



MagiCurrents

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Volume XIII No. 11 November 1999

Message from the President

Great news from the president, I will be able to conduct a meeting before next year. Looks like the project commitment is only two weeks longer and at least I can join the club for our Holiday Potluck.

The Pre-meeting theme is Impromptu magic for November. I have always believed impromptu magic is the test of skill, talent or by association. My meaning of by association is whatever everybody else is doing-- I can do that! I thirst for the new, exciting, innovative, and unique delivery. Seeing the same effects over and over again also makes your audience dis-interested. Stretch yourselves and not just rubber bands to bring ground breaking impromptu magic.

Y2K Magic is the meeting theme!! This new year will bring all kinds of gatherings and celebrations. For the working magician probably more opportunities and bookings. And for many more of

us even family and friends gatherings will be a buzzing with the Y2K theme why not make it a magic one?

Speaking of this, an early bird reminder **JANUARY 10, 2000** is the date for **Close-up Contest**. Please sign up with Dick Dale for that award winning spot.

President Julie Dale

What is Magic?

This month's meeting theme is Y2K magic. "What is that and why is it important," you ask? Picture this;

It is December 31, 1999 at 11:58 p.m. You are at a gala party, full of lights, laughter, and champagne. Everyone is there and everyone is having the time of their lives. The clock ticks down, Dick Clark is on the tube, and the closing moments of the millennium are slipping by.

Suddenly it is midnight and calender turns over.

All at once every dire prediction of the doom sayers comes true at once. Computers roll back to 1900, and, realizing they have not been invented yet, vanish! Electricity stops generating, water stops flowing, Airline pilots instantly forget the location of airfields built after the turn of the century, and that oxygenated gas that California requires for your car goes sour. Without electricity, transistors, and packaged silicone, the band goes silent and becomes less interesting. Without glitzy lights and atmospheric smoke, the party starts to lag. In all the pain and confusion, as the best of twentieth century technology screams to a halt, the host climbs to the stage and, cupping his hands to his mouth, yells, "My gosh, we're doomed! What are we going to do for entertainment!?!"

You look around. The situation looks bleak. You hand your coat to your date (husband, wife, friend, insert name here) and say, "this looks like a job for a magician!" Faster than a speeding bullet, you leap to the stage in a single bound. "I am a magician," you announce to calm your trembling host, "I will help you." For the next twenty or so minutes you save the day by performing fantastic magical effects using only the props and materials on hand. From pocket tricks with paperclips and rubber bands, to card tricks, parlor tricks, and mentalism, you keep the audience enthralled, saving the party, your host's reputation, and ushering in a new millennium with style and grace.

See **Y2K Magic** on Page 3

Y2K Magic

Continued from page 1

And as the first rays of sunlight dance off the broken remains of civilization, and the party guest filter on home, they will undoubtedly turn to each other and say, "who was that talented magician anyway?" "I don't know, but they left a silver thumb tip."

Y2K magic is ANY magic you would do, if you found yourself in this situation. Think about it. What would you do to save a New Year's Eve party?
See you Monday night.

October Meeting

This month's Pre-Meeting featured **Marcus Day**. Not a magician, but a collector of magic books. Not the usual books on tricks and slights, but books on the history and biography of magic and magicians. He shared with us a small portion of his collection of rare, out of print books, odd recent volumes, as well as tips on collecting. Marcus showed Ring members, and guests, catalogs from auction houses, and shared advice of binding of rare magic magazines, and restoration of weathered works of magical history. For the avid collector, and the magician of general interest, it was a most informative talk. Thank You Marcus.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm. President Julie Dale once again expressed her regrets, and the meeting was run by VP of Membership, **Tom La Chance**. There were 27 members in attendance, with 8 guests, including David Silverman, Ross and Mike Pippen, Ismael Sanchez, and Mary Mowder.

