *Mathematical Magic*, *More Power to You – The Very Best of David Acer*, *Impuzzibilities*, *The Last Greatest Magician In The World*, and *Scripting Magic*. This led to several great conversations about famous magicians, magic effects, and presentation/theory. In addition to the books, we also discussed the upcoming national convention, the ballot for elected positions, and how to create your own specially printed cards. Several wonderful tricks were performed, including Wes Iseli's presentation of Understanding The Bermuda Triangle and Dan Rowan's Magic Square.

Assembly 115 typically meets the first Friday of the month at 7PM at the Forest Lakes Pavilion Building. For more information please contact Mark Davis at 434-962-3019 or whiteoakcanyon@gmail.com. New members are always welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Mark Davis 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 summer. Many Compeers from our assembly participated in the Famous Unknown Magician Convention in Manchester, New Hampshire, on June 7 and 8. On August 10, we will be holding our annual cookout.

Joseph and Kathy Caulfield hosted our monthly meeting at Black Sword Estate.

**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**



**The Granite State Conjurers  
at Black Sword Estate**

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**— The meeting opened with discussion of last month's Get-Together. We lost a little but over all came out pretty good and everyone seemed to enjoy it. I know I learned a lot.

Chris Bontjes has set up a club show at the Danville VA on August 25th at 2 p.m. Contact him if you would like to perform for this deserving group.

Garret Trimble opened the magic portion of the meeting with a very nice Ambitious Card routine followed by Do as I Do, and a card disappearing from under a hat. Professor Higgins exploded onto the stage area with Silk through Chair and a floating ring. Andy Dallas showed his torn and restored bill and Dale Farris followed up with his Ring off Chain.

After the meeting, we sat around telling horror stories about flying with, or without, magical items as well as other stories of our beginning days. There were some great stories and I am relatively sure most of them were true.

See you at the meeting.  
—Ken Barham

Andy Dallas Assembly meets the 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. Phone: 217-841-5616 email: [Kebtram@aol.com](mailto:Kebtram@aol.com)

## 127

### TWISTING AT THE JUNE MEETING

**WALLINGFORD, CT**— Matt Martin Does Balloons. Time was when some magicians augmented their birthday party magic show with a few balloon animals, perhaps a balloon hat or sword.

No longer; balloon “sculpture” has arrived. Three or four balloon creations are the norm and some require many more and the number keep growing, including many specially imprinted balloons.

Matt Martin, prospective S.A.M. and Assembly 127 member, provided the June after-meeting activity: Balloon Magic. About six months ago, mainly to learn some one-balloon animals that he could add to his kids’ magic show, Matt started watching online videos and liked working with balloons so much that his focus now is on learning bigger and more complicated sculptures. He offers balloon sculpture as an add-on to his magic show, and also does an all-balloon show. On the latter, he’ll bring completed multi-balloon creations to the party.

Matt showed some basic balloon technique to the members and was kind enough to bring many balloons and balloon pumps to the meeting. Some magicians in the



**Matt Does Balloons**

group have never handled balloons and needed to start with a basic balloon dog. He also showed a few novelty moves with the balloons – the well-known “reverse” blowing up, whereby the bottom becomes inflated as air is blown into the balloon. Another consisted of a small “ball” inflated in the middle of a balloon that vanished and reappeared inside the balloon. Our card expert, Adam Parisi is also an expert balloon sculptor. He showed how a balloon figure could “find” a selected card, and he also created a number of balloon hats as well as several colorful (and complicated) balloon creations, including the popular “alien” balloon.

Matt led a discussion of which balloons to buy and where they could be purchased. At the end of the session, tables were littered with a variety of balloon animals and hats, a few creations that Matt and Adam had left and some

done by the members. Many of the figures were delivered to the bar portion of the Libero Pensiero Italian Club where we meet in the summer months. The bar patrons must have been as delighted to get these as the kids at a birthday party.

Thanks, Matt, for bringing all the necessary supplies and for the fun evening. And a thank you to Adam Parisi for his input, assistance, and those amazing sculptures.  
—Dick Hodes

Assembly 127 meets at the Libero Pensiero Italian Club, 91 Dudley Ave., Wallingford, Conn. during June, July and August. Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Contact Dick Hodes [richardhodes@att.net](mailto:richardhodes@att.net) (203) 287-1635 [www.magicsam127.org](http://www.magicsam127.org) for more details.

## 129

### JUNE MEETING

**PENSACOLA, FL**— Eighteen members and friends showed up for the June meeting of the Gulf Coast Magician’s Guild. Jeff Sobel was back in the area and attended this month’s meeting with his family. Welcome back Jeff. Ronnan Carrero is home for the summer from his studies at John Hopkins U. Nice to see him back with his father Raul. Special news from Brian Drake: they are expecting an addition to their family soon. That may slow up his box jumper for awhile.

The meeting was opened by President Nate Nickerson with a discussion on fire magic and how things can go wrong. Several stories were related on this subject along with things to avoid when using fire in your act. This was followed by a discussion on being prepared for the unexpected in your own act. Try to visualize what could go wrong with each of the effects in your act and be prepared for it. This was a most informative discussion on these subjects and I believe enjoyed by all. Thanks to all who contributed their input.

Nate had a collection of playing cards and other items from the two Chicago World’s Fairs. A raffle followed with some neat things going to the lucky ticket holders.

The theme for the meeting was “Impromptu Magic”; several members came up with some really good ones. —Beau Broomall  
Assembly 129 meets the third Thursday of each month at the Bayview Senior Center

2000 East Lloyd Street Pensacola Florida. Contact Beau Broomall [beaumagic@bellsouth.net](mailto:beaumagic@bellsouth.net) (850) 994-1060 [www.gulfcoastmagiciansguild.com](http://www.gulfcoastmagiciansguild.com) for more details.

## 131

### DANBURY TOP HATTERS JUNE MEETING

**DANBURY, CT**— Our June 17, 2013, meeting went well. Bob Able, Magic Des, Bongo the Silent clown, Zookey the Clown, and yours truly, Magic Marty, performed for our Methodist Church special care group. What a great audience. This makes being a magician or a clown worthwhile.

Following the show members of our club gathered and discussed our planned BBQ on August 10, 2013, 12:00 to 5:00 at the Home of Magic Marty and Gail Steinberg.

Future lectures were also discussed and a joint lecture with Stanford’s SYM Group, with dates to be announced in the near future.

Bubbles the clown gave us a mini lecture on sight gags; it was loads of fun, complete with foam letters, a green p, a blue j, etc.  
—Magic Marty Steinberg

Assembly meets at the Methodist church 3rd Mon of each Month. Clapboard Ridge Rd Danbury Ct. Contact Contact Magic Marty (845) 797-8363 Facebook Danbury Top Hatters for more details.

## 157

### PICNICS, NEW SHIRTS, OTHER STUFF

**BEAVER, PA**— President Ray Lucas of the Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (Assembly 157) thanked Rich Howard for the club picnic – lots of fun, food, and magic. Several members put on a pick-up show. Ray has set up the elections committee. New shirts commemorating club’s sixtieth anniversary were presented for purchase. A flea market has been suggested for the GPMN picnic in September with 10% of sales to go to the club.

Performances were emceed by Jim Tate, who also did an ESP card trick. He spread the cards, had a card chosen and placed on bottom. When he went through the cards, they all said “No,” except last one, which said “Yes”. Don Moody did his version of Mirroraculous, displaying three Kings. He rubbed and tapped the back of cards and a different one showed up on top.

With the last one, he pushed it up, and then the backs changed color and the faces were all blank. Ray Lucas also performed a card trick with a blank-face kicker.

Tom Chidester performed a trick from a past member, consisting of a plastic tower with two blades that slide through the sides. He placed a block into the tower and it magically went through blades to the bottom. Sean Evanick had someone pick a card and replace it in the deck. He placed a card in the participant's hand; it was the chosen one. Eric Davis had someone pick a card, sign it, fold it, and place it in his mouth. Eric then did the same thing. The cards then changed places. Bill Cornelius used his Smartphone, which he held in his hand. It showed a spider crawling across screen toward his hand. The trick ended with an artificial spider stuck on the back of the hand. Bob Mullins stated he is going to end the show with a bang. He placed bullet shells in his elbows, pointed his finger, straightened his arms, and shells flew out. —Judy Steed  
The Mystic Magicians of Beaver Valley (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.

## 160

### SAYING GOOD BYE AND SAYING HELLO

**WILKES-BARRE / SCRANTON, PA**— In April, Assembly 160 lost stalwart member George Heid to pancreatic cancer. In June, Bill Dickson, Joe Hussey, and Dave Jaye performed at a benefit for the Heid family to help with some of the medical costs from George's illness.

At the June meeting, we welcomed new member Elijah Miller. Elijah is a high school student interested and well versed in magic whom we are told does an excellent Tossed-out Deck routine. Welcome aboard Elijah!

We also welcomed visitor Mark Hunsinger, who is considering membership. He is a college student from Wilkes-Barre who is very interested in magic. We hope he will join us.

We had three performers who shared their talent with the group. Dan Kosloski did a slick close-up routine using pushpins in the place of sponge balls, and finished by

producing a jumbo push pin! Great close up magic with a "point!" Dave Tryzenski re-enacted a dream/nightmare about horror films using mini movie posters and Elijah's and Mark's imaginations. Both spectators were asked to mentally choose a movie time. They were shown various movie posters and asked to remember the film at their thought-of time. Eerily, they were both thinking of the same horror flick! Spooky!

Resident mentor-ist Dave Jaye gave us all a mini lecture/performance of cold reading as applied to palmistry. Give the man a big hand on an excellent presentation! —Dave Jenkins

Assembly 160 meets regularly on the first THURSDAY of each month at The Iron Skillet Restaurant located inside the Petro Stopping Center, 98 Grove St, Dupont, PA. Meeting time is 7:00 PM Contact Dave Jenkins [djen9999@gmail.com](mailto:djen9999@gmail.com) (570) 822-2460 [www.nepamagic.8m.com/](http://www.nepamagic.8m.com/) for more details.

## 172

### A FULL MOON IN JUNE

**PORT ST. LUCIE, FL**— I guess June's mega-moon brought them all out for the June 25, 2013, meeting of the Donald E. Lea assembly here in beautiful, sunny Port St. Lucie. It was either that, or it was the guests who brought out the best in us. Suffice it to say, once Klay, Ryan, Sara, and Kadish were introduced, not one of them remained seated for long; every one of the evening's performers required their assistance in some shape or form.

Al Chiaverini started off with offering Ryan a chance to win \$1 by choosing any one of three small purses. Ryan chose a purse and, of course, won his dollar. Unfortunately, the other two purses contained a \$5 and a \$10. Dan Warnke challenged Kadish with a toilet paper roll bar bet (yes, you read that correctly); as magicians usually do, he won the bet. Kadish did, however, go home with a prized souvenir; an empty toilet paper roll.

Our beloved senior compeer, Al Greenwood, performed a nice rendition of Color Deception, what I have come to refer to as The Ring of Pearls, and a well-executed Professors' Nightmare, all to the delight of our distinguished guests. Dean Devitt, yours truly, invited Sara up to the stage to

assist him in selecting a single face-up card that turned out to be the only blue-backed card in a stack of red playing cards. Dean also showed Sara his thirty-six-cent trick using nine cards and a pocket full of change.

Nick Bradley had all our guests on their feet for a five-card mentalism effect, the presentation of which I'd never seen before. It left me wondering, "Why didn't I think of that!"

With everyone invited to come up front, Mr. Jay Rene presented a coin vanish to end all coin vanishes. With a penny, a dime, a nickel, and a quarter – four coins flat on the table – they were brought together with the eraser end of a pencil, and the dime disappeared.

Matt Musgrave ended the evening by helping Klay put a bottle cap back in his beer bottle, swindling (not really!) Ryan out of \$5, and thoroughly confusing Kadish and Sara with a story of color-shifting Queens. See what happens when guests show up – everybody's a star! What Fun!

Audience participation and member participation, it works for me! See you next time. (Gee, I hope they come back!) —Dean F. Devitt

Assembly 172 meets at 7:00pm on the fourth Tuesday of every month (except December) at The Saint Lucie Lanes on Route 1 in Port St Lucie. Contact Dean Devitt [quindar46@yahoo.com](mailto:quindar46@yahoo.com) (772) 466-1942 for more details.

## 181

### WORKSHOP ON CREATIVITY

**HIGHTSTOWN, NJ**— The May meeting was the last in our season. We will have a pizza party, but that will be in a restaurant and will not include a workshop or lecture like our regular meetings do. This meeting's workshop was on creativity, presented by assembly member Mitch Geier.

After retiring from years of performing comedy magic in Las Vegas, Mitch then worked with a friend managing comedy shows throughout the greater New Jersey area. Since magic and comedy are often structured the same, Mitch was able to share that knowledge and his experiences to help present this workshop.

Keith Warner was called to assist in the workshop. Keith knows a lot of cigarette moves and they work just as well with crayons. Using a



Mitch Geier

little creativity, those moves can be translated to a Coloring Book routine. That was the challenge given the workshop attendees: come up with a premise for a Coloring Book routine.

Part of the workshop included a coloring prediction, in which random color choices by Mike Dziubas were predicted by Mitch. This was more of a demonstration of routining than of method.

Rocco Giovacchini, who is potentially a new member to the assembly, presented his signed card on lanyard, his original routine of a card to impossible location.

Assembly Vice President Dave Zboray started the "teach a trick" portion of our meeting by presenting a couple of effects using a red and blue gaffed card. One of the effects was the first trick he learned using a gaffed card, many years ago, from visiting a local brick-and-mortar magic shop. As a free gift, each attendee was given two free gaffed cards to take home.

Our president, Stephan Sloan, showed the process of creating a Yes/No deck. Steve's a perfectionist who went through more than a half dozen decks perfecting its construction, and he shared all of the nuances of the construction process, showing how each modification improved the performance. As a special gift, he gave everyone a handmade plastic gaff that improved the handling of the Yes/No deck. Now that's something that you can only get an assembly meeting like ours.

The meeting wrapped up with Ralpho showing some powerful performances with a memorized deck, inspiring those among us who might want to take on the mental challenge of memory work.

And so the season ended. See you in September. —David Zboray  
Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets the first Thursday of every month, September thru June at the First United Methodist Church

187 Stockton Street Hightstown NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00PM. Contact Stephan Sloan lands10@optonline.net (732) 757-5337 <http://www.magicsam181.com> for more details.

## 184

### MAGIC COMPETITION

**ISRAEL** — The joint summer kid's performances meeting of the Israeli S.A.M. members and the Israeli Magic Club members took place on June 11, 2013, at the Tel Aviv American Zionist House. The competition was opened by Yarden Shalev, a fourteen-year-old boy who performed with an original magic show about a kid who is sleeping and wakes up to be a magician.



**First price winner (third time)  
Tomer the magician**

In the bedroom show, Yarden did silk, wand, and confetti effects, and vanished a radio. The show was accompanied by two girl dancers. Vitali & Arik gave a comedy magic show with a parasol, glasses, and cheese. Papo the Magician performed with fire wands, silks, and a comedy kid's burnt shoe. Yaniv Levi offered card manipulations, a disappearing radio, and a comedy moving table, and he changed a silk to a live goldfish. Geni the magician did a guest show with a comedy glasses routine.

Chris La Artist won a special prize for his many years of making audiences happy and changing so many figures and costumes. The first price winner was Tomer the Magician who won the first prize for the third time. Tomer performed with his new show: wonder boy, with a talking parrot, wands, and a new floating boy.

In the second part of the event Zivi Kivi lectured about balloon

sculpture designing and Shalom! lectured about a medical clown.

It was one of our best events. Shalom! —Yosi Notkowitz  
Contact [notko@012.net.il](mailto:notko@012.net.il) for assembly information.

## 188

### A GREAT LECTURE AND A GREAT SHOW

**OREM, UT**— Our June meeting featured a wonderful lecture by Jay Scott Berry. He began with a beautiful manipulation routine with coins, balls, and silks, set to music he composed himself. He also performed a new variation on the bill switch and an amazing ring and ribbon routine. He then explained all the effects he had demonstrated.

Berry also shared some excellent words of wisdom. "We tend to overemphasize the tricks, and underemphasize the performer and the performance. We forget the reason for the tricks themselves. If we know how the audience thinks, we can use that to our advantage. Use anything that will get you from where you are to the moment of wonder. The effects are illusion; the experience is real."

The next evening, several members of the club performed a magic show for the residents of the Courtyard at Jamestown in appreciation for the facility allowing the club to meet in their building free of charge. Emcee for the fifty-minute show was Al Lampkin, who performed short bits between the acts by other magicians.

First on the bill was Keoni Chuang who borrowed a ring and proceeded to put it on and off a piece of rope by magic. A playing card was selected and later found in his pocket. Jason Carling next performed some amazing stage magic set to music that included the production of several parasols, a floating handkerchief, and many other effects, finishing with a streamer thrown over the audience, earning for himself a well-deserved round of applause.

Walter Webb, a resident of the facility, brought mentalism into play as he accurately predicted what another resident would draw on a slate. Curtis Hickman presented a whimsical routine explaining how he could never win in Las Vegas because the cards were always stacked against him. He demonstrated his dilemma using a very large display of playing cards. He concluded his act with a one-ball and cup routine,

climaxing with the production of two lemons.

The very versatile magician, ventriloquist, and Elvis impersonator Kerry Summers brought laughter to the show with his giant rabbit puppet full of jokes and even a song that Kerry and the puppet sang together. Kerry was the perfect finale to a great show enjoyed by all.

Other members of the assembly who attended were Dave "Magical" Johnson and his wife Catherine, and Ron Carasco and his wife Connie. —Steve Dawson  
**Assembly 188 meets at 7pm on the second Thursday of each month at the COUrtyard at Jamestown, 3352 North 100 East in Provo, Utah. Contact Brian South [brian@teachbymagic.com](mailto:brian@teachbymagic.com) (801) 916-2442 [utahmagicclub.org](http://utahmagicclub.org) for more details.**

## 194

### NEWCOMERS AND OLD TIMERS NIGHT

**YONKERS, NY**— We began our meeting with the election of officers for the next term. The results were as follows: Fr. Dermot Brennan – President, John Zymunt – Vice President, Roger Burchard – Secretary, Michael Piacente – Treasurer, and Jim Stranges – Past President. We will hold a meeting in August to appoint at-large members to the board and to plan multiple activities for the next year.

It was time for our newest member and several long-time members to perform. Our newest member, Oscar Capel, was first up and he did quite well. He had a different presentation with a Change Bag resulting in the vanish of a large white silk that switched with a multicolored sock that then was vanished to appear on one leg, with the white silk on the other leg. He also used several sight gags.

Next up was Dave Crasson, who did some nice smooth card effects using jumbo cards. Then Ted Lee entertained with one of his patented effects, this time with cards, in which nothing seems to work right until a surprise ending. Andrew Bieber followed with a different presentation of What's Next with a set of two black cards with bright red luminous spots. Dennis Barlotta offered an excellent Cups and Balls routine; the final loads were a different colored ball and the bag in which the whole set was carried. And he did it in excellent Italian. The

final performer was yours truly, who then proceeded to mess up his two offerings, Silk-n-Egg and Key-Rect. One more lesson in "stuff happens!"

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Sara Crasson, lawyer, magician, and daughter of member Dave Crasson, who spoke on the on-going problem of magicians copying another's act or material, what each performer's right to "ownership" should entail, how to copyright and patent an invention and how effective the process can be in this area, and other aspects that basically deal with ethics and honor (I nearly wrote, "among thieves"). This was more than a lecture, however. It involved a good deal of interaction with and among the members that was very informative and challenging and involved all present in one of our longer and highly interesting evenings. Sara will be making this presentation at the S.A.M. convention in Washington, D.C. I would advise all those truly interested in protecting creativity to attend. —Fr. Dermot Brennan  
**Assembly 194 meets on the third Wednesday of every month (except July and August) at 7:30 PM at the Slovak Catholic Club on Lockwood Avenue, Yonkers, NY. Contact Michael Piacente [mikepmagic@aol.com](mailto:mikepmagic@aol.com) (914) 709-2947 for more details.**

## 206

### THE SOUND OF SILENCE: THE MAGICIANS WORST NIGHTMARE

**AUSTIN, TX**— With hands in pocket, James Caldwell took the stage in Austin and then – very powerfully – said nothing and did nothing.

There was only silence. And it was awful.

This was Mr. Caldwell's simple opening demonstration during his lecture for Assembly 206's June meeting. The veteran tech expert explained how unanticipated silence can be the working magician's worst nightmare, but also how magicians can relieve painful silences with the deft use of music, and how music can turn an already good show into a great one.

The theme of Mr. Caldwell's lively, hands-on lecture was performance technology and its uses. For an hour he demonstrated how magicians fill the gaps with sound. He also demonstrated lighting, and provided his views on when to use technology and how.

Some of the technology Mr. Caldwell had on hand was expensive, but not all of it. For instance, he brought a number of affordable amplifiers to the assembly meeting and explained how magicians can combine such devices with an iPhone and an electronic fob to add music to any show, even the most modest ones. For more ambitious shows, a magician may want to use a mixing board or a spotlight, he said. He also advised magicians to hire a tech expert, when appropriate.



**Veteran tech expert James Caldwell provides Assembly 206 with great tips on the use of sound and lighting.**

Mr. Caldwell shared a number of tech tips. For instance, magicians can use the volume control to change the mood of a performance. He also advised magicians to arrive early to gigs to learn the venue and determine what sort of technology is appropriate for the space. Also: have a backup plan.

The assembly welcomed its newest member, seventeen-year-old Sofia Dyer, who has a regular street performance under the name "The Girl Who Knows." Sofia's proud father, Assembly 206 Secretary Jake Dyer, shared with members a recent article about the act. The article appeared in the Austin newspaper. He also told members about a brief Girl Who Knows radio documentary that aired on the local NPR affiliate.

Assembly 206 meets at the Omni South Park Hotel, 4140 Governors Row Austin, TX 78744. Contact Jake Dyer [jakedyer@yahoo.com](mailto:jakedyer@yahoo.com) (512) 6580017 <http://sam206.com/index.html> for more details.

## 226

### MENTALISM LECTURE BY LARRY LESSNER

WILLIAMSBURG, VA— President Michael Heckenberger

opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Tom Armentrout, Bill Baber, Alexander Goldberg; Amy Goldberg, Ron Grossman, Michael Heckenberger, Watt Hyer, Howard Karnes, Penn Russell, Philip Thorp, and Harold Wood. Guests were Mary Armentrout, Jackie Karnes, Larry Lessner, Adam Queen, David Ostrowski, and Michael Ostrowski.

Howard Karnes will be responsible for cutlery, napkins, cups, etc. at the upcoming picnic. Howard also mentioned that assembly dues are due.

We give a hearty welcome to Michael Ostrowski, who has completed his membership form. We couldn't be happier that he is joining our ranks.

We have all looked forward to Larry Lessner's "lecture-performance-workshop" on mentalism. In his introduction to Larry, Michael Heckenberger mentioned that Larry is a member of the I.B.M. in Richmond. He has performed at the Magic Castle.

I first saw Larry at the Jerry Blount auction last year and later at Harold Wood's annual January bash. He performed early in the line up. It was most impressive.

Larry began by passing out copies of his business cards to all the members and guests present. Each was to write or illustrate on the back of the business card the name of a playing card. The business cards were folded in half and placed in a bag. Larry drew one out at random. After much effort he revealed the name of the card and the author. He then revealed how the effect was achieved.

Larry performed (with the assistance of Adam Queen) a card to envelope routine. He discussed switch craft. He concluded with a delightful Q & A session. He also



**Larry Lessner teaches the Real Work of Mentalism**

sent to us a copy of his lecture notes and bibliography.

Larry displays such a convincing, solemn, and authoritative demeanor during his performance. It would be easy to believe that that he does, indeed, have extraordinary powers. Bravo!

The evening was concluded with member performances. —Phil Thorp

The Baker-Temple Assembly 226 meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 4th Wednesday (except December and January) room 009, Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, 215 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Contact Phil Thorp [pthorp@widomaker.com](mailto:pthorp@widomaker.com) (757) 229-2329 <https://sites.google.com/site/samassembly226/Home> for more details.

## 266

### SUMMER MAGIC INVADES LAKE LAND

LAKELAND, FL— The meeting was called to order by our president at 7:30. The business meeting was very short and we went right to some of the greatest magic of all time.

Bob Macy started the magic with a card trick called Duplicity by John Bannon. If you haven't seen this effect you have just been deprived. Master of the pasteboards Ed Mc Gowan was next with a beautiful trick featuring our guest Andy Lino. Without looking at the cards, a spectator picked a card and Ed told Andy what his was card was without even looking at the cards.

Andy Lino was next with a trick with the King of Hearts. A spectator is given the king of Hearts and another fifteen cards. This is repeated with the Queen of Hearts. The cards were mixed, separated, and eliminated until only two cards remained. The two remaining cards were the King of Hearts and the Queen of Hearts. It was a very complicated and entertaining trick.

We had a visiting magician from Toronto, Canada, on tour doing lectures. We talked him into doing a lecture; he accepted and did the greatest lecture on street magic, featuring sponge balls, Cups and Balls, and card tricks. The meeting adjourned about 10:00, when we broke into small groups and did some real magic.

If you are a visiting magician visiting the Lakeland area, we would love to have you join us. We meet the second Monday of

each month at the IHOP, Hwy 98 and Interstate 4. Come eat dinner with us at 6:30; the meeting starts at 7:30. Acting secretary Elmo for regular secretary Al D'Alfonso —Elmo Bennett

The Jim Zachery Assembly 266 meets the second MOnday of each month at 7PM at the I-Hop on Rt-98 and I-4 Contact Al D'Alfonso [keeper0499@embarqmail.com](mailto:keeper0499@embarqmail.com) (321) 4373814 for more details.

