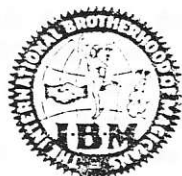
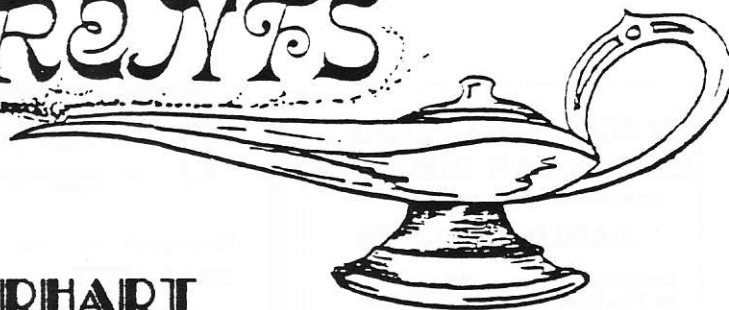


MAGICURRENTS



HONEST SID GIERHART
RING 76, SAN DIEGO, CA

DECEMBER 1988

MERRY CHRISTMAS

- and HAPPY NEW YEAR from the RING 76 Board of Directors and the *MAGICURRENTS* Staff - and being the man of few words that I am, I add my own personal Xmas Greeting: HO!

Eighty five members and still growing; two new members and one renewal at the November meeting, and one more renewal subsequent - WELCOME back to Al (*BUMBO The Clown*) PEARSON and Robin (*ACE MASTERSON*) FREELAND.

Little late this month, due to a frantic Holiday schedule and a nasty flu bug; but we're rolling again and hope that this month's mailing is not slowed down too much by the XMAS mail. Reservations for the XMAS Dinner/Meeting on the Nineteenth at the American Legion have been trickling in slowly; too slowly as a matter of fact, so the Board undertook a telephone campaign to remind everyone to get the checks in the mail promptly, and established a new deadline of Monday, the twelfth. So -- you should have been called by now and, if you haven't made reservations by now you're too late. Due to the American Legion Hall rules and regulations, we cannot accept dinner payment at the door; so you had to have sent it to Ed RAYMOND, our trusty treasurer. Hope you made the deadline, or you will have missed a great XMAS Roast Beef dinner catered by Fred and Ursula ROHRER, and a special XMAS Show by Jack EVANS.

Great Magic Auction up in the North County on December Sixth. *THE MAGICIAN'S GUILD OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA* held their third annual auction, and it was one heck of a seller's market. Items sold like crazy, and bidding was fast and furious. Paul BARTON did a magnificent job as the Head Auctioneer, assisted by Ken AYERS, and just about everything moved as fast as it was offered. Major sellers were Frank HERMAN, Jack MARKLEY, yours truly, Jan EAST-

MAN, Brian TEMPLETON and V. Robert ALLEN. Before the auction, President Jack EVANS announced future plans to invite IBM RING 76 to their regular January meeting on the third for a special show for US by their membership, and proposed a tentative idea to have both groups get together on a Sunday in April for a combined MAGIC POT-LUCK picnic. Great idea, Jack. How about April Ninth??

Reservations for the sixty first IBM

(Continued on Page 2)



Prez's Mezzage

Take a look at your name on the enclosed roster. Now. Please. See the number in brackets after your name? That's what's known as your "Official Performer's Number".

This will only be used if volunteer entertainers don't fill the entertainment needs for the evening.

It works like this: There is a tag with your number (and tags with everybody else's, too) in the drawing box. If we need, for an example, four entertainers, tags will be drawn until four magicians are found from those present at the meeting. These four will be asked to join in the entertainment for the evening.

Now for the un-scary part. If you are called upon, you can do anything you want. It can be your favorite trick, routine, something new you're working on, review a magic tape you've just viewed or listened to, talk about a book or article, or anything else that's magic-related. Easy, right?

Happy Holidays to you and yours.

**HONEST SID GERHART
RING 76, SAN DIEGO, CA**

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MAGICURRENTS

Editor	J.P. Jackson
Publisher	Frank Syren

LEAD STORY(Continued from Page 1)

Convention in July are now over eight hundred. So, don't wait any longer - get your check in now! We will add a convention application to next month's *MAGICURRENTS*, just in case you didn't get one yet from **Brad BURT** or me.

