



MagiCurrents

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Volume XIV No. 7 July 2000

Message from the President

It's our July Fourth and Celebration of Independence! Hurray America!

Hmmmm. Who were and are the American magicians? Earliest famed magician Jacob Meyer (1735-95), professional name Philadelphia was first American to achieve an international reputation as a conjurer. Alexander Herrmann (1844-96), called Hermann the Great and his nephew Leon Herrmann (1868-1909) toured extensively in America. Moving along, Harry Kellar (1849-1922) was famed the best known magician when he retired in 1908. Best American successor Howard Thurston (1869-1936) performed throughout the U.S. for 28 years, as well as Harry Houdini. Don't forget Harry August Jansen (1883-1955) known as Dante and the again one of the greatest Harry Blackstone (1885-1965). Ahh, during the 50's television magic of American magician Milbourne Christopher (1914-84) and Mark Wilson (1929-). But of course American magician David Kotkin (1956-) fondly known to us as David Copperfield. Son like Father, Harry Blackstone, Jr. Just a few but not all to ponder about our American heritage.

Let's look at Ring 76 and the legacy moves on. Dick Ustick with Cristina and Alex; Vi Freeman with Robin; Debbie Travis with Gabe; Dick & Julie Dale with Erica; Gary & Ann Schwartzwald with Julie and Jacob, Mike Stilwell and Scott; Marty Brenner and his son; Henry Vaca and his nephew; Bryan McDaniel and his daughter; I am sure that I have listed them all and apologize if I didn't mention all names--but I think this is pretty impressive.

Have a great Holiday you great MAGICIANS ---ALL OF YOU.

President

Julie Dale

From the Editor

This is the last edition of MagiCurrents under the current Board of Directors. In June we cast ballots and the new board was elected. On Monday, July 10, that board will be sworn in at the installation banquet, and the next chapter of Ring 76 will begin.

I am fortunate to have been re-elected as your secretary and thus your newsletter editor. The newsletter is a challenging task, but an important communication tool. Through it members can keep up with events happening in the Ring, and around the magic community. I will continue to try and present the best newsletter possible, with the most current information available. It is my desire to make MagiCurrents a solid source of information for all of its readers, both local and across the country.

I have been fortunate this last year to cultivate many sources to help me fill these pages each month. Locally we have had the writing talents of our own Jack White. Almost monthly he has enlightened us with information on magicians and magical history. He has also had the unenviable task of providing obituaries for several of our prominent magic members. I look forward to continuing to present Jack's prose. Thanks to the Internet I have also had the chance to "meet" gifted magicians from across the country. Jon A. Hand, of Tennessee, has provided a steady stream of articles and ideas, and I hope to continue this relation ship. Margaret LeClair (A.K.A. Margareta A. Magician) gave us a woman's perspective on magic, and John Evernden (Olde Rabbit in Washington)) related his take on Kid's Shows, always a profitable area of the business. Finally from Utah, Jim Keplinger gave us advice on the art of adapting to these chancing magical times.

I will continue to search out different sources of information for this newsletter, and I will always welcome submissions by our membership. If you have something to say, Ring 76 wants to hear it. Please send it to me. I look forward to the upcoming year, and I hope you do also.

Your Secretary and Editor,

Richard Ustick

June Meeting

In June, Ring 76 held its traditional "Stand-Up Competition." Any member in good standing is encouraged to take the stage and show his skills before the best audience he will ever have. June is also the time that we vote for "Member of the Year." A salute to the person the Ring feels has helped promote magic, and Ring 76, in the last year.

Before the entertainment, the business meeting was called to order by president **Julie Dale**. The first order of business was the election of officers. The Nominating Committee presented the slate of candidates and, as there was no challenge, confirmation came with a voice vote from attending members. **Julie Dale** was reelected president, **Dick Dale** will be the new Vice-president of membership, **Tom La Chance** will be the new Vice-president of entertainment, **Gary Dismukes** will continue on as Treasurer, **Richard Ustick** will continue as Secretary and Newsletter editor, and **Don Soul** will be the new Sergeant-at-Arms. The new board will be sworn in at the installation banquet in July. The next order of business was the Installation Banquet. It will be held July 10 at the American Legion Hall. Those who plan to attend should contact Gary Dismukes as soon as possible. Julie Dale then thanked the current officers for their service to the Ring in this last year, and Cristina Ustick was thanked for all of her work in getting the monthly newsletter stuffed, folded, stamped, and mailed. Final order of business was the introduction of guests and the raffle. With no further business, the meeting was closed and the entertainment was free to begin.

The evening was hosted by **Dick Dale**, who had the unenviable task of making sure the show ran smoothly. Ring 76 hosts a fine collection of professional performers, but, as with any

live performance, unexpected things happen. It is Dick's job to make sure that the show goes on.

First up was the magical team of the "Snap-Dragons," made up of **Don Soul** and **Gary Schwartzwald**. Don chained himself up, climbed into the Metamorphoses trunk, locked it, then climbed on top to "transform" into Gary. Gary then called **Marci Bruce** up on stage and impressed us all with his mental abilities.