## 274

### AUCTION

BOCA RATON, FL— At our June meeting we had two special auctions. First we auctioned the magic of Howard Hyat. Howard died recently from bladder cancer. He did not have a lot of apparatus, but he did have a nice collection of books. The second auction was mostly of DVDs from our late president Arnie Rosen. —Marshall Johnson

The Sam Schwartz Assembly 274 meets on the 1st Monday of each month at the JCC in Boca Raton, FL For further information call Marshall Johnson (561) 638-0043. E-mail [marshj4magic@aol.com](mailto:marshj4magic@aol.com)

## 291

### SHOW AND TELL

VENICE, CA— The meeting for June was full of fun, even though we were short on magicians performing. The preliminaries started off with President Bill Bedecarre informing us of all the general business going on in our assembly and upcoming local Los Angeles magic shows and stage performances. Les Cooper inquired for help with upcoming children magic shows. Frank Padilla, Jr. gave us insight (being a former judge) as to what the judges at the PCAM look for, and therefore how to "bring home the gold." Dave Cotelessa talked about the news of what is happening with the preparations for the PCAM and his brochure designs.

Now, on with the show and tell, in no particular order: Egbok Kogbe entertained with manipulations of cards. To further educate our group, he gave us a handout on "The Ten Categories of Magic." Donald Kuehne entertained with a routine on money magic using one of our national founding fathers. Raphael Monsch entertained with his routines with rubber bands. Frank Padilla, Jr. educated us about

his mystery box. Harold Sweet entertained by doing his rendition of origami with money. (Sorry if I missed anyone in our lineup because the dog ate my notes this month.)

Last, but not least, were all looking forward to our Fourth Annual BBQ, in which Frank is famous for his smoker and tri-tip that he will be slaving over all day. Included will be family and friends of the S.A.M and S.Y.M. to enjoy Frank's fruits of labor. All the additional food and what additional fun will be available for all ages. —William Dow Jr.

Assembly 291 meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Boys and Girls Club, 2232 Lincoln Blvd, Venice, CA Contact Les Cooper Cooper@ucla.edu (310) 4721820 www.westsidewizards.org for more details.

## 292

### ILLUSIONS FUN

**GREELEY, CO**— The highlight of our brief June business meeting over lunch was accepting a \$250 check to celebrate a very successful three-session magic course at a local library, taught jointly by Worley the Wizard and "The Amazing James" Lopez. Eleven of the original twelve children completed the course,



**From left: Alex Acosta, Rich Nakata, Lloyd Worley with check, James Lopez, and Lew Wymisner.**

performed in a show for parents, and earned both a certificate and a magic wand. At a later date, children who wanted to take the course but could not get in were invited to "Meet the Magicians," see some effects, and learn a trick themselves.

Lew Wymisner reported on the Magic in the Rockies convention and its new dates of October 3 through 6.

In a book review and handout, Ron Dutton recommended a gorgeous new book on Harry Kellar by Gail Jarrow. It covers the early golden age of stage magic, featuring the S.A.M.'s first Dean and a number of his contemporaries. It is a well illustrated bargain.

The Great Loudini handled the teach-a-trick section of the

program in his inimitable way. After considerable hilarious by-play with props that included The Magic Company's sharp "toe-pincher coffin" for the old finger-in-a-box trick, the teach-a-trick finally turned out to be a cards-in-the-pocket effect. Lew closed by demonstrating the best ways to do several useful card sleights.

The program theme was "Illusions" (of any size). Worley the Wizard opened with a story-based routine to music. He used the Mak Magic version of a wrist guillotine in which the spectator's hand visibly drops. James Lopez started by introducing his gracious and lovely assistant (and girlfriend), Kendall Perez. Then he performed Jay Sankey's "Block Buster."

Rich Nakata did the illusion with

which he usually closes a show, using music and "happy thoughts" patter with the DaVinci floating table. He also demonstrated and raved about HappieAmp's wireless "Ultimate Control," which he uses with a Fender MP3 player. He closed by discussing the differences between the Losander floating table and his DaVinci.

The closing act was a surprise: another floating table, but a beauty none of us had ever seen before. It turned out that Alex Acosta and his cousin had made the table themselves. He used a stunning cloth in floating it. Then he added a fast-paced theatrical routine in which he "followed" it all the way around the room. His table certainly looked very heavy. Then he and Rich Nakata kindly let people come up and compare the tables' weights by lifting both of them. The DaVinci weighed about four ounces; Alex's just a bit more. —Ron Dutton

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

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## KEITH J. BRANCH



Keith J. Branch passed away suddenly on April 18, 2013, at the age of eighty-two. He was an active member of the S.A.M. since joining in October 1998; he was also active with I.B.M. Ring 58 in Knoxville, Tennessee. He is survived by his wife of sixty-two years, Vivian, and sons David and Les, daughters Gwyl Wright

and Paula Krawczyk, along with six grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Keith's love of magic began in 1948; he enjoyed working with doves. In more recent years, Keith became interested in different forms of mentalism. He had a great sense of humor, and he went to various magic conventions around the country with travelling companions Charlie Fenn (of Dancing Spring Magic) and Roger Reeves.

He was born and spent most of his life in Michigan. Keith served in the U.S. Marines as a Staff Sergeant and demolitions specialist in the Korean War. He was a retired carpentry superintendent for forty-two years with the Wunderlich Company, Inc. He was a consummate carpenter, volunteer fireman, and an avid golfer (which is one reason he retired down to Fairfield Glade, Tennessee).

Keith will be remembered as a gentleman who was always considerate of others – a man who was the epitome of "kind and gentle," who always had a smile on his face and endeared himself to both family and friends.

## LELAND B. VAN DEVENTER

Leland B. Van Deventer passed away peacefully at Kindred Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas, on May 22,

2013. Born in Los Angeles, California, on November 10, 1920, professionally Leland was a tool-and-die maker with North American Aviation. He was proud that he even made a major support beam for the space shuttle.



After graduating from Los Angeles High School and Junior College, Leland proudly served in World War II, and later became an active member of the Fullerton and Fort Worth branches of the American Legion. Raising his family in Torrance, California, his passions were fishing, photography, carpentry, camping, and being an all around fix-it man.

One of his greatest passions, however, was magic and illusion. Leland was president of the Orange County Magic Club in California; later, the Fort Worth Magicians Club in Fort Worth, Texas, made him Magician of the Year. Known as "Van the Magic Man," Leland enjoyed performing on a regular basis for children's and family groups, and particularly in church settings. He built a lot of his own magic apparatus, and particularly enjoyed performing his thimble manipulation routine.

Leland's sustaining Christian faith was a major part of his life. His daughter Ruth would later say, "We never missed church, even when we went camping."

Leland B. Van Deventer is survived by his daughter Ruth Porter and son-in-law Walt Porter, step-daughters Sheral Sly and Linda Kisner and their husbands Dan and Toni, seven grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Leland outlived his two wives Myrtle Van Deventer and June Van Deventer. Ruth says, "Everyone who met him thought of him as an extra sweet man, and indeed he was." —Bruce Chadwick

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

**Roger Barr**  
883 B Liverpool Circle,  
Manchester, NJ 08759

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

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

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

**Joseph H. (Ben) Grant**  
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Warwick, RI 02886

**Charlie Gross**  
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Santa Fe, NM  
Cooley, David  
Glendale, AZ  
Currin, Chad  
Glenville, NY  
Gallant, Joe  
Somerville, MA  
Giles, Steve  
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Jersey Village, TX  
Grubbs, David  
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Guagliumi, Arthur  
Northford, CT  
Hampel, Dennis  
Lebanon, IL  
Hearn, Charlotte  
Houston, TX  
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Campbell, Robert  
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Carpunky, Christopher  
Alton, IL  
Carpunky, Christopher  
Alton, IL  
Chirico, Angelo  
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Crasson, Sara  
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Fraser, Jay K.  
Danvers, MA  
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Goodin, Robert E  
Overland Park, KS  
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Auburn, IN  
Heller, Kevin  
Auburn, IN  
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Johnstone, Robert J  
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Channelview, TX  
Kampf, Philip  
Channelview, TX  
Kaye, James  
Scarsdale, NY  
Kelly, James  
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King, Jeff  
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Kramer, Seth  
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Coquitlam, BC Canada  
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Lee, Raymond H  
Folsom, CA  
Linker, Jordan M  
Elmont, NY  
Lipman, Larry  
Falls Church, VA  
Lipman, Larry  
Falls Church, VA  
Loyd, Riley  
Vancouver, WA  
Martin, Knox  
New York, NY  
Martinez, Christopher

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Maturen, Mike  
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Mayate, Mark  
Tucson, AZ  
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Pagnucco, Frank J  
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Pickard Iii, Bert  
Beaver, PA  
Richard, David Christopher  
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Roady, Jimmy  
West Haven, CT  
Roady, Jimmy  
West Haven, CT  
Rosenthal, Daniel  
Santa Rosa, CA  
Runyon, Terry S  
San Marcos, CA  
Salinas, Alfredo  
Tucson, AZ  
Santana, Gary  
Lexington, KY  
Saucier, Wayne  
Fairfield, NJ  
Seaver, Robert C  
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Smith, David B  
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Stewart, Richard R  
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Sturk, John  
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### Can Be Used as a Flotation Device



This is cool. Want some magical promo photos, especially if you do the Balducci Levitation? Check out **Levitagram**. This is an app that easily takes pictures that makes it appear as if you are floating. How does it work? First take a photo of yourself lying down on a chair. Then take a second photo without you and the chair. The two photos blend together. Now use the simple tools to remove the supporting chair from the photo. Voila! You are floating in the park! Once the photo is

made, you can send it to someone or post it on your favorite social sites. It's a lot of fun to use; I'm sure you'll find a use for it. **Levitagram** is available on the iTunes App Store for \$1.99.

### Dots That Stick

**Glue Dots** are a very useful tool. Whether you are sticking cards together or making a spider secretly stick to a person's hand, **Glue Dots** have found their way into a magician's arsenal. If you use them a lot, they can be very pricy.

I spoke with Cindy Chadwick at the Washington S.A.M. convention, and she told me how much she enjoyed looking at things on Pinterest. She recently learned how to make her own **Glue Dots**. My ears suddenly perked up and she shared the link with me. It's easier than you think and worth the minimal effort.



Simply go to Michael's Crafts and buy a bottle of **Aleene's Tack It Over and Over Glue** for about \$4. You will also need the backing paper from a sheet of computer address labels. This is that waxy paper you throw away after you peel off your printed labels.



Now squeeze little dots of glue on the backing sheet in rows. Go to bed. In the morning, the dots will be clear and sticky. You can peel

them off the sheet and use them. The great thing about making your own is that you can make them any size. I use pinhead-sized, dime-sized, and quarter-sized dots. You can get thousands in a single bottle.

### Help from Some Past Presidents

The official S.A.M. app, **magicSAM**, does a variety of things. It gives you a reference guide for all things S.A.M. and



allows you to perform some cool magic tricks. During my recent Tech Talk, I reminded the attendees of a quirky, fun trick that is on the app.

This effect is a fun revelation of a card by some very famous magicians. A card is selected and placed face down on the table. To read the spectator's mind, we need something to concentrate on. Since a crystal ball is not available, the magician has another idea. He takes out his iPhone and shows the spectator a photo of the magical monument Stone-

henge. The magician stares at the stones and announces the card. How did he know? He saw it in the stones. If the spectator doesn't believe him, he'll show him.

As the magician zooms into the photo to get a closer look, it is noticed that two very famous magicians are standing by the rocks holding up a card. Harry Houdini and Harry Kellar are holding up the selected card.

Here's the secret. First, force the Six of Clubs. Now go to the Magic section of the **magicSAM** app and click on the trick AlakaZOOM. There you will see a photograph of Stonehenge. The photo is not gimmicked, and because of the distance you have to zoom, the two Harrys are not seen in the beginning. When you zoom in, (by spreading your fingers apart) be sure to go between the last two set of rocks on the right and you will find them.

The photo is specially made so that the two Harrys are always in focus. Don't underestimate the value of this effect. Although simple in nature, people seem to enjoy the outcome. **magicSAM** is available on the iTunes App Store for free.

### Using Trick Photography



While we are talking about the **magicSAM** app, be sure to have some fun with Tricky Photography. It's also in the Magic section of the app. Click on the camera and you'll be able to take some tricky photos. Press the EFFECTS button to scroll through the different choices. Have the ghost of Houdini appear next to your subject. Have Harry hanging upside down over their heads. You can also put them in the famous Kellar Levitation poster or on the cover of *M-U-M* magazine. Once

the photo is taken, you can email a copy to the person you have photographed. As usual, all photos taken with your phone are stored in your Camera Roll. ☆

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](mailto:SAMtalkBruce@cox.net)).



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

BY MICK AYRES

*A magician was invited to dinner. After the meal, the host graciously inquired about the possibility of some conjuring. The magician obliged and presented a few brief card mysteries of high skill. The host exclaimed, "Amazing! That is a fantastic pack of cards!" After a pause, the magician replied, "Dinner was amazing, too. You must have a fantastic stove."*

The industry of conjuring is selling its clients a phony bill of goods. Within our world of websites, Internet forums, magic shops, conventions, dealer rooms, and lectures, we promote the simplicity and ease of conjuring. Across the board, these varied sources of supply and knowledge focus exclusively on the what and how, but rarely the why – and never the where.

A conjurer's life is spent in theatrical settings. It makes no difference if your performance platform is flanked by proscenium arches on a grand stage, potted plants in a living room, trash cans on a street corner, or salt and pepper shakers on a restaurant table; to do well in the mystery arts one is required to have at least a general understanding of stagecraft. It also makes no difference whether you are a professional or amateur. Regardless, magicians and mentalists stubbornly refuse to embrace the disciplines of stagecraft. Seriously, that's like wanting to be an expert at billiards but refusing to study angles and physics.

To be fair, conjuring's appeal as a hobby is often adopted early on by awkward teenagers desperate to cope socially. At that stage, a few self-working effects that are acquired easily can go a long way toward "setting the hook" for any magic enthusiast. But, even at that level, mentors would do their protégés a grand service by teaching that learning a secret only makes one knowledgeable – but understanding how to entertain with that secret is where

the magic exists.

In a review about the magic-themed film *Now You See Me*, critic Reed Tucker from the *New York Post* bluntly wrote: "With the possible exception of ventriloquists and mimes, magicians tend to reside at the very bottom of the entertainment pyramid when it comes to cool factor. David Copperfield might be the exception – we're guessing Claudia Schiffer dated him less for what he could pull out of a hat and more for what he could pull out of his wallet. The new movie *Now You See Me* is looking to change all that. It hopes to make magic hip."

Please understand, in today's world a film by itself cannot change this perception of magicians held by the public at large – at least not for any respectable length of time. However, it is quite possible for magicians themselves to accomplish that goal by regarding their art seriously and improving their performances.

Successful people know that every overwhelming goal is reached by reducing it down to executable steps and handling them one at a time. Make a list of the effects in your act. Meditate on the presentations and evaluate each one carefully for strengths and weaknesses. Be your own worst critic. This can be difficult (and sometimes challenging to your ego), especially with favorite routines. Here, honesty will take you far. Ask yourself if the audience is truly mystified with that four Ace trick...or is that just polite applause because the guests have anticipated the conclusion?

Take notes as you make each observation (even if you later decide it is a non-issue) and immediately write down any possible solutions that come to mind no matter how silly, absurd, or minute. Sometimes the smallest detail – an added pause, a change of tone, a turn of a phrase – can be just the thing to push your presentation to the most effective level. Stan Allen

once did something crazy by attempting to reverse the plot of some classic effects, just to see what could happen. One successful result of this odd approach is Stan's delightfully visual *Rope & Restored Cut*. The point is, you won't know until you try.

Another easy first step for conjurers is to embrace a more bold and theatrical approach with our presentations, even the simplest of them. Be careful here though; the last thing any audience wants to watch is an amateurish display of enthusiastic over-acting. Remember that even the easiest effects still require a relevant plot, good scripts, and plenty of rehearsal.

For example, early on most conjurers learn to make a coin vanish using the sleight-of-hand technique called the French Drop. But these young magicians quickly realize a problem: when you make the coin vanish, the guest always wants to see the other hand. The problem is a false transfer of a coin is not magic. Rather, it is a challenge for the guests to learn what happened to the coin. So they do – and quickly.

To fix it, some magicians wrap a plot around the sleight. Show the coin. The coin is taken and put into your ear. The other hand now tugs gently on your nose and the coin drops out. Do this without saying a word and it is cute and mystifying enough. Now take it a step up. Ask the person with the most authority in the room to assist you and do it to them. It becomes much funnier, especially to a child who sees it happening to his grandfather or an employee watching his boss.

However, there's still room for improvement. Magicians now add a script to the plot. Borrow a quarter and say, "*Do you want to see the Dancing Coin trick? Okay, the coin goes into Grandpa's ear. Sir, please nod your head once. This makes the coin seek out the light at the end of the tunnels. Here, I'll get it. Ta-da! Do you know why this is called the Dancing Coin*

trick? *It has a little boogie in it.*" Pretend to pluck something off the coin and wipe it on Grandpa's sleeve and his grandchildren will groan and laugh every time. Yes, the plot is silly, the antics are absurd, and the jokes are corny, but it is also a lot of entertainment mileage from one simple move.

Similarly, in the world of mentalism the better performers must rely on a combination of relevant scripts with strong and appropriate acting skills if they hope to make their presentations less tedious and more believable. In a mindreading performance, keeping the guests focused and holding their attention is paramount to a successful act. A long-winded monologue filled with intellectual jargon is a death knell for mentalists. Keep the plot simple and the explanations brief and your mindreading experiments stand a better chance of making believers out of a naturally skeptical audience.

To illustrate this concept more clearly, consider the following demonstration of telepathy. From the audience's perspective, the proposal is clear, easily understood, and uses a common item found in every home. From the performer's perspective, the emphasis here is on presentation, not technique. The experiment is completely hands off; all that is required is to speak clearly and act well.

## HUMMINGBIRD

Years ago, Max Maven created Mockingbird, a brilliant effect that allowed the performer to gradually identify a selected card by reading the spectator's mind every time a group of cards was displayed. Eventually, one card was isolated from the others – a card that was the matching color-mate to the selection. In developing Hummingbird, what I borrowed from Max was his intriguing presentation. Otherwise, this mental drama remains widely different in both effect and handling.

You will need a deck of cards that includes one Joker. To begin, ask a guest to shuffle the deck thoroughly. Once she is finished, leave the pack with her and say, *"I'd like to perform an experiment in what scientists call 'telepathic instruction,' where one person mentally shares thoughts that guide another person to complete a specific task. To set the stage*

*for this experiment, we need an object to focus upon – in this case, a random card from a shuffled deck.*

*"First, please remove the Jokers and put them aside. They have no real value anyway and may confuse things later."* Watch as she searches the pack. She will quickly locate the Joker and remove it. She will continue to search the pack completely to find the second Joker, but to no avail. This innocent dodge lets you clearly see the card at the back of the deck. Remember it because this is your key card.

Continue by saying, *"You only found one? Okay, I suppose the other Joker got tossed already. No matter; hold the pack up and spread the cards so only you can see them. Allow your eyes to settle upon any card near the middle and focus your mind while you gaze at it.*

*"Now, to be fair, I did see some of the cards while you were searching for the Jokers, so let's stir the pot a little more. Look at all the cards in front of your selection. Take about half of them and put them face down on the table. Likewise, look at all the cards behind your selection. Take about half of them and drop them on top of the tabled pile. Next, pull your card out and lay it on the tabled pile as well. Finally, place the remaining cards down as well. This changes the location of everything and buries your card. You have to agree, that card of yours is now lost somewhere in a deck you have mixed several times.*

*"Now that you have a target object in mind, your next task is to guide me to it mentally. I apologize for making you do all the work, but if I handle the cards at any point it nullifies the whole experiment. Please cut the deck into four piles and turn each pile face up. Spread each group so every card can be seen."*

As she is spreading the packets, scan them quickly for your key card. Her selection will be immediately behind it. Take your time. In a moment, you will begin the search using a spread that does not have the target card. Since three of the four packets qualify, finding one is easy. Remember, this is a mental experiment, not a card trick. So, don't rush the revelation. Theatrically speaking, it is far better to locate any lost card with believable tension and drama.

Say, *"Here is where the rubber meets the road. Telepathy is about the transfer of thought from one person to another. From this point on, everything gets easier for you and harder for me. My job is to learn which group holds your card. I will hold my hand over them one by one. If your card is not in that group, simply think the word 'No' in your mind. If it is there, however, just think the word 'Yes.' Are you ready?"*

By this time, you should already know the location of her card. Now it is time to channel your inner actor. Hold your hand over each group of cards and look expectantly at the guest. Discern her "thoughts" and respond appropriately by commenting, *"I am sensing a clear 'No' for this group. Would you please remove them from the table? I am not receiving any thought here yet – but this group...is...a...definite...No! Please put them aside, too. Now we're down to two..."* Continue in this fashion until one pile remains.

The pace is picked up a bit as the guest is asked to split this final group in half. Reveal which half holds the target card by reading her Yes/No thoughts. Again, she is asked to discard the "No" group. Keep dividing the remaining cards by color, odd/even, high/low until you have whittled it down to two cards. The excitement should be palpable as you oscillate between the choices. Finally, point to her card and shout, *"Yes!"*

Pick up the target card and hold it high for all to see. Smile broadly at your guest and say, *"It wouldn't have worked without you!"* It will not be lost on the audience that this is the first time you have touched any cards during the entire experiment. ★

Hummingbird copyright 1998 by Mick Ayres. Previously published in *Cardworker* (c. 2001).

*Mick Ayres enjoys an eclectic career as a parlor conjurer, storyteller, and musician – and now, as a writer for M-U-M magazine. For the past thirteen years, he has performed over 1,300 shows annually entertaining guests from all over the world at the exclusive Walt Disney Resort on Hilton Head Island...and is still at it. Mick welcomes input (and dialogue) and can be reached at [mick@mickayreswares.com](mailto:mick@mickayreswares.com).*

# The Nielsen Gallery

## Shade "Cabinet"

Dimensions: Half-sheet: 27.5" x 20" • Lithographer: National  
Date: circa 1920s • Nielsen Rating: Rare

### SHADE THE MAGICIAN

If you're a magician looking for an intriguing stage name, "Shade" works very well. In literature and poetry, a shade is often taken to mean a spirit or ghost from the underworld. In the case of this month's featured performer, it is both the stage and birth name of George W. Shade, an innovative illusionist, enthusiastic supporter of magic organizations, and all around fan of conjuring.

Shade was born in 1891 and spent the majority of his life in the central Pennsylvania town of Shamokin. There is no account of how he first became interested in magic, but by the mid to late 1920s his name starts appearing in *The Billboard*, the leading entertainment magazine in the country, with references to him taking out his own illusion show. Prior to this he and his wife appeared in vaudeville on the Keith circuit.

I have been unable to find any program listing illusions he performed, but I discovered some tantalizing clues. Reports in the magic magazines always reference his outstanding performance of the Spirit Cabinet. In this effect, Shade was tied to a chair and placed in a curtained enclosure on stage. On a chair next to him sat a tambourine, a hand bell, metal dinner plates, and a horn. No sooner were the curtains closed than the spirits rang the bell, shook the tambourine, tossed the plates over the top of the enclosure, and caused a great ruckus. When the curtains were thrown open Shade was found still securely bound.

A volunteer was then selected and, after being blindfolded, was placed in the cabinet on a chair next to Shade. The curtains were closed, another ruckus of noise took place, and upon the curtains being opened, the spectator was found

with his pant legs pushed up and a bucket on his head, with the still tightly tied Shade sitting next to him.

He can also be included among the very short list of magicians who performed the Bullet Catch that killed or maimed so many magicians over the years. In the 1920s when *Sawing a Woman in Two* was the rage, Shade also presented his version. It was built by Dave Swift but apparently Shade improved the method. Leslie Guest, a former editor of *M-U-M* visited Shade and recalled that his version had "...no room for an extra girl or dummy feet either, but he gets all the effects." At that time Shade was also performing *The Man Who Walks Away From His Shadow* and an entirely automated Spirit Paintings routine. Guest observed fourteen illusion crates in Shade's garage and said the house was filled with magic.

Shade was very involved in the I.B.M. and attended every annual convention from the very first in Kenton, Ohio, in 1926. He was one of those who first voted to approve the constitution of the organization, held various offices in Ring 20 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and also served on the Expose Committee. Most magic organizations of that period fought furious battles over the exposure of even the simplest magic effect to the general public. Many of these appeared in newspapers or magazines. In the case of Thurston, these exposures came in his "Magic Box of Candy."

Shade took a sanguine approach to such matters, telling fellow magicians, "Advertising that reveals secrets of magicians is not objectionable. This form of advertising helps the professional sell entertainment and does just as much good as Thurston does when he reveals magic; only the amateur who tries to sell tricks is affected."



Eventually Shade retired from both vaudeville and presenting his illusion show and, as the saying goes, “got a real job.” For many years he operated a drug store, and from 1938 to 1946 served as the mayor or “burgess” of his hometown. And he took the job seriously. A brief article in the *Gettysburg Times* for April 27, 1940, reports Shade giving himself a ticket and paying a fine for illegal parking.

One last item before we conclude this article. The town of Shamokin had another famous son, Will B. Wood, an extremely talented magician who created a levitation called Edna. Wood was on tour in Mexico when he and his wife

and family were killed by pirates off the coast of Yucatan. Alexander Herrmann acquired the illusion and presented it as The Maid of the Moon, with Dot Robinson being levitated.

In closing, Shade’s close friend Edwin Bloom writing his obituary said of him, “He was genial, generous, ever ready to help the young magic enthusiast, a fine showman, and an accomplished magician. Our art has lost a great booster.” ☆

—Tom Ewing



## MICHAEL CLOSE

Our guest contributor this month is Michael Close. Michael's interest in magic began at age six when he was given a few tricks as a birthday present. The bug bit and held, and magic remained an important hobby for him through high school and college.

In 1972, Michael was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of Harry Riser. Being able to spend time with Harry was a treat and an education and provided Michael with an expert example of what magic was supposed to look like. Harry imparted a philosophy of magic influenced by Dai Vernon, Charlie Miller, and Stewart Judah.

Michael is the author of the *Workers* series, *Closely Guarded Secrets*, *The Work Volumes 1-3*, and several other instructional ebooks. For ten years he was the product reviewer for *MAGIC* magazine. He has lectured and performed for magicians around the world. In 2009 he became the editor of *M-U-M*.

The following routine first appeared in *Workers 2*, where it was used as an "encore" for a three-phase effect called *The Ring, Shoelace, & Straw Routine*. It is an easy and amazing penetration effect, perfect for restaurant situations.

