



MagiCurrents

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Volume XIV No. 9 September 2000

Message from the President

OOOPS!!!!

PRACTICE - REHEARSE - PERFORMANCE - PERFECTION

Just knowing an effect does not make ONE A Magician. Really and truly, magic is an artistic delivery by a woman/man hence then called a magician. PRACTICE -- you get acquainted with the handling, as well as the ins and outs of the effect you are working with. Mirrors are great at this stage. Master, practice, master, practice the handling, sleights, and moves. This is step one and the ground rules. Don't perform without practice, that is the true difference between a magician and a poor demonstrator.

Now REHEARSE. Bring in the patter, bring in the family members for audience reaction, real time rehearsal, delivery, execution, persona and style. Again, again, again and again. You should not have to think where you are in your rehearsal or delivery of your magical presentation.

As you PERFORM, the hours of practice will be the foundation of your trick and abundantly clear to your audience---WOW!! Need I say more. But each time you perform is the highest level of rehearsal and refinement of your presentation.

Your performance will be your tag and the memory your audience has of your skill. Your skill will grow with each performance, so look for opportunities to express your growth. If you want return engagements, even with your beloved family, be the perfectionist you can be.

As you
PRACTICE- REHEARSE - PERFORM - PERFECTION
consumes you. Be the perfectionist of just one trick which

could become your trademark!!! Think Lefty???, Think White tigers???, Think Zombie??? Think Twisting the Aces??? THINK AND BRING PASSION TO YOUR MAGIC

President,

Julie Dale

West Coast Wizards Wow 'um by Don Soul

The kid performer show at West Coast Wizards Magic Camp was better than I expected. Even Dave Goodsell remarked at how entertaining the show had been considering that Eric Trout busted his butt getting it together and had doubts, at times, whether it would play well. Julie got picked to be an assistant for a prediction card trick. I said hi to Jacob but I don't think he realized who I was.

Lotta talent - especially a kid named Jeremy (I believe) who did the crystal balls manipulation using four on one hand. He went on for at least four minutes but could have stayed on longer, in my opinion. Also, some good material for Shaman Don to steal: Christopher Olsen performed the death-defying spork escape, parts of which I will be lifting. One other clever performer stood out - a skinny penny named Christy (hilarious deadpan delivery - had Dave howling with laughter at a simple change bag routine). Jann Goodsell performed and three illusions were included as well (although I think our metamorphosis is better).

The show ran 15 minutes over since the whole staff wanted to tribute Dave on his 61st birthday. He was in tears at the end. Andy Amyx went on about how the autographed picture he gave Dave could never have happened without attending WCW many years ago.

Michael Feldman reported to me that visitors to the hill throughout the week included several other Michaels - Mike Caveney, Michael Ammar, Mike Rogers -as well as instructors Bob Steiner, Loren Lind and George Schindler, Aldo Colombini, Eric Buss, Harry Anderson and Danny Cole. I take it the kids are tired and dazzled. I know I would be.

August Meeting

The August meeting is always one of the best attended of the year. It is the first meeting under the new officers, it is the last meeting of the summer, and it is the meeting where we do our favorite tricks. This month was no exception. We had all the new board members, 27 additional members, and eight guests.

The pre-meeting was something different. Recent Ring surveys showed that members wanted a chance to review magic tapes before investing their hard earned money. With that in mind we reviewed three selections of recent magic videos. Time was limited, but we got a chance to see a good representation of each offering. This may become a regular pre-meeting event.

President **Julie Dale** called the business meeting to order. She recognized the current newsletter which featured stories and photos from last month's installation banquet. She also mentioned that future editions of MagiCurrents will be featuring biographies of Ring members. **Seth Assre** recommended that the newsletter be sent via e-mail, reducing postage costs to the Ring. We already post **MagiCurrents on the Web** at **Kasners.com**. The treasurer reported that Ring 76 is financially sound at this time, and the minutes of the last Board meeting were approved. We then reminded the Ring that the Board meetings were open to all members, and their input welcome. Julie Dale then reviewed the member's survey conducted last month. She then polled the attending members on what they would be interested in doing at meetings for the new year. We will post results in the next newsletter. **Loch David Crane** sent his regrets, but through Julie Dale requested the Ring aid his attempts to

bring Magic Week back to the Villa Montezuma in Old Town. He is looking for performers and stage help for this annual event in October. Those interested were asked to call Tom La Chance.