Roy Armstrong gave an update on the "Healing of Magic" program being started at a local area hospital. The appropriate departments were looking at the program tape and instructional material, and training of staff may begin soon. **Loch David Crain** was sorry to announce that there would not be a show for Magic Week this year at

Montezuma Hall. He would continue to work with local officials to schedule a magic event in the future. The announcement of the upcoming magic lecture, by Mike Close, was confirmed. It is not sponsored by Ring 76 and there will be a \$20 admission fee. It will be held November 16 at the American Legion Hall in La Mesa. With no further business the meeting portion of the evening was closed.

Tonight we had a special lecture/Teach-in by former Ring 76 member Tom Allen. For the last twenty years Tom has earned his living with his own creative style of innovative Close-up magic. This evening Tom showed us some of this "innovative" magic, and kept the audience captivated with one miracle after another. The magic was top notch, and as usual, "all in the notes."

After the meeting, members were additionally entertained by Mary Mowder, a friend of Tom Allen's and one of the countries leading, female, close-up performers. This little "extra" bit of magic made the evening that much ore enjoyable.

Board Of Directors

Julie Dale- President

2447 Nielsen Street
El Cajon, CA 92020
(619) 562-7379
DickDale@juno.com

Tom La Chance- Membership VP

447 Nila Lane
El Cajon, CA 92020
(619) 441-3747
Magiccat@Hom.com

Dick Dale- Entertainment VP

2447 Nielsen Street
El Cajon, CA 92020
(619) 562-7379
DickDale@juno.com

Gary Dismukes- Treasurer

10397 Avenida Magnifica
San Diego, CA 92131
(619) 549-8717
dismukes@cts.com

Richard Ustick- Secretary

6040 Bob St.
La Mesa, CA 91942
(619) 463-2407
rustick@flash.net

Ralph Mauzy- Sergeant-At-Arms

P.O. Box 1224
Alpine, CA 91903
(619) 390-7494

Don Soul- Member-At-Large

10068 Branford Rd.
San Diego, CA 92129
(619) 484-3492
McGefty@AOL.com

Gary Schwartzwald-Past President
6135 Haas St.
La Mesa, CA 91942-4312
(619) 697-9468
gschwart@Grossmont.K12.ca.us

On September 10th of this year, the magic community lost another of it's members. It is always sad when a friend departs, but it is a greater loss when that departure goes without notice. It will be the policy of MagiCurrents,



whenever possible, to take a moment and recognize the life of a magician, through the words of those who knew them. - ED.

REMEMBERING LONGTIME RING 76 MEMBER L. GORDON PLUMMER

by Jack White

I was saddened and shocked to read in the paper the other day of Gordon Plummer's death. I was shocked because like so many other's I thought he had died many years ago, he was 95. The obituary talks in detail about his work at the Theosophy Society which was founded and located on top of Point Loma in 1900. In passing it mentions he was also a magician.

He joined Ring 76 not too long after it was formed in the early 1960's, but he had practiced magic as a performer since he was a teenager. When I met him he was already in his mid-70's. He was a diminutive man with thinning hair, spoke softly and wore eye glasses that were so thick that his eyes were magnified many times their normal size giving him an eerie appearance. However, he was a true gentleman and an easy man to get to know.

Gordon was a wonderful story teller and his little lectures turned his sometimes crude homemade magic tricks into superb theater. He did not attend every meeting of the ring because his eyesight would not allow him to drive at night. He would attend when some kind hearted member would give him a ride. He made all of his props himself. The most he ever bought at a magic shop was a thumb tip and the Tarbell Lessons in Magic.

One evening he presented a mental routine, it was all out of the Tarbell books and the Linking Ring Magazine, but his natural speaking style and story telling ability was a lesson in good showmanship. He had drilled a hole in a small block of wood that he had hidden under his coat behind his back. He had five or six marbles that were different colors. He had gone through hundreds of marbles to find these six that all looked like they were the same size but each one was smaller than the other. The smallest the green one fell through the hole in the block of wood. The next, the red one could be forced through the hole, the yellow one would go just less than half way through the block and so on. An old simple trick that he gave a new look that night and it became the feature portion of his clever act.