## THE JUDAH STRAW TRICK

When I was in my early twenties, I met John Railing, a magician from southern Indiana who was attending I.U. law school in Indianapolis. Through John, I was able to meet Cincinnati magician Paul Swinford. Paul was a knowledgeable and clever magician, and he was very generous in sharing information with me. (Older readers may remember Paul as the author of several books on the faro shuffle and as

# I LEFT MY CARDS AT HOME

BY STEVE MARSHALL

a Parade editor for *The Linking Ring*.)

Paul had been a good friend of Stewart Judah, and he showed me several Judah creations, including The Judah Straw Trick. In fact, Paul had socked away several boxes of waxed-paper straws just so he could continue to perform the trick.

The Stewart Judah routine is almost totally unknown to magicians of my generation and younger. As originally conceived, it used a pencil, a paper straw, and a string. The string was wrapped around the pencil and the straw. When tugged, the string penetrated the pencil but still ripped the straw. Unfortunately, the trick became the victim of the development of space age polymers – when straws started to be made of plastic the trick became impractical. My contribution is the realization that with modern straws the straw serves the function of the pencil, the wrapper the straw comes in acts as the old-fashioned paper straw, and, of course, a shoelace does duty as the string. I checked this out with Swinford and believe that I was the first to revive the trick in this form.

To learn this you'll need a shoelace, a plastic straw in its paper wrapper, some masking tape, a pen (the latter two items are just used for learning purposes), and a patient friend (this may be the hardest thing to find). Using the pen and the masking tape, make a small tab and attach it to one end of the lace. Label this tab "A." Label the other end "B." Because the ends of the lace continually change sides during the wrapping process, it becomes too confusing to refer to "right" and "left" ends of the lace; by labeling them we can keep track of the ends. Obviously, this is just for explanation purposes. Okay, here we go.

Tear off the end of the wrapper and remove the straw. It is important that the wrapper not be destroyed in the process. Remove the straw carefully, and then smooth out the wrapper. Lay the wrapper on top of the straw and have your helper grasp the straw and the wrapper at one end. Fold back the wrapper toward the helper. The straw should be more or less at right angles to your body.

## WRAPPING THE STRAW

Drape the shoelace over the straw. The "A" end should be on your right. The right hand grasps the portion of the lace that is to the right of the straw; the left hand grasps the left portion. The grip is with the thumb and first two fingers. The right hand brings its portion under the straw. The wrap is toward your body. Take control of this portion with the left third and little fingers. Then grab the "B" portion with the right hand and bring it under the straw and to the right. The ends have changed sides, and the straw has been wrapped once (Figure 1).

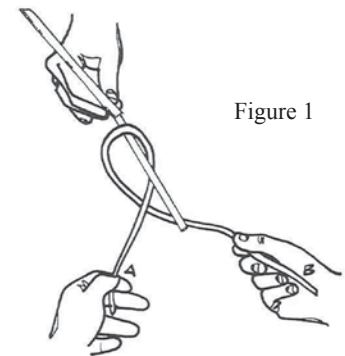


Figure 1

The left hand now brings the "A" end up and over the straw. It crosses over the straw and is allowed to hang down to the right. Again, the wrap is toward your body. Now the right hand brings the "B" end up and over and lets it hang down on the left side of the straw. The straw has been wrapped twice, and the ends of the lace are hanging free at this point (Figure 2).

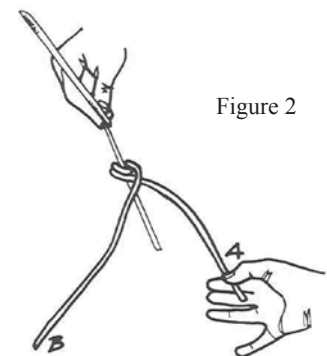


Figure 2



## WRAPPING THE WRAPPER

You will now wrap up both the straw and the paper wrapper. Fold down the wrapper, so it runs the length of the straw. It will cover the wrapped portion of the straw. Ask your helper to hold the wrapper against the straw with his other hand, so both ends of the straw and wrapper are held securely.

The right hand controls the “A” end, the left hand the “B” end. Bring the “A” end up and over the straw and wrapper and let it fall to the left-hand side. As before, the wrap is toward your body. The left hand brings the “B” end up and over and lets it fall on the right side of the straw. The wrapper has been wrapped once and the ends have changed sides (Figure 3).

Now the left and right hands grasp their respective portions of lace by the thumb and first two fingers. The left hand moves under the straw and the right hand grabs the “A” end with the third and fourth fingers. The wrap is toward your body. The left fingers can then take the “B” end from the right hand and bring the “B” end back to the left, under the straw (Figure 4).

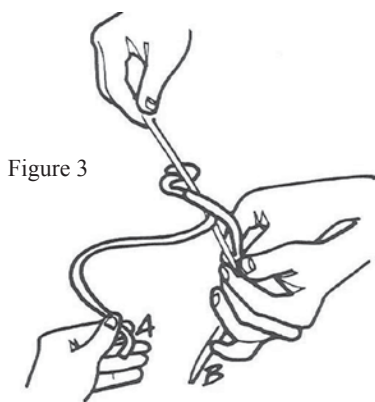


Figure 3

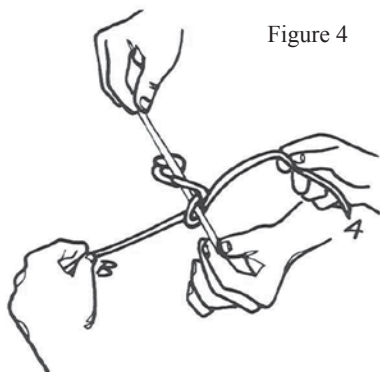


Figure 4

The right hand now comes up and over the straw and the wrapper with the “A” end and lays its portion over the straw and wrapper. The wrap is toward your body. The left hand lays its portion up and over the straw and wrapper. At this point the “A” end is on the left and the “B” end is on the right (Figure 5).

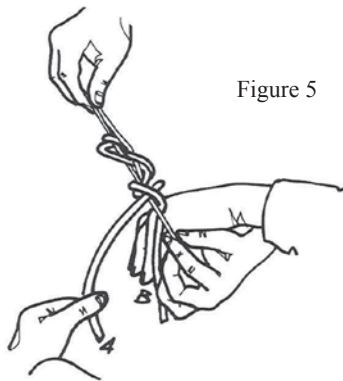


Figure 5

At this time make sure your helper has a firm grip on the straw and wrapper. Grab the “A” end with your left hand and the “B” end with your right hand. Sharply tug the lace between your hands. The shoelace will rip the wrapper and will now be stretched above the straw as if it has penetrated through it. (This, of course, assumes that you didn’t screw up. If you did screw up, you probably broke both your helper’s arms. Find a new helper and keep trying.) The principle is that when you wrap up the wrapper you are in effect undoing the previous wrapping of the straw. The wrapper, however, keeps the lace from falling off. When the wrapper rips, the lace comes free. This is quite an amazing trick considering how fair the wrapping process appears. Here now is the patter that accompanies the above moves. The correlation between words and actions should be obvious.

*“People sometimes ask how I got interested in magic. When I was about to graduate from high school I wanted to be a physicist. But just before the commencement ceremonies my parents sat me down and said, ‘Michael, how can you think of throwing your life away trying to develop a clean, inexpensive source of energy, when you could be doing magic tricks in a noisy, dingy bar? Let’s get some purpose to life!’ So here I am. But I still love physics, so here’s a trick based on physics.*

*“Which would you say is stronger: the*

*straw or the wrapper that the straw came in? This is not a trick question. The straw is, of course, stronger, because it is made of space-age plastic; it is almost impossible to tear. The wrapper tears easily. Now, do you know why they don’t make the straw out of paper and the wrapper out of plastic? Because you could never get the straw out! You’d die of thirst before you’d rip this sucker open! It’s my job to think of things like this.”*

I now enlist the aid of a nearby spectator and wrap up the straw and the wrapper as explained above. My patter during this part is mostly explanatory and need not be detailed. When the wrapping process is done, the patter continues as follows:

*“It would seem that there are two ways to get the shoelace off the straw: either unwrap it, or have you take one of your hands away and slide the shoelace off the end. But I have developed a theory that goes like this: If I pull real hard on the ends of the lace, it will try to break the straw, since it’s wrapped around it. But the lace can’t break the straw; so instead, the lace will pass right through the straw and will rematerialize just in time to rip the wrapper. I feel that this theory is so obvious and easily visualized that I need not do it. (I begin to walk away.) Okay, okay, I’ll do it for the skeptics. Do you have a good grip on the ends, Mary? Good. (I do the penetration.) Because I have found that when the lace comes through the straw people are too stunned to applaud.”*

The routine is over.

## CODA

The Judah trick is especially good and is now very practical through the use of the straw and the wrapper. I still enjoy performing this routine and the response from an audience leaves nothing to be desired.

Even though this routine appeared in *Workers 2* more than twenty years ago, was included in my L&L videos, and was demonstrated and explained it in all the lectures I gave in the 1990s, very few magicians seem to have latched on to it. This is surprising, because the trick gets a great reaction from both laymen and magicians, although it reads like a horrible cross between macramé and origami. Be sure to give it try, especially if you work in a restaurant, where a straw is a very organic prop. ☆



## FOCUS ON FUNNY

BY NORM BARNHART

### VERY COOL SNOWFLAKE MYSTERY

I like fast and flashy magic. Kids do too. They want to see some magic, so get to it! A long drawn out routine that ends with a bit of magic is probably not as interesting as a surprising trick that gets to the point and knocks their socks off. Kids don't want to wade through a long drawn out plethora of patter in the presentation. Magic should be visually interesting. That really is the point. Add some comedy along the way and you have a winner.

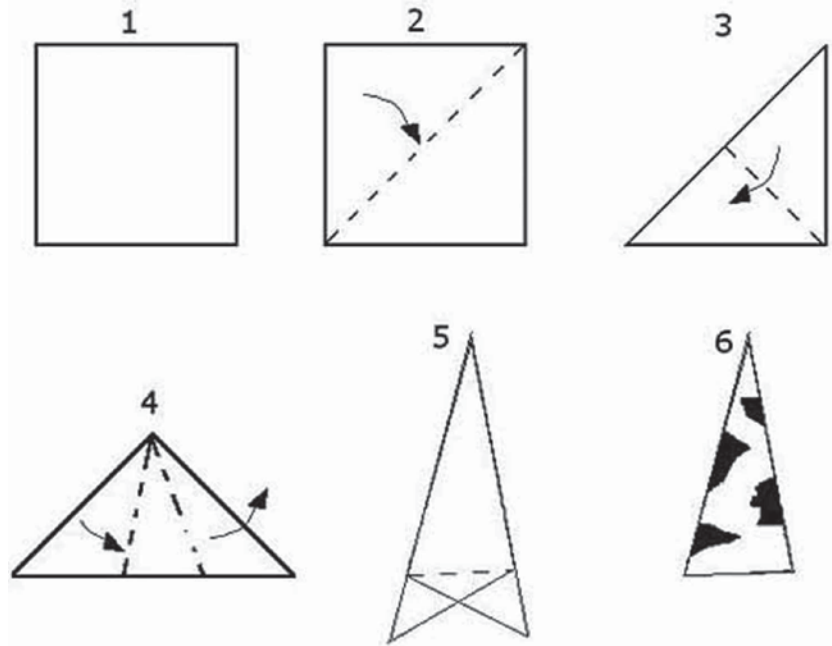
Here is a fun and quick little trick I created that makes the kids' eyes light up. The response is usually "oohs" and "ahs" with a few "wows" mixed in. If done for a special event, such as a birthday party, the child gets to keep a nice gift from you in the end.

**What They See:** A four-inch-square sheet of 20-pound office paper is folded up; the performer makes a clipping motion with his fingers. The paper is unfolded to reveal a snowflake.

**Preparation:** Two four-inch-square sheets of paper are needed. One is prepared by folding and cutting it into a snowflake. The paper snowflake is hidden in your hand and a billet style switch is done to switch in the snowflake. You ditch the folded plain sheet as you reach into your pocket for invisible "scissors." The scissors that you use are your fingers, which gets a chuckle. When these magic finger-scissors actually *do* magically cut the paper to make a snowflake, the children are amazed!

**How It Is Done:** Two sheets of identical-sized paper are required. A snowflake is made before the show in the traditional way of clipping a folded sheet of paper (See Figure 1). This is folded and placed in a pocket next to the folded sheet of uncut paper. In performance, the right hand holds the folded-up snowflake hidden by bottom three fingers as the uncut sheet of paper is removed.

The plain sheet of paper is shown and folded. The right thumb and first



finger help to fold the paper. It is good to keep both hands looking casual. Fold the paper until it reaches the shape shown in step 5 of the illustration. Once folded, this sheet is held next to the cut sheet. Slide the uncut sheet back as you pretend to press and fold the paper. At that moment the switch has been made. You can keep the tip of the cut paper in full sight as you slowly squeeze and switch.

The snowflake sheet is casually retained in the right hand along with the uncut sheet. They see the paper poking out of your right hand and assume it is the same uncut paper you just folded. The left hand is casually shown empty; it goes to your pockets on the left side of your body as you search for a pair of scissors. This is misdirection. No scissors are found.

The right hand places the folded snowflake paper over into the left hand, retaining the uncut paper. The paper is positioned in the left hand so the tip protrudes from the top of the hand.

The right hand now checks the side pants pocket for the invisible scissors. The uncut paper is left behind as you remove the empty right hand. You check your side jacket pocket, again bringing the hand out empty. Finally, you then "find" the invisible scissors in the left inner

breast pocket of your jacket and they are brought out. Basically, you just hold out your two fingers like in the Rock, Paper, and Scissors game. You then clip around the paper in your left hand with the finger-scissors.

Unfold the "clipped" paper and reveal the snowflake.

Give this unique surprise gift to the birthday child and watch the smiles.

This is especially amazing to the younger kids. It is simple and direct and leaves them wondering. It gets the "oohs" and "ahs." I like to talk about how kids are like snowflakes. Each is special because no two are alike! I've had difficult-to-please nine-year-olds to teenaged kids be amazed by this simple effect.

I add comedy by talking about how I am learning to do origami. I explain that I can make a few items. The four-inch square of paper is folded in half once. "A hat." Folded again. "A boat." Folded again. "A rocket ship." They are all basically triangles, and the kids think, "Wow, this guy knows nothing about origami." When the snowflake appears, their jaws drop! ★

This is from Norm's latest book *Cool Kid Show Magic*. Check out [www.NormBarnhart.com](http://www.NormBarnhart.com).



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## MICHAEL GOUDEAU: THE BEST FRIEND A MAGICIAN COULD HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL CLOSE

Several years ago, Michael Goudeau and I sat around a table with Penn Jillette, Teller, and Johnny Thompson brainstorming ideas for a TV special called *Penn & Teller: Off the Deep End*. Creating material for this special was challenging because much of the magic would be performed under water.

Someone (it might have been me, I don't recall) suggested that we experiment to find out whether a Squirmle (the slum magic item) could be manipulated under water. I was put in charge of this particular project, and Lisa and I spent several days trying to construct a large version of the Squirmle that would work. (The slum-item Squirmle fell apart when submerged.) We finally made one that did the job.

In the meantime, Michael Goudeau came up with a gag to showcase the newly-dubbed "Bahamian Sea Slug." The idea was that Teller (while under water) would manipulate the slug as Penn explained that they were harmless, except during mating season. At that moment, forty more sea slugs would swim out from behind Teller's back and between his legs, all trying to mate with the slug Teller was manipulating.

To accomplish this, Goudeau designed a harness that Teller could wear that would hold forty slugs all attached to fishing lines that could be pulled while he hid out of frame. The harness was built, the extra slugs were manufactured, a couple of extra "hero" slugs were made, and the whole thing was shipped to Nassau for the shoot. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the bit was never taped.

I learned two important things from this experience: 1) Never do a magic show under water. 2) If you need a guy to create *and build* great gags, a person who can keep his cool regardless of how crazy a situation gets, go to Michael Goudeau.

If you ever saw Lance Burton's full-evening show in Las Vegas, you probably saw Michael Goudeau. He worked with Lance for nineteen years. This alone would make him an interesting subject for a magic magazine, but there is much more to Goudeau than just being the variety act in a magic show. Goudeau has been a writer for many Penn & Teller projects, was the co-host for Penn's syndicated radio show,

and is the go-to problem-solving guy for big name magicians around the world.

To top it all off, Michael Goudeau is one of the nicest people I have ever met. He is also one of the cheeriest people I've ever met. I could try to attribute this cheerfulness to the fact that he doesn't really understand what's going on, but that isn't the case; Goudeau has a deep intelligence and has an amazing knowledge of an amazing number of things.

I spoke to Michael via Skype. —Michael Close

**Close:** Let's start at the beginning

**Goudeau:** I was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Good old Red Stick. Let's quit trying to pretend it's something fancy. My parents are both computer programmers. My dad programmed computers for banks; my mom wrote the instruction manuals for early software. I have one sister who is a mom and is in a band in Sebastopol, California.

I was in Baton Rouge until I was twelve; then my parents (who were wannabe hippies) moved to Marin County to be close to San Francisco, to be close to Haight-Ashbury. Perhaps correctly, they had discovered that Louisiana was not the place to be hippies. That was 1968. We moved right in the middle of it.

**C:** What got you interested in juggling?

**G:** There were a couple of things. The first one was that we bought a unicycle at a garage sale when I was about fourteen years old. It was four dollars. One of my friends and I spent the summer competing to see who could ride the farthest. I won. So we spent an entire summer unicycling and playing ping pong.

About a year later my dad got me Carlo's *The Juggling Book* and I learned from that. I didn't really practice that hard. I read the book and thought, "That's kind of interesting." A few months later I was at a Renaissance Fair and a friend was working at a game booth where you had to knock down fluffy stuffed cats. He got me a job at the booth. There weren't a lot of people coming to the booth, so there was plenty of time to practice juggling.

Two guys who did an Italian juggling act with lots of screaming came by. They seemed to be having a great time and people loved them. And I thought, "That seems better than this cat-booth thing." So I found a friend of mine and taught him to juggle, because the only juggling I'd ever seen was a duo act. We practiced four or five hours a day for the next six months and we started doing shows. We didn't learn to juggle for any particular love of it; we just wanted to do a show. We were near San Francisco, so we started doing street shows. The great thing about that location was that it was conducive to street performing. There were places to do shows without having any real talent or having to audition. And the cops didn't hassle you; it was very rare that you got into any trouble for busking. We just started doing it.

The odd thing was that by this point there were four of us doing the act; I was the oldest at sixteen. We called ourselves Fly-by-Night. We practiced and practiced and got ready to do shows. There was a street fair coming to San Francisco, and we thought, "This is the one; we're going to start doing shows." Two of the guys chickened out. So the third guy and I went to San Francisco and we made up an act on the spot, because we had enough juggling skills at that point. We made about eighty or ninety bucks for a full day of juggling, which for a little kid in 1976 was a pretty good pile of change.

C: Were you a good student; were you an athlete? Did you participate in activities or did you hang around on the fringe?

G: I was one of those middle ground guys. Even though I was in California, I played ice hockey; and I played soccer, at a time when no one really did. I was involved in organized sports, but not in the normal ones. I did enjoy school. I've always been a science geek. My friends at school were all science geeks. Like most jugglers, I got straight Bs with no effort. Rather than do the tiniest amount of work and get straight As, I did no work at all and got straight Bs.

I tested out of high school a year and a half early, which made my soccer coach very angry. I knew what I wanted to do: I wanted to be a forest ranger. So I headed to the College of Marin in Kentfield, California, (and later to their Indian Valley campus) – they were kind of hippy colleges.

But I was juggling pretty much full time. We started doing shows at the Cannery in San Francisco, which was a terrific venue. There was a stage, there were lights, and you actually had to audition to perform there. We were there two or three days a week. Michael Davis and Whitney Brown were there. It was a really good time to be there. You could make a good amount of money doing shows there because there were three or four rows of seats and it had a balcony, so you could gather a big crowd in a small spot. We were riding unicycles in the show and juggling torches and knives. I spent my entire early career doing a multi-person act. The first fifteen years was either a four-person act or a two-person act.

In 1979, I learned that the best jugglers I knew – Michael Davis, Greg Dean, and Michael Marlin – had all graduated from Ringling Brothers Clown College. I applied and got into the Clown College. In 1979 I saw in the newspaper that they were having an audition in San Francisco. The audition was in August, and college started shortly after that. In the span of about a week, everything in my life changed.

At the audition, my juggling partner Frank Miles and I got into trouble for being funny. There was a gag in which we were supposed to walk toward each other; as one of us extended his hand the other one tipped his hat, and then this was reversed.

And this would work into a funny clown gag. We were the fourth or fifth in line, and the people before us had all done this long drawn-out thing. So Frank and I decided that we would just walk out and shake hands, and with what had come before, this would be funny. So we did that and walked off, and it got a huge laugh, because everyone expected the other thing. But the boss clown went nuts yelling at us, "What's the matter with you, can't you follow directions? This isn't the place to be monkeying around, *this is Clown College*." (Laughter) But they did accept me into Clown College; unfortunately, my partner didn't make it.

C: What goes on in Clown College?

G: Back then it was an incredible amount of work – eight in the morning until ten at night, at least five days a week, and more days if you wanted to stay ahead of the curve. They picked



you up in a bus in the morning and took you to a circus arena where you had classes all day – mime, juggling, makeup, how to make your own costumes, how to build props, just every possible clown thing you could think of. They'd take a break for lunch and dinner, but the arena was open in the evening if you wanted to work on the stuff you had learned during the day. At that time there were six thousand people applying for Clown College and they had sixty spots available. Of those sixty, they would hire twenty or twenty-five people. So you had to somehow manage to be better than two-thirds of the class if you wanted to make the show. It was a lot of fun, but very competitive and exhausting.

I still use the prop-building skills I learned and I'm happy that they taught me how to sew, which has been very useful. The main thing about Clown College was that it was the first time I had to sit down and write a lot of material. They expected the students to write their own gags for the class graduation. I had to create a bunch of gags that I would be in and that other people would be in. That was the first time I had done a lot of that.

At the end of Clown College there was a mortifying day when you wait around and they pick people up in car, two or three at a time, and they take them to the arena to offer them jobs. You have no idea how many people they're going to hire or who they're going to take. Everybody stands around in the hotel lobby; every hour a car comes up and takes two or three people. It's a long and intense day.

**C:** You'd think they'd bring a car around and twenty of you would get in it.

**G:** It's funny; we would do that if we went out for ice cream. There was a clown car at the arena that (at that time) was legal to drive on the street. So we'd pile in and go to Carvel for ice cream; but not in makeup. It's much funnier that way.

**C:** How long did you stay with the circus?

**G:** I was with Ringling Brothers Blue (there used to be two troupes) for two years. I got a job offer from a circus in Mexico. As great as Ringling was, at that time it was a very low paying job. My take-home pay was about 120 dollars a week. It was difficult to make a living. The Mexican circus paid a good deal more; in fact, the contact I signed for eight weeks paid what Ringling would have paid me in a year. In Ringling, there were twenty clowns in the circus; in Mexico, there were three. So there was a great deal of focus and attention on the clowns. It just seemed like a better deal to perform there. So I jumped ship.

Unfortunately, there were some frightening stories associated with the Mexico gig. I'm pretty sure the circus I was with was actually running guns into Mexico. They talked me into driving the truck. It wasn't quite what I thought it was at the time; it dawned on me that this was something more than just a circus.

**C:** Where did you go from there?

**G:** I came back to the US and was practicing with a friend of mine named Greg Barnes. We were hanging out and juggling together just for fun. We got a call from a winery and did a show there. We didn't have a show; we just juggled and talked. Then a couple of days later we got a call from an agent in Japan. He said he needed a juggling act in Sapporo, Japan, but we would have to get on a plane the next day at noon. It was noon on the



**Goudeau and Frank Miles  
Fly-by-Night**

day they called us; we had twenty-four hours to get everything ready to go. We didn't have an act; we'd only been juggling together for a couple of weeks. But we thought, "Sure, let's go to Japan." We managed to get passports and visas in twenty-four hours and got on the plane. We knew no Japanese and we didn't have a show. This was 1981 or '82.

On the flight over we tried to write out a show. And it ended up going really well. We stayed in Japan for six months and then went to Taiwan for a month. And we managed to put together a relatively slick and funny juggling act set to music. It was fun and an interesting and entertaining thing to do.

When we came back from that I discovered that two of the guys I had worked with in Fly-by-Night had continued to do shows, and one of them decided to quit, so I took his place and joined back up with my old partner.

I spent a month or two performing at Magic Mountain and doing street shows in Westwood with Barry Friedman (of the Raspyni Brothers). He and I did street shows together for a short time, but then Frank Miles called me. He was in Houston, Texas, working in AstroWorld.

I went to Houston and worked with Frank for a long time. The gig in Houston was great. It was in a review show, a Las Vegas style show in an amusement park. It was a great show and we had a great spot. Jeff Dunham was in that show. We had a contract for nine months and six of those were weekends only, for which we received full pay as if we had worked the

full week. (We had a good agent.) So for six months a year we'd work two days a week doing two shows a day. It was just the greatest job. On our days off we took acting classes, dance classes, and improv classes and got hired into a sketch comedy improv group. So we'd work our two days at AstroWorld and the other days we'd work in an improv show. It was great for us.

C: So you're getting paid and broadening your skill set.

G: Obviously, my dance skills did not improve. So some of it was an exercise in futility, but the improv was great for us.

While we were working in Houston we got an audition for the *Folies Bergère* show in Las Vegas. Frank and I and a friend of ours, Kurt Larson (who had a magic act called Dexion), had seen Lance Burton on the *Tonight* show; we videotaped it. We watched Lance in slow motion over and over trying to catch him loading birds, and we never did. We were just astonished; it was the greatest magic act we'd ever seen. About a month or two after that, our agent called and said he had an audition for us in the *Folies Bergère*. They hired us and put us in the show with Lance, who at that time was doing the Dracula character. He was pale, with a giant black pompadour hairdo; he glared at the audience while he did these amazing tricks. This was 1983. We moved to Vegas and started with the show just a few months after Lance did.

We worked on and off in the *Folies* for about five years. During the busy times they'd have three variety acts in the show; during the slow times they'd only have two variety acts. We were the third act, so we'd get laid off. They always kept Lance on and they always wanted a comic to close. We were the middle act.

