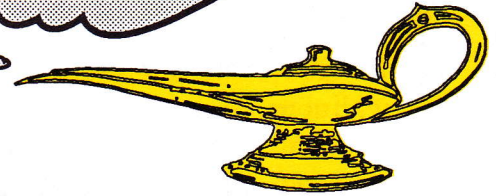


MAGICURRENTS



HONEST SID GERHART
RING 76, SAN DIEGO, CA



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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

I hope everyone enjoyed last month's meeting. Special thanks go to Ring 76 member Brad Burt for a great pre-meeting on the subject of false shuffles. If you enjoyed the event, please be sure to mention it to him the next time you see him or visit his shop. By the way, I finally got a chance to see the baby Burt (Nicholas) and I really need to give him *****, highly recommended!

Last month was also the first time we had a chance to use the riser that was built to enhance our visibility during performances and lectures. Member Dave Lane donated the craftsmanship, and seems to have done a top-notch construction job. The Hungry Hunter is storing and assembling the platform for us.

Our guest speaker, Joe Bertuzzi, IBM Endowment Chairman and Executive Board Member, was direct and to the point. In addition to bringing us up to speed on some developments of the recent IBM board meeting, he announced an IBM plan to encourage youth participation. I feel that our Ring has benefited by the presence of our younger members, and stand ready to support such IBM directions which appear to benefit young magicians.

Well, since February is a short month, this will be a short column. As your board has worked hard to put together some new aspects to the club, I would appreciate any written feedback, however brief, on our progress. Specifically, any feedback regarding the newsletter, new location, name tags, members directory, pre-meetings, and so forth. I can be reached at:

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Richard B. Waterhouse

LAST MEETING or what you missed

by Mark Flores

The 25 members and 5 guests of Ring 76 enjoyed the first meeting of 1995, with our own Brad Burt hosting a very informative false shuffle teach-in. That included false overhand shuffles, slip shuffles, injogs and Brad's own finesse with the Zarrow shuffle. Brad's teaching experience and professional expertise is always a valuable and greatly anticipated part of the monthly Ring 76 meetings.

Congratulations to Brad and his wife, Barbara, on the birth of their son, Nicholas Daniel on November 11, 1994! More teach-ins are scheduled soon, so be sure to take advantage of some hands-on practice.

Joe Bertuzzi discussed the upcoming IBM Convention on July 12-15 in Oakland, the anticipated IBM Mastercard, IBM ring (finger-type), Handbook for Ring Officers, International Membership Card and the international organization's support of youth in the IBM.

The evening's theme was "Old Magic". President Rick Waterhouse kicked things off with a wonderful two-card coincidence, utilizing a new deck and an antique deck of gypsy cards. Upon completion of the divination, members Dick and Julie Dale were confirmed soul-mates for life. Sean Gallagher next performed two variations of linking rubber bands, eventually shrinking them into nothingness!

Dick Dale exhibited a fascinating antique piece known as "Soft Glass". This 1943 effect was originally performed by one of the first female magicians, Dell O'Dell.

A solid pane of glass was placed in a wooden stand and covered with wood shields. Four steel needles were drawn through four separate sections of the pane and, of course, it remained intact! Fooled the heck out of just about everyone!

VP Don Soul used his mental prowess to determine the identity of a selected, and subsequently lost, card from a spectator's free choice. Loch David Crane performed two clever tricks from his repertoire: "Clippo", a repetitively clipped and restored strip of newspaper and "Gypsy Floss", with full explanation and helpful hints. Thanks, Loch!

Finally, Joe Bertuzzi was able to predict the value of a card associated with the birthday of one of our guests with the help of his own pocket calendar.

January's meeting turned out to be a very enjoyable, full evening of magic, fun and camaraderie. This is the atmosphere of San Diego's Ring 76, and we always welcome guests free of charge. Tell your friends about our club, and bring them along.

The Ron London lecture at our next meeting on Monday, February 13, promises to be time well spent. Ron brings with him years of experience as a full-time stage and trade-show magician. He has appeared with Bob Hope three times and has been the opening act for several celebrities.

In addition, he has performed over 500 lectures, including several at the Magic Castle. His one-hour lecture for our club will feature material for stand-up magic that is easy to do and easy to make. He'll also include tips on equipment you already own and after the lecture he'll show us some commercial stuff.