Gary Schwartzwald announced that Martin Lewis will be lecturing at our October meeting. **Diane Lane** announced that her cable access show "Magical Moments" has been given a steady time slot on Time Warner cable. Her show can now be seen every Friday, at 6:30pm on channel 16, where Time Warner is available. Those interested in appearing (so to speak) on Ms. Lane's program, should contact her at www.magical.n3.net.

Secretary **Richard Ustick** reported that the Board was interested in recruiting members to contribute to the "Parade" section of Linking Ring. Any member who has an original trick, or unique twist on an established effect, should contact Richard Ustick for format information. With no further business, the business meeting was adjourned.

This month's magic theme was, "my favorite trick." Members were encouraged to bring that effect that they hold most dear. This is always a popular theme and many members participate.

Jeff Smith was the first to perform, and he set the tone for the rest of the evening. With his capable and lovely assistant **Sandy Lavn**, he first called up **Greg Wauson** and had him silently pick his favorite magazine from a collection of covers. Jeff then showed his guess (potentially embarrassing for Greg), but in the end the two selections matched. Jeff then called

Dawn McDaniel to the stage and had her pick an invisible card from an invisible deck. Jeff then pulled a very visible giant card from his coat pocket, and

they matched. Finally Jeff tried to find a vanished ring in a gum ball machine, but the effect evaded the competent magician. The results were amusing and in a way amazing.

"Entertainer of the year" **Brian McDaniel** was next to take the stage. He pulled out a small tube and proceeded to produce a big die, prematurely. He then had Jeff Smith choose a card, the Jack of Clubs, shuffled the cards, and produced the Jack of Spades in a bottle. Still, a good effect. **Gary Dismukes** followed him, who had a new twist on the old favorite "torn and restored newspaper." Gary had the pleasure of being the first act of the evening to go off without a hitch.

Jeff Marcus came to the stage with his bag of tricks and had member **Werner Von Bergen** choose a card. This was to lead to a great four ace trick with the chosen card found nestled between the aces. Unfortunately Werner chose an ace (a one in fifty-two chance) and the finish was not as grand as the flourishes. **Gary Schwartzwald** got the evening back on track with the help of **Diane Lane** and **Dave Minnick**. Each chose a card, showed it to the audience (but not the other helper) and placed it back in the deck. Gary then placed the wrong cards in the hands of Diane and David, only to have the cards correct themselves in the end.

Richard Pesce entertained the Ring with a fine "Cups and Balls" routine followed by visitor James Thayer's "no regrets" card trick with the help of **Donna Soul**. **Tom Kasner** then called up



Mystify Your Friends With This Trick.

David Minnick and **Richard Pesce**. Any card chosen could be quickly found, Richard chose the seven of diamonds as they all looked alike. Bob then showed, how fifty-two easy lessons, from a deck of cards and, with the help of Tom, David was able to "discover" could train you to print the cards, one at a Richard's card. **Syd Segal** dazzled the time. **Mike Stilwell** then made a Ring with fine coin and card surprise appearance as the last performer manipulation ending with a mixed up of the evening. deck rearranging itself with a chosen card Even with it's many glitches, the only one left face down. Former this was a most enjoyable evening. Ring president **Bob Pozner** ended the evening by showing his blank deck.

Magic notes from Jack White

Ring 76'er Sumit Dua Create's A Magic Web Site:

For some months I have been thinking about writing an article about the fast growing interest in magic on the Internet. Folks like Richard Robinson, Jim Sisti and Dodd Vickers have all made significant inroads on behalf of magic as an art using the Internet as a tool.

That grand performer and writer on magic, Mike Rogers of Valley Center has a unique web page and always has something interesting to say to fellow magicians on Joe Stevens Gemini web page.

Just as I was about to write about these pioneers in online magic I received a phone call from Ring 76 member Sumit Dua. He asked me if I had my computer turned on. I said I did. He asked me to call up this web address:

www.cardmagician.com

I did and low and behold I discovered one of the most unique web sites in magic.

It seems that while Sumit was setting up a new computer counseling service he was also spending time building his new magic website.

There are any number of features that you as a hobbyist or semi-professional magician can take advantage of on this site. There is a service that allows magicians to exchange e-mails, there is a sight to sell the magic props you are no

longer using and advertise for props you might need for an upcoming show.

There is a page for magic talk and the exchange of ideas. A history page on things that have gone before and of course there is a section where you can learn new tricks.

All of this started out to be a site devoted to local magic and there is a lot of that on the site. But in the short time it has been up magicians from outside the San Diego County area have found the site and are now contributing.

The best part of course is it is free. I have bookmarked the page and call it up a couple of times a week. Right now Sumit is looking for local magicians who want to contribute a profile or information on where they are appearing or a favorite trick to his page.