Next up was **David Silverman** who entertained us with the story of an Indian magician, known as Sasha. The story involved a voodoo card and, oft chosen audience member **Sherry Luft**. Whatever Sherry did to her card happened to the same card in the deck held by David.

The next to perform was our own "masked magician," **Bryan McDaniel**. Riding on the "popularity" of "exposure shows," Bryan showed magic tricks such as "Clipo" and then "exposed" how they were done, showing the reams of Scotch tape secretly palmed to fix cut pieces of paper. He then showed the well kept secret of the "Magic Coloring Book," and finally revealed the age old secret of "What's Next?" It is amazing how well a hidden magic marker can fool such an educated crowd. This comedy act was much appreciated by the magic audience.

Gary Dismukes was the next to perform. A rest from rapid patter, Gary did a silent display of crafty conjuring and skilled manipulation, all set to music. From a rolled up piece of paper he stuffed colored silks in one end and retrieved the same colored balls from the other. Balls multiplied from empty hands, silks vanished, and Gary demonstrated magical grace and charm.

Richard Ustick entertained the audience with his own rendition of Shania Twain's "Feel like a Woman." In this case he "feels like magic." Aided by his charming assistant **Cristina**, the

blend of music and magic was entertaining.

Our mistress of magic, **Diane Lane**, was next on the stage. She opened with a beautiful dancing cane to the music from Titanic. She then called up a member of the audience and tried repeatedly to find his chosen card. However failed force, wrong insurance policy, and defective card case could not help her find the card. Finally her "Mind Morphing Machine" let the audience find the chosen card.

The last act of the night was the mysteries of "Dark Dimensions." **Rick Bruce** and **Paul Thomey** lead us through the uneasy realms of darkness, and the creatures that lie within. Paul recruited a member of the audience to help track down, and stake, a vampire hidden among several sealed envelopes. As the stake went in, the envelope bleed, revealing the vampire within. Rick then called upon several "decrepit souls" from the audience to assist him in an on stage seance. "Spirits" unlocked their locks, and left a message on sealed plates. Rick finished the act by producing vampire Paul on top of the stage platform.

Once again the talent of Ring 76 was amply represented. The audience voted for the favorite entertainer, and the results of that vote will be revealed at the installation banquet next month.

**Attention Ring 76
Members!**

How Blackstone Handled the Exposure of the Vanishing Birdcage:

By Jack White

As magicians we all seem to be preoccupied with the modern day exposure of magic tricks in various forms of the media. Not long ago Frank Herman told me a story about the exposure of the vanishing birdcage that Harry Blackstone Sr., was featuring in his full evening show.

In 1933 full-page advertisements began to appear in a number of national magazines exposing the secrets to many of the most amazing tricks of the day. Below is an example of the birdcage vanish.



There it was for everyone to see the full working of the cage and where it went. This was just one of twelve such ads that appeared monthly.

When Blackstone's people saw the advertisement they urged him to take the trick out of the show. After all every child could see how it was done. Blackstone told his friends

it was too good of a trick to retire; he said he would change the routine and make it look like a different trick.

He would appear on stage carrying the canary

in the cage and they would both disappear. Someone would yell from the audience "It went up your sleeve." Blackstone would look at his heckler and say "no it didn't, I wouldn't do anything that old for this audience." Then he would start to walk off stage and say: "To prove it I will get another cage and another canary and do it again....Yes I will." For the second vanish he invited a mob of spectators onto the stage to put their hands on the bottom, the top, the sides and all around the cage and it would of course disappear before their eyes. Then he would say "feel my arms there is no cage up my sleeve". His helpers would feel his arms and then go back to their seats.

How did Blackstone get away with this bold maneuver? He was wearing a formal shirt with starched cuffs, as he offered his arms to be felt he did kind of a paddle move rotating his arms inside his sleeves. His own hand would also be patting his sleeves as he guided spectators efforts to find the cage and he kept this whole process moving very quickly and then dismissed his volunteers.

It is interesting to note that during this period in the late 1930's and early 40's when reporters would write reviews of the Blackstone Show they would almost always write that the Great Blackstone did not resort to the exposed up the sleeve bird cage vanish as shown in the recent Camel Cigarette advertisements. Blackstone's was a new more modern technique that allowed him to invite a committee on stage to touch the cage as it suddenly and magically disappeared. Blackstone's technique was just some darn good showmanship.

So the next time you learn that one of your pet effects has been exposed on television or in a magazine or newspaper do what Blackstone did give the effect a new look and routine and keep right on using it. And if someone questions you tell them you would never do anything that old or simple for your audience.

This may be your last
MagiCurrents!

Rising costs in paper, production, and postage, are forcing us to cut corners to save club money.

Starting next month only paid members will continue to receive this newsletter. If you have not yet paid your dues, it is not to late. Contact Dick Dale or Gary Dismukes today .

Don't miss a single issue!

But make it look different and like Blackstone be bold when you have to but be sure you can get away with your claims.

pictures, news, and artwork from all members of Ring 76, members of IBM, and magicians with a point of view. Material can be submitted by mail, in person, or by e-mail to rustick@flash.net.

MagiCurrents Letters and articles may be edited for space, and become the welcomes articles, property of MagiCurrents.