The *Folies* gig turned out to be a good one for me, because I met both Lance and my wife in the show.

C: I assume you and Lance hit it off pretty quickly.

G: At that time Lance was Dracula and he didn't talk much. He was pretty reserved and quiet. Frank and I were loud and obnoxious at that point. We were young kids in the *Folies* making pretty good money and raising a fuss. We joked around a lot. Lance got into that. He enjoyed hanging out with us.

There were two things that changed Lance's life. The first thing was the Funkenring. He would get into an elevator with someone, ask what floor she wanted, press the elevator button, set off the Funkenring, and fall on the floor screaming, with sparks shooting out of his hand. He went nuts over this. If he could get you ten times in a day with it, he would.

And then Jeff McBride made a great suggestion. Lance was doing the paper tear; he tears a triangle out of a paper and then restores it. When he tears out that triangle and folds it, it sort of looks like a bird. McBride said to Lance, "That looks like a dove; you should make it flap for a second." Up to this point in the show Lance has been so serious and scary to the audience that when he folded the paper and made it flap, the audience went nuts. It was hysterical. Lance got a taste for being funny. This led to him talking and extending the act, which eventually led to him developing his own show. Getting those laughs really woke something up in him.

I also met my wife in this show. The romantic version of the story goes like this: Theresa was a singer, and her agent was trying to get her to audition for the *Folies*, but she was already working in a show she liked. The agent convinced her to at least go to the *Folies* to check it out. She saw Frank and me in the show and decided she wanted to meet me, so she auditioned.

But then when she started with the show, it was during the time when we were laid off and they only had two variety acts. I wasn't there. By the time I returned three months later, she had already told everybody the story. When I got back, Johnny Thompson was backstage and said, "Hey, that girl singer thinks you're cute. You should ask her out." He talked me into it. So I went downstairs and asked her out, and it worked out okay.

C: We should talk about that great photo of you and Lance changing costumes for the finale of the *Folies* show.

G: We were just hanging out backstage. In most shows you have a lot of free time. When you're doing a ten-minute spot in the show, you have a lot of time to monkey around. And that's what we did. Lance is still furious at Frank and me because we set off an explosive in his dressing room and burned up part of his carpet. And we tossed juggling knives and throwing stars into his walls. We were just rambunctious.

One day after our set we had an hour until the end of the show, so we switched costumes. I put on the collar and did my hair up as much like Lance as I could. He put on my suit and mussed up his hair as much as he could. And we went up to the stage to wait for bows. People would come up and when they saw the three of us together it wouldn't register what the problem was. They'd look at us for a second and then walk on by. One of the singers in show actually did a triple take as he walked by, stopping between each look back. Backstage there were only a few people who saw us. They announced Lance's name and I walked out all serious; the audience didn't recognize that anything was wrong, but all the dancers cracked up. Then Frank and Lance walked out with Lance bouncing like me. I'm not sure the audience noticed it, but we laughed a lot.

C: How did the solo act come about?

G: On the last day of our final run at the *Folies*, Frank and I had gone out paragliding. He crashed and broke his ribs and punctured a lung. I carried him down the mountain and took him to the ICU. But we had a show that night, so I went in as a solo, which I had never done before. It was a big shock. At the time I was a very good club passer and a good two-act person, but I really had no solo skills at all. A week later we were supposed to be on the Smothers Brothers TV show and I had to cancel that, which was heartbreaking. Two weeks after that we were supposed to get on a cruise ship. I knew that Frank wasn't going to be ready, and I knew that as a solo act I'd have to go back to doing street shows to get booked.

So I practiced and wrote a solo act, but I didn't tell the cruise ship about Frank. I was supposed to leave on the ship on a Sunday afternoon. That Sunday morning I called the director and said, "Terrible news: Frank has had an accident and he's not going to be able to do the gig. But I can do a solo." They said, "Okay, you jerk, come on and do a solo." But it went well and they kept me on as a solo act.

They weren't going to hire me back at the *Folies* as a solo act; I really hadn't impressed them that much the day Frank got hurt. Unlike the street, the *Folies* actually expects you to have an act, and I didn't really have one. But I managed to keep myself booked on the cruise ship. Frank and I discovered the same thing from this: bookers pay for a variety act spot, not the number of people who do it. Whether there is one of you or there are ten of you, the money is the same. So by working as a single, the money doubled for me.

I did cruise ships for a while and then I was in a show called

## LANCE BURTON ON MICHAEL GOUDEAU

I first met Michael Goudeau in the early '80s when we were both appearing at the Tropicana Hotel in the *Folies Bergère*. Goudeau and his juggling partner, Frank, were doing a two-person comedy/juggling act that was very funny and amazing. The three of us became good friends and remained so, even after they left the show a couple of years later.

At that time, juggler Kris Kremo held the record for the longest running variety act in Las Vegas. He had been in the *Lido* at the Stardust Hotel for about a decade. When I opened my show at the Hacienda Hotel I brought Goudeau on board as my special guest star. He stayed with me throughout the run at the Hacienda and then went with me to the Monte Carlo Hotel. For those keeping track, that is a total of nineteen years – a new record! Congratulations Michael Goudeau!

Back in the '80s Goudeau and I went to the movies to see *Groundhog Day* starring Bill Murray, a wonderful film about a man who gets stuck living the same day over and over again. Michael immediately began using *Groundhog Day* as a metaphor for show business. He pointed out that performing a variety act was exactly like the movie. We do the same act over and over again. We relive the same day over and over and we find out everything that can go wrong, and we try to figure out what to do to correct the situation. Goudeau has an inventive mind and always notices things like this. That is why he has been so successful.

Here's to many more years of comedy and creativity from my good friend Michael Goudeau!



Lance (as Goudeau), Goudeau (as Lance), and Frank Miles (as himself)

*Hitz* at the Hacienda before Lance opened there. A friend of mine who was a burlesque-style comic had worked in the show previous to *Hitz*, and they really liked him. So they decided to keep him even though they were switching to a modern, hip-hop show. It wasn't a good fit. He was extremely unhappy with the show. During one of my breaks from the cruise ship I stopped in to see the show; afterwards I sat at the bar with him. He said, "I really hate this show; tomorrow morning I'm going to call in and quit." So I asked him, "What time are you going to call?" He called at 11:30; I called at 11:45 and asked if they needed a variety act in the show. They said, "Oddly enough, we do." (Laughter) They basically hired me sight unseen and put me in that show.

It was a big cut in pay from what I made on the cruise ship, but the Hacienda show gave me more flight time: I had more time on stage to work on my act. I hadn't been doing a solo act that long and I knew from the street that I needed to do as many shows in as short a time as possible. So I went from the ship, where I might do two shows a week, to the Hacienda, where I worked six days a week doing two shows a night for half the money.

Melinda's brother David Saxe saw me in *Hitz* and asked me to be in her show, which I did for about a year. I did a short stint at the Lady Luck downtown and then I moved into Lance's show at the Hacienda.

C: Did you have much input on the structure of the Hacienda show? Did Lance ask you for advice?

G: I worked on jokes, mostly. Lance had all the tricks in place. All the stuff he wanted to do he'd been working on for a long time. He'd spent the last couple of years at the *Folies* putting new things in at the end of the bird act. He worked out illusions there; the *Folies* were pretty lenient about those things. So by the time he got to the Hacienda, about two-thirds of the illusions had been worked out. I helped write jokes or sat in the audience and watched for sight lines while he rehearsed; the type of things that good magicians ask other people to do for them.

C: Were you the first to do beanbag chair juggling?

G: Absolutely. I was the first to do that trick by a long shot. I was walking through Walmart and saw the beanbag chairs and thought, "Hey, I bet I can juggle those." I picked them up and juggled them right there in Walmart. I was in Melinda's show at the time, and I put them in the act that night. Melinda's mom Bonnie said, "What a horrible, stupid, amateurish trick." So it was in and immediately out. I invented it and then didn't do it for a year. When Lance opened at the Hacienda I put the trick back in.

C: Here's something I've always wondered about: How do you travel with those things?

G: I will tell you a trade secret. Normally when I traveled what I did was to purchase Styrofoam peanuts in whatever town I was in. I traveled with the valve that those giant peanut loaders use. But then I found some eight-foot diameter beach balls. I put the beach balls inside the beanbag chair skins and blew them up about a third of the way. It took some experimentation to figure this out. With the partially inflated beach ball inside, the beanbag chair handles and looks like the genuine article.

C: So you were with Lance at the Hacienda and a deal was



worked out with the Monte Carlo; there was no doubt that you would move with the show to the new hotel.

**G:** Yeah. They showed me the blueprints for the hotel and the theater, and I was involved with that from the beginning, which was very nice of them.

The Hacienda was a very small hotel. The first day we walked into Monte Carlo I looked around and said, “We’re in trouble. This place is much nicer than our show.” The Hacienda was kind of a grubby old hotel. People who came to see Lance there were surprised that such a great show was in such a little, tiny, horrible room. I thought, “Man, we’re going to lose that element of surprise at the Monte Carlo.” But Lance is a genius; he pulled it off. He upgraded the show so it didn’t feel like us doing our crappy little show.

Being with Lance at the Monte Carlo provided me with something few variety artists ever attain: job security. I also had health insurance and a retirement plan. These are things that jugglers never have. It was great, and I thank Lance for that.

**C:** One of the other bits in your show that cracks me up every time I see it is the samurai joke with the rubber band. Where did that come from?

**G:** When I was in the Ringling Circus, one of the other clowns, Tuba Heatherton, was playing with rubber bands and discovered that a rubber band would pull your hair up like that. This was around the time when John Belushi was doing the samurai thing on *Saturday Night Live*, so I just tied the two things together. I was already doing some samurai jokes about juggling knives, so it was a very easy fit; it just fell into place.

I steal those rubber bands from broccoli in the grocery store. They’re the best kind to use. I’ve never been able to find another source for them. I’ve written to broccoli producers to find out where to get them, but they never respond. So, until they respond, I’ll keep stealing them. I beg them, “Please make an honest man of me,” but they don’t write me, so I continue to steal them.

**C:** It must have been through Lance that you met Mac King.

**G:** Yes, I met Mac through Lance; he’s one of Lance’s best friends. I met him when Mac first came to Vegas. He’s one of my best friends in the world, and my life is better for knowing him. Our daughters are best friends; we hang out with them and our families take vacations together. There is no funnier or kinder people in the world than the King family – as you know. They are also some of the most normal people in the magic world.

**C:** When did you meet Penn Jillette?

**G:** When I was doing street shows in San Francisco, the Asparagus Valley Cultural Society – Penn, Teller, and Weir Chrisemer – was also performing. They had great advertising, really funny, clever stuff. They’d have Bald Guy Night – all bald guys got in free. That would get all this free press in the newspaper because it was funny. I had heard it was a magic show, so a couple of friends and I went to see them. The show was in a very small theater in San Francisco.

After the show, I introduced myself to Penn as a juggler. Penn yelled to Teller, “Hey, this guy claims he’s a juggler, but I don’t believe him because he isn’t dressed like a hippy.” (Laughter) That was the first time I met the guys. I would run into them every now and then. Eventually, Penn and Teller



started working Vegas full time. They came to Lance’s show and we hung out after. We hung out a lot and became friends.

When Penn and Teller were doing pre-production for their show *Sin City Spectacular*, they had to write twenty-four hour-long shows, and they invited me to join the writing team. They hired everybody they knew for one week to crank out the scripts for these two dozen shows. At the end of that week, I thought, “Man, this is great. I’m going to keep coming in.” They told me I could keep coming in, but they weren’t going to pay me. A couple of weeks later they changed their minds and hired me to stay on through the completion of the project.

**C:** You did something for that show that was pretty challenging. A lot of people don’t realize that there are often delays (sometimes major delays) when TV shows are taped. You were the audience warm-up guy for *Sin City Spectacular*.

**G:** A one-hour episode could take anywhere from four hours to twelve hours to complete. One night I believe I was on stage for eight hours, keeping the audience warmed up because there were so many complications and things going wrong. Now, no one has eight hours of material. Being cheerful is a very useful skill in this situation. I came out and had the audience do a seventh-inning stretch and sing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.” Then we’d do it again but shift the tune off by one beat (which is very funny to hear and very hard to do). I had a joke-telling contest, with the audience competing. Every single thing I had ever thought of, or had ever seen, or had ever read about,

I used in that eight-hour marathon. It was a long, long night. We were there until four or five in the morning trying to tape that one-hour show.

But it was a great experience. I got to work with a lot of my heroes: the Smothers Brothers, Lyle Lovett, Gilbert Gottfried – some really great people. We not only had to write the show, we had to build all the props. It was a fun, busy, hard-working time.

C: And there was at least one bit from that show, the knife-throwing, which became a major hunk in the P&T Vegas show.

G: I always try to take an undue amount of credit for that bit. There's a clown gag that the thing is based on, and Penn and I knew we wanted something that played like the Paper Balls over the Head. It became a big bit. Another was The Inflatables, which was inspired by an inflatable mascot that I saw at the Triple A World Series. Silverfish (Teller's Miser's Dream solo spot) also came out of the *Sin City Spectacular*. Penn and I went to Lake Mead to catch carp, because an earlier version of the trick used gigantic full-sized carp.

C: I assume it came as somewhat of a surprise to find out that you and Penn had so many other things in common besides juggling.

G: We were both Ringling clowns. We have very similar political interests, religious interests, and comedic interests. We are both curious and inquisitive; we both have been cheerleaders for science all our lives. I think the only thing we disagree on is celebrating Christmas with our families.

C: Many of the people reading this will not be aware of some of the other things you have done and I'd like to talk about those now. You are one of the finest cooks I've ever known. When Lisa and I lived in Las Vegas there were many occasions when we would go over to your house for a feast. How did this interest develop?

G: Well, you have to eat every day, and I just took the same attitude that I have with my act. I'm going to have to do this every day, so I might as well get good at it. I really got into it once I found science-related cookbooks, not books of recipes, but books that explain the science of it: what makes something taste good? What causes a sauce to thicken?

C: A few years ago you wrote a book about pancakes called *Extreme Pancakes*. Is this a book people can track down?

G: Barnes and Noble sells it, but I think it's sold out online. You'd have to go to a Barnes and Noble store to find it. I wish they'd print more of them.

C: The other thing that people may not know is that you have designed barbeque covers.

G: The BBQ Zoo ([www.bbqzoo.com](http://www.bbqzoo.com)). I was sitting in my mother-in-law's backyard in her Jacuzzi with my wife. It was dark; their barbeque was off to the side and I could see it through the bushes. I thought, "That thing looks like a rhinoceros; how hilarious is that?" And then I thought, "Why couldn't you make a barbeque cover that *really does* look like a rhinoceros?" And that's what I did. It has been a delightful money-losing project ever since. My kids' college fund has been tied up in renting a warehouse here in Las Vegas. But recently the Food Network featured it as one of their fun summer things, and sales have picked up. I've gone from selling two a month to selling five a week, which is almost enough to cover the storage cost.



**Mousetrap pancake**



**Christmas tree pancake**



**Cow BBQ Cover**

C: For almost twenty years you had a performing situation that was almost like going to the office every day, which gave you a lot of time to be with your kids.

G: For the last two years of Lance's show we did five shows a week, so I would leave my house at 6:30 and I'd be home by 9:00. There's nothing better in the world than that. I stumbled head-first into the greatest gig in world. Even Lance didn't have it better than I did because he had to babysit the show and deal with the cast and the crew. Me, I just walked in, changed my clothes, did the show, and went home. And this freed me up to work on other things like the pancake book and writing for *Penn & Teller's Bullsh\*t!*

C: You did eight seasons of that show?

G: Yeah, we did eight seasons and received twelve Emmy nominations for writing. But we never won because no presenter on TV is going to say, "And the winner is *Bullsh\*t!*" (Laughter) There was just no way that was going to happen.

C: The closing of Lance's show a couple of years ago had to have been met with a certain amount of wistfulness.

G: People ask what the difference is and I say, "I don't work any less, I just don't get paid."



C: Lisa, Ava, and I saw you at Christmastime here in Canada when you toured with Murray Hatfield. What else is keeping you busy these days?

G: Just recently I did a TV spot that I can't talk about, but which will air soon. It involved a very familiar part of my juggling act. I've been doing festivals and magic conventions, and I've been doing a lecture on comedy writing. I did one in Finland last year and it was voted the best lecture they've had in Finland in many years. I'm going back to Finland for a month in November.

C: Because there's nothing more fun than Finland in winter?

G: Well, I survived the Canadian winter, so I guess they thought I could survive it over there.

C: The Hatfield tour was your last set of shows before you had hip replacement surgery on both hips. Was this a congenital condition, or did you beat your hips to hell with all the activities you like to do?

G: I don't think the activities did it, although the rock climbing, unicycling, kite boarding, and snowboarding may

## MAC KING ON MICHAEL GOUDEAU

- Michael Goudeau likes to juggle just for fun.
- Michael Goudeau likes to play croquet.
- Michael Goudeau likes to bake cakes.
- Michael Goudeau likes to go to fancy restaurants.
- Michael Goudeau likes to go to dive restaurants.
- Michael Goudeau likes people.
- Michael Goudeau really likes to laugh.
- Michael Goudeau is a great writer.
- Michael Goudeau will try almost anything.

There is no one on earth more giving than Michael Goudeau. If I call him and say, "I'm wondering if you could help me; I need..." before I even say what it is I need help with, he answers, "Yes, of course." And he means it.

Michael Goudeau is the most good-natured fellow in the entire world, actually in the entire universe. And if there are, in fact, multiple universes, Michael is the most amicable guy in any of 'em. It's not that I've never seen him angry; I've never even seen him unhappy.

Michael Goudeau is one of the most interesting people on the planet.

Not only is Michael Goudeau one of the most interesting people on the planet, he's also one of the most interested. He is the most curious person I know. And not only is he inquisitive, he also puts the wisdom gained through his keen thirst for knowledge to good use. If I want to know something about anything in the world, I almost always start by asking Michael. As a matter of fact, they should change the name of the search engine from "Google" to "Goudeau." When I first met Michael he'd say something about an obscure topic that I was certain was fallacious. I'd think, "There's no way he knows what he's talking about now. No one has that depth of knowledge about broccoli." But then, sure enough, it'd turn out to be true.

The only thing I've ever known Michael Goudeau to be wrong about is sour cream and cilantro in guacamole. He says yes to the sour cream and no to the cilantro, but he's wrong on both accounts.

Michael Goudeau is a great father, husband, and friend. ★



**With Teller on the set of *Bullsh\*t!***

have had some effect. I don't think anything I've done is more strenuous than being an NBA player, and they rarely have hip problems. So I think it was a congenital problem. But the surgery went great. I was only off for four months. Again, this is one of the reasons I'm a science cheerleader. Had this happened twenty years ago my career would have been over. It's only the latest version of artificial hips that can withstand the impact of my jumping off a unicycle. After four months I told the doctor that I was going back to riding and jumping off a unicycle, and I asked him how likely I was to break the new hips. He said that my legs would break before the prosthesis would. I'm walking at full speed; it's an amazing thing.

**C:** Before we wrap this up I'd like to briefly address one more topic. There was a panel discussion at the S.A.M. convention about magic and ethics that focused on the appropriation of intellectual property and how difficult it is for creative magicians to protect themselves. I assume the same thing happens in the juggling world.

**G:** There are two opposing sides in the juggling world. There are those who advocate for originality and creativity. And there are those who say you should just do the best show you can, even if this means taking this bit from that guy's show and this hunk from some other guy's show. In the marketplace, doing the best show you can (even if it isn't yours) generally works. That's the bad news. Talent bookers don't seem to care about whether you've appropriated the hunks that make up your act. That would seem to be an argument against the side that I want to be on. My comedy lecture is well received because it's about how to create new material, how to write your own jokes.

**C:** And when the stuff you come up with is personality driven, it makes it very tough for someone to steal it.

**G:** Yeah, but they *do* take it. There's a guy in Italy who's doing my entire act, almost exactly. That's true for a lot of our friends. We've been lucky to hang out with successful people. But there are a couple of guys in Korea who have ripped off



**Michael and Theresa Goudeau on the set of *Dancing With the Stars***

Penn & Teller's Blast Off. It's hysterical for us to watch, but for P&T that has to be really annoying.

Here's a very good piece of advice from Penn's mother. Some years ago Penn was very upset and angry because someone had ripped off some of his material, and he talked to his mother about it. Very gently she asked him, "Can't you write more?" (Laughter) And, you know, Penn's mom is right. Yes, he *could*. And that's what has made him successful. He's made a career out of creating more. That's what creative people do, and it's the advantage that they will always have over those who simply take. ☆

## PENN JILLETTE ON MICHAEL GOUDEAU

Writing a TV show is a high-pressure situation: temperamental stars, harried producers, broke line-producers, network suits purposely kept in the dark and then blamed for not getting it, weather, loud airplanes, “drop dead,” “wheels up,” and “losing light.”

When I’m in that situation I do everything in my power to have Goudeau there by my side. There’s always some trick that isn’t working and some moment that needs a joke or a gag. Goudeau is in there with gaff tape, some fish line, saying he can hide inside the hassock and jury-rig the trick to work from there. When everyone else on the

set has nothing, Goudeau has ten jokes and five sight gags. Six of the jokes just plain suck, two of the jokes the suits won’t allow, and two could almost work if we do them perfectly. Three of Goudeau’s sight gags involve big things – a big chicken, a big rock, and a giant mousetrap. One of the sight gags involves a cream

pie being thrown at him, and the last gag could be okay funny if we do it perfectly. Everyone else on set has exactly nothing. Wait a minute...nope, we’ve got nothing, but by then Goudeau has ten more ideas.

Goudeau *never* has nothing. I’ve never seen him shrug. I’ve never seen him run and hide at craft services pretending he’s jonesing for some trail mix with carob M&Ms at that exact moment. I’ve not experienced enough pressure that Goudeau stops giggling and stops trying to help. I can imagine him wounded, in the front lines of ‘Nam, with the Cong still coming at him, saying, “Could we just name the dog ‘Chunks?’”

Goudeau was supposed to be a park ranger. He even has the hat. He’s outdoorsy. He’s physical. He’s knowledgeable. He’s tough. He’s strong. He’s smart. He loves learning and teaching. He loves science and nature. He’s not even slightly crazy. He has an annoying giggle that wouldn’t bother the flora and fauna. The giggle doesn’t even bother

me that much anymore. That annoying giggle is the sign that my most trusted friend is nearby and we’re gonna come up with something funny.

He would have been a great park ranger. In a parallel universe there’s some empty environmentalist figurehead writing how he couldn’t run the U.S. park department without Goudeau and his giggle. On the way to being a park ranger, Goudeau started street juggling. He got good and he made money and he had fun. That wasn’t really a fair test, because Goudeau can have fun burning fudge. I’ve been fired with Goudeau, I’ve cried with Goudeau, I’ve failed with Goudeau, I’ve

been injured with and by Goudeau, I’ve injured Goudeau, I’ve been scared for my life with Goudeau, but I’ve never seen Goudeau not having fun. I don’t think of Goudeau as a juggler or a comedian; I think of him as someone who loves life so much, it becomes art. Goudeau is a good person. You pick any definition of how a good person should live his or her

life and Goudeau will fit that definition. He’s a great entertainer, a great father, a great husband, a great partner, and a great employee, and he will beat you at any game you play with him. Don’t even think about beating him at ping pong. Goudeau is the man your parents wanted you to be. Yup, he’s that good.

Mac King, Lance Burton, Penn & Teller, Johnny Thompson, Amazing Jonathan, David Copperfield, Apollo Robbins – we’ve all gotten gags, jokes, and pieces of business from Goudeau. And those are just the ones you’ve heard of. Everyone that crosses Goudeau’s path gets some help from him. He’s a genius at showbiz and at life.

He was on a jury with eleven fellow jurors voting for guilty and just Goudeau on the side of “not guilty.” Goudeau turned them all around with logic and compassion. It was *One Angry Juggler*...with a giggle. He sticks up for what’s right and he does it with joy and that annoying giggle. I hate that goddamn giggle.



# Illusions of Grandeur

by David Seebach

*Not the Dr. Pepper  
You'd Drink*

If my supposition is accurate, most of you will be reading this at the very end of July or in early August. That means it's not too late! I shall now endeavor to select my words very carefully, because I want to pitch some praise in a manner that does not cause any reader to presume something beyond what I intend to convey.

The seventy-sixth annual Abbott's Magic Get-Together will take place from August 7-10, 2013, and I think you should be there in tiny Colon, Michigan. You should especially be there if you have never attended before. And, yes, in our modern age of jet travel, you can easily get from Colon (via Detroit or Chicago) to Las Vegas on the 11th to attend *MAGIC Live* and not miss a thing.

I have attended other magic gatherings; whether it's called a convention, a jubilee, a fest, a symposium, or something else, they all are fun and all offer many reasons to participate. But, the annual frolic in south central Michigan is unique in the true dictionary sense: "one-of-a-kind." I began attending in the 1960s; while I cannot boast to have gone every year, it is the only magical event that I try to never miss.

Why? I think there's a different atmosphere when hundreds of magicians converge on a tiny town without a single hotel or motel and limited dining options (even more limited in 2013 after last spring's downtown fire). I actually believe that if the Abbott Magic Company decided not to host this annual retreat, the faithful would still show up to see each other. I hear so many magicians refer to this pilgrimage as "coming home."

Jeff McBride is one of the big stars this year. Let's use Jeff as an example. If this was the typical assembly in a big city with a hotel as its anchor, it is entirely possible that the star attraction could remain in his suite, appearing only onstage and avoiding the hoi polloi. But, this is Colon. That's not going to happen. It's entirely likely that you'll be seated with Jeff as you wait for your

pizza or that Jeff will come to your table late at night at the Legion to share some new card tricks.

There is a "sameness" to all the other magic conventions. That's not an insult, just an observation. Colon is different, but you won't know until you have experienced it. (Confidential: There's quite a nice "night-before" party at a beautiful modern home right on the water on August 9. I might be able to get you in...)

## *It's Not Exactly a Mirror*

The act and apparatus we know of as Pepper's Ghost was actually invented by Henry Dircks over one hundred years ago. Few of us have ever seen what was staged back then, but almost all of us have seen its modern incarnations at a Disney theme park or on a carnival midway.