Like the MagiCurrents Newsletter these kinds web sites don't just happen they are the result of a lot of hard work. In the case of "cardmagician" a fantastic amount of work.

Take the time to look the site up, if you like it tell Sumit, if there is something you think can be improved upon then tell him and help him achieve it. This is a web site that can offer a great deal to local magicians, so become active and use it to your advantage. But most of all lets all take the time to say thank you to Sumit Dua for taking the initiative to put this sight together for our use.

Parlor shows to Close up miracles, entertainment for all ages. If you would like to appear, contact **Diane Lane**, producer, at 619-203-9986. **Magical Moments** can now be seen every Friday at 6:30pm on Time Warner's cable Ch. 16.

Guest Editorial

MagiCurrents will always be pleased to offer opinions and information from Ring 76 members and all members of the magic community.

Doing Magic for Teenagers

Among the toughest audiences for which you will ever perform are teenagers and elementary school students. I had my say on Kid's Magic Shows in the October 1999 newsletter, and now I'd like to take a shot at Teen Magic Shows.

In my discussions with other magicians, many seem to imply that teens only want to be grossed out or hit in the libido. Their rationales seem to be that "anything else is too childish for the MTV/Southpark/Comedy Central generation." Such well-intentioned magicians have advised Needle Through Arm, Arm Twisting, Head Cremation, etc., or else "blueing up" the material to appeal to teen prurient interests.

Poppycock! Such material generally only appeals to immature teen boys, and those young men don't need such off-beat interests encouraged as "entertainment." I would never advocate blue material for any age group, because one never knows who is watching that might be offended. One can lose a lot of work (magic as income), or lose a lot of respect from locals (hobby magician) very quickly.

The opposing view says that the material should contain information about

Safe Sex, Personal Safety, or Anti-Drug Use, so the show can be useful as well as entertaining. **Poppycock, again!** If one were doing a school assembly show, these positive messages would be a selling point to administrators who have to choose what to book with their limited budgets. However, when doing a general show for teens, I would not advise the "message" approach, as teens get tired of being "preached to" by all of the adults around them.

So, what does one do?

I work with teens every day (I teach high school and community college). I do magic for them from time to time, and any good solid material will work. I do card tricks, cups and balls, sponge balls, coin work, etc., and all of the material goes over wonderfully.

I think that one's best course would be not condescending to them, and not trying to cater to their tastes, which comes off as phony to them. Just do for them what one would do for adult "clean" shows, and the show will be fine.

One interesting idea for a large show theme would be a "teen night club" serving non-alcoholic drinks. For teens, I would make the club theme fairly

realistic and serious (instead of the satirical approach I might take for a retiree audience). But, with nice round tables and chairs (some high schools have this type of thing in their cafeterias), gentle lighting, and a 16' square 8" high platform (high school band risers, two 4'x8'x8" sections), one can emulate the night club atmosphere well. Good thematic scenery props can be purchased from prom catalogs if you steer away from those that are too cloying. Add waitresses running around the hall to



deliver drinks, and you are ready to go. I would think that a quality platform magician with carefully picked material might even be able to make this into a school prom gig, perhaps working the after-dinner part of a formal school prom before the dance starts.

Just keep the small teen show natural and fun, and the large one with a fresh theme that does not condescend, and the teens will have a blast!

Jon A. Hand, age 47, has been a hobby magician since age 8. He is currently working on a book of fresh plot structures and new sleights for the age-old Cups and Balls.

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Board Meeting

The meeting was called to order a 7:00 p.m. by president Julie Dale. Don Soul and Ralph Mauzy sent their regrets, and there were no guests.

Dick Dale reported that IBM national has raised the membership dues. New members will now have to pay \$55 and renewal will now be \$40. This should not effect new members who joined by the last meeting, as the notice was not received until the end of August.

October will feature a lecture by Martin Lewis. Doors will open at 6:30 with the lecture starting at 7:00. This is a free lecture to all members in good standing. Guests are welcome, with an admission fee of only \$15.

President Dale reported on the results of the opinion survey conducted at the last meeting. The figures mirrored those of the written survey conducted at the July installation banquet. The main exception was an increase in interest for a "dealer night."

The September meeting will feature a "surprise teach-in" as the pre-meeting theme with "Rope and String" as the theme of the meeting. All members are encouraged to bring their

favorite, best, or experimental rope or string trick.

Loch D. Crane sent an update on Magic Week at Villa Montezuma. He regrets to inform the Ring that his plans will not go through at this time. October will be landscape and maintenance month at the villa, so no programs will be possible this year.

