



MAGICURRENTS

SAN DIEGO RING 76

MARCH 2021

VOL. XXXVI #3

President's Message

For those of you who did not make the February meeting, I can only say that you missed an extraordinary event and possibly the highlight of our Ring during this Covid season. There were enough highlights for three meetings and the presentation of each of these events was smooth, well-timed, and worthy of the reputation that Ring 76 enjoys.

I would like to particularly thank Mark Booth who took on the unenviable task of assembling a tribute to Jeff Marcus, who passed away this January. He called for, and received, photos and video clips that spanned Jeff's personal and professional life, arranged them, timed them, set them to music, and then presented them to the Ring as a wonderful tribute. He did this in a remarkably short amount of time, and it was an In Memoriam worthy of the impact Jeff had on the Ring, the magic community, and his friends.



Following that, we had a Broken Wand ceremony which I had to present, as the person who has done this for the past

decade has been Jeff himself. It was as difficult to step into those shoes as you would imagine.

The rest of the evening you will find in other articles in this issue. We had a very good lecture, thanks to Greg

Ring 76 2021 Calendar

Mar 8 - Tricks I learned from IBM Linking Ring

*Opportunity for Members to Perform

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not be having physical meetings until further notice. Where possible, we will have virtual meetings on-line. Read this Newsletter and watch your e-mail for further details!

Wauson and our annual Close-up Contest all in one evening. It was handled with both style and technical experience and made the event, minus the solemn beginning, the highlight of the winter season. Once again I would like to draw your attention to Joe Mystic who has hosted our Ring meetings this year on ZOOM. I know this was a particularly challenging meeting to coordinate and Joe rose to the occasion.

As for the future, recent news is that the storm that has buffeted us for the last year is starting to lighten. We may be able to return to in-person meetings by the end of the year or perhaps the end of summer. The Board has been keeping in contact with the Clairmont Community center and when they get the state okay to reopen we will be holding our meetings there. Watch the newsletter and your inboxes for more information.

I hope to see you at the March Meeting,

— Richard Ustick

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HONEST SID GERHART RING 76
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER - JAMES THAYER, EDITOR@RING76.COM**



Coming Up !

March

Our next meeting on March 8 has a theme of “Something I’ve learned from the Linking Ring magazine.” Several people are in the queue to entertain us with their feats of legerdemain – and some just might actually be from the Linking Ring! The important thing, especially when our meetings are via Zoom, is for our members to perform, and it’s totally fine to think of the theme more as a suggestion. We don’t want to limit anyone to such an extent they decide not to perform since they don’t have a trick they’ve learned from the magazine. This is a performance night, with members voting for their favorite performer. The one with the most votes will win the coveted “entertainer of the month” award as well as a \$20 eGift card to Amazon.

April

The April 12 meeting will be a teach-in. This theme is always popular and this will be the second time we will have done this over Zoom. Several performers will each be demonstrating an effect and then teaching us how to do it. There’s always a good variety of magic with cards and coins or other objects.

May

Our stand-up contest will be the feature of our May meeting. It’s not too early – or late – to consider participating in this Ring 76 tradition. Your act may consist of effects which are all new to you, or magic you’ve been performing for several years. First, second and third place vote-getters will be awarded prizes and \$50, \$25 and \$15 cash awards, respectively. Send Greg an email at gw83@ring76.com if you’d like one of the performing slots.

— *Greg Wauson*

February Meeting

08Feb2021

In Cyberspace

On Zoom.

Secretary **Matthew King**. Meetings held every 2nd Monday, currently via Zoom.

This was our eleventh ring meeting held on Zoom. President **Richard Ustick** called the meeting to order at **7:07 p.m.** There were **29 members** online and **13 Guests**. **Richard** turned the meeting over to **Mark Booth**. **Mark** had put together and played a beautiful 10 minute tribute video for lifetime member **Jeff Marcus**, and he thanked all who sent in photos and videos. The video had photos and videos over **Jeff’s** 40+ year career. **Richard Ustick** completed the Broken Wand ceremony. **Jeff Marcus** was the Territorial VP since 2003, and a lifetime member of **Ring 76**.

