



MagiCurrents

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Volume XIII No. 12 December 1999

Holiday Message from the President

We all have had some time to reflect and ponder about the past 1,000 years or at least the advertisers have helped us to that end. I know that I could have, should have, might have, didn't, and wanted to.

I am not talking about resolutions that we all seem to have missed, partly missed, and accomplished for the new years in the past. Take one single look into yourself and your magic-- dig deeper to bring a new meaning as you are lucky enough to move into the year 2000.

Simple examples, have you changed or upgraded any of your performing props, silks, cards, etc? Have you ever gone to a convention? Think of things about yourself that you have never ever changed or wanted to change--just because you didn't want to. Have you thought to use magic other than as a money making venue? Have you ever thought deep enough about why you are really you??? One great wonderful thing about you, is that you can enjoy, perform, understand, appreciate and move magic to the new millennium.

Take your magic and create a greater contribution for the new waves, expectations, and future for our art. Really look at the gift you have to be able to leave a legacy of wonderment, joy and beauty.

If you have and believe in magic, then I know you have other talents and hidden crafts as we are really artists of many fine spectrums. Appreciate first yourself so you can give your magic to others, magic is not truly a gift



until you share. Have a great, healthy and happy year 2000.

President,

Julie Dale

*It's Potluck Party
Time!!!*

This month's meeting, on December 13, will be our traditional Holiday Potluck dinner.

It will be held at the American Legion Hall, in the big room, starting with no host cocktails at 6:30pm, with dinner at 7:00.

The ring will be providing a delicious turkey and ham this year, and all members attending are asked to bring either a salad, side dish, or dessert. Please

call Julie Dale before December 11 if you plan on coming, and let her know what you plan on bringing.

Entertainment this year will come from the large pool of talent that is Ring 76. The San Diego ACES will be doing walk around before dinner, with Bryan McDaniel and Don Soul entertaining us after dinner. We hope to see everyone there for the last meeting of this year, and century.

November Meeting

As the century comes to a close the theme of this month's meeting was Y2K magic.

For the pre-meeting, the twenty-eight attending members, and two guests, were entertained by the Board of Directors. Each attending member demonstrated the impromptu magic they would use if the lights did indeed go out on January first. Former Ring President **Gary Schwartzwald** opened with the coin sleights he does best. **Tom La Chance** dazzled the audience with Impromptu Linking Coat Hangers, while **Don Soul** vanished a card from a spectators pack, only to have it re-appear in his own. Treasurer **Gary Dismukes** demonstrated the wonders of paper magic by forming a moon with one tear, and star at the same time, while **Dick Dale** shoved solid coins through an equally solid table. Secretary **Richard Ustick** successfully predicted the total of four, three digit numbers, before they were even written down, and the pre-meeting was finished with members **Loch D. Crain** "magically" printing business cards, and **Michael Feldman** predicted the order of a packet of cards, verbally arranged by the audience. With talent like this the "millennium bug" is nothing to fear.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm. With President Julie Dale, and Sergeant-at-arms Ralph Mauzy sending there regrets, the meeting was presided

over by VP **Tom La Chance**. The next meeting will be the traditional holiday pot luck (see page 1), to be held at the American Legion Hall, in the large meeting room. The Board will provide the ham and turkey, and the other attending Ring members will provide salads, side dishes, and desserts. This will be orchestrated in the upcoming month. Several international magicians will be touring the United States in the next year and have expressed an interest in lecturing. It was decided that the Ring should send letters of intent to these magicians and see if plans could be made to have them here. Jerry Schnepf's lecture, reported in last months Board report, was met with enthusiasm by the Ring, and plans are underway to secure this guest early in the next year. **Dick Dale** reported that Ron London was running for International Board member, and those in support should sign the petition presented. Ron London also is on the lecture circuit and the Board will discuss the possibility of having him as a guest. **Tom Kasner** reported that the Ring 76 web site was back up and could be found at WWW.Kasners.com. Webmaster Tom has created a very good site and members and magicians are encouraged to stop by. The last of the business for this meeting was the auditioning of new member **David Silverman**. He impressed the membership with a 'Star Trek' effect, teleporting a chosen card from the planet deck, to the hand of an audience member, holding the transporter pad. Then after much shuffling, and a second deck, David not only found a chosen card, but produced a Royal Flush with the next four cards in the deck. Ring 76 welcomes the talents of **David Silverman** as the newest member.

Ismael S. Sanchez also re-joined the Ring, having just returned to San Diego. With no other business, the meeting portion of the evening was closed.

The night's magic theme continued with Y2K magic. It was opened with **Richard Ustick** using "Ebenezer Tate's Magic Compass (it pays to read the Linking Ring). This was followed by **Bryan McDaniel** who's Polaroid pictures spelled "Not Y2K Compliant," and the reverse side added up to the chosen card. **Don Soul** showed how the Faro Shuffle could be used to find a card chosen by an audience member. And it worked!