When you stand in a brightly lit room on a dark night and attempt to look out the window, you often see a reflection of yourself and the room you're in, not the exterior panorama. If you dim the light in the room the pane of glass that had been reflective gradually becomes transparent. This is how magicians have turned a sheet of glass into a mirror.

The original concept (which must have required a massive piece of glass by anyone's definition) allowed live actors on a stage to duel with skeletons and phantoms that were actually in the orchestra pit. The reflection of these "ghosts" became apparitions that could appear, disappear, and even fade away.

At Disney's popular Haunted Mansion you pass by a banquet scene where translucent ghosts are waltzing about. They must be ghosts because you can see right through them! An unseen pane of glass, at a forty-five degree angle, is in between the patron and the banquet room. The "ghosts" that you see are the reflections of brilliantly-lit mannequins on the glass. I believe this principle is also used on their *Twilight Zone* Tower of Terror attraction as you look down a long hotel corridor. A piece of glass can reflect another, duplicate corridor, set at ninety degrees, for a mysterious disappearance. And, who hasn't seen the sensational Gorilla Girl on a midway in which a gal in a bathing suit morphs into a hirsute ape right before your very eyes?

Decades ago, when Carl Owen worked for Floyd Thayer and there was a craze in America for anything Egyptian owing to the discovery of King Tut's tomb, Carl developed a compact and self-contained illusion called Reincarnation that used the Pepper's Ghost principle. Some years later, Percy Abbott reversed the Owen/Thayer illusion's effect and released the Frame of Life and Death. You can still order either of these unusual props. The Abbott version is \$2,500. The more elaborate Owen effect is at least three times that amount. I own one of these and have handled both of them. But, I've never seen anyone perform one in a show.

The Abbott model resembles a 1950s table-top television set. A spectator is coaxed to sit and place his (or her) head into the con-  
traption from behind. The box that the volunteer's head is in has



*Reincarnation set-up on stage*

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a couple light bulbs that are flicked on. The head remains in full view. The performer manipulates some controls and we witness the head gradually transform into a bleached-white skull. The performer may even reach into the prop and withdraw the bony remains. When the skull is replaced, the controls are adjusted and the flesh, color, and vitality return to the helper.

You've seen this sort of visual when a vampire is staked and the undead fiend rots away to a skeleton...or less. The impact here is that it's not a movie trick, but a live-action special effect.

I understand that the celebrated Dr. Neff, in his *Madhouse of Mystery* show, made this into quite an attraction. It seems like a natural for a midnight spook show. I rescued one of these props from an estate and cleaned it up a bit so that Detroit's Keith Stickley could purchase it and add it to his *Dr. Scream's Spook Show*. I hope I see him perform this someday.

The Thayer/Owen Reincarnation has a slightly different plot. The performer introduces a fancy Egyptian chest. It is placed on top of a two-fold screen with a beautiful scarab design. The design is a cut-out so the audience can clearly see through the screen as the performer or his assistants walk behind it.

A skull is introduced and placed into the chest. Again, interior lighting makes the skull easy to see. Slowly the color, flesh and hair return to the skull and it comes to life. This "reincarnated" individual can talk, but its vitality is short-lived for the process reverts and the head again becomes a skull.

A piece of glass at a forty-five degree angle is used in both illusions. The skull is actually below the opening that we look through and it is positioned on its back so it is staring straight up. The compartments for the person and the head are painted identically and each has its own illumination (narrow showcase bulbs). If the bulbs behind the glass are at full intensity the audience will be looking directly through the transparent glass to see the live head. But, if those bulbs are off and the ones in the compartment with the skull are on, then the pane of glass becomes a mirror and reflects the image to appear on its surface. The Owen model also uses glass that is partially silvered for a better effect.

This more elaborate apparatus also uses a black-art component. Two black velvet curtains are concealed at the top of the two-fold screen. They are rolled up when the illusion commences. The cut-out pattern insures that the audience can see through the screen. When the chest is placed on the screen, the curtains are rolled into position and now the screen is opaque. Performed in front of a black background this cannot be detected. The assistant then enters from behind, sneaking into position. There is a complex arrangement of hinged panels that she must operate to assemble the chamber that the head will be placed into. It's all quite clever and works just fine.

The illusion has a controller that, when operated by the hidden assistant, reduces the power to one circuit and increases it to the other. This expensive gizmo is more exact than the two dimmer switches in the Abbott version. No controls are visible in the Owen version; the transformation just happens.

When I commissioned California's Owen Magic Supreme to build Reincarnation for me almost a decade ago, I had an annual relationship with two Milwaukee theaters. One was a small suburban venue with a compact stage and less than five hundred seats. The other was our home at Halloween and was a grand theater from the 1920s with a balcony, over two thousand seats, and had been a regular stop for Francisco's midnight spook show long ago.

I wanted to stage this at the smaller theater, but it never happened because their management changed and magic was

no longer an option for them. We staged it at Halloween, but the stage and theater were too big for this illusion. We did add a live TV camera and screen to enlarge the magical transformation, but that only made it look more like a movie/TV effect. Hollywood's special effects wizards can do this much better...but on film. This is impressive only seen firsthand and live.

To this day, though, I think our staging was dramatic. We obtained three backdrops, all painted in forced perspective to suggest the interior of a long-shuttered tomb. From an architectural art company I bought lots of Egyptian "décor" to set the stage. I found the music composed for Universal's 1939 *Son of Frankenstein* that was later used over and over again in all of their Mummy movies with Lon Chaney, Jr. We used the motif of the charging – but shuffling – mummy and timed the transformation perfectly to the music. I also had San Diego's Doug Higley make a mummy's head for me; something other than a bleached-white, pristine skull.

When I put all the components together I realized that something just wasn't right.

I had created a presentation that suggested that somehow I had obtained an actual Egyptian relic, the mummified head of someone dead for thousands of years. I was going to pour "water from the Nile" over the sacred tana leaves and brew an elixir that would restore life to a disembodied head. And, I would carry on a conversation with this reincarnated individual!

Can you imagine a more far-fetched scenario?

So, I swung for the fences. I decided it was all so ludicrous that I would start heavy and dramatic and then make an unexpected turn and take the presentation into a different direction. I wrote a script for our conversation that, I think, was more like a ventriloquist's routine. It consisted of "zingers," one after another, with the head insulting me at every opportunity.

We preserved the magic, but added additional entertainment. I still maintain it would have been better at the smaller venue. And, both of these illusions were probably more sensational decades ago before this kind of wizardry was commonplace on TV and at the movies.

The photos will show you the complex nature of this illusion concept and how beautiful the Owen apparatus is. We used it for one edition of my Halloween show. It now sits safely cased up. I hope I get the opportunity to stage it again in the future.

And, I hope to see you in Colon for the seventy-sixth annual Abbott's Magic Get-Together! ☆



Reincarnation at Owen Magic Supreme

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In this month's column, I will be covering fundamental rule of magic number seven, which was:

*"Deception can be enhanced by lengthening the time between the secret move and the magical effect."*

## ILLUSIONARY ARTS

Conjuring is an illusionary art, which means that the magic itself only exists in the minds of the spectators. To express this more artfully, I sometimes say that, "Magic is in the eye of the beholder." It is interesting that conjuring is *not* the only illusionary art form. For instance, some of the figurative paintings made by the Old Masters are illusions. When seen in person, these portraits and still lifes seem real enough to touch. But in reality, they are only pieces of stretched canvas fabric, covered with smudges of paint. Cinema can also be considered an illusionary art.

## SENSORY ILLUSIONS

But in cinema there are two separate factors that create illusions: the way motion pictures are captured and projected, coupled with the visual processing of the human eye and brain.

Take for instance a film (or digital) cinema camera, which does not shoot a "moving picture" per se, but actually shoots a sequence of still photos at the frame rate of about twenty-four images per second. These images are ultimately projected onto a screen in rapid succession, yet we perceive it to be a moving image. The reason for this is because the human eye exhibits a biological phenomena that causes the human brain to retain a bit of an image for a tiny duration after the visual exposure to the image has stopped. There is also another phenomenon called "short range apparent motion," which causes the sequence of the images to blend together. For these two reasons, cinema is a sensory illusion that causes us to believe we are viewing a moving picture.

## COGNITIVE ILLUSIONS

There is however another kind of illusion that is cognitive in nature. By the word "cognitive" I mean the processes in the brain that relate to such things as memory, reasoning, problem solving, language, etc. Sometimes in cinema, a "cognitive illusion" can manifest itself. For instance, pretty much everything you see in a film is faked. The people you see on the screen are paid actors, making believe they are the characters that they portray. The words the actors say are actually dialog written by a screenwriter. The locations are often film sets, so when you see a scene with an actor who is alone in a small room, the actor is actually in a huge studio with dozens of sound, light, and camera technicians nearby. But if a film has a good script, a believable cast, and is shot and edited artfully, we can feel as if what we are seeing is real. This is because our brains can create a "cognitive illusion" that gives us emotional involvement in a film that we know to be a completely false representation of reality.

## A TALE OF TWO COIN TRICKS

Now that we have defined the difference between sensory and cognitive illusions, let's take a look at how these two types of illusions relate to the art of magic.

There is sleight that appears in John Northern Hilliard's 1938 book *Greater Magic* under the title A Coin Vanish (which is Dai Vernon's improvement of a sleight from T. Nelson Downs's 1909 book *The Art of Magic*). In current parlance it is called a Retention of Vision Vanish; it is a very deceptive move in which a coin is seemingly placed into the closing fingers of the left hand while it is secretly retained by the right hand. Regarding the move, in *Greater Magic* Hilliard writes, "...there is nothing in the entire realm of coin sleights so deceptive. The whole action is based on the optical illusion known as the persistence of vision." In other words, because of the previously mentioned "after-image" phenomenon, the coin appears to remain in the left hand as the fingers close around it. But in reality the coin is stolen away and the spectator is fooled by a sensory illusion. [For expert instruction on this

sleight, see this month's Ebook Nook.]

The next trick that we will look at is the coin production routine that first appears in Robert-Houdin's 1868 book *les secrets de la prestidigitation et de la magie* under the title "la pluie d'or." This simple yet effective routine utilized a handful of coins and a small receptacle such as a top hat (and much later a pail). The trick pre-dates Robert-Houdin; it went under various names until T. Nelson Downs built an act around it and called it The Miser's Dream.

At its simplest manifestation The Miser's Dream requires the following preparation: the magician holds a container in his left hand with his thumb on the outside of the container and his fingers on the inside. At the same time the left hand is secretly holding a stack of coins hidden against the fingers that are inside the container. The right hand retains a single coin in a thumb-palm position.

To perform the trick, the right hand makes the coin magically appear from the air by secretly transferring the lone coin from the thumb-palm position to the fingertips. After the coin is shown to have appeared, the right hand goes above the opening of the pail and makes it seem as if the coin is dropped into the container. In reality, the coin in the right hand is secretly transferred into the thumb-palm position while moving downward as the left hand lets a single coin drop into the container. This creates the illusion that the coin that had appeared has been discarded by dropping it into the container. Next, the right hand once again produces a coin from the air, and the entire process is repeated until there are no more coins remaining in the left hand.

When analyzing this version of The Miser's Dream, I will freely admit that it has two sensory illusion components. The first component is visual, because the spectators actually see the coin appearing at the fingers of the right hand. The second sensory component is auditory, because the sound of the coin is heard in the container. But I submit to you that with The Miser's Dream there is also a cognitive illusion component that is actually more important! And the heart of this cognitive illusion is causality. ☆

[To be continued next month.]



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**Excerpt From:**

*The Vernon Chronicles  
Volume One*

**Written By:**

Stephen Minch

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Those of you who were not actively interested in sleight-of-hand magic way back in 1987 may not be able to understand why the publication of *The Vernon Chronicles* series was such a big deal. Vernon material had appeared in print before, in *Stars of Magic*, the classic *Dai Vernon Book of Magic*, the four-volume *Inner Secrets of Card Magic* series, and the special Vernon issues of *The Pallbearers Review*. But there was a large amount of Vernon material that had not seen print (not to mention the fact that many of the previously published descriptions were incomplete or incorrectly described). The fact that the two men who spearheaded the new book (Larry Jennings and Bruce Cervon) were intimately familiar with the Professor's work and that the writer and the illustrator (Stephen Minch and Tom Gagnon) were two of the best in the business made *The Vernon Chronicles* series one of the most highly anticipated events in magic history.

*The Vernon Chronicles: The Lost Inner Secrets Volume One* is a treasure trove of information, information that (as was pointed out to me by a well-known performer) many magicians uprooted and moved to the West Coast to acquire. Included in the book is a handling for a standard procedure that (back in 1977) I was eager to learn (and which my mentor Harry Riser could not recall). When Vernon lectured in Indianapolis as part of his \$1,000 Lecture Tour, I racked my brain to figure out a way to ask Vernon about the technique without making it seem too important (so nobody else at the lecture would pay much attention to it). This is how highly prized this information was to those of us who adopted the Professor's approach to magic. (And if you think I'm going to tell you what this piece of information was, you're wrong.)

That the Vernon repertoire was recorded at the time it was is fortuitous; such a series of books could not be done today. In the twenty-six years since the publication of Volume One, magic has lost Vernon, Jennings, Cervon, John Booth, Mickey Hades, Roger Klause, Gerald Kosky, Peter Warlock, Conrad Bush, Milt Kort, Faucett Ross, Michael Skinner, and Herb Zarrow, all of whom contributed to the accuracy of the books. Some of those who were taken into Vernon's confidence are still alive, of course, but for the most part they prefer not to discuss publicly what they know. Because of this (and because so many magicians only judge magic by what they see on video, and the video record of Vernon catches him in old age), there are magicians who doubt the value of the lessons offered by Vernon. Let me assure you of this: every expert magician I know has absorbed and exemplifies the Vernon approach.

In this month's Ebook Nook I have chosen two short examples

from *The Vernon Chronicles Volume One*. The first is a thorough explanation of one of the most visually extraordinary coin vanishes in the literature. (Jay Marshall performed this vanish expertly.) The second excerpt is a routine that I have used since I was a teenager. There are no illustrations that accompany this routine, which means (I hope) that most will overlook it.

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

## THE PERSISTENCE-OF-VISION COIN VANISH

The persistence-of-vision coin vanish is now a recognized staple of the advanced coin-conjurer. This outstanding vanish, often called the "retention-of-vision" vanish, gives one the illusion of having actually seen the coin in the hand from which it vanishes just moments later. The sleight creates an optical illusion that is extremely potent.

This type of coin vanish may be over a century old, but it was not widely known to magicians until more recent times. Mr. Vernon was one of the persons instrumental in popularizing the sleight. He learned it, when a young man, from Hilliard and Downs's classic, *The Art of Magic*. There, on pages 243-245, is given a description of the sleight as performed by T.J. Crawford. In introducing the vanish, Mr. Hilliard wrote at the time (1909), "We cannot claim that this pass is original, or even new; but it is not generally known to the profession." Almost thirty years later Mr. Hilliard, under the guidance of T.J. Crawford, redescribed the sleight in more detail in *Greater Magic* (pp. 717-719). Earlier in the same tome (pp. 666-667) Mr. Vernon's handling of the vanish was also explained.

There is an amusing anecdote concerning this sleight. Attending an early Abbott's Get-Together years ago, Mr. Vernon discovered that T.J. Crawford was present. Introducing himself to Mr. Crawford, Mr. Vernon praised his coin vanish and requested that he perform the sleight. Mr. Crawford suggested they retire to a secluded spot, away from the crowd. This they eventually did and Mr. Crawford asked that Mr. Vernon first perform the sleight for him. This Mr. Vernon did. Mr. Crawford was highly complimentary of the illusion created by the vanish in Mr. Vernon's hands and, saying that he had never achieved a better one, refused to perform the sleight. Therefore, Mr. Vernon was never to witness this vanish in the hands of its best known exponent.

Since *Greater Magic* is sadly difficult to obtain at the time this is being written, it seems worthwhile to redescribe Mr. Vernon's handling of this valuable coin sleight, taking the opportunity to compile all the fine points and add several that did not appear in the original description. For though this sleight has been published in several places (first in *Five Close-Up Problems* [see *Early Vernon*, pp. 48-49]; also Bobo's *Modern Coin Magic*, pp. 30-32), a complete dissection of it has never been offered. This will necessitate the discussion of many details. The element of timing in the vanish is paramount, and timing is a difficult enough thing to teach in person. On the printed page only careful detailing can hope to give the reader an idea of the goal for which he must strive.

It is best if the coin used is brightly polished. The glint of the

coin aids in creating the desired visual impression: Apparently this is a momentary afterimage of the coin left on the retina, after the coin is out of sight. The coin is pinched between the tips of the right forefinger and thumb. As much of the coin as possible must be exposed while retaining it in a secure grip. The right second, third, and fourth fingers are drawn back somewhat, so as not to cover any portion of the coin. However, they must not be curled tightly in on the palm. They are bent only minimally inward.

The left hand is held open and palm-up, fingers out straight and together. The right hand approaches the left and lays the bottom edge of the coin directly onto the base of the left fingers (Figure 1).

Those fingers now bend up, as if a solid wall, in the first action of closing over the coin. The fingers bend mostly at the inner, or proximal, joints, while the fingertips point upward. This, for an instant, creates a screen behind which the right second, third, and fourth fingers can invisibly extend over the coin. The timing of the right fingers' action must be considered. Too soon, and the

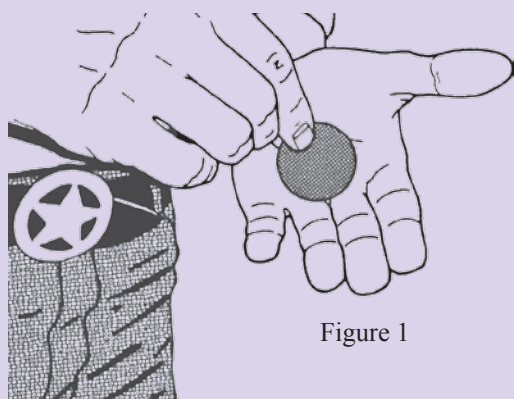


Figure 1

movement will be detected, destroying the illusion; too late, and an unwanted hesitation will be created. As a gauge for governing the precise moment to extend the fingers, wait until you feel the left fingers touch the backs of the right (Figure 2); only then should they be straightened.

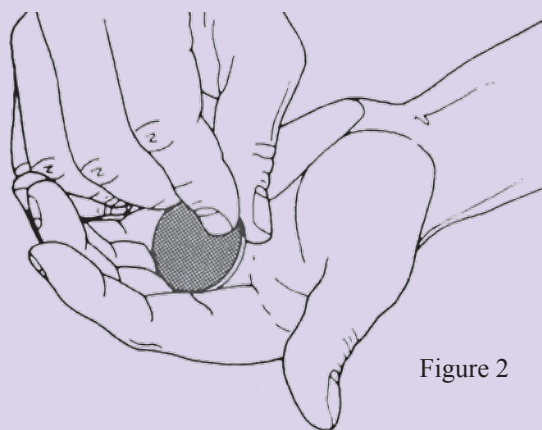


Figure 2

The movement of the right hand as it separates from the left is simple, and yet complex to describe. It moves to the right and away from the left hand. It also moves slightly upward and outward at the same time, drawing itself from under the left fingers. Simultaneously, the left fingers continue to close, actually brushing across the backs of the right fingers as the right hand withdraws

with the coin.

The right hand flexes or hinges inward somewhat at the wrist as it moves out of the left hand. It almost rolls over the tips of the left fingers. This action points the right fingertips slightly in toward the body, so that the rim of the coin is shielded from the extreme left side (Figure 3). Please note that the inward turn of the hand is small – just enough to move the exposed portion of the coin from the audience's sight.

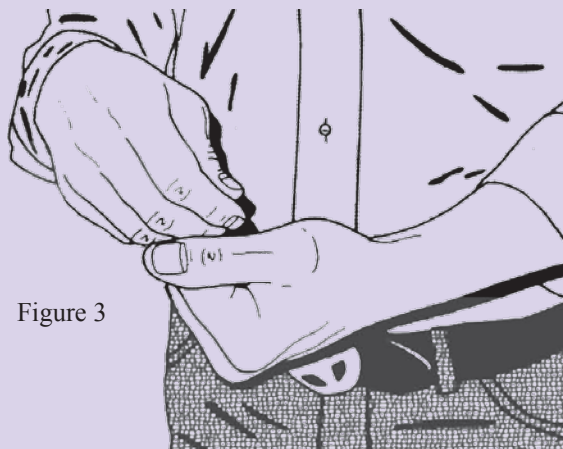


Figure 3

The “breaking” of the wrist is an important detail, one that distinguishes the Vernon vanish from its parent. Since the turn at the wrist effectively hides the coin, the fingers' movement can be minimized without hazarding the deceptiveness of the pass; rather, the illusion is strengthened. Mr. Vernon developed the wrist-break action after carefully observing the actions used to place a coin genuinely in the hand. He saw that the hand that deposits the coin relaxed and dropped slightly at the wrist once the coin had been relinquished. Indeed, a stiff-wristed action looked unnatural. This breaking of the wrist, when not overacted, communicates to the observer's subconscious mind the impression of an honest transfer of the coin. The same subtle action can be incorporated into the vanish of any small object.

As the right hand draws away, the left fingers continue to close, apparently over the coin, and the left hand drops an inch or two. The right fingers should curl in slightly, giving the back of the hand a relaxed appearance. The fingers act as a ledge upon which the hidden coin is supported (Figure 4).

The rightward and slightly upward action of the right hand is sustained only until the hand is about six inches away from the

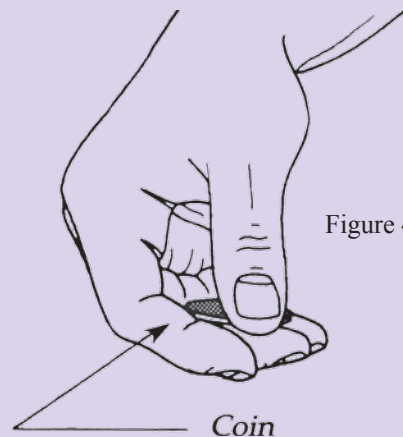


Figure 4

closed left hand. The right hand then falls to your side. How it falls is important. It must be relaxed, but not lifeless or limp. A fault often seen in coin vanishes is overcompensation, a hand acting of an unoccupied hand. Instead of relaxing to a natural position at the side, the hand and arm drop and hang like a felled python. Such an action calls attention to itself, rather than avoiding it. Study how you and others naturally hold the arm at rest beside the body; then mimic that posture.

An important point always stressed by Mr. Vernon is the judgment of the proper moment to palm a coin after the vanish. Most performers are anxious to push the coin into classic palm immediately after the right hand is withdrawn from the left. The finger motion is visible and can betray an otherwise faultless sleight. The coin is securely hidden on the tips of the right fingers. There is therefore no need to rush its transfer to the palm. Mr. Vernon will often execute the palm as the right hand moves to adjust something; for instance, the left sleeve is tugged up a bit, or something on the table is picked up or shifted. Here it is natural movement that conceals the palming actions. Another good approach is strong misdirection. During the placement of the coin into the left hand and the subsequent vanish, your gaze and all attention should be focused on that hand. Only as the left hand slowly begins to open, revealing the vanish, should the right fingers press the coin into the palm.

It is also recommended that the left hand should be opened in an artistic manner when a vanish is performed. Do not simply open the fingers and jerk the hand palm-down and up again to show the coin gone. Instead, slowly and dramatically trace the tips of the fingers over the surface of the palm, curling them ever more tightly in on themselves until they cannot curl any farther. Then open them gracefully outward to display the entire surface of the hand empty. Figures 5, 6, and 7 give a sense of this action.

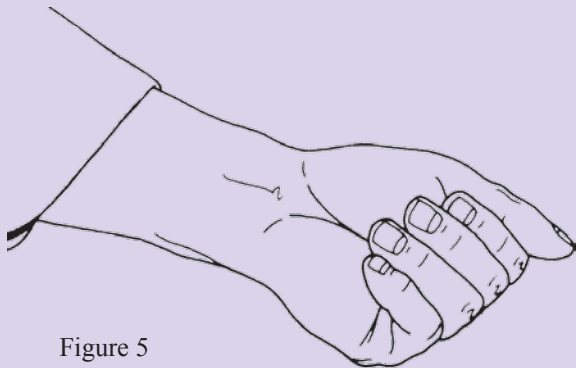


Figure 5

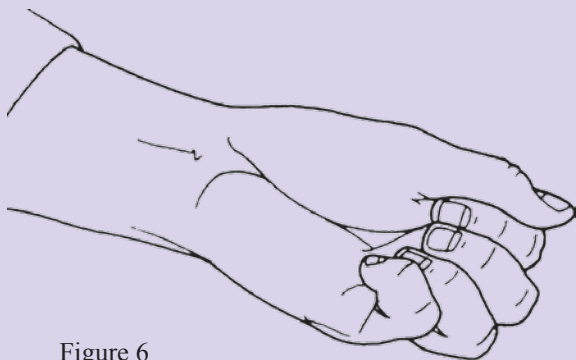


Figure 6

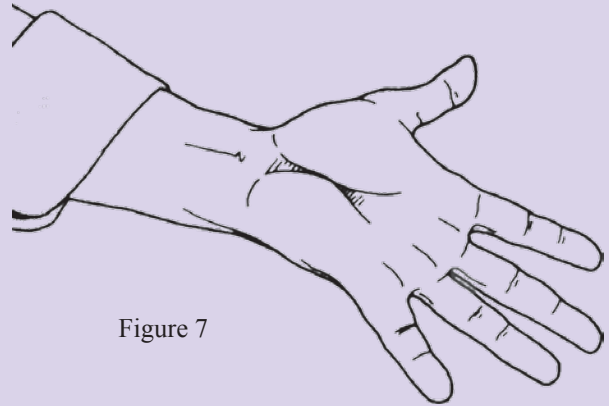


Figure 7

Opening the hand in such a manner sustains the suspense of the vanish and is pretty to watch.