Richard Ustick announced the theme for the March meeting will be “Effects from The Linking Ring”. He reminded members we have an election coming up, and that some great magic items donated to the club have ended up with **Matthew King**, and he will be providing details in the newsletter. **Peg Marcus** thanked the club for the tribute video and ceremony. **Richard** turned the meeting over to First VP (Entertainment) **Greg Wauson**.



Greg Wauson introduced comedy magician **Matt Fore**. **Matt** spoke about different performing situations, appropriate wording, combining sight gags in magic, structure, and ways to segue into the next effect. He showed various effects that work well for corporate events, despite their appearance.

Greg Wauson informed members of the close-up contest rules.



Mark Booth

The 1st contestant was **Mark Booth**. **Mark** selected **Laurie Pearson** as a volunteer. He made a prediction on his phone and set it aside, in full view. He had **Laurie** shuffle invisible cards and mentally select one. She wrote her selected card on a paper and showed it to the audience. **Mark** then immediately showed his phone screen and the prediction matched her thought of card.

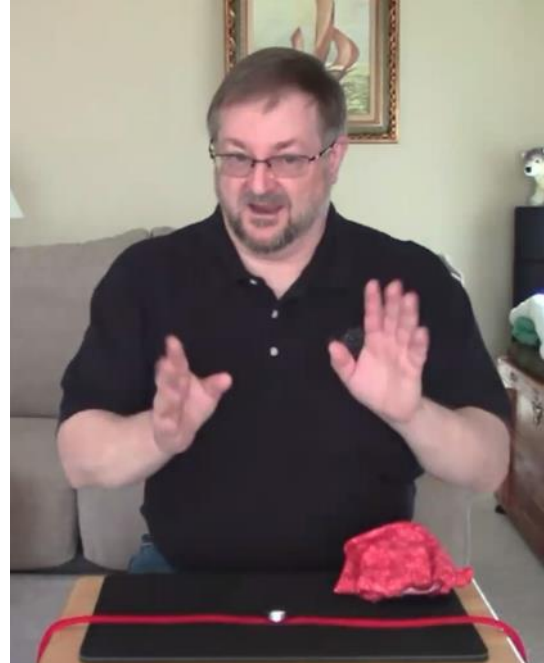
Next up was **Joe “Mystic” McGrievy**. He spread out a deck of cards showing them in new deck order, then he shuffled them thoroughly. However, when **Joe** spread them out again, they were back in new deck order. He grabbed another deck, shuffled them, made 4 piles, and then found the aces. He



Joe Mystic

also tied in an oil and water style routine, and made the aces magically jump between cards one at a time.

The next contestant was **Chris Lorenson**. He showed an effect with a ring, threaded on a string, and it turned into a giant ring. He then tied in another effect with a ring on a rope, and one where placed the ring under a handkerchief and it was put on the rope, with the ends still visible.



Chris Lorenson

Contestant **Ken Intriligator** then performed an effect where he continuously made coins appear and vanish into thin air. He placed a piece of toilet paper in a tube. Then he made the coins vanish and appear



Ken Intriligator

in the tube, but when he lifted the tube they were under the piece of toilet paper. Then he put a candle in bowl, lit it, and rubbed hand sanitizer on the money and said he could extract more money. It exploded in a flash and more coins appeared.

The next contestant was **Matthew King**. He selected **Vic Terrific** to assist him. He spread the cards around on the tabletop, started touching them, and **Vic** stopped him on a card. **Matthew**



Matthew King

put the card aside, showed the other possibilities, then turned over a jumbo card which was on the table, and it matched. He then used two Kings to pass a quarter through a glass, and he made the middle of the final King vanish and reappear.