The final order of business was the completion of the meeting calendar

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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

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for the year. September will feature a surprise teach-in as the pre-meeting, with Rope and String magic as the meeting theme. October will feature the Martin Lewis lecture. November is tentatively scheduled to be "Dealer Night." The dealer is yet to be announced. December is the annual Holiday Banquet with details to be discussed in the future. January will feature a pre-meeting talk on the principles of performance. The theme of the meeting will be Comedy Magic. The February meeting will be the annual Close-Up competition. March will host Ring 76's swap-meet and auction. April will be a lecture, to be announced. May will feature another video review at the pre-meeting with Paper Magic as the theme. June will be the annual Stand-Up competition and elections, with July hosting the Installation Banquet.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Next month's meeting will be September 25, at the home of Dick and Julie Dale. All members are welcome

HOW CAN YOU MESS UP YOUR FAVORITE TRICK? THIS MAKES NO SENSE TO ME!

If your messing up the tricks you call your favorite....what the [heck] is happening with the ones you only do every once in a while?

We "magicians" are always telling the new magicians, the students..PRACTICE < PRACTICE< PRACTICE!!! AND NEVER DO A TRICK UNTIL IT IS PERFECT.

I HAVE A RULE: If you can't do the trick in your sleep, with out thinking about it, if it is not second nature, if you don't know how to cover everything that can go wrong, if you can't do the patter only-with out the prop, if there is just 1

chance in a 100 that it will not be a success, then DO NOT DO THE DARN THING!!!!

I don't want everyone to think I am the high and mighty, and that I don't make mistakes....I am HUMAN TOO,,,Maybe my biggest mistake will be to speak out,,, Maybe you don't want to be embarrassed to say that your favorite trick is this or that.... So you throw in something you think we want to see..... , an I do make mistakes,,,,,I just don't start off by saying,,,Here's my favorite trick,,,,,

NEXT TIME JUST DO YOUR FAVORITE TRICK.....or explain....here's a little something I'm working on, that

Letters to the Editor

way when you it up we will all understand!

If you want to E mail me with your excuses then do it...MAGICMIKEOFSD@Aol.Com

Or you can practice a routine 3-4000 times and feel good about it!

Sincerely,
"Magic" Mike Stilwell

MagiCurrents welcomes all opinions. Letters may be edited for space.

Magic notes from Jack White:

After 50-Years in the Magic Business Jim Swoger Still Enjoys Helping Young Magicians:

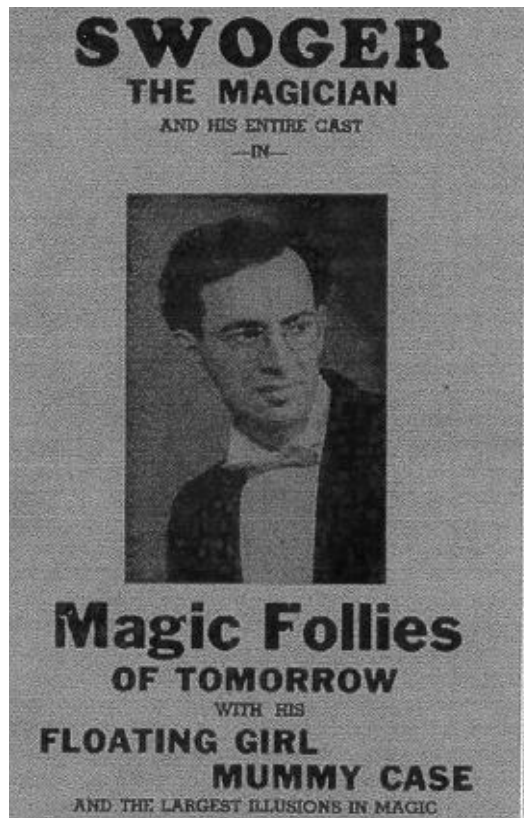
When Jim Swoger was about 5-years old his older brother Arthur taught him how to perform the cut and restored piece of string trick. Jim, at that young age of five was "hooked" on magic and now 75-years later he is still "hooked" on magic.

By 8-years of age Jim was doing a front and back card palm. By the time he was in high school he was building his own illusions and producing a full evening of magic.

During World War II he was assigned to a Special

Services Unit and worked in many variety shows entertaining troops as well as being a soldier and seeing combat. One of the other magicians in his Special Services Unit was Melbourne Christopher the late Dean of American Magicians.