This month you are getting your **RING 76** Membership roster as promised. It's as current as we can get it, but we need your help to keep it accurate. Please take a minute to check your entry for accuracy, and let me know any necessary corrections. I know we need new phone numbers for **La Vern GRAVES** and **Stuart ZOLA-MORGAN**.

This issue also contains those famous "Performer's Numbers" you've heard so much about - **REMEMBER??** It's a three digit number starting with a "zero" right after your Zip Code. For example **Jim RILEY** is "001", and **George EDWARDS** is "002", a concession to their longevity.

All others have been randomly assigned, and should be committed to memory 'cause we will start using them after the first of the year.

And, for which, I wish you all a Healthy and Happy 1989!

NOVEMBER MEETING

---what you missed

November was our first annual ever **SWAP MEET**, and proved successful enough to make it a continuing event. Forty two members and eleven guests were present for a busy night of swapping. Sellers included **J.P. JACKSON**, with treasures from his collection; **Brad BURT**, with great discounts from his Magic Shop; "**SKIPPER FRANK**" **HERMAN**, with some good bargains from his shop in Oceanside; **Jack MARKLY**, with assorted goodies, including some cute, magic, magnetic "Fridge Door" stick-up pins; **Dick BUSH**, **Jan EASTMAN** and **Bob INGALLS**; all with some good used props.

Formal meeting started with a short business session which reminded all of our annual **XMAS Dinner/Meeting** on the nineteenth (a full catered affair), and the Xmas show for the American Legion folks on the twenty third. Brief plans for a paid lecturer in the spring were discussed, and some ideas for TV publicity were noted for future Board action --- and then it was "**BACKWARD TRICK**" night. Eight performers came forward with hilarious versions of standard tricks done in reverse, and the results were great. **Joe MYSTIC** led off with his back to the audience doing a very nice paper tear, which no one could see; then turned around with the resulting Santa Hat, and proceeded to turn it into two pieces of tissue.

Brad BURT came up dragging about fifty feet of paper coil, stuffed it all in his mouth with some extremely unintelligible patter, chewed it all up, and produced a neatly rolled mouth coil. **Jack EVANS** bounced on waving a thirty six inch silk (Rice, no less) and a bunch of feather flowers - vanished the silk, and exited stuffing the flowers up his sleeve. His standard opening in

reverse. **Bob INGALS** did a nice "**ROPE AND RESTORED CUT**"; which looked just like it sounds, and left the stage with two pieces of rope and one lone knot. **Loch CRANE** did a reverse version of **Bob HUMMER**'s "**WHIRLING CARD**" which looked the same forward or backward until the gimmick caught on his ear. **Ken AYERS** came on, complete with backward patter, complete down to each syllable (sounded like an old 78 record at 33 RPM) while he executed a backward card production.

Jack MARKLEY gave us a funny version of his famous "**PLUMBERS HELPER**" card location in reverse, using the trusty plunger for a "force" rather than the usual revelation; even then the thing lost suction - but looked good. **Jessie JUDGE** closed out the **BACKWARD TRICK** artists with a color changing something; but I'm still not sure if he did it frontwards, or backwards, or both.

After a short break the tables were arranged and the swapping commenced. Everybody went home with at least one bargain, and it looked like we succeeded in clearing out everyone's junk so that our fantastic February Auction will be reserved for prime items only.

**MAGIC
WANTED**

Rich ROBERTSON is looking for two decks of **FOX LAKE** alphabet cards, one of them the standard fifty two double alphabet deck and the other one all "Y"s. Call him at 291-7424

Frank SYREN is looking for a practical method of levitating a small Persian rug. His is two feet long by one foot wide with fringe at each end. It weighs over a pound. 563-9684

BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors met on December FIFth with **Dick DALE**, **J.P.JACKSON**, **Mark DIMENSTAIN**, **Ed FORSYTHE**, **Harry HARTMAN**, **Ed RAYMOND**, and **Ruth PEARSON** in attendance. Final selection of **Fred and Ursula ROHRER** as the caterers for our XMAS dinner on the nineteenth was the first order of business. Bids, Menus, and Services offered from three sources were compared in detail. The Board was unanimous in choosing the **ROHRER'S** bid as the best package for the price.