The final contestant was **Nick Benevento**. **Nick** showed a cups and balls routine called “rub-a-dub-dub” written in the 1950’s, which was a fun patter and presentation. The balls jumped around the cups, with a surprise finale of golf balls appearing under each of the cups.



Nick Benevento

Greg Wauson reminded all of the members about the close-up contestants of the evening, and asked for members to vote by e-mail.

Richard Ustick reminded members of the theme for next month.

Meeting Adjourned 9:16 p.m.

— *Matthew King*



Elections

As the cold of winter recedes and the first robin of spring appears, so does the notice that elections for the Board of Ring 76 are coming soon. The Board of Directors manages Ring 76 and makes sure that your magic needs are met to the best of their ability. Ring 76 is one of the largest and most active Rings in the I.B.M. When we have hosted the national convention we have surprised officials with the resources we have been able to provide. Resources even larger Rings cannot deliver. That is how active our membership is.

The Board is very important and is chosen by you and is made up of members in good standing. It strives to be a reflection of the current membership and straddles the gulf between the traditions of Ring 76 and the new ideas that keep it alive and relevant. If you have enjoyed the events and comradery that Ring 76 provides then perhaps you should consider actively serving on the Board of Directors and shaping the Ring in the year to come. These are challenging times and we need members up to the challenge. Are you that member?

In the next few months, an election committee will be formed to oversee the event. The Board will present a slate of officers to that committee and any member in good standing can be on that slate. Your input, your visions, your ideas are important to the vitality of Ring 76, and now is the time for you to stand up and serve. Besides the Ring meetings, the Board meets, via ZOOM for the foreseeable future, once a month to manage and plan Ring business. It is not a large imposition on your time and it is important to the magic community.

If you have any questions about the positions on the Board or what is involved then contact me at Ring76ibm@yahoo.com.

— *Richard Ustick*

Matt Fore Lecture

“A beautiful stage and a room full of fresh victims. That’s when it all pays off! The comedy, the lines, the hilarious magic!” This was what Matt Fore, the lecturer at our February meeting, said his “Killing It Onstage” lecture would be all about. From what our members said after the lecture, I’d say he succeeded. Matt Fore is a humorist, writer, speaker and award-winning comedy magician who has served as the main stage performer for all types of audiences around the country for more than twenty-four years. He has performed for Carnival Cruise Lines, the Magic Castle and has appeared on several national TV shows. He is a lecturer among his peers in the areas of entertainment, sleight of hand magic and effective marketing.



Matt Fore

He started off this Zoom presentation by asking us to chat to him our favorite performing venue, to let him know what areas he should emphasize during the lecture. There didn’t appear to be a clear consensus, which is expected because our members have a broad spectrum of experience, from beginners who have never performed for an audience to full-time pro’s. So he had something for everybody.

Many people think a magician’s job is to fool people, but Matt doesn’t see it that way. The bottom line, he says, is to make the event planner look good. That’s a



useful goal, especially if you want repeat bookings. According to Matt, magicians get re-booked because the audience laughed and had a great time. He told us the real secret of a successful magic show is to load the cannon with tons of jokes and subtle lines. If you're just an OK performer, this is one way you can learn to do a GREAT show! This requires tons of gags and call-backs, where items they've seen earlier in the show appear again later. Coming up with genuinely funny lines takes time. He said a tall, geeky friend of his came up with the perfect opening line: "Is it tall and geeky in here or is it just me?" I thought the jokes he told us are funny but since so much of a joke's effectiveness is in the presentation, he should have included something about how to present them. Even if he had, however, it still seems lots of stage time performing the humorous material is needed to make it natural and become a comfortable part of the act.

He performed the four bean trick, which appears in the Tarbell course and which Tom Mullica popularized, where he appeared to put each of four beans into his eyes, nose and mouth. They then magically reappear. This is an effect which wouldn't be appropriate to do when people are eating, but it's a funny and baffling routine. He showed us how it works and offered to email us a presentation and explanation if we just send him our email address. I did and then he sent it to me



within a few hours. He also showed a fun rubber band trick and made the same offer to give it to us if we email him a request. Again, he came through when I asked for it.