Gary Schwartzwald, presented a trick billed as, "may or may not work." Because of his computer background, Don Soul was called up to help. After a "you do as I do," shuffle and cut, Gary ended up with four kings, and Don had four aces, not counting the one up his sleeve. **Bill Monroe** showed how the four kings could predict what would happen at the turn of the century, with the red kings representing 11:59pm and the black kings representing 12:01am. Where the chosen card ended up would determine the fate of modern man (I won't give the answer away). **Paul Thomey** finished the magical evening by calling up Dawn and Donna. Dawn chose a card and showed it to all but Donna, who then had to try and find it. He first attempt failed and the card was ripped into pieces, and secured in Donna's hand. Paul attempted to find the chosen card and also failed until the name of the card was revealed. That card, in pieces, was found under Donna's hand. Very impressive magic from all members.

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Board Meeting

The November Board Meeting was called to order @ 19:00 at the home of Secretary Richard Ustick. President Julie Dale called the meeting to order. All Board members were present with the exception of Ralph Mauzy, who was recovering from surgery and sent his regrets.

The First order of business was the December Christmas Pot luck meeting. It will be held December 13th at the American Legion Hall. President Julie Dale will be taking care of the turkey and paper products, and ham will also be served. Members will be called by the board to decide what else will be brought. Members should bring either a salad, side dish, or dessert. If you have not been called, please call Julie Dale by December 11th to confirm you are coming.

Entertainment for the December Gala will be provided by a number of our talented sources. Rick Bruce will have the A.C.E.S. doing walk around magic. Joel Ward, the winner of the junior stage Competition at this year's IBM convention, will be performing before he jets off to his tapping at the next Lance Burton Show. The stage will also be shared by Bryan McDaniel as well as Don Soul. We will be in the Big room unless otherwise told.

This year there will once again be a gift exchange. Those who would like to exchange gifts are encouraged to bring a wrapped present, of no more value than \$10-15.

The next order of business dealt with the future meeting site for Ring 76. The American Legion Hall may not be available to the Ring as early as January, the year 2000. Negotiations are under way to maintain the hall, but an alternate venue may be needed. Suggestions on a site that will be beneficial to all members are sought. The Brigantine, in La Mesa, has a nice back room that can be closed off. West Hills Highschool, as well as Jack White's Magic Place, are also being look at as temporary locations for the meetings.

The January Close-up Contest is less than a month away so if you are going to perform please contact Dick Dale.

The Board is pleased to report that Skipper Frank is reported to be doing well. He recovered from his accident, and is out and about. He is busy with several personal and business projects. We continue to wish him well, and good health in the coming year.

Guest lecturers were the next order of business. The Board is still arranging for a guest lecturer for the April meeting. So far we have several calls out. Any suggestions from the members would be appreciated.

The February 14th meeting will be a teach in and dealer demo. The problems of what we want for a teach-in was brought up. The problem of how to bring in the quiet members to participate more was also addressed. One suggestion was a one-on-one mentoring program, or a table with a mentor to answer questions and an open arena to have teaching sessions. People can go to the table that they want to learn what they want, to question the expert about technique and performance skills. Once again, suggestions from the membership would be welcome.

With no other business, the meeting was



adjourned. There will be no board meeting in December, and the January Board meeting will be held January 24th at the home of Gary Schwartzwald. As always, all members are invited to the Board meetings.

\$10 per year for out of area magicians.

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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What is the Furor Over New Masked Magician?

Guest Editorialist

Jon A. Hand

Well, we have the new furor of the latest exposure of magic on TV. It seems to me that there are three schools of thought on exposure.

The first says that exposure hurts magic, because exposed tricks cannot be used any more. This is garbage; most people watched those specials out of mere curiosity, and consequently little of what they "learned" was meaningful enough for them to care about or remember long term. Also, many of those tricks are either long out of use or done in newer and better ways now. Those who do remember can see quickly that what they know does not necessarily apply, so they promptly forget it.

The second says that the real damage is that exposure teaches people not to respect magic as an entertainment anymore. This is also garbage, as the public knows how play sets and movie sets are made, and how movie stunts and miniature are done, yet no one has lost interest in plays or movies due to this exposure. Magic is LIVE, where movies are not. It is the live component of magic that will keep people interested.

The third says that exposure forces magicians to be more inventive and create new effects. In a sense, this is garbage, too, since there are only a limited number of basic effects that are possible. Everything else is just "window dressing" (see OUR MAGIC by Maskelyne and Devant and/or THE TRICK BRAIN by Fitzkee for more information).

Gary Schwartzwald- Past President
6135 Haas St.

Magicians need to be creative, yes; but great tricks live on through exposure and the fads of time anyway. Cups and Balls are thousands of years old, for example.

Finally, I would say that any exposure does hurt magic to some degree by removing some of the wonderment and mystery for the audiences. Yet, the

public forgets these things quickly, just like they forget the latest hit songs after 6 weeks. As a parting example, let me point out that Houdini went around the US for years exposing every fake medium (seance speaker to the dead) that he could find. The methods of mediums are well-known and available in most larger libraries, yet Fortune Tellers, ESP phone lines, and Mediums still find gullible and trusting souls to fleece for \$\$\$\$. Has exposure hurt them? Not that I can see!