The subject of Magic Lecturers and fees was discussed. The Board agreed that regular meeting dates would not be changed to accomodate lecturer's schedules. **Paul GREEN's** was chosen as our paid lecturer for the remainder of the 88/89 year since **Ron LONDON** and **George SANDS** are not available on a regular meeting date. Due to the ever-increasing size of **RING 76**, and the diversity of the membership the Board concurred in the decision that there would be no gift exchange at this year's XMAS dinner.

Ed FORSYTHE and **Ruth PEARSON** volunteered to serve as an ad-hoc committee in exploring the purchase of **IBM RING 76** name tags for the membership. Based on their findings and prices the Board may act on a proposal to purchase a name tag for each member on a one-time basis.

The on-going discussion regarding the selection of a Member-of-the Year and a possible Magician-of-the-Year based on a structured point system proceeded with no resolution. Addi-

tional Pro's and Con's were discussed, and the idea of conducting a multi-phase competition for Magician-of-the-Year was considered. This issue will be continued at the next Board Meeting on January Second at **Ed RAYMOND'S** home.

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DECEMBER MEETING

---what's coming

The Xmas Dinner and Show on the nineteenth is also our regular meeting for December. Hope you're planning to attend for an excellent Roast Beef Dinner with all the trimmings, fully catered by **Fred and Ursula ROHRER**, and a spectacular, special, magic performance by good friend, **Jack EVANS**, tailored especially for our Dinner entertainment. The dinner and show both will take place in the main part of The American Legion Hall - *not* our usual meeting room. Come in the front door and you'll walk right into the main hall with the big stage. Social hour starts at six thirty P.M. with a No-Host bar and Ursula's incredible Hors D'Oeuvres. We plan to sit down to our buffet dinner at about seven thirty P.M. followed by **Jack EVANS** at about nine P.M.

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SLEIGHTLY NEWS 'ROUND TOWN

☆ **FASHION VALLEY** announces its Xmas Shopping/Entertainment Schedule with magician **Terry GOD-**

FREY appearing on Saturday and Sunday, December seventeenth and eighteenth from one to four P.M. and again in the afternoons of December twentieth, twenty second, and twenty fourth.

☆ According to **Stan ALLEN's "IN-SIDE MAGIC"**, **Dan WITKOWSKI** and Company will again produce the Half-Time Show at this year's **SUPER BOWL** on January twenty second. It's called "**SORCERY SPECTACULAR**" and will be a twelve minute "production show" with magic, including a card trick involving all 75,000 spectators. Hope us TV watchers get to see something besides commercials.

☆ **Loch CRANE** has donated several shows for the "Homeless and Less Fortunate" this holiday season. He will be appearing at eight P.M. on December Twenty Third, Twenty Fourth and Twenty Fifth at **GOLDEN HALL** for the **MAYOR'S HOMELESS SHELTER**. This is his second year as a volunteer for this project. Nice going, **Loch!**

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FUTURE EVENTS

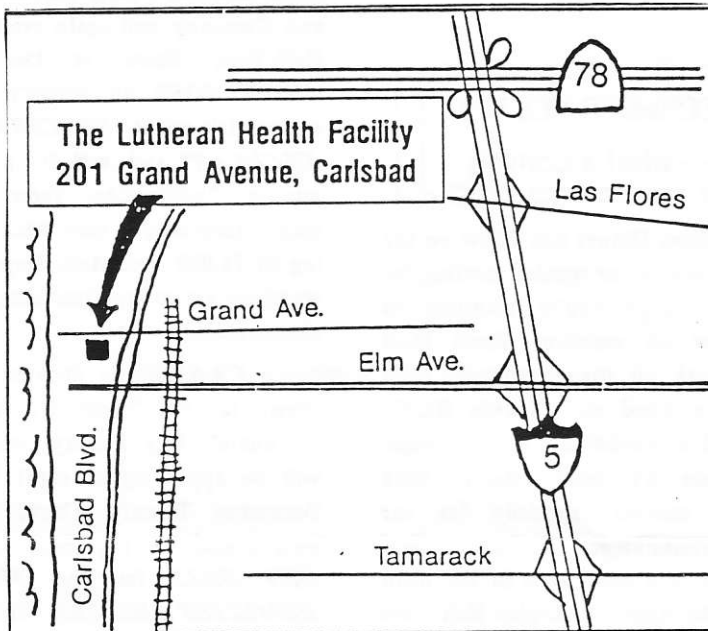
- **THE MAGIC GUILD OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA** will have their regular "**MEMBERS MAGIC NITE**" at their regular meeting on January Third, AND - the entire membership of **RING 76** has been invited to this annual event as special guests for the evening. This fun group meets at Seven P.M. in the *Lutheran Health Facility* at 201 Grand Avenue in Carlsbad, CA. (Southeast corner of Carlsbad Boulevard and Grand Avenue.) Please use street parking