Matt wants to raise the bar for the overall effectiveness of magicians' acts. This became evident when he shared his #1 pet peeve: magicians who want to pad their acts with filler material. Way too often, he says, magicians boast they can "milk ten minutes from this trick which should take five minutes." This is the wrong way to go. He said we should desire instead to cram a ten-minute trick into seven minutes.

A \$10 pearl necklace is made of plastic pearls threaded onto a string whose ends are tied together. If the string breaks, all the pearls are released and fall on the floor. A pearl necklace worth \$10,000 is made of real pearls, with a knot tied in the necklace after each pearl. In the same way, he taught us that a great act contains a segue between each magic effect. Those knots hold the show together.

At the end of the lecture he offered his comedy magic downloadable course at the usual price of \$69.95, but if you ordered it by the next day he included two of his instructional DVDs. At least three of us, including me, took him up on this offer. By the way, I just finished watching one of the two DVDs, "Six Minutes of Killer Comedy," which shows him presenting his rope routine and goes into detail in the mechanics and bits of business which make it top-notch comedy magic. In my opinion it's worth a majority of the cost of the entire course. The downloadable course also has a lot of good information, although it focuses mainly on how to add comedy to a magic act, rather than teaching tricks. I especially enjoyed his demonstration of how he presents about fifteen opening lines which he has used during his performances. He claims the opening line is the most important part of a magic show since it's during those first few seconds the audience decides if they like the performer immediately or not.

— Greg Wauson



Ring 76 Plex Server is a Terrific Resource!

Thanks to the vision, dedication and work of Librarian Gary Salisbury, Sergeant of Arms David Chiu, and former (and much-missed) member Josh Sherwin, Ring 76 now has its own online video library. The Ring 76 Plex Server is chockfull of outstanding videos to help you learn and hone your magic skills.

What is a Plex Server? Basically, it's a collection of videos that are hosted on a computer that runs software known as Plex. The Plex software was designed for this specific task, to allow individuals to place digital copies of their videos in a single location and access the videos remotely via either Plex apps or a computer browser. The Plex app is available for the majority of popular platforms, including iOS, Android, Roku, and Apple TV. Or, you can simply create a Plex account via your favorite computer browser.

David Chiu is planning to put together a short video that will provide a visual explanation on accessing the Ring 76 Plex Server. For those that don't wish to wait, you need to follow these steps:

1. Install the Plex app from the app store for your device - or - visit www.plex.tv via your computer browser.
2. Create your own Plex account (it's free) .
Editors Note: It's free to us the Web Player (and other non-mobile players), but unlocking the iOS or Android mobile players will require a PlexPass subscription.
3. Let David Chiu know that you've created a Plex account and you'd like access to the Ring 76 Plex Server.
4. David will add your personal Plex ID (account name) to "link" your account to the Ring 76 Plex Server.
5. The next time you open the Plex app (or log into your account at plex.tv and click "Launch"), you will have access to the Ring 76

Plex Server. The videos are currently in a gallery called "IBM Collection".



And, oh my, what a collection it is! There are currently over 1,100 videos covering just about every aspect of magic! Choosing "Library", the videos are sorted alphabetically by title (the default). Or, you can choose "Collections" which then sorts the videos by magician's name, type of magic (Card, Sponge, Coin, etc.), or by pertinent groupings (such as "Penguin Lectures"). There is also a search function built into Plex that allows you to narrow your search rather quickly. Want to learn more about Linking Ring magic? Typing "Linking Rings" into the search field quickly brings up the four videos in the collection dealing with the Linking Rings.

Important note: The videos are available for streaming only, not for download. So you must have an internet connection to watch the videos. Before you start watching these videos on your mobile device connected to a cellular network, be certain you have enough available data to avoid being charged for data overages.