Gordon Plummer also played the accordion and Sid Gerhardt, who liked to get everyone involved, asked Gordon to supply the music for one of the Ring 76 shows. Gordon played the same

song for each act. He played "Its A Long Way To Tipperary" a World War One song. I was the M.C., of the show and he played me on with that song and he played me off with the same music. Later he told me "it was a song that had a beat that seemed to fit all of the acts". Beat or no beat it was the song that everyone got no matter who you were or what you did.

On another occasion Gordon told me he had come up with a new "rough-smooth" principal for playing cards. He said he put a light drop of honey in the middle of the back of a card. Let it dry and when he put the face of the next card against the honey it stuck. It actually worked! Sometime later Gordon said he was using a new rough-smooth method because a swarm of ants found his "honey" deck and almost walked away with it box and all.

Most of the younger people in the ring will not remember L. Gordon Plummer because he stopped attending meetings many years ago about the time we lost Sid Gerhardt. But he continued to include magic in his many lectures that he gave throughout his life. During the last few years he had continued to live on his own in a care and boarding house coming and going as he pleased.

The last time I remember seeing this grand old gentleman was in 1980, when he presented his "Universal Self Correcting Sundial" to the San Diego Zoo. I did a news story on the unique time piece and its equally unique inventor. As the camera was recording this for our audience Gordon turned to me and in a quiet voice asked, "will there be time for me to do a card trick?"

He lived a magical life and was truly one of the real characters of Ring 76 history. He died September 10th of pneumonia, he was 95 years young, there are no survivors and there were no services.

Subscription to MagiCurrents.

Membership Questions should be sent to the club treasure, Gary Dismukes. All Ring 76 members must be members in good standing with the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

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6040 Bob St.
La Mesa, CA 91942
rustick@flash.net

Guest Editorial

The IBM is made up of many different individuals. Performers, watchers, collectors, historians, writers, inventors all pay their dues, get their magazine, and have a love for that which we call Magic. Is it always one big happy family?

Jon A. Hand, age 47, and lifelong amateur magician, sometimes sees strife. This month he would like to talk about it. - ED

Amateur magic is much like tennis, or golf, or acting, or playing a musical instrument, or oil painting. We see so many people who do these things professionally, and on TV, that most people are afraid to try them lest they be ridiculed or mocked by their friends! People in America used to enjoy all of these activities as amateurs, but now they feel so intimidated by the high quality of televised pros that they give up what should be a fun hobby for them. Work, television, and sleep is not much of a life! Yet we, as a society, tend to razz hobby amateurs in any area and suggest that they are "wasting their time." Well, it is their time to waste, not those who are doing nothing but criticize! The public should be having active fun, doing amateur sports, amateur music, and amateur fine arts. Our fear of peer disapproval is turning our nation into one of passive watchers rather than doers!

Then, there are the "pros," who are gaze down loftily upon the amateur world as if they are gods, feeling benevolent, just because they are displaying their talents for us! Such attitudes insure that:

- 1) few new amateurs will enter the ranks of the pros.
- 2) pros get to continue feeling lofty.
- 3) interest in their respective areas by the general public wanes.

Such attitudes are garbage! Pros should feel grateful that they get to do something they love AND get paid for it! They should be even more grateful that anyone cares to watch, much less pay to watch!

I have been a performing professional on sax since my junior year of university in 1972. Still, I am

extremely humbled at my every performance, by the fact that of all the things people could be doing for entertainment at that moment, they chose to spend their money on the group I play for (or direct). I repeat: pros in any area of endeavor should be grateful, not conceited!

And yes, many of them are grateful, and gracious to amateurs who are entering the fold. They offer help and advice, and treat the amateur like a colleague instead of a student or a potential competitive threat. Unfortunately, there are far too many pros who don't exhibit such



attitudes...