One further detail: There is an appearance of certainty in the way the coin is placed in the left hand that is impossible to describe. Quite simply, it is *put* there. The action is wholly natural and deliberate. There is no hesitation or posing as the coin is placed. The instant the coin contacts the base of the left fingers those fingers close over it. It is as much the manner in which the coin is placed as it is the persistence-of-vision illusion that makes this sleight effective. There is one way in which you can acquire this manner: Study the genuine action of placing a coin into the hand and learn to imitate it perfectly. Then sit down with several children and do as Mr. Vernon did:

He would often test the effectiveness of his technique on his two young sons. When the boys would come to ask him for some spending money, he would propose a small gambling game. Each boy was handed \$10.00 and it was explained that they could keep a dollar for every time they could correctly tell their father when he had really put a coin in his hand and when he had not. For each time they were wrong they forfeited a dollar. He would then place a coin in his hand, sometimes performing the genuine action and other times the sleight. He knew that he had created the most critical audience imaginable: two young boys with keen eyes, strongly motivated to catch their father so that they could keep the money. It should be recorded that Mr. Vernon always allowed them to catch him at least once before the game ended, so that they each had a dollar to spend.

## THE FINGERPRINT CARD TRICK

**Effect:** Mr. Vernon has performed the following effect for over fifty years. The presentation is intrinsically interesting to people, and this fact is used to advantage.

The trick is introduced with a brief story about the science of fingerprinting in criminology. Every person's fingerprints are unique and can be identified. A demonstration of this fact is given.

Someone is asked to take a card and remember it. The card is returned and the pack shuffled. The performer now runs through the face-down deck, trying to detect the spectator's fingerprints on the backs of the cards. Because the cards have been handled previously, this proves a bit difficult, but several likely cards are shifted to the top from different spots in the deck. These cards are

then examined further, both faces and backs.

One by one, the cards are eliminated by the performer. Eventually he identifies one as the spectator's selection. This causes some mild dissension in the audience, for they know that the card specified is not the one that was chosen. Rather, the selection was seen to have been eliminated several cards earlier in the search.

Despite this, the performer is adamant in his judgment. When the card he holds is turned face-up once more, it is seen to have changed to the selection. Examination of the discards shows, as might be expected, that the chosen card is not among them.

**Method:** This trick is extremely entertaining. It is of the same engaging family of "sucker" effects as the Partigas "Sell" (ref. *Farelli's Card Magic, Part Two*, pp. 42-43).

In 1945, Dr. Clyde F. Cairy contributed a trick to *My Best* by J.G. Thompson Jr. that is almost identical to the Vernon Fingerprint Card Trick (see pp. 11-12). It is certain that Mr. Vernon was performing the trick some years before Dr. Cairy published his Dick Tracy Card Trick. Dr. Cairy was known to be scrupulously honest. Therefore it can only be concluded that this similarity in tricks is a remarkable example of independent invention. Because the trick has been so closely associated with Mr. Vernon, and because the Vernon handling has a number of details in technique and presentation not featured in the Cairy version, it is felt that it warrants a full description.

Mr. Vernon begins the presentation with the story of a tour through the Fingerprinting Department of the FBI. He explains that no two finger or thumbprints are identical, and that a careful examination of such prints will identify their owner.

A demonstration of the science is suggested. A card is freely chosen and noted by a spectator and those around him. The card is then shuffled back into the pack. Through whatever means preferred, the selection is brought secretly to the top of the deck.

Mr. Vernon now begins to spread through the cards, closely examining their backs as he attempts to locate the spectator's thumbprint. As he does so, he is thinking out loud. "No, that's not it. This one could be it, but people have been handling these cards." This sort of vocal rumination continues as he runs through the deck and transfers any four cards to the top along the way. The exact number of cards shifted is not emphasized. It is simply done. These cards are understood to be cards he thinks likely to be the selection.

The deck is squared. The selection is now fifth from the top. Mr. Vernon explains that he has narrowed the field down to one of five. He turns his attention again to the cards. The top card is flipped face up onto the pack and named. "This one is the Nine of Clubs [or whatever]. It might be yours." The card is flipped face down on the deck again. The pack is tipped and tilted as Mr. Vernon apparently looks for thumbprints on the back of the top card. "Let's see...It's a little hard to tell in here. The light is so dim. No, there's no print here. No, that's not your card." The top card is dealt face down onto the table.

The next card is turned face up and named in the same way. It is turned face down again on the pack and its back is scrutinized. "No...well, there is a little smudge here that misled me." The second card is dealt onto the first.

"Let me see your thumb for a moment." When the spectator complies, Mr. Vernon grasps her hand and examines the tip of her thumb. This byplay provides powerful misdirection away from

the deck, so that the left thumb can push over the top three cards and the fourth finger can catch a break beneath them.

"That's most interesting. You have beautiful hands, by the way, young lady." This bit of flirting flattery is charming and amusing when Mr. Vernon delivers it. Of course, the compliment is varied to suit the person. If working with a male spectator, some comment about "a strong hand" would be more appropriate.

The next card is now turned up on the deck. Actually, a triple turnover is executed, bringing the selection into view. The card is named and the triple card is turned face down. The back of the top card is studied. "No, that's not your thumbprint. It doesn't match at all!" The top card is dealt onto the table. This denial of the chosen card surprises the audience. It appears as if Mr. Vernon has failed.

He does not give any helpful soul the opportunity to correct him. He immediately turns over the next card on the pack and names it. This card is turned down again, and its back is studied. "No, that is a man's thumb – not a bit like yours." The top card is tabled with the rest.

When the left thumb pushes over this card so it can be dealt, the two cards below it are pushed over as well. While the right hand tables the top card, a break is secured under the card now second from the top of the deck. Unsuspected by the audience, the selection is on top of the pack.

"Well, this is the last one, so it must be yours." The top two cards are turned face up as one and named. The double is turned face-down and the top card taken into the right hand.

"Yes, yes. Do you see your print there?" The card is held out toward the spectator and some spot is indicated on its back. "See, it matches your thumb exactly."

This is the cue the spectator needs to deny, often with a mixture of commiseration and satisfaction, that Mr. Vernon has made an error. In the face of this, he remains convinced of his success. "No, no. It's your card. The print matches perfectly."

After a short amount of baiting, he turns the card over so that the face of the selection is revealed. The dealt cards on the table are almost always reached for at this point, so that the spectators can assure themselves that they saw the selection discarded. Of course the card is not found.

Notice how cleverly Mr. Vernon has with presentation solved an old problem of the multiple lift and turnover. There is always a mild air of illogic in the action of turning a card over on the deck and then dealing it. The normal procedure would be simply to deal the card as it lies, or turn it over in the action of dealing. Mr. Vernon provides a reason for turning the card down on the pack after showing its face. He must examine its back for thumbprints. This same psychology, though not the exact motivation, can be applied to other tricks to strengthen the logic of the action.

Another admirable piece of construction shown in this trick is the application of the triple lift. Note how this stratagem exposes the selection three cards before the trap is sprung. It is a curious fact that even persons well aware of double lifts will be fooled by the triple lift. In the context of this effect the use of the triple lift is exceptionally cunning.

I can only repeat that this is a most entertaining effect with a plot that immediately claims the interest of any group. If the reader learns and uses it, the trick will prove itself a solid favorite to his audiences. ☆



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

BY SCOTT ALEXANDER

### THE CLUB DATE ACT

*"I'll work anywhere. I get up in the middle of the night and open the fridge, the light comes on...I do ten minutes."*

– Anonymous

If your goal in magic is to be the next Criss Angel and have billions of dollars to blow, appearing shirtless in a huge Vegas theater with a cast of dancers and throngs of adoring loyal pre-teen fans... stop reading now. However, if your goal is to make a successful and rather nice living doing what you love (magic), then allow me to reveal the ultimate show biz secret...build a club date act. For almost two decades Denny made a ton of money in what he calls the club date circuit. There are real workers today doing the exact same thing, making tons of money, whom you have never heard of. They are entertaining tens of thousands of people a year because they have an act that can play anywhere. It is a segmented, interactive, and fun program that can be performed in any and all venues, for any length of time necessary, without any large demands for lighting or sound; the show can even be performed in the round.

So what exactly is a club date act? Nowadays, it is a catchall phrase Denny uses to cover lots of scenarios, but "back in the day" the club date was where showbiz was happening. According to *Blumenfeld's Dictionary of Acting and Show Business*, the "club date circuit" is a series of nightclubs, jazz clubs, rock clubs, etc. that book cabaret entertainers and bands. Likewise, a "club date" is a booking for a singer, comedian, or other performer at a cabaret, etc.

The club date, as I imagine, gets its name from the heyday of the various nightclubs and cabarets in the '50s and '60s. If you page through the Alan

Wakeling book you can see photos of him working some of these swanky upscale venues. It's like an episode of *Mad Men* – everyone looking aloof while smoking and drinking martinis. The cream of the crop worked these gigs, including Norm Nielsen, Marvin Roy, Johnny Thompson, Jack Kodell, and Channing Pollock. These clubs are still around (sort of) in one form or another, although they have morphed and changed over the years. The closest modern equivalent would be the techno pumping dance clubs that sell overpriced drinks while creating opportunities for the young and over-privileged to bump and grind against one another in a sea of sweat-drenched humanity. Vegas is full of them. In fact, most major cities in America have them. Like most magic tricks released today, these clubs are overpriced and lack any substance, but they have cool one-word names like Haze, Ghostbar, and Pure. Some of these clubs are classier joints that still employ bands and a few variety entertainers on a regular basis. But by Denny's wider definition, club dates can also mean performances for various community service clubs like the Lions Club or Moose Lodge, where people gather together to serve the community and put on functions. They can be coffee houses, comedy clubs, small corporate events, parties, banquets, and even cruise ships. What are most of the magicians who work cruise ships doing? Floating club date acts, myself included. Anywhere people are gathered and have the need for entertainment has the potential for a club date act to work according to Denny's model.

Denny says, "Probably the best thing about being in this field is that once you can be a success with club dates, you can fit into any of the other fields with very little change. From this forty-five-minute act or show, you can delete routines or add routines to make this show an opening act, a children's act, a comedy act, a traveling illusion show, etc. Once you get a good club date act, you have all the ammuni-

tion to tackle almost all phases of show business."

### THE FORMULA FOR THE CLUB DATE ACT

Denny has a set of lecture notes about performing in the real world and what you have to do to get your act together. He defines the act this way. "The club date act is an act that can work in almost any condition. It could function as an opening act for a comic, as part of a three- or four-act show, or can it stand on its own as an evening's entertainment. You should be able to entertain adult or family audiences with a likeable personality, doing good clean material and strong magic. In order to succeed in this field, you must be able to talk. You must have some audience participation, and you must have at least one spectacular trick or illusion that will really blow them away. You must be able to do time. You should have at least a forty-five-minute presentation that can work anywhere, from the local Moose Club new membership night at the nominal fee of \$200 – \$500, to an after-dinner entertainment for the twenty-five year membership of the Ford Motor Company at \$3,500 – \$7,500 plus first-class expenses. The amount of money you make per show is directly proportionate to how good you are, and how good your publicity materials are. There are many "magic stars" working this field today. There are also many acts you have never heard of. There are expensive acts, moderately-priced acts, and low-priced acts working in this field. They all have a place. There is no definite amount of money to quote when working this field."

The potential amount of money to be made is based on how good you sell yourself; the longevity in the field is based on how good of a product you deliver on a regular basis. Cream rises to the top, as they say. But let's leave the money aside. It will always be there. As long as we are

human beings with beating hearts in our chests, no matter how advanced technology gets, we will have a need to gather together, in person, with other human beings; when that happens, those people will need live entertainment. Let's focus now on putting that act together.

The basic idea is to create chunks of material/time segments that can be interlaced and interchanged, added or removed, to create any type of show. Whether it be a ten-minute opener for a band, a twenty-five-minute after-dinner act at a corporate event, or a full blown evening show in a theater, by taking a "plug and play" approach you can create programs tailor made to each venue you encounter. Below is Denny's trick selection and categories for building his club date act. Just change the names of the tricks and substitute ones from your own arsenal that fit the bill, and you are well on your way. According to Denny the act is constructed using the following framework.

## THE OPENING

In his notes, Denny describes the opening effect as, "Something to get the attention of the audience, show them what you do, and let them know your show has started and that you are on. It does not have to be a musical opening or a flashy opening. Any number of things can work here as long as it gets them to like you." Here are Denny's openings he has used throughout the years.

**A Grave Mistake:** This is the routine we touched on in last month's issue. It's Denny's current opener. This allows him to introduce himself to the audience and let them know he is a seasoned performer with a good sense of humor about his advanced years.

**Crystal Box or Sword Basket:** During the heyday of big money gigs, Denny would cycle these two illusions in and out as opening tricks. He would do the Crystal Box as an "add on" to make the show bigger, if the money was bigger. These two illusions are perfect for a club date act because they can both be done surrounded in the middle of a dance floor with no chance of exposure. They pack relatively small and play big. The Crystal Box is a fast-paced, stunning illusion that gets people gasping right off the bat. Denny

would follow this with the Hindu Sword Basket routine, which is also fast-paced and interlaced with hilarious comedy bits throughout; it can also be done surrounded. By adding a few illusions like this to your core club date act, you can demand a higher fee.

## THE PERSONALITY TRICK OR TRICKS

Denny continues, "I call the trick that goes in this slot a personality trick because it is here that you really get your first chance to talk to your audience and relate to all those who you may have missed during your opening. Preferably, this should be a good, strong effect, because you don't want to lose the audience after your opening. A strong effect to open followed by a strong effect to further develop your personality lets them think that everything you do is going to be good. You can do more than one trick here if you really need the time."

**Torn and Restored Newspaper:** By doing the Torn and Restored Newspaper (which we discussed in the June issue), Denny has the chance to convey the three P's to his audience. He conveys his *perspective*, his *point of view*, and his *personality* to the audience. He lets them know that he is not just a regular magician who comes out and doesn't tell them what he is going to do before he does it. He tells them he is a rule breaker and that he wants them to know that he is going to tear up the paper and they will see it visually go back together again. The audience is getting to know his personality and they begin to like him. This routine is a core component of Denny's club date act. By "core," I mean it is always one in the mix, whether it is a ten-minute set or a full evening show. Develop some core tricks for yourself that really show the audience who *you* are.

## THE FEATURE

**Card Manipulation:** This is the routine done to music that breaks up the talking. This is where Johnny Aladdin (whose work inspired Denny) used a card manipulation routine. But this could be any routine that is visual and strong. Denny says, "A good move here is to do something strong enough to be a closer but that does not have the applause-getting finish that is needed

for a closing effect. It can be an illusion, a manipulative effect, or basically anything skillful or amazing enough to make the audience sit up and take notice."

Like Johnny Aladdin, Denny does a card manip routine here. We covered it in the March and April issues (Photo 1). It is a beautiful routine with a fanning deck and intricate card flourishes and productions. It fits perfectly here because it shows a level



of skill and lets the audience know, sub-consciously through observation, that this guy really has amazing hands and can do that "magician stuff" too, not just jokes and gags. Even though Denny's manip routine is peppered with comedy bits, he is doing some serious old-school manipulation; the audience appreciates the skill and years of practice it must have taken him to pull this stuff off. They now like him and respect him. Here is the place to put that fancy finger-flinging routine that sucked away so many hours of your life (Photo 2).



**Sword Suspension:** Again, if the money was right Denny would add in the Sword Suspension here. Denny performed a beautiful routine, but again it was sprinkled with bits of comedy, including a parody of Indiana Jones complete with a sword-wielding ninja who antagonized him through the presentation. One of my

favorite lines was, “Tonight I present the Oriental version of the... (he looks at a guy in the crowd) ...I said ‘ver – zhun’ sir! I present the Oriental **version** of the suspended lady.” This illusion was carefully selected because it, too, could be done completely surrounded. Plus people always love it when the magician does the floating lady shtick, which is something to keep in mind when structuring your club date act.

## THE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

This is the heart of the show. It is your chance to interact with the audience now that they know, like, and trust you. Denny says, “Now you can go into your lengthier routines and some heavier comedy. By now you should have the audience in the palm of your hand. You can do one, two, or three routines here and have a real ball entertaining your crowd.” It is here that Denny has a few really strong laugh-getting (but amazingly deceptive) turns. The tricks in this part of the act have varied over the years, but the ones below are the standards. Here are Denny’s main audience participation pieces.

**Egg Bag:** This is another core component to Denny’s club date act. We covered Denny’s handling and touches on the Egg Bag in the January and February issues, and if you go back and re-read those you will see why this has been a staple of Denny’s act for most of his career (Photo 3).



Photo 3

This type of trick gives him a chance to get two people up on stage. The audience loves to see representatives on stage watching the magic. It makes them feel as if they are right there with you. The reactions that he gets from audience members onstage help to amplify the reactions from observers in their seats (Photo 4).



Photo 4

**Bill in Lemon:** Denny used the Bill in Lemon routine he developed in a longer set. His routine consisted of Mihn, his assistant, teasing and taunting him throughout the routine. He used a grenade that was a cigarette lighter and a Chaplains Tipping Candle on a tray that Mihn held that accidentally burned up the envelope with the bill inside. He even had a gag in which he demanded a knife, and from off stage a steak knife came whizzing by and impaled itself into the tray Denny was holding. A lengthy routine like this turns a short thirty to forty minute show into a program of almost an hour.

**Cards Across:** Another great trick Denny sometimes adds to his set is the Cards Across. Based on the Zen’s Cards Across effect from J.G. Thompson’s book *My Best*, it is a funny comedy of errors in which two guys seal cards in envelopes and stick them in their pants. Three cards selected by the audience travel from one guy’s pants to the other. Denny recently gave me permission to release my spin on his routine. I have changed some of the handling and added some new jokes; it’s called Super Fly. You can now get it direct from Denny or my website. A longer piece like this or the Bill in Lemon is perfect to plug into your act to get that bump from a cabaret-style act to a full evening show of entertainment without switching or changing your whole line-up. Just drop a segment like this in the show and poof! When considering what tricks to use for your club date act, you should use your bread-and-butter tricks here. You might put *your* Bill in Lemon routine here, or perhaps a Confabulation routine, or maybe a Cut and Restored Rope. Pick stuff you know will kill. Choose some things from your repertoire that get people up on stage and get everyone laughing and having a great time.

## THE ELEMENT OF DANGER

**Razorblades:** Although Denny doesn’t mention this in his lecture notes, when discussing this article we agreed that there can be one more ingredient to the club date act, an element-of-danger effect. Denny did this in his act for years and I think it deserves its own category. Include this type of effect toward the end of the show, when the audience already likes you. This way, if you are in some kind of danger, they are really rooting for you to overcome whatever this dangerous effect might be. This kind of trick is not something everyone can pull off, but if you think you can, it is a valuable added effect that can spice up the end of your show. Maybe you do the Needles or a Russian Roulette routine. This could be just the place for it.

For years Denny has been doing the Razorblades Trick. You eat the blades and some string and pull them out threaded



Photo 5



Photo 6



together (Photos 5 and 6). It came into Denny's act as a necessity while doing his eight-minute act in the Officers Clubs while stationed in California. Unexpectedly, they asked him to do a full, thirty-minute show on his own. He dug around, scrounged some razor blades, and cobbled together a performance from his memories of reading about the trick at age fifteen. The Razorblades Trick was the talk of the show, and Denny continues to do it to this day. Don't overlook the danger category; it can add drama and excitement to your program.

## THE CLOSING EFFECT

**Multiplying Bottles or Canvas Covered Box:** According to Denny, "This is where you really let them know you are through. Many times this should be the absolute strongest thing you do or at least the thing that leaves them talking about your act the most." Denny has always closed his club date act one of two ways. If it was a solo show it was always the Multiplying Bottles, which we covered in June's issue. If they paid the big bucks, Denny always closed his bigger club date show with the Canvas Covered Box. This is a trick that Abbott's Magic produced, but that magicians rarely do, or have ever even heard of. But if you saw the *Denny and Lee Show* in the '80s or early '90s, this was all you would have talked about. It's the Sub Trunk, but old school style. This again fits the bill of being both totally amazing and performable under the harshest working conditions. Guess who Denny taught his Canvas Box to and who still does it to this day: yours truly.

Also on the bill, to close a more modest show, is the Multiplying Bottles. Denny gets so much out of this routine it is strong enough to use as a closer (Photos 7 and 8).



Photo 7



Photo 8

Because of the nature of the prop (which uses the bottles and the gag table), this also gives an added "furniture factor" to your show, making it appear bigger, with more production value. When performed with Denny's timing, facial expressions, and pacing it is a real winner (Photos 9 and 10).



Photo 9



Photo 10

## BREAKING UP ISN'T HARD TO DO

Now that you have the formula, let's take a look at how Denny's club date act can be segmented and laid out for a variety of potential performance scenarios. Think about your tricks and how you could rearrange them to form these different sets.

### Opening for a Name Comedian (ten-minute set)

- Torn and Restored Newspaper (4 minutes)
- Egg Bag with Shot Glass ending (6 minutes)

### Set for Microsoft's Geek of the Year Awards Banquet (twenty-five to thirty minutes)

- Sword Basket (3 minutes)
- Torn and Restored Newspaper (5 minutes)
- Card Manipulation (5 minutes)
- Razor Blades (5 minutes)
- Canvas Covered Box (10 minutes)

### Headliner Show on a Cruise Ship (thirty to forty-five minutes)

- Grave Mistake (2 minutes)
- Torn and Restored Newspaper (5 minutes)
- Egg Bag (6 minutes)
- Card Manipulation (5 minutes)
- Cards Across (12 minutes)
- Razor Blades (6 minutes)
- Multiplying Bottles (4 minutes)

### Full Evening Show at the Big Time Performing Arts Center

- Crystal Box (2 minutes)
- Sword Basket (3 minutes)
- Torn and Restored Newspaper (5 minutes)
- Egg Bag (6 minutes)
- Bill in Lemon (10 minutes)
- Sword Suspension (5 minutes)
- Card Manipulation (5 minutes)
- Cards Across (12 minutes)
- Razor Blades (6 minutes)
- Multiplying Bottles (4 minutes)
- Canvas Covered Box (10 minutes)

There you have it: Denny's whole core act laid out for you in these few pages. This is show business gold! It's a sparkling cocktail of powerful entertainment that can be mixed, poured, and consumed in any order, under any conditions. Choose effects you already do and play around with this concept. For those of you who can not only read the lines, but read in between the lines, this formula offers a time tested road map to creating a successful program and a successful career in magic that can earn you untold returns. This formula will allow you to live a comfortable existence, rake in the bucks, and enjoy a fruitful and stress-free retirement. Just don't decide to open a magic shop. ★



## MAX MAVEN

Most magicians know Max Maven as a legendary creator of magic and mentalism. It may, however, be less widely appreciated that he is also a master of the stage.

For one thing, watching Max Maven perform is immensely entertaining. As a total stranger once exclaimed to me during an intermission, “I had no idea he was this funny!” Max’s shows are fun and funny, but they also provide a graduate-level education in making a good show.

His character is strong, clear, and specific, not weak, vague, and generic. And his stagecraft is impeccable – blocking, voice, eye contact, body and hand positions, acting, entrances and exits, fluid handling of props, and so on. To be perfectly honest, I have learned more about magic stagecraft by watching Max than I have from any other person or book in magic.

This is why I go see Max whenever I can. I have gotten on airplanes to see him perform, and I have produced shows by him on two occasions. One of these was his current work, *Thinking in Person: An Evening of Knowing and Not Knowing*. I recommend that you see this show the next time Max performs it anywhere. Don’t let it be the best show you have never seen.

I would love to discuss *Thinking in Person* here, but being equal parts mentalism, comedy, and monologues, it is too complicated to honor in this context. Instead, I will discuss the one-hour show Max created for the 2011 I.B.M. convention in Dallas.

The room was set with cocktail tables surrounded by chairs; the stage was on a platform with a subtle shiny curtain; and there was a complement of lights, pre-show music, and a mic stand at center stage. In other words, the venue was the equivalent of a nightclub – a venue in which Max excels.

**Max Maven, I.B.M Convention Show, Dallas, June 30, 2011**

1. Max’s signature opening: he briskly

walks to the mic, the spotlight comes up on his face, and he softly says, “Boo!”

2. After words of greeting, Max borrows a pack of cards and then brings a gentleman on stage. With escalating humor, Max proceeds to psychologically force the Three of Spades on him in six different ways. At the end, the last selection is revealed as the Four of Spades – an apparent miss. With a touch of disgust, Max tears off one of the four corners: now it is a Three. Then he removes a giant card from his pocket, folded into quarters, and reveals it to be another Four of Spades that is torn to be a Three. (As a coda, Max gives a new pack of cards to the person from who he borrowed it.)

3. Welcoming monologue: “It has been a good season for this image.” He discusses his life in Hollywood, his travels around the world, some of the countries he has performed in recently, and his television program *MAXimum Dimension*, in which he teaches children about the fun of mathematics. As a tag, Max warmly converses with a young person sitting the audience, finishing with, “It is important to eat your vegetables...or you end up looking like this!” (He points to his face.)

4. “Now we get to the mindreading portion of the show.” Max brings two people up and hands one of them the “anchor list” and the other the “tertiary list.” Laughs abound at their confusion. Explaining those meanings, Max has each person study their list, confirm that all the items are different, and memorize an item on it. Slowly, while discussing the nature of thought, Max reads the mind of the first participant; he is thinking of a yellow toothbrush. (He is sent back to his seat.) Turning to the woman, Max mimes taking her item, sends her back to her seat, and then slowly reveals the imaginary object in his hands: a shot of whiskey! (He mimes a little toast and drink.)

5. After thanking the convention’s technical crew, Max closes with his classic routine “Desire.” Four business cards and pencils are distributed to audience members. Discussing the nature of our emotions, three of the participants are instructed to write the name of a city where they actually have been; the fourth person is told to write the name of one to which

she hasn’t been but always desired to go. Another audience member collects and mixes the cards, and brings them to Max. Working one card at a time, Max names the location on the first three cards, “reads” the participants to determine whose card it is, and then provides detailed information about their actual experiences at the location. Since it is now obvious who wrote the final card, Max crumples it in his fist so he can’t see it, asks the fourth person to visualize her location, and then describes in detail the mental picture she has created, culminating with the revelation of the city! “Thank you!” Max briskly exits, and comes back for a warm wave. Show over.

## OBSERVATIONS

I have already mentioned how much we can learn from Max about show making, but how about show building?

Well, one thing we learn from this show is to take our time. It is so common to see magicians pack their shows full, to rush from trick to trick, and to rush through tricks. Breathless and trick-full, such shows have less impact.