Gary, David and Josh have worked hard to create a very valuable resource for Ring 76 members! (And that's important, this resource is available *only* to Ring 76 members.) And you don't even need to leave the house to take advantage of it! No discs or tapes to borrow (and return later). Once you're set up, it's instant access to hundreds of hours of magic videos

If you aren't already accessing the Ring 76 Plex Server, I encourage you to give it a whirl ASAP. And next time you see Gary, David or Josh, please give them a hearty handshake and a pat on the back for a job well-done!

— Mark Booth



Shavings From the Board

January 25, 2021

The meeting was held via Zoom and it was called to order at 7:07 pm. by First VP (Entertainment) **Greg Wauson**. President **Richard Ustick** was out due to work. Also in attendance were Second V.P. (membership) **James Thayer**, Treasurer **Joe “Mystic” McGrievy**, Sergeant-at-arms **Dave Chiu**, Secretary **Matthew King**, and Members-at-large **Mike Stilwell** and **Robert Vinson**. Also present were Social Media rep. **Mark Booth**, Ring 76 Librarian **Gary Salisbury**, and members **Sherry Luft** and **Gary Dismukes**.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The January board meeting minutes were discussed and approved.

REPORTS

Treasurer Report, Joe “Mystic”

McGrievy: **Joe** shared his list of expenses and our current status. We received 3 checks for magic sales totaling \$1,485. We sent a payment to magician **Matt Fore**, and our current balance is \$2,478.55. **Joe** indicated that the balances match in the bank with the records.

Sergeant-at-Arms Report, David

Chiu: **David** indicated we had 29 members and 13 guests at the February meeting. **David** offered to have **Matthew King** look at his google docs notes to review performances, etc.

Library Report and Discussion, Gary

Salisbury: **Gary** has received 6 donations to the library, and he indicated there are about a half-dozen items out on loan still. **Gary** asked for someone to write a newsletter article about using the Plex server. **Mark Booth** indicated he would. **Gary Dismukes** inquired as to navigating the Plex server. **Dave Chiu** suggested we show members how to use it at the next meeting. **Gary Salisbury** recommended creating an instructional video, **Mark Booth** volunteered to host the video, and **David Chiu** agreed to help create it.

First VP (Entertainment), Greg Wauson: **Greg** recapped the last meeting, lecture, and contest, and he thanked **Mark Booth** for creating the tribute video for **Jeff Marcus**.

Second VP (Membership), James Thayer: **James** indicated we remain at 53 members. **Gary Salisbury** asked about gaining more interest or members.

Robert Vinson recommended using business cards and posting magic videos on our website. **Mike Stilwell** suggested a contest for whoever recruits the most members. **David Chiu** mentioned starting a separate out-of-area membership for previous members who have moved. **Gary Salisbury** asked about having videos on our website, and **Robert Vinson** mentioned having our members post videos introducing themselves, performing, or teaching a trick. **Mike Stilwell** volunteered to be first up.

OLD BUSINESS

Greg Wauson reviewed the structure of last month’s meeting, which combined a tribute, comedy lecture, and close-up contest, and he indicated the contest winner will be announced in July. **James Thayer** recommended holding lectures and contests separately to be more flexible for a Q&A session.

Greg Wauson asked for input as to renaming the club. **Mark Booth** mentioned a new recognizable name, like **Jack White**, might gain more interest. **Gary Salisbury** mentioned that **Jack** did not want the club named after him. **Joe “Mystic” McGrievy** mentioned that **Jack** may have been referring to changing things while he was living, and not regarding in tribute to his legacy. **Gary** agreed to reach out to **Lynn Stedd** to ask her opinion.