Keep all of the secrets you can, and cherish any that fool and entertain an audience, but don't get terribly upset if some things get out. The public forgets.

And, taking the liberty to quote from a friend, Neil Alexander, who runs Conjuror.com, these thoughts:

"Those who regard magic only as an intellectual challenge need more self-validation than we as entertainers can offer, and are beyond our ability to reach. Most are smart enough to know they are tricks, and not worry about how they're done. Most will tell you they don't want to know. They represent the majority, and they are overwhelmingly the largest part of any magic audience.

I have a movie poster from the 30's that reads "Exposed! The Sensation of Sensations! Sawing a Lady in Half, How Is It Done?" This exposed a reasonable version of the "Sawing Through a Woman" illusion first introduced by Percy Selbit in 1921, a vast improvement on the original Thurston version. The movie is long forgotten; the P.T. Selbit illusion is the basis for all the modern "super ultra micro thin" and etc. sawing a lady in half illusions being done today.

Similarly, Penn and Teller went through some heat for at one time exposing a thumb tip as part of their act. 70 years ago Harry Blackstone Sr. was chastised by the magic community for the same thing. To this day you can find a thumb tip in many magic sets. I continue to use one with excellent effect; it's all in the handling. To those who think they know, confusing them is that much more fun.

And, of course, the poor linking rings. Countless exposures; it remains a part of my full stage show.

I was performing a large illusion show in Grand Cayman when the first Masked Magician special came out. I did the linking rings and the sub-trunk on the night following the special (they get Fox in the Cayman Islands), to an audience who had seen the show. It was one of the better shows I had, possibly because they expected to be able to figure out how I did everything, and were impressed by the way what I did didn't quite fit the explanations they thought they had.

Overall I would say avoid exposure. And on the occasions when something that might actually be a part of a professional act, not a clearly amateur trick, is exposed through Fox, or the original masked (Unknown) Magician, Herbert Becker (case in point, anyone even remember old Herb?) [note: Herbert Becker wrote 2 volumes of exposure books which can be found in most larger bookstores--Jon], or the programs in England and Europe that we in the US don't even hear about.... Don't lose any sleep.

Magic lives because people love it, and they love to be swept away by the fantasy of it. Those who regard it only as an intellectual challenge need more self-validation than we as entertainers can offer, and are beyond our ability to reach. Most are smart enough to know they are tricks, and not worry about how they're done. Most will tell you they don't want to know. They represent the majority, and they are overwhelmingly the largest part of any magic audience.



Closeup

Tis the Season of

The winner is determined by a vote of the attending audience, so if you are not going to perform (and why not?), then show up to cast your vote.

Remember, call Dick Dale today and say, "I am going to compete!"

See you there.

Contest!

The January 10, year 2000 meeting, will be our annual closeup competition. ***All*** members in good standing are encouraged to get in touch with Dick Dale and tell him that you will be performing this year. The close up competition is one of three that Ring 76 sponsors. Winners will be awarded at our installation Banquet this summer.

Giving

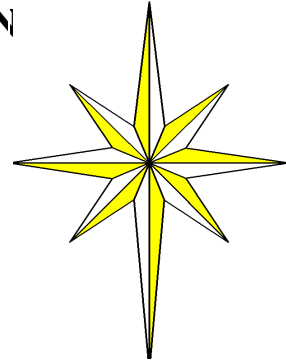
This year we will once again be having a gift exchange at the holiday potluck December 13. Those who want

to participate in this festive tradition should bring a wrapped present to place “under the tree.” Please limit your generosity to a gift of no more than \$15.

Also this year, in the spirit of the holidays, if you wish to give to the “Holiday Food Drive” please bring a can or box of non-perishable food, to the potluck, and the Board will see it makes someone’s season a bit more special.

Happy Holidays

*So if you happen to be one of
those girls or boys,
who have recently packed up
and moved all your toys,
Then write MagiCurrents, tell
us where you hang your pants,
And don’t forget to notify
VP Membership,
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(619)441-3747*

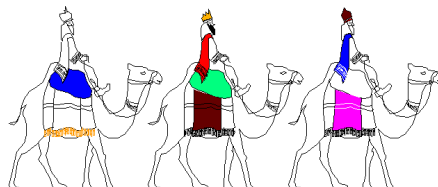


*Each month we make a list,
and check it twice.*

*We mail out the newsletter to
all the members, naughty or nice.*

*Most get where they’re going,
to bring happiness and glee,*

*But lately some others have
been coming back to me.*





Upcoming Events

- December 13 6:30pm American Legion Hall-La Mesa
Pre-Meeting: No Host Cocktail party and walk around Magic
Theme: Holiday potluck Dinner
- January 10 6:30pm American Legion Hall or **TBA** (see newsletter)
Pre-Meeting: Close-up
Meeting Theme: **Close-up Competition**
- February 14 6:30pm **TBA** (See newsletter)
Pre-Meeting: Teach-in (what do you want to learn? Let us Know)
Meeting Theme: Dealer Demo
- March 13 6:30pm **TBA** Pre-Meeting: **Swap Meet** Meeting Theme: Auction and Donations for Ring

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