Max presents us with a very different model. This sixty-minute show had only three “tricks” in it, but it was totally compelling. How does Max do it? I could go on at length, but a big part of it is that Max trusts his character. He understands that his character is one of the major “effects” in the show, and he allows plenty of room for it to be expressed. Notice how much we learn about Max as the show unfolds: he is witty, wry, intelligent, aware of his “look,” funny, a show business pro, a star of stage and screen, and great with kids. Oh yes, and his “tricks” also show he is a master of psychology and can read minds. Wow! Who doesn’t want to spend time with such a person!

And so I ask: do your shows allow enough room to let your character breathe and develop? Do you use your scripts and segues to reveal more and more of who you are? Are you being upstaged by your own tricks?

Max Maven offers a powerful reminder that a well-constructed show is one that really allows you to shine. ☆

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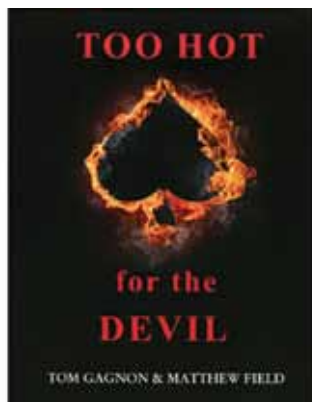
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Compiled and Edited by W. S. Duncan

### TOO HOT FOR THE DEVIL BOOK By TOM GAGNON AND MATTHEW FIELD

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Price \$60.00

#### REVIEW BY ANTONIO M. CABRAL



Tom Gagnon's latest book, *Too Hot for the Devil*, took me by surprise. His previous book, *Avant-Cards*, was such a treasure trove of novel techniques that I couldn't believe a whole other book arrived in such a short time. What I didn't appreciate is Tom Gagnon's ability and willingness for exploration with his techniques – a silly mistake on my part.

The field of card magic is so vast that it's often difficult to reconcile the various facets

and niches. One could spend a lifetime just studying the myriad techniques and mechanics, and many do. We were introduced to Tom Gagnon's explorations into tabled ribbon spread controls in *Avant-Cards*, and *Too Hot for the Devil* continues tapping that vein. Where *Avant-Cards* gave more of a general overview of Tom's various techniques, *Too Hot for the Devil* rolls up its sleeves and digs deeper into the many varied applications of Tom's spread controls.

The first half of the book is dedicated to exploring Tom's Versatile Spread control as a control, a switch, a revelation, a sandwich load, and other applications. In many ways this is disappointing for the reader, because part of the pleasure of learning a new move is discovering for yourself the various ways you can apply it to different situations. From the look of things, Tom's covered a lot of that ground. What's left to the reader is to have the light bulb go off on the perfect place in a routine for any of these techniques. The tricks in *Too Hot for the Devil* are simple and direct to the point where they feel like dealer demos to me. The moves themselves are so intriguing, though, that I have to think that in a more developed trick or routine they would help to create some heavy miracles. In addition, like the material in *Avant-Cards*, these moves require a good deal of practice to get the knack. Over a year later, I'm still trying to get the knack of the basic Spread Control move on which Tom built this vast pyramid of techniques. But as I said, that's part of the joy of being a card magician: finding something novel, beautiful, and flat-out difficult to get under your fingers.

The second half of the book is where most of the variety is. There's one more chapter of card concepts that contains some really cool ideas. There's a bottom card cover pass, an Open Prediction, a "Cancelled Deck" card stab that's essentially a card

sword routine without the sword, and some more techniques that will give your fingers a rest after all that table spreading. My favorite items in this chapter are Si of Relief, a utility technique for controlling or calculating the position of any card in a Si Stebbins stack (which should bring a smile to the face of anyone who still can't bring themselves to memorize a stack); the Slug-o-matic Deck, another utility idea that uses a well-known gambler's artifice to control a small stock while allowing a spectator to riffle shuffle the deck (check out *Shuffling Monkey* for a really nice application of the concept); and the Z-Box, a way to gaff up a card case to turn it into a switching device for cards or any small objects. Most of the ideas in this chapter swap the practice and elbow grease of the previous material for gaffing and preparation, so either way you're going to put some work in ahead of time.

After all the card work, there's a full chapter of Tom's coin work. Most of these routines are coin assemblies (of the cards-and-coins Matrix variety). I'm certainly less of a coin worker than a card worker, but Tom's applications of the Tenkai pinch to these routines may actually have me busting out some half-dollars to try (when no one's looking, of course). There's also a cute coin production and a devious ending for the Kangaroo Coins. Following that there's a whole chapter devoted to reprinting Tom's Radical Rebound routine from *The New Stars of Magic*. Younger coin workers unfamiliar with this routine might take this opportunity to get to know it. Topping off the book is a handful of "catch-all" ideas: a Cups and Balls subtlety, a rubber band penetration, a quickie with a lit match, and advice on what to do about a bent coin shell.

The book is full of Tom's top-tier illustrations, and the writing assist from Matt Field gives this book a much more consistent voice than its predecessor while maintaining a very clear instruction style. Between the two books, I personally prefer the variety of *Avant-Cards* over the variations on a theme contained in *Too Hot for the Devil*, and I would recommend that book first. However, if Tom's unique style of card work got you chomping at the bit in the first book, you'll likely enjoy tucking into *Too Hot for the Devil*. Recommended for the card enthusiast.

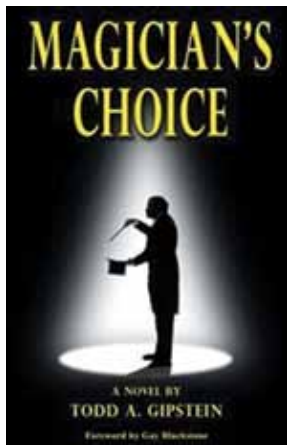
### MAGICIAN'S CHOICE NOVEL By TODD GIPSTEIN

Available from: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)  
Price: \$19.95

#### REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSSELL

Do you believe in fate? Do you believe in fortunes? Do you believe that you control your own destiny? Everyone wrestles with such questions from time to time, but mostly we plod along without thinking about the whys and wherefores of life. In *Magician's Choice*, his recent fiction book about magician Guy Borden, author and magician Todd Gipstein has played a little magician's choice not only with Guy Borden's life, but also with us, the readers.

The result is a delightful story of a young man growing up



in New London, Connecticut, in the 1930s, where he discovers the world of magic as a result of a birthday trip to Harry Blackstone's *Show of 1001 Wonders*. Yes, he is called on stage to help Blackstone with a card trick, but that is the only predictable part of the occasion, for two days later Guy meets The Great Blackstone once again in Guy's father's barbershop, which happens to be in the hotel where Blackstone is staying. Guy is thrilled, of course, and the next day he meets Blackstone one more time in the hotel coffee shop, where the two strike up a conversation. Black-

stone teaches young Guy the retention vanish with a Morgan silver dollar, which he gives to Guy as a memento, with the admonition to "practice until your fingers bleed!" That retention vanish has many roles to play in the next fifteen years of Guy Borden's life. That occasion is followed by Guy receiving a Mysto Magic Set in the mail from none other than Blackstone, himself. Is this Guy's first encounter with destiny?

Gipstein skillfully unfolds Guy Borden's life, as he graduates high school and lives a short time in New York City, working as a stagehand at a Broadway theater, while practicing magic on the side. This begins a time of discovery for the young man, who visits Tannen's Magic Shop and catches glimpses of the great wonder workers of the day and even invents a unique illusion, only to lose it by trusting too much. Pearl Harbor and World War II lead Guy to a stint in the Army that, through a novel twist of fate, results in Guy going to work for a traveling carnival as the resident magician. The next several months are filled with adventure, romance, danger, and tragedy, skillfully woven together with our friend destiny and a sensitive portrayal of Guy Borden finding his way as a person, not just as a magician. Doors close as others open, and we, the readers, wonder what fate has in store for his future. We hope, but Gipstein leaves us just enough room for doubt.

When the carnival closes, Guy returns to New York City, finds work as a bartender (where he begins to hone his close-up skills), establishes friendships with a number of New York City magicians, and even becomes a student of The Professor, Dai Vernon. Blackstone reappears in his life once again, as well. Sketched in outline, the plot might seem a bit improbable, but Gipstein has cleverly couched these events in the cloak of fate, fortune, and destiny. If there is such a thing as destiny, there is no such thing as improbability.

In the final chapters of the book, Gipstein nicely brings the story full circle, neatly tying together the subplots of Guy Borden's life. His best writing, in a well-written book, is in this section, in which the character of Guy Borden deepens as he learns several enduring lessons about life while at the same time coming to maturity as a magician. He is called upon to question the place of fate, fortune, and destiny in his life and, indeed, the role of the magician's choice. We might wonder about our own lives a bit as we turn that last page.

Magic has been a life-long hobby for Todd Gipstein, whose own life has been an adventure, as well. A good portion of his life has been as a photographer, writer, and producer for National Geographic. He and his wife collect vintage magic apparatus and posters. His knowledge of the history of magic, and especially of magicians who lived in the Thirties and Forties, is evident in *Magician's Choice*, his second novel.

## ROGER CURZON'S BLOOD ON THE TRICKS VOLUME 2 DVD BY MAGIC DIRECT AND MAGICTRICKS.CO.UK

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Retail Price \$30.00

### REVIEW BY JAMIE SALINAS



On the case of the DVD, Roger Curzon is described as "one of the UK's real hidden treasures in card magic." I am not familiar with Roger and his work, so I came to this review looking forward to see what he has to show us. The DVD covers a series of many card effects.

The DVD is recorded with Roger and Matthew Johnson in a setting where Roger is teaching Matthew several card routines in a one-on-one session. Matthew does a great job in asking questions and repeating as well as clarifying steps during the instructional portion. The DVD follows the "perform a trick, teach a trick" format. Since this two-DVD set is a collection of variations on standard card trick themes, it's important that you know what makes up the collection.

Roger teaches the following effects on the first DVD of set: his version of a Larry Jennings trick in which a selected card gets left behind as two halves of a pack are pushed together in face-up and face-down fashion; a version of Alex Elmsley's trick in which a selected card appears in a stack of all Diamond cards in the location the spectator names; a very straight forward prediction effect with two decks; a packet trick with a gambling theme in which a bad hand changes into the four Aces (with a sucker finish); a card sandwich routing in which a selected card appears between two cards that are rubber banded together (this is very straight forward and easy to follow); a very strong card stab routine using an odd-backed card; a routine using a one-handed shuffle in which a selected card is found with an indifferent card that is stabbed into the pack as it is shuffled; and finally another card stabbing effect in which a prediction is written down and an odd-backed Joker is initialed and stabbed face down into a deck shuffled by the spectator. The card next to the initialed Joker matches the prediction.

The second disc teaches: another card stab in which an indifferent card is stabbed into the deck to find a lost selected card; three random cards are removed from a face-down pack by the magician then the spectator shuffles and removes three random cards from a different-colored pack of cards and all three match; a "magician fooler" demonstrating sleights; a mind-reading effect in which a thought-of card is revealed; a two-deck routine in which a simple process reveals matching cards similar to an Any Card at Any Number effect; a poker-themed routine demonstrating card control; and finally a bizarre routine using cards.

Card workers will delight in the quantity and quality of material presented on these DVDs; all of the routines presented here are very strong and straightforward. This is not for the beginning card worker; the sleights and moves are more suited for the intermediate-to-advanced card worker. Many of the sleights are only briefly covered here. I really like Roger's teaching style; you will feel like you are participating in a private session of learning some advanced card magic. Roger is a very good performer as well as a teacher of the material presented here. For \$30, this is a

good value for the money (for the intermediate and advanced card worker), and I highly recommend the set.

**6 BY SIX DVD**  
**By MICHAEL "Six" MULDOON**

Available from: [www.System6Magic.com](http://www.System6Magic.com)  
Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies  
Price \$30.00

**REVIEW BY DAN GARRETT**



In addition to being a fine magician, New York City's Michael "Six" Muldoon also does active humanitarian work with his conjuring skills for Magicians without Borders. On this DVD you will find a collection six card effects. If you like performing card magic, you should check out Six's offering.

The first effect was developed while in the hospital receiving a blood transfusion, hence the title *New Found Blood*. It's a sandwich effect that ends with the surprise revelation of a four of a kind. Michael teaches three variations of the routine, including a version done entirely in the hands. You'll also learn a couple of very nice card switches that are both invisible and easy to do. A small set-up is required, but Michael also gives a method for setting up on the fly if you prefer.

You can probably guess the effect (and possibly method) of *Two Ton Triumph*. It's a pleasing presentation. I like Six's variation in which the back of the selected card changes color at the end. The third offering is called *The Invisible Flush*. The effect of *Invisible Palm Aces* becoming a royal flush at the end plays quite well.

Fourth is a dealing trick with a payoff that is worth the dealing. If you use a set up, there is almost no skill involved. But with basic overhand shuffle controls (see *Royal Road to Card Magic*) you can do the slightly complicated stack right under their noses. It's called *Royal Tantalizer*, and if you set up right after performing *The Invisible Flush*, you can have a double miracle on your hands.

The penultimate routine has received the most buzz in the magic community over other effects on this disc. It is called *Fool Me Once*, and it uses a freely cut selection chosen under seemingly impossible conditions; inexplicably, you are still able to divine the card. Six uses this routine to fool magicians during late-night sessions. Needless to say, the laity doesn't have a chance. For years, I have been using almost the same idea to blow away some of the best minds in magic. I used an unpublished faro sandwich routine shared privately by David Solomon. Now, the secret is out there for you to use, either for great good or terrible evil. Try to stay away from the dark side.

Finally, *No Stopping Me* is a stop effect inspired by Asi Wind. It got one of the strongest reactions from the female spectator in the studio shoot. At the very least, all the effects require some basic skill with the cards. Anyone who enjoys performing card magic will probably have the skills needed.

Perhaps the fad of one-trick pony DVDs is fading, as discerning buyers of new magic see the value of multiple effects in their purchase. With *6 by Six*, the odds are greatly in your favor of finding one or more items that you will like and actually use.

**OSCAR MUNOZ LIVE TWO-DVD SET**  
**By OSCAR MUNOZ**

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies  
Price \$50.00

**REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD**



I have enjoyed Oscar Munoz's work since I saw him in person at Magi-Fest many years ago. He is a strong performer, and a busy worker, doing tons of school shows, club dates, parties, and corporate close-up. I believe this is the first time he has released a live show DVD. If you have not seen him work, it is well worth it to watch his show. On disc two (I'm not sure why it is labeled number two – watch it

first.) Munoz performs a forty-five-minute show at a family restaurant/club. He presents a short, efficient *Linking Rings* routine, his award-winning *Billiard Balls* routine, his version of the *Sand-Sational Rope Trick*, *Swallowing a Balloon*, and more. His witty banter is so smooth you are not sure what is scripted and what is adlibbed. He makes clear and effective use of timing, pauses, and facial expressions to the point of leaving his audience in stitches. This is truly a fine presentation to watch to give you an understanding of what audiences want to watch. Although most of the magic is amazing, his character, audience interaction, and comedy are what keep the attention of the crowd. You know he would be just as entertaining with a different set of tricks.

If you are looking for some hot new material to steal and present, you won't find it here. Most of his repertoire consists of classics. But he does teach his routines with those classics on disc one. (Again, oddly numbered – watch these explanations after you see the show.) His *Sand-Sational* rope routine pares the best and is not overly long. His *Professor's Nightmare* plays more like *Sympathetic Silks* and gets a strong reaction. His *Linking Ring* routine features three rings and a few simple on-off moves. That is, "simple" as in clear to the audience, not "simple" as in easy to do. He teaches a silent link and a spin unlink that will take you some time and a bit of a knack. I had the moves down after about fifteen minutes of practice, but I'm going to add a *lot* of rehearsal time before I perform these moves under show pressure. The moves are worth it because they add a beautiful "sell" to the premise of your being able to pass solid matter through solid.

Munoz's instructions on swallowing a long, fully-inflated 260-balloon are clear and concise. At first it seems like there isn't much to it, but you will want to really work out the kinks before you put that much latex that close to your windpipe. It's a clever trick that audiences love. Be sure to consider his entire routine. His acting when he finishes "swallowing" the entire balloon provides a much-needed emphasis – that the audience just saw an amazing magic trick, not a geek feat. You don't want kids to go home and try emulating putting half a long balloon down their throats.

Besides the wonderful comedy and routines, Munoz sits with Kozmo and discusses creating comedy, the business of show business, costuming, characterization, and working for many audiences. He comes across as a hard worker who is also likable and friendly. I thoroughly enjoyed this set. I'll probably never be able to master his billiard ball moves, but I caught quite a few decent ideas watching him work a crowd.

## F#@\*ING COINS DVD

By PHILIPPE BOUGARD AND CLEMENT KERSTENNE

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

### REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



This is a collection of provocative coin magic, and by provocative, I don't mean the mildly scatological word in the title that has apparently scandalized a certain segment of the magic community. What I mean is that this material will challenge you and make you think. You will either agree or disagree with the approaches taken by Philippe and Clement, and that's a good thing. This is magic created by two young men, with the youthful tastes and sensibilities that are reflected in the

title, and a soundtrack that features the word in the title repeated over and over. There are also scenes in which coin magic is done in order to impress pretty girls in a bar, and one in which a young lady emerges from a trunk, where she apparently lives. During the explanations, there is implied vomiting. Other scenes involve coin magic being done on an abandoned construction site, in the middle of a field, and other places where we usually see young people doing magic in magic videos. This might not be to everyone's liking. However, Philippe and Clement also bring fresh perspectives to some classic coin tricks and strategies, and for me, that excuses a bit of adolescent rudeness.

For instance, Bobo's *Modern Coin Magic* has entire chapters devoted to techniques based on clothing people were wearing in the 1950s. While you probably don't have much use for cuffing today, you might find yourself wearing a hoodie. If so, you should like Sweetstreet, a three-coin flurry that starts with the coins being produced from the strings hanging from the hood, and then continues using effects and techniques that make use of the particularities of this garment, including the oddly placed pockets. The ditches are well designed, and the routine is well constructed. Like several of the routines on these discs, this one ends with the production of a cigarette and lighter, or a cell phone. Three Fast is another routine designed to take advantage of the hoodie. In this case three complete vanishes are accomplished. Warning: in these and many routines here, there is sleeving involved.

The boys also update Al Schneider's seminal Matrix, using "improvised" items – in this case, a pack of gum, a Smartphone, a deck of cards, and a pack of cigarettes – as covers instead of the usual four playing cards. In addition to making the routine feel more organic (which is important to some), the use of these objects adds interesting visual elements. For instance, when the coin is covered by the phone, the image of a coin appears on the phone's screen. When it's time to vanish that coin, it is done by wiping the image off the screen. The cigarette pack covers the destination corner, and the coins arrive under, in, and under the cellophane wrapping of the pack. There are other secret advantages, and this routine also is nicely constructed and designed to take advantage of the particularities of these props.

Recently we've seen card tricks done with coins, with Joe Rindfleisch, Dan Harlan, and Juan Luis Rubiales all tackling the Ambitious Coin, and Michael Rubinstein, and now Philippe adapting Oil and Water. Here, you'll find a very commercial handling that's very deceptive, has a lot of magic happening in

the spectator's hands, and which is easy to do. There are some very nice subtleties used here that take their cues from moves with cards, and which should be useful for other effects. Later on, Philippe also offers a quick and funny version of Lyn Searles's Cannibal Cards, done with coins.

I have to mention Les Amants (The Lovers), in which the performer illustrates the nature of human attraction with two coins that at first seem magnetically drawn to each other (using a little-seen technique of mine, no less), and then seem to repel each other just as strongly. The ending is a bit predictable for magicians, but I suspect that this is a fun piece for lay audiences. Warning: the presentation requires that the performer be able to convincingly claim to have experienced genuine human interaction. If you've never had a serious relationship with a significant other, you might want to wait on this one. Or do the routine, but talk about something else.

Also worth your consideration is Travelo, which is a shelled Coins Across in which both sides of every coin are initialed by the spectator at the outset. I'm not sure this adds that much to the overall effect, but it's an interesting problem, a clever solution, and considering both will benefit any thinking coin enthusiast. And while we're talking about gaffs, \$ is a Copper/Silver/Brass routine with a surprise finish. I won't tell you what that is, because I want it to fool you, as it did me.

Special Travel is a very commercial handling of Gary Kurtz's Four Fisted routine in which four silver coins are produced one at a time. The spectator holds one in each hand, as does the performer. Suddenly, they all change to copper. There are other feature length routines that are worth your consideration, as well. They feature a Chinese coin that penetrates on and off a rubber band, a re-handling of Paul Harris's Twilight, and a fingertip production of three silver coin that change to copper, all at once and then singly. This resembles my Beijing Coins Across from *Palms of Steel 2: Fists of Fury*.

All of which is just disc one. The second disc is chock full of shorter bits, sometimes moves, or quick tricks, and one of which is an amazing visual change of a silver dollar as it's spinning on the tip of your thumb. This is the first thing that I saw Clement do at the very first European Coin Magic Symposium, and even just the flourish is worth learning. The change is excellent as well, of course, and you would be wise to learn both. There are other interesting bits on the second disc, but I don't have the space to mention them all here.

The credits are embarrassingly, even insultingly, brief and unhelpful. The explanations are all delivered silently, so it's impossible to tell what, if anything, Philippe and Clement have added to existing techniques. All credits are given in a separate section, hidden in the "bonus" area. There, the names of all the people the boys give "thanks" to scroll by, with no indication of what any of these people are being thanked for. If you find some technique or effect interesting, you have no way of continuing your research. Worse, the list that scrolls by is incomplete. Standard sleeving techniques by Derek Dingle are completely uncredited, for instance, as is a Coin under Watch routine, and while the Catapult is named in text that flashes on the screen during an explanation, there is no credit to Joaquin Navajas.

In short, if you're an adult who likes innovative coin magic, and you don't mind a bit of cussing, I think you'll find this set worth your time and money. If you're a serious student of the ideas that are propelling coin magic, you'll find these discs interesting, but not very helpful in your study. If you're one of the rare individuals who are actually creating those valuable ideas, you might find these discs insulting. If, however, you are not an adult, I

cannot recommend these discs. Not because of the language used, but because there are effects in which you are invited to literally play with fire.

### THE MIRAGE TRICK By DANI DAORTIZ

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$35.00

#### REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



Luis De Matos produces, Dani DaOrtiz is the talent, and assisting him are Richard Wiseman and Yanni Deutch. And the routine is straight from Dani's professional act. So, I'm interested. The effect Hofzinsler's Everywhere and Nowhere, but on steroids. I am going to explain the effect in a moment. But do yourself a favor and watch Dani's performance on YouTube so you can truly experience the impact that this routine has. I'll wait. Following is the column-required trick description.

Two cards are peeked at in the deck (we'll say the Jack of Clubs and King of Hearts). Three Aces are produced and tabled face down. One at a time each Ace changes into a Jack of Clubs. Then the entire deck changes to the Jack of Clubs. The second selection is named and the three cards that were the Aces, but are now the Jacks, change into the Kings of Hearts. Then the entire deck changes to the King. Then the mirage is over and the deck and the Aces revert to normal.

The effect runs about nine minutes, and if this isn't Dani's closer I would love to see the card trick that could follow it. The routine is extremely visual, and with the deck very cleanly changing three times, it's without a doubt one of the most amazing routines I have ever seen. That's the good news. The bad news is the routine is very difficult from a technical point of view. Passes, multiple card top changes, lapping, and more make this a demanding routine; it will test the chops of most performers. The included deck is gaffed to the hilt. It is a special deck that combines elements of Hofzinsler's Transformation Pack and Robert-Houdin's Protean Pack.

Most of the time, a gaffed deck is used to make things easier for the performer by eliminating sleight of hand (e.g. Invisible Deck). But in this case the gaffed deck's potential has been maximized by combining it with Dani's beautiful sleight of hand. As I watched the explanation, I was fascinated listening to Dani describe different points at which he decided to do something a particular way based upon the way he feels the spectator will think. Whether you can perform this routine or not, it is worthwhile to see Dani explaining the how and why of the choices he makes when constructing a routine.

The only quibbles I had were that at times the sound was not as loud and as clear as it could have been. Dani performs the effect over background music and this may not have been the best choice for this performer, whose first language is not English. I would have also liked some discussion of the way he handles lapping in the real world. In the video shoot, he performs for two seated spectators, with no other audience at a table that is not draped. Since the trend in close-up has been for the performer to stand, an alternative to lapping would have been nice. That being said, I

was able to come up with a good alternative to lapping and I think most performers who would be willing to tackle this routine will be able to do so as well.

The release of this routine is the crown jewel in the published works of a man who has quickly ascended to the throne as the King of Cards. As noted, the effect is difficult and long, but for those willing to put in the work, the reward will be a routine that few will be able to top. The deck of specially printed cards should inspire someone to come with other routines that may be easier to do, and I am already thinking along those lines. I will recommend this routine for anyone who aspires to the pinnacle of card magic and to the rest of us who will enjoy seeing a master perform and explain his thoughts on trick construction.

### THE MECHANIC PRO-TOOL KIT PROPS By MECHANIC INDUSTRIES

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$64.00

#### REVIEW BY CURTIS KAM



Here are the items you get in the Mechanic Pro-Tool Kit: one mechanic deck, one mechanic metal card guard, four grinder coins, and a black Sharpie. And that's just about all a reasonably resourceful performer, or a beginner with a limited repertoire, might need to perform an evening's worth of close-up magic. So it's a nice little kit. Frankly, the clip and the

Sharpie are just there for you to look cool while you're performing, so let's look at the deck and the coins first.

The Mechanic Deck: Everything in this set features an industrial, mechanical look, done up in a gunmetal gray motif. The cards are printed on good quality stock, with a snap and a finish that feels like a new deck of Bikes, but the stock feels a bit thinner. (The ads say it is Bee stock with a "magic finish".) The faces are traditional, with the colors subdued, in keeping with the gray palette. The Hearts and Diamonds are dark, mottled red. The Clubs and Spades are gray/black, not a crisp black. The face-down deck faros more easily from top to bottom, if that matters to you. The pack includes a blank card along with two Jokers, and an advert card that provides the very valuable link to the Mechanic Industries website; more on this later.