NEW BUSINESS

Matthew King discussed the donated items, Ring 76 Online Store, and shared his list. He recommended using a private google drive link to update the list of items for sale and emailing it to members. **James Thayer** reminded the board to set up a PayPal account and recommended starting small with the operation. **Matthew King** and **Joe “Mystic” McGrievy** agreed to collaborate on obtaining a PayPal account. **Mike Stilwell** mentioned **Gary**



Salisbury wants to exchange magic items for the Ectometron machine. **James Thayer** recommended determining a fair-trade value. It was agreed that **Matthew King** and **Mike Stilwell** will review **Gary's** proposed magic items to determine the trade. The Board Members voted **Matthew King** as the Ring 76 Store Manager.

Greg Wauson mentioned the possibility of returning to in-person meetings by summer. **Mike Stilwell** indicated he would contact the senior center about allowing a meeting in June or July.

Greg Wauson asked as to our Roundtable for **Jeff Marcus**; **James Thayer** recommended separating it from our March meeting to allow more time to organize, and the board agreed.

Board Members decided the theme for the April meeting will be "Teach-A-Trick".

Greg Wauson indicated he would let President **Richard Ustick** manage the election business. **Robert Vinson** indicated he will be stepping down as member-at-large.

Mike Stilwell suggested performing a Virtual Ring 76 Magic Show on Zoom. The board agreed and **Matthew King** said he will organize and host it. **Mike Stilwell** and **Joe "Mystic" McGrievy** formed a committee to pick a few members to perform.

NEWSLETTER REQUIREMENTS

James Thayer indicated the deadline for newsletter articles is this weekend, and he outlined submissions he usually receives.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

— *Matthew King*

Newsletter challenge question

It's time again for your opportunity for fame and fortune by taking on the infamous newsletter challenge. If you spot the answer to our question and are the first to send it in an email to VP of

Entertainment, **Greg Wauson** (gw83@ring76.com), you will become the proud owner of a \$10 Amazon eGift card! Please put "Newsletter challenge" in the subject line of the email. All Ring 76 members are eligible, except board members and the previous month's winner.

Speaking of which, congratulations to our February winner, **Elissa Berver!**

Here's our March newsletter challenge question:

It's been said that a magician should make a particular person look good. Who is that person? The answer is somewhere in this newsletter.

— *Greg Wauson*

Ex Libris

By **Gary D. Salisbury**



Welcome to Ex Libris, my monthly newsletter article about the IBM Ring 76 Library in San Diego, CA.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE LIBRARY?

1-IBM Ring 76 Magical Arts Library:

This is a project to build a physical place to store your library. It would consist of shelving and work surfaces where members would have a place to research materials, view audio/video files, etc. It would also serve as an archive for legally owned videos now digitized on the PLEX server. There will even be a small portable refrigerator with beverages.

I have put this action item on hold pending another solution, a donation of lots of hardwood cherry cabinets that I might use instead. (Drum set not included.)

2-IBM Ring 76 Magic Media Server:

The IBM Ring 76 Magic Media Server project is one where we will have all the magic videos we legally own available to members for streaming via a PLEX media server. At last count, we had over 1,200



instructional and performance magic videos that will be available for viewing on the server. That is about 4TB online. The Magic Castle has a similar service for their members but theirs is 28TB online. Keep donating and we will beat them!

Current Project Status:

The IBM Ring 76 Magic Media Server is up and running so if you would like to try it out, send an email to: (librarian@ring76.com) with your real email address (not your ring email address) requesting access. I will send you a PLEX invitation, which you will need to accept, in order to gain access. People who have tried it say it is nothing less than FANTASTIC!

Extra:

You can view from your PC, or you can also Install the Plex App and view from your smart device. You can also do both. The smart device would be useful for listening to audio files on the Plex server. Note: this is a paid application.

3-Soliciting Library Donations:

I have been soliciting donations of books and videos from over 30 magic groups on Facebook and have received promises to send us some material. We might have to pay shipping in some cases but it would probably be beneficial for us to do so. I will evaluate this on a case by case basis.