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FUTURE EVENTS

(continued from page 3)

only - the lot in front of the meeting room is totally reserved for tenants of the Health Facility. (See map inset.)



- The February meeting on the Twentieth will be our **ANNUAL AUCTION NITE**. Rules for Sellers and Buyers will be announced in a future **MAGICURRENTS**. Meanwhile start dusting off those unused props and gimmicks, and look for the **DIRECTIONS**. One of the

basic rules for a good auction is that all items must be complete with directions, and packaged individually; or carefully annotated as to what's missing. Call **Mike STILLWELL** if you plan to be a Seller, and get on his list.

start a four month run at a fancy, brand new restaurant called **PARK PLACE**, also in Bullhead City.

- **Mark Chase**, our friend from Lafayette, Indiana, who visited us at the October Meeting, checked in by phone the other night to report that he is booked solid with shows through January, but is still planning to relocate out here in the summer.
- **Stan ALLEN** reports that a new Magic/Comedy Club called "**CRAZY JS**" will open in Pasadena in Mid-February, complete with Magic Bar, Magic Poster Decor and a full stage show capability.

J.P. Jackson

J.P. JACKSON
TEL. 569-0096

- Ex-President **Mark DIMENSTAIN** is having his annual "**Magic Pot-Luck**" on New Year's Day, Sunday, January First. He has kindly invited **RING 76** members to attend, and describes his party as a fun, magic get together for Magicians and Laymen alike. Call Mark at 287-3706 for directions and further details on what to bring.

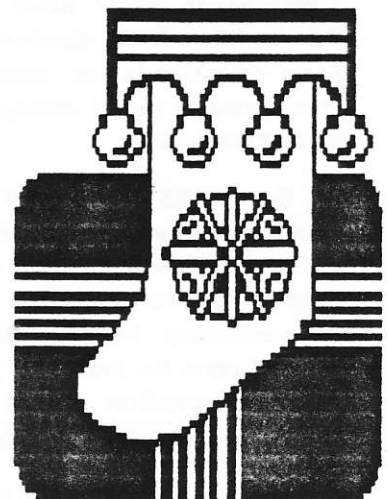


CROSS TALK

- Our January meeting on the sixteenth will feature a lecture by **MAGIC CASTLE** magician, **Paul GREEN**. Paul is one of the busiest performers in the LA area, and a regular at the **MAGIC CASTLE**. His lecture will be our one paid Magic Lecture for the remainder of the year and is free to members of **RING 76** - more details in the January **MAGICURRENTS**.

- Nice letter recently from **Nick BROWN** way up **LOS OBOS, CA** way, letting me know that our Ring Reports in the "**LINKING RING**" are being read by folk other than just Ring 76 members. Nick was an active member and officer in the late seventies, and served as president in 79-80. He sent his personal greetings to old friends: **Jim RILEY**, **George EDWARDS**, and anyone else who remembers him. He may even be able to join us for the **XMAS Dinner/Meeting** on the Nineteenth. Thanks, Nick. Those kinds of letters feel good!

- **Jim BEAMON** has finished up three weeks at the **RAMADA INN** in Bullhead City, AZ, and will soon



Personality of the Month



Story by FRANK S. SYREN

Although I have been acquainted with Mike Stilwell for about eight years I had never really gotten to know him. In fact, I felt there was a brittle, aloof quality about him that kept me at a distance. I was mistaken.