Before we go any further, if you're wondering what all the references to machinery have to do with magic or card flourishing, it goes like this: The traditional inside term for a guy who cheats at cards is a "mechanic," hence the Mechanic Deck, and the slogan, "Fixing Games Since 2012." Since 2012 was just last year, so that isn't much of a claim, but it's honest, which is a peculiar thing for a company making cheating apparatus to be.

Of course, the artwork is mainly on the backs, which are, no surprise, gray. They're also white-bordered, and show layers of interlocking gears. The neat thing is this: when you flip through the cards, as if the deck were a flip book (the way you would if you were checking for marks or performing Card-Toon), the gears appear to turn and move. There are two large gears where you'd find the circles around the angels on Bicycle Rider backs, and parts of other gears are visible in each corner. There is a border made of links, like a bicycle chain, going around the design. When the



cards are in their new deck order, the gears turn smoothly, and the chain appears to move smoothly around them – pretty darn neat.

But let's think about that for a minute. The gears move smoothly once the cards in order. That means the precise location of the images on the back of every card is directly tied to its location in the deck. That's pretty close to the definition of a marked deck, isn't it? And if you really could tell each card from its back design, then not only would you have a marked deck, you'd have a marked deck in which the marks are "explained." In other words, you'd have a deck of readers that could safely "go to the movies." But, is that the case? Well, the cards come with no directions, and the variations on the backs aren't obvious. The ad copy states, "Because of the different back designs, you can also identify the values of the cards at a glance, making this an incredibly affordable marked deck!" That's all the information that's available right now. However, if you go to [www.mechanicindustries.com](http://www.mechanicindustries.com) you'll find links to Facebook, YouTube, and other sites where there is an impressive amount of support being provided, including video tutorials of some really clever tricks you can do only with the Mechanic products (pulling the Grinder coin off the Joker was especially cool), and they promise to put up a video explaining how to use the marking system.

The Grinder Coins: These coins are apparently intended to compete with the Artifact coins made by Ellusionist. Like those, Grinders are supposed to be an affordable alternative to silver half-dollars and dollars. (Although at seven to nine bucks per, they're more expensive than clad Kennedy halves or Eisenhower dollars, at least in the US.) Grinders are not identifiable as coins used by any nation. They seem more like tokens – abstractions of the concept of a coin. Whether you prefer them to Artifacts or real coins is mostly a matter of taste. I can tell you that these coins are a pewter/gunmetal gray, but the ads say that they're "100% copper," speaking directly to those who were nervous about prolonged exposure to the unstated makeup of Artifacts. Grinders clink against each other sharply and loudly enough for click passes, but they do not ring like silver coins. The dollar-sized coins (the only ones I have had the opportunity to handle) are as thick as a newly minted Peace Dollar, which is pretty darn thick. The edges are sharply milled, making these coins easier to palm than worn coins. They are remarkably "soft," given how deeply engraved they are, which is to say they slide over each other with hardly a sound. The coins look pretty much the same on both sides, so there's no obvious heads or tails. Although Grinders are also available cast in bronze, or with a bronze finish, I haven't had the opportunity to handle one, so I can't comment on the clarity of the contrast.

Personally, I can't think of a reason to prefer the dull gray finish to the shine of a solid silver dollar. However, there are times when a cheaper coin would be better, for instance, on stage where the point is the production of a lot of coins, or in instances where you're likely to drop or lose coins. For those reasons, I do have one stunt in mind for which Grinders are the perfect choice: Ron MacMillan's Over the Head. If you're a stage coin manipulator, you might want to give these a look.

The Card Guard: This is a thin metal (the ads say stainless steel) card guard, silver/gray in color, featuring the Ace of Spades design and the Mechanic name and slogan. It does not have the gripping power of a proper Porper Clip, but it's lighter, easier to carry around, and the look matches the cards and coins. If you sit on it, you'll have to bend it back into shape. But if the whole gritty industrial look works for you, why not go all the way? By the way, tee shirts and other merchandise are available, too.

The Sharpie: Finally, the marker appears to be just an ordinary

Sharpie, but it does have the Mechanic Industries logo and website printed on it. I suppose it coordinates with the coins, cards, and guard, if people bother to read what's written on your marker. More important, the website information will come in handy when it's time to reorder. Let's face it: the deck will wear out before the coins will. And on the Facebook page, they promise videos of routines you can do with the coins and marker.

So, even if you usually work with real silver coins, the resourceful professional can find a use for the Grinder coins. Even I did. The deck is attractive, to my eye, and it handles well, despite the fact that it faros in the wrong direction. Plus, the deck provides a definite visual punch to the typical magic gesture of riffling the cards. If, for example, you riffle the deck to cause the ambitious card to rise to the top, the audience can actually see the machinery turning. It's like having a magic moment built into the deck, or a wand that's only there when you need it. If the value of that's not clear, see how they use this feature on the videos. As I said, the customer support is impressive, and I hope they continue to develop this line.

### THE (W)HOLE DECK TRICK\

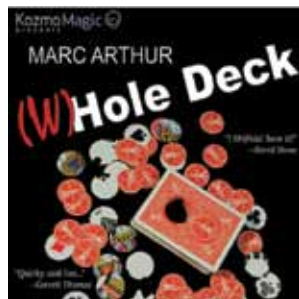
BY MARC ARTHUR

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

Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies

Price \$30.00

### REVIEW BY DANNY ARCHER



Marc Arthur is the creator and host for this DVD from Kozmo Magic. The picture, sound, and DVD navigation are first rate. Marc begins by welcoming you and introducing the hole/deck concept. The idea of having a hole in a playing card has a long history and Mark mentions several predecessors.

Here is the basic effect: A pack of cards is shown front and back and a spectator selects a card. A portable hole (a sticker with the back of a deck showing) is removed from the card box and placed onto the selection. The hole in the selection becomes real and then visibly jumps to the deck, where every card now has a hole in it except for the selection. For the climax, the box is opened and upended and the missing card holes pour from the box.

You are supplied with the special deck (available in red or blue) and the holes. The deck can be shown front and back via the pressure fan or you can spread the cards on a table and even do a spread turnover. Marc explains everything clearly and the camera work is excellent in capturing the important close-ups. The sleights needed (slip cut, double lift, twirl change) are, for the most part, standard. There is one odd move and one discrepancy that will need to be addressed, but nothing that can't be handled with a properly prepared presentation. If you want to include the circles-from-the-box ending, you will need to do a box switch. The trick will play without it, but it adds a nice touch of visual comedy at the end.

No mention is made of how Marc gets into the effect. Does he do a deck switch? When he is finished does he put this away and use another deck? Marc mentions that he performs at a restaurant. I would have liked to see a little more about the before and after, ideally in the restaurant with a live audience. If you are a hobbyist, this is a really cool effect to perform. For workers, it's a one-trick

deck (with a extra box if you do the holes ending), and that is something to be considered.

But wait, there's more! There are two bonus effects using the special deck. (CH)Angel is a trick in which you have a card selected from a blue deck (say the Queen of Clubs). Stuck to the box is a circle from a red deck cut from a Joker. You pass your hands in front of the card circle (ala Spellbound), and it changes into a blue-backed circle showing a Queen of Clubs. When the Queen of Clubs is removed from the deck, there is a circle of a Joker from a red deck that is then popped out showing an unusual transposition. This was a fun effect and the image of the Joker circle in the queen was quite arresting.

Hollow (W)Hole is an effect based on an Aldo Colombini trick. The deck and the case have a large hole in the middle, and a long loop of yellow ribbon runs through the hole. The ribbon is around the performer's neck and the deck hangs from the ribbon. The deck is uncased and a card is selected by dribbling the cards while the spectator says stop. The deck is re-cased and a balloon is inflated. Holding the deck and the balloon in the same hand, the balloon is popped and the performer is now holding the selected card. This is a great effect and not much changed from Aldo's original handling. This trick is fantastic; it will play great in either close-up or stand-up shows, and its inclusion makes me recommend this DVD wholeheartedly.

### MELTING POINT TRICK BY CASSHAN WALLACE

*Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies  
Price \$19.95*

#### REVIEW BY DAVID GOODSELL



Build a better mousetrap? How many ways are there to link and unlink rubber bands? Can you really improve on what has been developed so far? Take a look at Casshan Wallace performing his version on YouTube. A red rubber band is stretched between the fingers of both hands and a blue, unstretched rubber band is held by the thumb and forefinger of one hand just slightly in front of the stretched red band. That is exactly what it looks like. The setup is a near perfect illusion all by itself! Then

slowly, with just a simple twist of the blue band, it passes through the bottom strand of the stretched red band. After showing the linked bands in an apparently very fair manner, the blue band unlinks from the red. Superb!

If you are already skilled in rubber band work, you should be able to follow Wallace's instructions and master the effect in a day or two – perhaps less. If you do not do much, or any, rubber band magic, be patient, for it may take a lot longer to learn this effect. That is the great thing about DVD instructions, though; you can go through the complicated setup step by step until it becomes clear. Young Casshan Wallace has come up with a good one here, and, recognizing that the effect by itself is almost too good and too quick, he also teaches his approach to Crazy Man's Handcuffs and a nice rubber band through finger. Run through these with your spectators and you will have their attention, which is what you want, because Melting Point deserves close attention. Master

this and then let them “burn” you. They will be fooled badly. The DVD comes with a dozen rubber bands so you can get started right away.

### HUG DVD BY NEFESCH

*Available from: www.nefesch.com  
Distributed by Murphy's Magic Supplies  
Price \$50.00*

#### REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD



File this one under “Not for Everyone.” Nefesch, who has produced a couple of decent books on mentalism, offers this one-trick DVD that teaches you how to present a sort of arm-twisting illusion. It is similar to the one in which you place both hands palm down on the floor and twist one 360 degrees. Or perhaps closer to the one in which you

have everyone in the audience try to rotate their arms after they straighten their arms and interlock their fingers with their thumbs pointing to the floor. In Hug, you ask the spectators to copy you as you show them how to wrap your arms behind your back as if to hug yourself from behind. Then you bring your arms straight forward without untwisting them, a feat not possible by the spectators in their position.

The hour-long video starts with three almost identical performances, one close-up, one at a live stage show, and one apparently in his living room. He goes into great detail as to how to set up your audience, how to place your arms around you, how and when to accomplish the secret move (yes, there is a move), and some performance tips. It is taught well, but that does not mean you will learn it well. As you can imagine by visualizing the prospect of hugging yourself from behind, you have to have a pretty fair degree of flexibility in your shoulders, arms, and wrists to pull this off. The creator is quite thin, which also helps a lot. He insists that it can be done by people of normal weight or even heavy people, but offers no examples.

This type of stunt is a quirky and interactive feat that says to the audience, “I am a magician and you are not.” It has been used to great advantage by Copperfield on several tours, as, with a wink and a nod (and a bit of self-deprecation), he ingratiates himself to the audience. Much of the effect it has on the audience is because of the feat's placement in the show. He does not open with it or use it as a big closer, but carefully places it after a big illusion while the curtain is closed and he kibitzes with the audience in one. Nefesch suggests it as an opener, but it does not really work there, as is evidenced by the very audible amount of chatter and movement going on at his live show. Many in the club (or bar?) where he is performing are talking, milling about, and generally not participating. And since he has not started his “real” act, they do not know him. Insisting that people follow your directions and “do as you do” without first establishing your personality, gaining their trust, or connecting with them is risky.

I had a little trouble with his presentation, although if you want to perform Hug, you can certainly change your wording, patter, or story line to fit your personality. Nefesch tells a rather long anecdote about visiting with a friend who complains that Nefesch is using his arms and hands too much when he talks.

To accompany the story, Nefesch makes many broad and varied arm and hand gestures, as if to accentuate that he is indeed using a great deal of upper extremity movement. In other words, he positions himself as a bit eccentric and a drama junkie. Then he performs Hug. Then he reverts to a non-eccentric, non-dramatic persona for his regular magic act. I suggest you do not use his patter. Why set yourself up as a nitwit, just to show an illusion, and then revert to a different type of character?

The DVD also contains five similar feats, including one where your linked arms penetrate your knee and one where you apparently pull your hands from behind you through your neck. None of these are quite as strong as Hug. Performed by Nefesch, the visual illusion Hug provides is very quick, but startling. It looks great. For \$50, though, you ought to be assured of getting something that you can do, and not everyone will be able to physically accomplish this. It looks good on the creator, but, as I said, it may not be everyone's cup of tea.

**RE TRICK**  
**By CHRIS WEBB**

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

**REVIEW BY NORMAN BECK**



RE is a single trick DVD with a gimmick that allows you to do a Torn and Restored Card effect. You tear a card into four pieces and put it back together again, one piece at a time. You may have seen someone do this.

First things first: Mr. Webb, if I was to buy your DVD (and I would not), I would buy it to learn a magic trick, not to listen to music. The music playing is of

no value, other than to make it hard for me to hear the instructions, which might be a good thing. I don't much like gimmicks, and this particular gimmick would be a pain to make and a pain to carry. The DVD is thirty-eight minutes long. Neither the clean-up nor the get-ready look good, and you would have to make a new gimmick after just a few performances, and that would be a pain, too. Re: RE – give this trick a pass.

**CARNEY 2013 ONLINE VIDEO LESSONS**  
**By JOHN CARNEY**

*Available from: [www.carneymagic.com](http://www.carneymagic.com)*  
*Price \$90.00*

**REVIEW BY MICHAEL CLOSE**

At the end of June, a small group of magicians met in Toronto for the final 31 North gathering. Attending were a stellar line-up of performers and creators who performed and lectured for each other in a relaxed, informal situation.

John Carney attended and was one of the performers. He knocked it out of the park twice: once at a late-morning session for the group and again at a very nice cocktail party for a combined group of laymen and magicians. (During that second performance he displayed masterful skills in handling a less than cooperative helper.)

I've known John for almost forty years; he has established

himself as one of the finest conjurers of our time. He has won every award possible from the Magic Castle and is one of the very few magicians who have mastered stage, platform, and close-up magic. And through it all he has remained a *student* of magic – respecting the past, honoring those who have shared their knowledge with him, and constantly seeking to improve and perfect the routines he performs.

I assume that the name John Carney is familiar to all of you. His effect The Logical Bill Trick from *Carneycopia* appeared in the February 2013 issue of *M-U-M*. *Carneycopia* was written by Stephen Minch; it contains many of John's earlier creations. John's second big book, *The Book of Secrets*, appeared in 2002. In my review of that book in *MAGIC* magazine, I wrote, "John Carney is passionate about magic, and he wants you to be passionate about it, too. John was fortunate enough to be mentored by some of the greatest magicians who have ever lived. He has absorbed their influences and now shares that insight with you. John would also like you to consider taking the road less traveled, to present magic in a way that emphasizes the mystery rather than the cleverness or skillfulness of the performer." Both of these books should be in your library, and you should refer to them often.

John's latest project is *Carney 2013*, a series of online conjuring lessons. Twelve lessons are offered, with a new lesson available around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. These lessons are presented as pre-recorded, streaming videos; they come to the purchaser through the Revissit software platform, which imprints a "digital fingerprint ID" on each video to curb piracy. This software is available for Mac, PC, and iPad. I had no problem installing the Revissit software and it worked fine on my Windows 7 machine. Be aware, however, that you are not getting a DVD; you'll need to be hooked up to the Internet to watch the lessons.

So far, seven lessons have been released. They cover the Silent Mora Balls and Net routine, the Vanishing Birdcage, Eddie Fechter's 8 to 12, Four Gone (the production and vanish of four Aces), Time/Space Coin-tinum (a routine that combines elements of Spellbound with productions and vanishes using a purse frame), a lesson on fixing fundamentals, and a collection of impromptu routines.

Merely listing the contents of these lessons does not do justice to the depth of instruction that John provides. John discusses the history of each effect and the decisions he made in constructing his routines. He suggests sources for further study and explains all the handlings in detail. Regardless of where you are in your magic development, you will learn something new from these lessons.

The magic marketplace is overwhelmed with products that offer little or no substance; like a Kleenex tissue, they are to be used and disposed of in a short period of time, thus making way for the next "newest thing." With *Carney 2013*, John Carney offers *real* substance – a product that inspires, educates, and challenges. I have learned a lot from watching it, and I highly recommend it. ★

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

Bill Duncan  
P.O. Box 50562  
Bellevue, WA 98015-0562

# TREASURES FROM THE SALON DE MAGIE

BY KEN KLOSTERMAN



## ROBERT-HOUDIN CRYSTAL CASH BOX

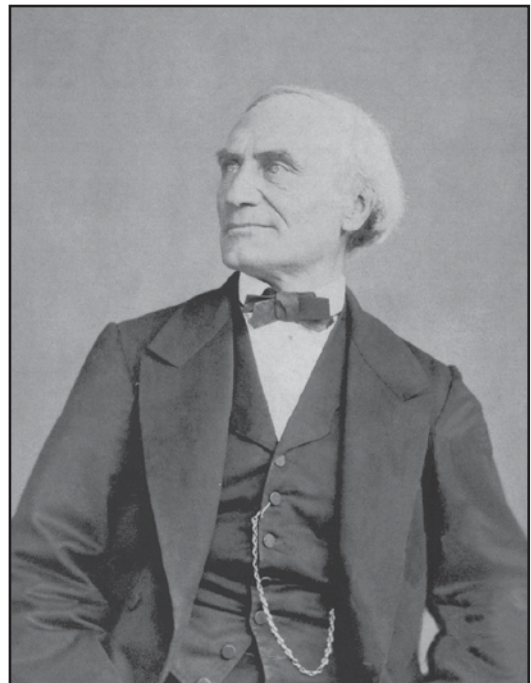


A certain amount of irony is attached to the story of Robert-Houdin's Crystal Cash Box, for after his death it was prized and performed by Houdin's most venomous critic – the man who had appropriated his name, Harry Houdini. Called The Transparent Cashbox or The Traveling Coins by Houdin, the trick is a truly remarkable example of not only an early secret use of electricity on the stage, but also of the reverence later magicians have had for the tricks of this amazingly inventive predecessor.

Robert-Houdin used this apparatus, a heavy glass box with gilded trimmings, to great effect in his *Soirées Fantastiques*, beginning in 1847. Borrowing several five-franc coins from his spectators, who marked them, he dropped them into a crystal vase on one side of the stage and caused them to invisibly arrive in a similar vase several feet away, each with a distinct jingle. His assistant then hung the elegant transparent box from thin silk cords attached to the ceiling, and set the box swinging. Houdin gestured with his wand, and the money was heard and seen to arrive in the box. The oval cover in the top was then opened and the marked coins were removed and returned to their lenders.

The box was seemingly free of all human influence because it was isolated well above the performer's table by the slender cords threaded through the rings at each end, and because it was made of

colorless glass. But, like much of the great magician's apparatus, cleverly designed mechanics were combined with electricity: A wire in one of the cords delivered the power that gave the spectators the marvelous effect of the coins' appearance inside the box. The small device with safety pins shown in the photograph was a concealed noisemaker used to simulate the sound of coins as they were apparently handled and arrived.



**Robert-Houdin**

Houdini presented the trick as part of his final American tour in 1925-1926. In fact, he proudly announced that the prop was the very Crystal Cash Box used by Robert-Houdin himself, and used Houdin's name in his billing of the trick. Even so, Houdini had gone to vast lengths to discredit Robert-Houdin's claims as a great inventor of magic tricks and to destroy his reputation as a magical innovator. In Houdini's book *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin*, he lambasted the famous French magician, discounting nearly every claim Houdin made to originality or inventiveness. Later historians established that Houdini was overwhelmingly wrong on almost every count.

Houdini acquired this prop in Europe. After his death the box was owned by Samuel Cox Hooker, Charles Larson, and John J. McManus. It came to the Salon de Magie from the defunct Circus Museum of Sarasota, Florida, in great need of repair. It was restored by magical craftsman Carl Williams. ★

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### S.A.M. PHOTO CONTEST



Congratulations to Linda Fieldman Robbins. Her S.A.M. gear photo was voted the grand prize winner at the S.A.M. national convention in Washington, D.C.

# INSIDE STRAIGHT

BY NORMAN BECK

## OTHER INTERESTS: NONE

*"Is life not a thousand times too short for us to bore ourselves?"*  
– Friedrich Nietzsche

To me, the following is the most important lesson in life: don't be boring. I am not talking about *your* magic. I am talking about *you*. In my travels, life has been good to me, but it has also been a little sad, because I've discovered that some of the best magic guys I know are very boring. The reason they are so boring is that their life is about fifty-two pieces of paper and four half dollars.

Let me tell you something; real people don't care about magic tricks. In some ways, as magicians we are like trained dogs; after you sit up, roll over, and play dead people are pretty much done with you. Just like a diamond, you need to have many facets; discovering and developing them are much more important than any double lift or pass.

There are plenty of magicians whom you look up to who are starving to death. A major reason is that they are boring. Let's acknowledge the elephant in room: most of us were socially inept at the time we got into magic. Many of us still are socially inept. I will not give any examples of magicians who are boring in person; my goal is to make you be interesting apart from your magic, but that is easier said than done.

I think that the best way to hide the fact that you are boring is to learn to ask good questions and then actually listen to what the person says. Then ask a follow-up question to the first one. I will tell you that if I discover what a person has a weakness for, I will figuratively own them. One big secret (and there are many) is to get a person to talk about his or her passion and you, Mr. Magician, *listen*.

I think that most magicians make the mistake of only reading magic books (that is, of course, if they read at all). I think that you should read the following every day: *The Wall Street Journal*, *US News & World Report*, your local paper, *Playboy*, *National Geographic*, *Wired*, and the *New Yorker* magazine. Not all of these are daily publications, but they all have articles that are relevant to the world. Katie Couric asked Sara Palin what newspapers and magazines she read, and her answer was unintelligible. Don't let that happen to you. Two books that you should put on the top of your must-read list are *Influence* by Robert Cialdini and *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie.

As you interact with people, it is very important never be manipulative. You must learn how and when to keep your mouth shut and listen, and when you should talk. I know four people in magic who are masters of the craft: Bill Herz, Mac King, Bill Malone, and the fourth whose name I won't put in print. The reason is that he might not like to be mentioned, and this way I won't step on his toes. Or perhaps by not mentioning a fourth name people will think that I don't know a fourth person.

To get you started, here are topics to avoid when you are striking up conversations with people you don't know: politics, religion, and sex. Topics that are safe are: food, local interests, music, the person's kids, and books (if they are a reader and you are a reader). I actually use food to size a person up. When I am visiting a new city, the type restaurant that a person likes tells me a great deal about him (and he never even knows that he has tipped his hand. Please note that just because a person likes or does not like a certain type of food proves nothing; but it is a good yardstick. It's just like in magic; let me see your double lift and I will have a good idea about your magic. ☆



# THE DEAN'S DIARY

BY GEORGE SCHINDLER

## TWO SCHINDLERS ARE BETTER THAN ONE



St. Thomas Synagogue

The Frenchman's Reef Hotel in St. Thomas was the venue for the banquet we played in March of 1983. The event celebrated the 150th anniversary of the rebuilding of the St. Thomas Synagogue on April 3, 1833. Fire destroyed three previous wooden buildings dating back to 1796 when a group of Sephardic Jewish traders from Philadelphia built the first one with help from other West Indies Jews. In 1832 it had been decided that the building needed to be made of stone and brick.

The president of the congregation, Monty Abrams, was a neighbor of magician Del Cartier and his wife Rhoda, who owned a condo on the island. It was Del who suggested a magic show as part of the celebration. Another PA 1 member, Ronnie Reckseit, who owned a motorcycle rental business for tourists on St. Thomas, was also booked as the emcee. The New York S.A.M. was well represented.

We arrived and were passed through customs easily, but the fiber case carrying our illusions and props was being held for inspection. One would think that the U.S. Virgin Islands was part of our country. It was Friday and we were told that we needed to wait for a broker to clear it Monday. Of course, the show was the next night. Del and Monty got busy calling every politician they knew.

Here is where fate played its trick. It seems that the guest speaker for the Friday night services was a famous American

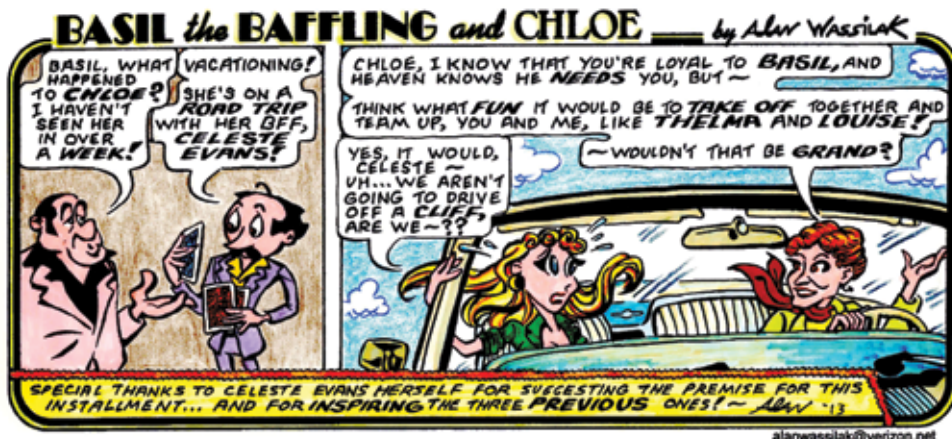


Inside the St. Thomas Synagogue

rabbi whose name was Alexander Schindler. He was president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and belonged to many other well known organizations of Jewry. He had arrived earlier that day. A call was made to Governor Luis who was told that Schindler had a problem with clearing a case at customs. It was true (it was just a different Schindler). The governor made a call and the crate was delivered to the hotel within two hours. After the Friday service I introduced myself to Rabbi Schindler, who said, "Hello," but not a word more. I guess he didn't want to be associated with a "magician."

Nina and I had been staying with the Cartiers. We had a great time. I found a small Magic Masters shop in the hotel, managed by Mike Abston. We watched a maid washing the veranda glass window with vodka. It seems that in an island economy it takes a long time to get supplies. The Windex was "finish" she told me. Vodka was cheaper there and does a better job!

We left for the airport a few days later with a cab driver who told me how to get there faster if you "moshyoufoot." I'm not sure what this means; you get to the accelerator and you just have to mash your foot? Getting our magic case back from the airport at home took more than a week, and I personally had to open it and repack it at the airport's facility. Luckily, I had carried the vodka home with my luggage. But a lesson was learned. Now, I always hand carry some basic props and close-up items. ☆



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