If you have any magic DVDs or VHS tapes, why not consider donating them to the library? They will be digitized and put on the PLEX server so they would always be available to you any time plus be sharable to other club members. Sharing is good!

FEBRUARY 2021 DONATIONS

Thanks to the generosity of a few, we have a few more items that we can all share and funds to build with. Thanks again for your generosity and setting an example for others to (hopefully) follow.

Thank you, Gracias, Grazie, Merci, Danke, Arigato, 谢谢, 감사합니다, ciacchō!

Gary Salisbury donated two audio books:

ELLY GRIFFITHS-1-The Zig Zag Girl

ELLY GRIFFITHS-2-Smoke and Mirrors

Mark Booth donated several books.

Mike Stilwell donated several books.

Michael Berg will bring his donation (DVD & VHS videos, 2 boxes of card, packet, & other magic tricks) out next week.

Lynn Stedd of San Diego has some books and magazine of former member Jack White's to donate but I have to pick them up.

Terry Lunceford of San Diego has promised us a donation of an unknown quantity VHS tapes.

Richard Costantinou, SAM Southwest Regional Deputy, of San Diego donated 178 VHS magic tapes. (This was huge!)

Herb Briscoe of Maryland is sending us 141 books, 18 VHS tapes, and 12 DVDs. He is contemplating some props for our Ring 76 Magic Store too.

John Coppin of Tucson, AZ is driving over and delivering his book & video donation on 3/10.

Curtis Frye is sending is 16 VHS tapes to us.

Carlos Vara of Miami decided to pay his own postage and ship us his collection of German Magic magazines.

Mike Barrett is sending us some old copies of magazines.

Brad Burt of Sedona, AZ has promised us a donation but hasn't had the time to clear it out of his garage yet. (He asked if we would pay shipping.)

Brian from Minneapolis has a lot of 200 magic DVDs he is trying to sell off and has promised to send me what he has left after his sale.

DONATIONS WANTED

♣ We need more books and videos to build the library. Those have to come from donations because there are no funds earmarked for library acquisitions in the ring budget.



- ♣ We have not raised any additional funding for the library because physical meetings have been cancelled and we have gone to virtual meetings. That means no library sales table or 50/50 raffle.
- ♣ Currently we need money to buy Windows 10 Pro software and some incidentals for the Magic Video Streaming Server project. We also need remote access software for managing the server remotely. If you could help out by donating something for this? We need \$300 more but anything at all will help.
- ♣ Think about this: If you have purchased a downloaded video lecture (such as Penguin lectures) and no longer need it, I have a suggestion. Donate it to the library and we will put it on our PLEX server. That way you will always be able to view it any time along with the rest of the club. The club would then officially own the copy however, once it is transferred over to the library, you must delete all copies of it from your system. This is no different than donating a VHS or DVD except the media isn't physical, it is digital.

LOAN STATUS

Six items still currently on loan. If you have something checked out, it would be appreciated if you could drop it off or make arrangements to have it picked up.

MAGIC BOOK REVIEWS

Here are reviews of the two audio books I donated this month from Goodbooks. Both of these audio books are on the PLEX server so you can listen to them on your smart phone.

The Zig Zag Girl

(Stephens & Mephisto Mystery #1)

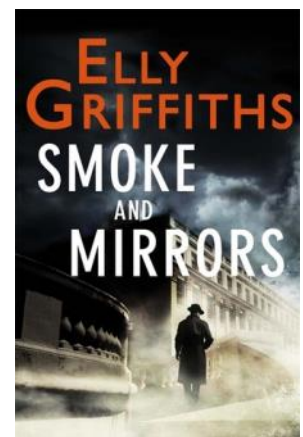
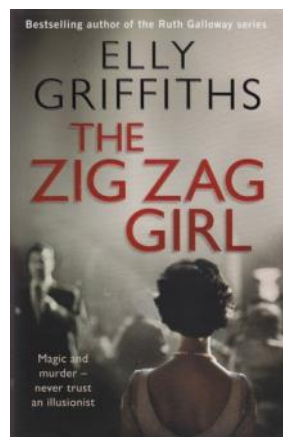
by Elly Griffiths

When the body of a girl is found, cut into three, Detective Inspector Edgar Stephens is reminded of a magic trick, the Zig Zag Girl.