GAUGHAN FISHIN'

Part 2

By Rick Waterhouse

RW: You don't consider yourself a performer really?

JG: No.

RW: Yet you demonstrated Zoe, Antonio and the Hooker Rising Cards?

JG: Yes. Actually, I've done a lot of TV work with the Automats in Europe because apparently it is a better setting for it. We just did a variety show in Portugal, we did a documentary on French Television of Robert-Houdin a month ago, and we've done a lot of John Fisher's BBC shows (Paul Daniels). So over there it fits into their variety shows a lot easier than it does over here.

RW: Well, we don't really have what you would call Variety Shows on TV now...

JG: That's True.

RW: With something like Antonio, what path did he tread to finally end up in your hands? How did you get him?

JG: Oh, it was wonderful! It was Georges Melies, the great film pioneer, who owned the Theater Robert-Houdin (in Paris) from 1889 on. After it closed at the beginning of World War I he had all of these wonderful pieces and he sold off a couple of them. In 1923 he sold Antonio to a man named Albert Smith, a New Yorker, who also did magic. He was a magician. So... Smith was interested in films too and he started a company called Films-Vidagraph. Later he became the founder of Warner Brothers pictures. And so, Antonio, in 1923, was never used or performed by Smith and it ended up in his attic in Los Angeles. After he died, the family was cleaning out the attic. They found this puppet. Albert Smith also had a great watch collection, so they tried selling Antonio to watch collectors. No one ever wanted it, so they finally gave it away to the Magic Castle and it was given to me from there. It took 7 years to reconstruct it, to get it all back together (internally and the swinging bar). Also, to figure out what the original routine was I had to go back to the French magic collectors, their historians, which are a lot more serious people then they are over here. They helped reconstruct what his routine was.

RW: During the reconstruction, you want to stay true to the original equipment. I can't imagine that you could find plans for him. How do you know what to put into him?

JG: Most of everything was still there, it was just in a terrible state. For instance, the trapeze bar had been ripped apart and all bent up. A lot of interesting people helped me restore it. One guy repaired trombones, so he could go down inside the tubing and scrape it all out. And that was wonderful to see the parts that this trombone repair guy could [bring] about. So all of the pieces were still there and you saw the function of it, so you could bring it back through that route.

RW: I think most people, including myself, don't appreciate what goes into making a clockwork person. What's inside?

JG: You first have to understand that Antonio was built by a magician and that his actions and his performance is somewhat of an illusion and so while its presented as purely a clockwork mystery, which it really is, its still not like the classic Automata where you go over and wind up a key and it starts doing it.

RW: Before we go much further, I was wondering if you could help me a bit with Pronunciation?

JG: Sure. Automaton (a-TOM-a-tawn) or Automaton (a-TOM-a-tawns) are the English pronunciation and Automates (aw-to-MATs) is the French pronunciation.

RW: Now, there are two types? Those that are controlled secretly from offstage...

JG: Which are called False Automata. and Automatas the whole group, you know, the plural of that, so Automaton and Automata.

RW: Have you ever worked on if you will, true automatons, you know that just do their thing?

JG: Yes, A lot of our business is restorations on the classic French automatons. There's a couple of collections in Los Angeles that are the finest in the world, believe it or not, of those figures. All made in Paris around 1860, 1880, 1900 range.

RW: How many have you restored overall?

JG: 30 or 40 or so, 50...

RW: How many Automaton effects have you recreated?

JG: Well, the orange tree is a recreation, I do have an original in my house, but the original is worked by an assistant hiding off stage, so its a lot easier to make it as you saw Tina doing it. The first one was built for Dr. Albo, you know the great Magic collector in San Francisco, and he didn't want to have to have a table and the curtains and all the cabling set up to go to the system off stage in order to demonstrate this thing. So we made it all electric, battery operated. And that's what you saw Tina doing.

RW: When we spoke at the castle you mentioned that you do get nervous when Antonio performs. He doesn't always hang on?

JG: Yes, its because all of the screws, all of the mechanisms are original, so they're not like today's mechanisms where you can use Lock-tite to put 'em in there, wonderful automotive threads or anything like that. So it loosens up very quickly. Almost every other performance you gotta go through it again and re-torque everything down.

RW: How often do you perform with Antonio?

JG: Oh, couple times a year.

RW: Given the risk of damage when he performs, why do you haul him out and let him do his thing?