I went to my first pro rock concert in the fall of 1970, as a college freshman. The group was the IDES OF MARCH, a Chicago/BS&T type of group who had 3 hits ("Vehicle," "Superman," and "L.A. Goodbye", in case you forgot or never knew!). The lead singer, Jim Peterik, came out after the concert, sat on the front of the stage, and talked for almost two hours to whomever stayed around to watch the roadies tear down the gear. He was friendly, witty, engaging, never condescending, and talked happily with us music majors who came to the show. A year later, Bill Chase split a bill with the Allman Brothers Band, and he talked a long time with us, too. My junior year, Maynard Ferguson played a show on our campus, came on a whim of an invitation to our music fraternity house, and had a ball with us. I never forgot those experiences. Now, whenever anyone wants to talk with me about music, or magic, after a show, I will stay as long as the conversation is viable, sharing what I can with the newbies.

The moral? Remember your roots! Everyone was an amateur sometime! If

you made it on your own, good for you; count your blessings, as such occurrences are truly rare! If, like the rest of the world, you learned from and built upon the knowledge of others, then pass that knowledge along in the form of instruction and encouragement to amateurs! The joy of seeing even one of your ersatz proteges eventually become a pro is all of the reward you will ever need!

MagiCurrents is always pleased to offer opinions and information from its readers and other members of the magic

Upcoming Magic

community.

Michael Close is about to take a sabbatical from the world of magicians and conventions. When magicians want to be amazed and entertained, they consistently hire one man, Michael Close.

Close is a performer, creator, author, and teacher of magic, and is acknowledged by his peers as one of the finest close-up and stand-up magicians in the world today.

A professional magician since 1978, his corporate clients include: Sprint, Dow Chemical, Allstate Insurance, and Eli Lilly Company.

Michael is currently making his farewell tour with an all new lecture. It features close-up and stand-up routines from his highly acclaimed video collection "Very, Very Close."

The lecture will be held at the La Mesa American Legion Hall, corner of Spring St. and University Ave. At 7:00pm on Tuesday, November 16, 1999.

This is not a Ring event. Registration is \$20 in advance, and 25\$ at the door.

Contact Dick Dale at (619)562-7379 for details.

Board Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 19:00. In the absence of President Julie Dale, the meeting was run by VP Membership Tom La Chance.

Dick Dale announced that La Mesa, the city of San Diego, the county of San Diego, and the city of El Cajon will all be issuing proclamations of Magic Week for October of 1999. Ring 76 will be prominently featured in all of these proclamations.

Money is always a problem for the Ring. To help solve this problem Mike Stilwell has suggested that members of Ring 76 perform for tips at Balboa Park. This venue is open to any performer who registers with the park officials and attends the Saturday morning lottery for locations, in the park, for your show. This idea will be discussed at the next meeting.

Jerry Schnepf, IBM's International President, has prepared a lecture entitled "Go for the Gold." As Chairman of the IBM Convention Contests for the last 20 years, President Schnepf has been in a unique position to meet and help some of the organizations most talented newcomers. He is currently touring Rings, presenting his lecture based on qualities that the judges look for in selecting contest winners. It is thought by the Board that this lecture, along with a panel discussion by members who has participated in contests, would be of interest to all of our Ring members. Tom La Chance will contact President Schnepf's office to set up a date.

In the area of future lectures, Abb Dickson, past President of IBM, is currently lecturing on the mental magic of Karrel Fox. Garry Schwartzwald will be finding out more on this and we may be having this lecture soon.

The December meeting will be the traditional Christmas Pot-Luck banquet. Members will each bring a dish with a turkey and ham provided by the Ring. The location for this fun evening will

either be at the Legion hall or at Jack White's magic Museum. This will be announced soon.

Keep watching the newsletter and the next meeting.