Perhaps it was the wild look in his eyes; or perhaps it was the years he spent as a magic bartender, handling drunken customers, that made him seem slightly sardonic. As I said, whatever I thought it was, I was wrong.

In extended conversation Mike comes through as a warm, compassionate man who loves children, his wife, and magic - not necessarily in that order. His entire life is devoted to magic, not to mention his entire livelihood. He is fond of saying, "I'm one of the fortunate few who does not work to live but, rather, lives to do the work he loves."

Mike was born and spent most of his youth in the sleepy colonial town of Annapolis, Maryland. Like most of the rest of us, his love for magic developed young. A magician came to his home to entertain at his ninth birthday party. Naturally the magician didn't show him how the tricks were done, so Mike set out to

learn for himself. At the public library he found a book titled "Cyclopedia Of Magic" by Henry Hay. This book became his bible. To this day he keeps a well-thumbed copy in his office with the word BIBLE written on it in large block letters.

Unfortunately, he knew no one in Annapolis who could guide him in his magical studies. The nearest magic shop was in Washington, D.C. As a result, for many years there were some strange blind spots in Mike's magical knowledge. One incident particularly illustrates this.

On his twelfth birthday his father gave him twenty dollars to spend in any way he wished. The boy had his heart set on the *Chinese Linking Rings*. He and his father went to *AL'S MAGIC SHOP* in Washington where they found that a set of rings cost nineteen dollars. Then Al Cohen, the proprietor, offered them a bargain. He had a box of used magic which contained at least twenty tricks, including a smaller set of rings, plus a hollow egg, an egg bag, a change bag and, in Mike's own words, "a bunch of ends of thumbs, some metal, some rubber, one with a wick at the end, one with a bit of lead, one with a little scrap

of cloth stuck by one corner inside of it. I had no idea what any of this stuff was for, but I was sure it was a great value since all he was asking was twenty dollars for the lot. I went for it."

At about this time the magician who had entertained at his ninth birthday gave his father a tuxedo he had had as a boy. This was a *magic* tuxedo. It had all the secret pockets - in the sleeves, in the lapels, in the tails of the jacket - all over! Of course, Mike didn't know how to use them, but it was nice to have them incidently, the magician's name was *William Smith Jr.* and he worked under the name of *MAR. MAGIC*. Mike would like to thank him for introducing him to our art, but has lost all touch with him; so if anyone knows anything about Smith, Mike would love to hear it. Also, at about this time, Mike gave his first show for profit. He sold tickets and presented it in his basement. The program included the *MILK PITCHER*, *FOO CAN*, *CHINESE STICKS*, *CUT & RESTORED ROPE* and a zombie called the *MIRACLE BALL*. Four years later he finally got to visit a magic club in D.C. and some one did the lit cigarette into the handkerchief; so badly, that he flashed the thumb tip. When Mike got home he examined his tips and, sure enough, one of them had burnt cigarette ash in it. His embarrassment was acute. Ah, Innocence!

After graduating from high school, where he played defensive end on the football team and center on the basketball team, Mike came to San Diego. The plan was to go from a small town to a big city and be discovered as a magician. The

(Continued on Page 6)

trouble was that five thousand other boys had the same idea. He had wanted to work on cruise ships, but found he was too young for that so, after about a year of struggle, he joined the navy where he remained for seven and a half years. The last four years of that service were spent back in San Diego where two important things happened.

In June of 1977, *while he was still in the Navy*, Mike and J. C. Wagner opened a bar called **THE MAGIC LOUNGE**. It was located at 4619 University Avenue and continued to flourish until 1980 when the business lost its lease. All the bartenders were magicians, and on weekends there were stage acts. There was also a back room where magicians could do magic for tips. The place was extremely popular, and whenever a magical celebrity was in town he was sure to turn up at the **MAGIC LOUNGE**. Among many others were Slydini and Ricky Jay.