The inventor of the trick, Max Mephisto, is an old friend of Edgar's. They served together in the war as part of a shadowy unit called the Magic Men.

Max is still on the circuit, touring seaside towns in the company of ventriloquists, sword-swallowers and dancing girls. Changing times mean that variety is not what it once was, yet Max is reluctant to leave this world to help Edgar investigate. But when the dead girl turns out to be known to him, Max changes his mind.

Another death, another magic trick: Edgar and Max become convinced that the answer to the murders lies in their army days. When Edgar receives a letter warning of another 'trick', the Wolf Trap, he knows that they are all in danger.



Smoke and Mirrors

(Stephens & Mephisto Mystery #2)

by Elly Griffiths

Brighton, winter 1951:

Pantomime season is in full swing on the pier with Max Mephisto starring in Aladdin, but Max's headlines have been stolen by the disappearance of two local children. When they are found dead in the snow, surrounded by sweets, it's not long before the press nickname them 'Hansel and Gretel'.

DI Edgar Stephens has plenty of leads to investigate. The girl, Annie, used to write gruesome plays based on the Grimms' fairy tales. Does the clue lie in Annie's unfinished – and rather disturbing – last



script? Or might it lie with the eccentric theatricals who have assembled for the pantomime?

For Stan (aka the Great Diablo), who’s also appearing in Aladdin, the case raises more personal memories. Back before the Great War, he witnessed the murder of a young girl while he was starring in another show, an event which has eerie parallels to the current case.

Once again Edgar enlists Max’s help in penetrating the shadowy theatrical world that seems to hold the key. But with both distracted by their own personal problems, neither can afford to miss a trick. For Annie and her friend, time is running out.

MAGIC BOOK & VIDEO REVIEWS WANTED

If you have watched a magic video or read a magic book (good or bad), please drop me an email telling me what you thought of it so I can include your comments in the next issue of Ex Libris. (librarian@ring76.com)

LIBRARY CHECK OUT PROCEDURE

Members may contact me 7x24 either by e-mail at librarian@ring76.com or by cell phone (voice or text) at 619-569-6035 to let me know what you would like to check out. (If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, there may have been a technical problem so call me.) I will make sure the item(s) get to the next monthly meeting or you can pick it up at my home in Blossom Valley.

There is a limit of 4 items per month. You will need to sign the library card attached to the item along with your phone number. We ask that you return the items to the library on or before the monthly meeting for the following month (for example: If you check out a book at the July meeting, it should be returned on or before the August meeting). If need be, you can keep the book or video again if nobody else has requested it but you must sign for it again.

Remember, our objective is to build the best magic reference library in the entire IBM organization

world-wide_but we need your help to do that. Please return over-due books & videos and donate regularly to your library.

Have a magical month my friends and we will see you again next month. In the meantime, email me with your thoughts about the library. I would love to hear from you.

— Gary Salisbury



Have magic to sell, stage equipment to rent? Looking for something to buy or rent? Need a ride or have room for a passenger to an out of town event such as the Magic Castle?

Have a special skill or service another member might use? Need a temporary assistant?

Advertise it at no cost to Ring 76 members in MagiCurrents



Don’t forget that Ring 76 has a private area just for members called [Arcanum](#). There you can find contact information for other Ring 76 members and numerous magical documents are available for download. Contact [James Thayer](#) for instructions on how to log in for the first time.



Ring 76 is still looking for a new editor for MagiCurrents. It’s a great opportunity to put your stamp on this organization. If interested, contact [James Thayer](#).