Last month the idea of producing a calender for Ring 76 was proposed. Don Soul reported that a quality product, for the next year, could not be produced in the time remaining. It was suggested that a calender of the year 2001 could be produced and the quality of it might make it a fund raising project. This will be discussed at the next Ring meeting.

The next Ring lecture has yet to be confirmed. Michael Ammar has been suggested, as well as Max Mavin, Nick Lewin, and T.C. Tahoe, or Willard Falkenstein. The lecture will be next April and will be announced when confirmed.

The November meeting will have an impromptu theme. The pre-meeting will feature impromptu magic ideas from each Board member. The theme of the meeting will be Y2K magic. This is any magic that can be done, on the fly, should the Y2K bug bite. More of an explanation will be forthcoming in the newsletter.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The next Board meeting will be November 22, at the home of Secretary Richard Ustick.

Magic on Television in the month of November

November 8th at 4:00pm

Rough Magic (1995, Fantasy)

In the 1950s, a magician's assistant and her two pursuers go to Mexico in search of an ancient shaman. Starring: Bridget Fonda, Russell Crowe, Jim Broadbent, D.W. Moffett, Paul Rodriguez, Euva Anderson

Comedy Central Lounge Lizards

November 10th & 11th at 3:00AM

A half hour of stand-up from Amazing Jonathan recorded live in Las Vegas.

Fox Family Channel

Houdini: Unlocking His Secrets

November 11th at 10PM

Hosted by Robert Urich

(Originally aired May 1995) Features:

Under Water Chain Escape by Charlotte Pendragon, Explanation of Jacket Escape By Lance Burton, Mac King and Houdini's Thumb Tie, The Pendragon's Metamorphosis, Brett Daniels Water Torture Cell, David Williamson Needle Swallow, Jonathan Pendragon Coffin of Death.

American Movie Classics

Houdini Nov. 12th and 21st

The classic 1953 movie starring Tony Curtis as Houdini and Janet Leigh as Bess. Though historically inaccurate, it is still fun to watch.

Fox Family Channel

Lance Burton, Master Magician: The Encounter November 18th at 10PM

(Originally aired February 24th, 1997)

Lance Burton, the only American illusionist to win the coveted World Championship of Magic, takes the art of magic into the 21st century by performing breathtaking feats of prestidigitiation.

See **Magic on TV** on page 6

Magic on TV

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The Learning Channel
More Secrets Revealed
November 21st at 8:00 PM
November 21st at 11:00 PM
November 27th at 5:00 pm

"A magician reveals the trick behind the
""levitating lady"" act. Also: a school for
professional wrestlers; secrets of
supermodels; how to increase your odds
playing slot machines; and how
pickpockets operate."

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Special Thanks

This month's edition of MagiCurrents
was made possible through the help of a
number of individuals.

The editorial staff and Board of
Directors would like to take this
opportunity to thank them for their
contributions.

Jack White- for his continued support
for Ring 76 not only in editorial material,
by for the use of his Magic Meuseam.

Jon A. Hand- for his articles and ideas

Richard Aviles- for his original art
work of the "broken wand" featured in
this month's edition

Jacob Johnson- Ring 63- for his
original artwork to be
used in future
newsletters

Upcoming Ring 76 Events

Nov. 8: Pre-Meeting: Teach in on
impromptu magic

Meeting theme: Y2K

magic

Board Meeting: 11/22/99

Richard Ustick

Dec. 13: Pre-Meeting: Presentation by
A.C.E.S.

Meeting theme:

Christmas

Dinner

(pot luck) and show

No Board Meeting

Jan. 10: Pre-Meeting: Close-up

Meeting theme: Close-up competition

Board Meeting: 1/24/00 at

Gary Schwartzwalds

Feb. 14: Pre-Meeting: Teach in

Meeting theme: Dealer Demo

Board Meeting: 2/28/00 at

Gary Schwartzwalds

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La Mesa, CA 91942