JG: Well, because if you can bring it back to his... If you can restore it back, its just too wonderful to let it, let him sit on a shelf. I'm only a custodian of this little fellow. As long as I have the resources to be able to perform it... I don't even know how much this thing cost me to restore.

RW: Significant?

JG: Yes, very significant. For instance, at the Magic Castle, I had the guys, my helpers, on overtime because they work during the day. They make more per hour than I'd make per show, you know being there in the evening and you have to have a support group to keep this little fellow goin'.

RW: Well, when Zoe took her nose dive...

JG: Oh Yeah! Yes its like dialing 911 we spent the whole time back there...

RW: What goes through your mind? Did you see it?

JG: Yes

RW: Was it like... was it in slow motion?

JG: Yes, It was like a dream thing. because you saw the curtain open and I'm going like this [gesturing towards her] and you saw the curtain catch her hand and she just kinda takes a roll off the back. It wasn't a real hard hit so I picked her up and asked one of the guys to see, look up from the bottom and see if the mechanism was still straight, but it didn't work.

RW: Whose Idea were the Programs for the Castle show?

JG: They were my idea, mainly because I wanted the audience to have a setup. The Magic Castle audience, they have a long time to sit there and I think that if they understand that these are historical things that are going to be presented on the stage they will view it in a different light. And being that I'm not a "solid" performer, so to speak, I want all of the help and crutches that I can get. I want them to have a little preconception about what they are going to see rather than just coming out on-stage and lecturing to them that "this is something old now, this is special" So if they get a feel, anything that would help me. That's where I was coming from on it.

RW: I think that they should have one in every palace show.

JG: Yeah, I think so too. Even in the newsletter we've tried to pound on these people, to you know, set up... These are special performances, and if the audience understands this, if they are elevated up a little bit they'll enjoy it more. It'll be special. In '91 when we did that show it was the first time a program had ever been done there. It received such a positive reaction that several other people after that [provided programs]. It works out well.
[Note: It seems as if the folks at the Castle Listened. Last month's newsletter included write-ups of the talent by none other than member Max Maven!]

RW: How do you feel that Automaton plays to a modern non-magician audience?

JG: Well, that always surprises me how well that works. I mean it has to be to a relatively small audience, other than television, It even works on Television though if its set up in a proper historical perspective. Well, you saw one of the shows there. It does hold the interest of the audience even though they are over 100 years old.

RW: Its rather slow compared to modern pacing, why do you think it plays?

JG: I don't know. Of course the audiences of the Magic Castle are great polite audiences. They're there to be entertained, but still, I think that the routines that these... well especially Zoe, used to do a 40 minute routine [with] all sorts of cubed roots, square roots all sorts of mathematical problems and go on and on and on. So I'm not quite sure what the answer is there but I think if you just give them a little sampling of flavor of what she was, that works.

RW: It played well both times we saw it. People were stunned.

JG: Well that's good to hear 'cause I never get any feedback.

(To be continued...)

COMING UP

Feb. 13	Ring 76 Meeting Location: Hungry Hunter Ron London lecture	May 8	Ring 76 Meeting Location: Hungry Hunter 6:30pm Pre-meeting: "Chemistry Magic" 7:30pm Meeting Theme: "Flower Magic"
Feb. 27	Ring 76 Board Meeting Mark Flores'		
Mar. 9-11	Desert Magic Seminar Las Vegas, NV.	May 22	Ring 76 Board Meeting 7:00pm The Dale's
Mar. 13	Ring 76 Meeting Location: Hungry Hunter 6:30pm Pre-meeting: "Showmanship & Patter" 7:30pm Meeting Theme: "St. Paddy's Magic"	June 1-4	Las Vegas Close-Up Las Vegas, NV.
Mar. 27	Ring 76 Board Meeting 7:00pm Sherry Luft's	June 12	Ring 76 Meeting Location: Hungry Hunter 6:30 Pre-meeting: "Coins" 7:30pm Meeting Theme: "Kids Magic"
Apr. 10	Ring 76 Meeting Location: Hungry Hunter 6:30 Pre-meeting: TBA 7:30pm Lecture Billy McComb	June 17	Ring 21's "Day Of Magic" Hollywood
		June 19	Ring 76 Board Meeting 7:00pm The Dale's
Apr. 24	Ring 76 Board Meeting 7:00pm Sherry Luft's	July	Ring 76 Meeting Installation Banquet Time & Place TBA

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