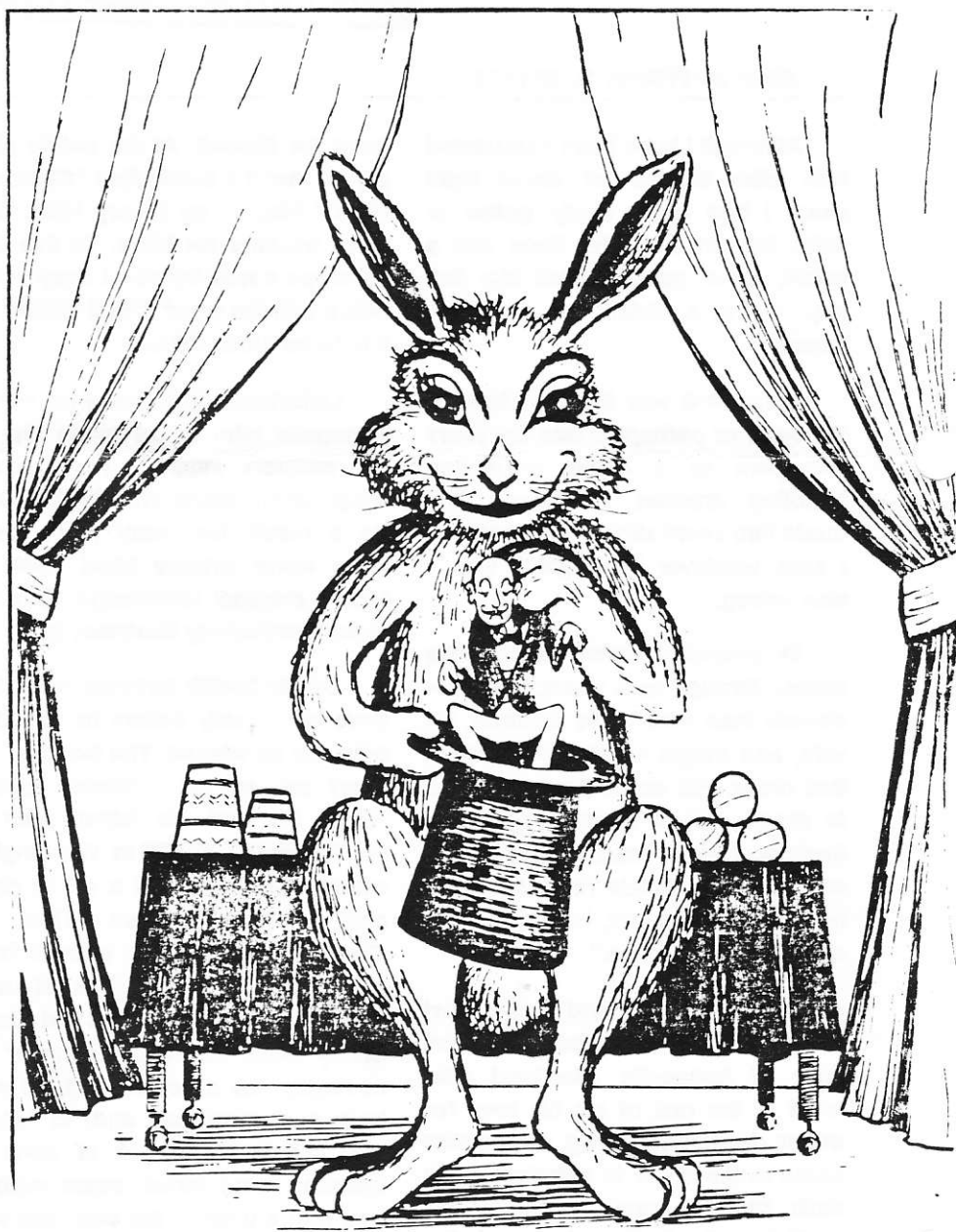
One night a pretty girl and her date came into the lounge. Mike entertained her with a few tricks, and showed up where she worked the next day - just in time to take Donna Lynn Doumont to lunch. The rest is history. They have been married for ten years now.

The worst feature of the bar was that it tended to debase Mike. In the constant search for new gags and leering double-entendres he found himself growing ruder and cruder, until Donna finally called a halt. Mike had just gotten out of the Navy and taken a civil service job. Now

he left the **MAGIC LOUNGE** and, during a twenty week hiatus from magic, he reevaluated his magical career. Donna gave him a pen and ink drawing of a very large rabbit removing a magician from a hat. (The drawing is reproduced here.) With his already plus six foot height it was easy to make a costume for a

seven foot rabbit. John Ferguson, a magician who lives in Redlands, CA, designed the entire costume for him. The head alone is about fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter and is strapped on so he can move, bend and twist without it moving, turning - or worst of all - falling off. The feet are enormous, in scale with the

(Continued on Page 7)



head. The rabbit wears a special black tuxedo and white gloves.