Board Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the home of secretary Richard Ustick. Member-at-large Don Soul sent his regrets and Gary Schwartzwald attended. All other Board members were present.

This was the last meeting of the '99-'00 board, and the first order of business was the election held last month. Julie Dale, Richard Ustick, and Gary Dismukes were all re-elected to their current offices. Dick Dale was elected to Vice President of Membership, Tom La Chance was elected to Vice President of Entertainment, and Don Soul was elected to Sergeant-at-Arms. They will all be sworn in at the installation banquet in July.

The next order of business was the new year. It was decided that the membership will be surveyed at the installation banquet, to see what they desire from the Ring in the upcoming year. The was done last year with some success. Categories that received no response last year will be deleted from this year's survey. These include Bag Magic, Backward Magic, and Theater Arts. It was proposed that an additional competition be added to the year's events. Categories such as "Comedy Magic," and "Best Lecture by a Club Member," were discussed. This idea will be on the survey form passed out at the installation banquet so that members may express their ideas.

The Legion is all set for the installation banquet on July 10. The price for the dinner and show has been reduced from the \$15 set last month, to \$12 for members, \$12 for guests, and children under 12 will still only pay their age. There will be two admissions points, the main door and one side door. Both tables will have a complete roster of members who have pre-paid. Members can pay at the door, but it is important to

notify Julie Dale for reservations. Decorations will be provided by Gary Schwartzwald and Richard Ustick. Gary will be responsible for flowers and Richard will be taking care of the table displays. As of this meeting eight tables are booked.

The installation banquet will also be the presentation of the Ring 76 awards. The winners of the Close-up and Stand-up competitions will receive their plaques, as well as the Member of the Year, and Entertainer of the Year. These plaques have been ordered by Raul Mauzy.

A motion was presented, and discussed, to have the year's Close-up and Stand-up contest winners perform at the installation banquet. This would become a tradition for Ring 76, to be repeated each year. Numerous advantages and disadvantages were presented for this idea, and an advisory vote taken. The board voted to table the idea at this time, but present it to the membership in the near future.

Dick Dale reported that the problems with securing the American Legion hall for Ring 76 meetings have been resolved, and that our meetings will continue at the hall for the foreseeable future. This is a relief to all members as the size of our attendees limits our venues.

Gary Dismukes raised a issue with the voting procedure at the Stand-up competition held at the June meeting. In the past all audience members were allowed to vote for contestants. This year voting was limited to members in good standing and their spouses only. Gary indicated that his wife did not receive a ballot and wondered if the voting procedure had been changed, or if other spouses did not receive ballots. Ralph Mauzy related that he endeavored to give a ballot to all members in good standing, and their spouses. The board will review this policy before the next competition.

Next month's Board meeting, the first with the new board, will be held on July

31 instead of July 24 as previously reported. It will be held at the home of Tom La Chance. As always all members of Ring 76 are welcome to attend.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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
(858) 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
(858) 484-3492
McGefty@earthlink.net

La Mesa, CA 91942-4312
(619) 697-9468
gschwart@Grossmont.k12.ca.us

Gary Schwartzwald- Past Pres.
6135 Hass St.

Monday July 10 at the La Mesa

Ring 76 Installation Banquet

**Featuring the Award Winning
Magic of**

**Terry
Lunceford**

The evening will also feature a
scrumptious Mexican Buffet!

Seating and Social Hour will Kick off at
6:30 pm

The Buffet will start at 7:00 p.m.

All this for the unbelievable low price of \$12.00
per adult. Children under 12 years old pay an
amount equal to their age

**Call Julie Dale today for your
reservations!**

Do you use the Internet to shop for magic, learn new tricks,
or converse with other conjurers around the world. If so,
Jack White would like to hear from you. Jack is currently
researching a article for a future edition of MagiCurrents
and wants your input. E-mail Jack today with your stories
of triumph or tragedy with magic on the web.
Write to Jack White at prestooone@home.com

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Subscriptions to MagiCurrents are
\$10 per year for out of area magicians.

Membership Questions should be sent to the
club treasurer, Gary Dismukes.

All Ring 76 members must be members in
good standing with the International
Brotherhood of Magicians.

Articles, contributions, and letters should
be sent to: MagiCurrents

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

Terry Lunceford Lecture

Terry will be lecturing on his unique approach to magic, how to incorporate comedy and audience participation, and presenting his unique line of award-winning magic effects on Tuesday, July 11 at the La Mesa American Legion Hall.

This lecture is free to all Ring 76 members in good standing, and only \$10.00 for guests.

Door open at 6:30 with the lecture beginning at 7:00

Upcoming Events

- July 10 Ring 76 Installation Banquet
Social Hour 6:30
Dinner 7:00
Entertainment by Terry Lunceford
- July 11 Terry Lunceford Lecture
La Mesa American Legion Hall
6:30 doors open
7:00 lecture begins
(See ad on page five for price information)
- August 14 August meeting, American Legion Hall
6:30 Pre-Meeting (To Be Announced)
7:00 Regular Meeting (To Be Announced)

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La Mesa, CA 91942**