The hard part was learning to walk and talk in the costume, and to do magic with gloves on. The name selected for the new creation was *Bumper*. However, on one of his early *Bumper* shows, Mike Rogers, who was monitoring the show, gave him a penetrating critique:

"Mike," he said, "you're just a guy in a rabbit costume doing magic. You've got to *become* a rabbit if you're going to be effective!"

It took Mike a while to take this in. But that wasn't the only problem. With the head on he had lost a lot of the powers of misdirection which derive from the direction the eyes are looking or the expression on the face. The solution was a class in mime at City College. He learned to create expression with his whole head, his shoulders, his hands and arms, even with his knees and those enormous feet. He learned to think like a rabbit.

He credits Mike Rogers for much of his achievement. Mike continued to suggest and guide as the rabbit developed, giving him many insights that might, otherwise, have been difficult to perceive.

And then came another great step forward. He had a sound system built into the costume. Now he could talk and there was no stopping him. *Bumper* lived!

To maintain the illusion that he *was* the rabbit, he never allowed anyone to see him in partial costume, or to see the head or feet disembodied. Since he couldn't

drive with the head on he had to be driven to every show. As an example, for five years Donna had to drive him to the Black Angus and sit around for endless hours while he table hopped. When he finally got a van he could use as a dressing room part of that problem was solved.

Bumper was the rabbit that made Mike Stilwell. He was enormously successful, working the Magic Conventions, appearing on television, being featured as the official rabbit at the Del Mar Fair, working every Sunday at Seaport Village for a long period and doing countless commercial and charitable shows. But still he was not completely happy. He still had to go to that civil service job five days a week. He wanted to start a magic shop and concentrate totally on magic.

As it happens, his Uncle Sude (his mother's brother, Ted Sudbrack, but "Suds" to all his friends) was operating a magic manufacturing business in the Los Angeles area. "Instead of opening a shop, why don't you buy my business?"

Suds was one of the two largest manufacturers of *Linking Rings* in the country, and probably the largest maker of *Hot Tears* in the business.

Mike and Donna bought a beautiful house on the side of a hill in Spring Valley with a sprawling yard spotted with fruit trees. Mike built a pen for his rabbits, a pool for his turtles, and set up the "Suds" business in the

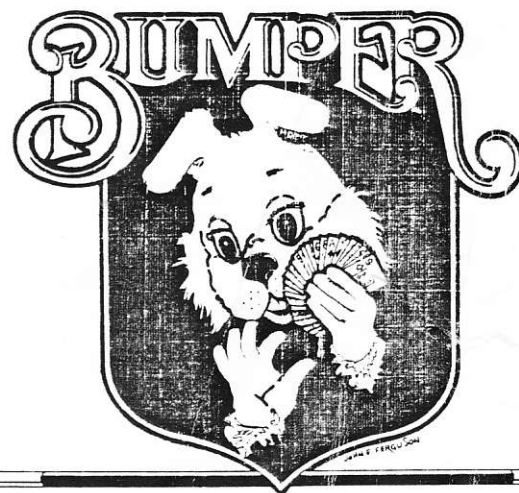
basement. In deference to the debt he owed to the rabbit he named the business *BUMPER & COMPANY*. Due to the slope of the hill the garage is on the basement level and has become part of the operation. Hence part of the working area is open to the scenery on a nice day.

At a recent IBM convention, Mike's old friend from Washington, Al Cohen, approached him and said, "Mike, isn't it interesting that I sold you your first set of *LINKING RINGS*, and now I buy all of mine from you."

Mike does not do many *BUMPER* shows any more. Now, working as *Magic Mike*, he does several restaurant shows a week and numerous private parties, trade shows, and hospitality suites. But *Bumper* is still on call when requested.

Thus Mike Stilwell has fulfilled his dream of not working for a living, but living for the work he loves - full time.

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