After the war years Jim returned to his native Pennsylvania and began performing magic for a living. He realized he had to do more than just magic shows to make a living so he opened a shop and sold magic and gave lessons in slight of hand.



Below advertising is from Jim Swoger's full evening magic show about 1946.

I first met Jim Swoger through his advertisements in the Linking Ring Magazine in the late 1950's. Jim operated the "House of Enchantment" in a suburb of Pittsburgh. As a youngman living in Oceanside I would read his ads and write to Swoger and ask him about certain tricks he was selling. He always wrote back and we became sort of "pen pals" over the years. We are still writing to each other.

He is still helping young magicians and doing more than just teaching new slights and tricks. Recently a magician who worked restaurants asked Jim how he could get better tips. Jim suggested he take a little ceramic top hat with a rabbit coming out of it with him from table to table. Put a few dollar bills in the hat. When you set it down at the table tell the audience; "if they enjoy your act to feed the rabbit a little lettuce." After using this method for a couple of weeks the magician came back to Jim and told him he had tripled his tips.

What most magicians do not know is that Jim Swoger manufactured hundred's of magic tricks for other dealers and distributors.

Jim had always been very handy in the high school wood shop. He still has several large illusions he made as a boy and they could be

Jim Swoger, continued from page 6



Left to right: Jack White, Jim Swoger, Sammy Smith
Swoger showing a prop he made in 1957 in his shops.

Jim is a walking encyclopedia of magic of the past. He enjoys sharing his new ideas for old tricks. Recently Viking Magic

dusted off and performed today. After the war getting his magic business started was a struggle so he began building small props for distributors like U.F. Grant, and a dozen others.

Let Jim walk through a collection of older magic apparatus and you will hear him begin ticking off the items he has constructed. "I built that in 1947 and 48. Then he will point to something else and say I made those in 1951 and down the list he goes.

One of my favorite stories involves a blindfold drive that Jim presented in the 1950's. Jim was working with Mickey Marc's who had gained a reputation as a pretty good mentalist. Marc's wanted a good publicity effect to promote his show. He went to Jim for advice.

Jim hit on the idea of having Marc's blindfolded and would drive a car through busy city streets. But to add more showmanship to the drive Jim would be the "control" and sit beside Marc's and send mental signals as to when to turn or dodge an obstacle in the road. A newspaper reporter would also be in the car noting that Jim did not give any verbal commands just mental thoughts to the driver.

It was a very effective routine and got both men a lot of publicity. It gave the blindfold drive new credibility. The two presented this act in a number of large eastern cities. Each time thousands of people would line the streets to watch the blindfolded mentalist and his thought sending "control" drive by the crowd.

Today Jim Swoger and his wife live in a beautiful retirement community in Oceanside. His home is filled with the memories of a lifetime in magic. Not just performing, but creating, manufacturing and selling magic.

See Jim Swoger, page 7

reproduced his "Swoger Coin Box" and it is being widely used by today's close-up magicians.

Next time you see Jim at a magic function take the time to say hello and get aquatinted. Don't be afraid to ask a question because if you are asking about magic he will know what you are talking about and probably have a suggestion on how to do it better.

We Want you to share with us

The next issue of MagiCurrents will be our annual Halloween edition.

This year we will be featuring ghoulish advice on simple ways to make your act "to die for." If you have suggestions on Halloween show ideas, stories of shows that drove you bats, grave counsel on what to avoid in the monster routine department, or you just want to stake out that trick that will have them spinning in the grave, I want to hear from you. Please contact me at:

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Upcoming Events

September 11

8118 University Ave.
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re-Meeting:
Surprise Teach-in

Meeting Theme: **Rope & String
Magic**

September 25 7:00 pm
Board Meeting at the home of Julie Dale

October 9 6:30 pm American Legion Hall
Meeting: **Martin Lewis Lecture**

October 23 7:00 pm Board Meeting at the home of Julie Dale

November 13 6:30 pm American Legion Hall
Meeting: **Dealer Night**

I.B.M. Ring 76 Presents a Lecture by

Martin Lewis

Martin Lewis has devoted a lifetime to performing magic around the world. Best known for "Cardiographic", the original sketch pad card rise used by David Copperfield in his stage and TV specials.

Along with his unique comedy style, the lecture will feature something for everyone. Mr. Lewis will cover all skill levels, close-up, platform, mentalism, comedy and a children's close-up effect.

This lecture is "**FREE**" to Ring 76 Members. Guests are welcome for a fee of \$15.00.

This lecture will be at the October 9 meeting. Doors will open at 6:30, with the lecture starting at 7:00.

For more information, call Tom at 619-441-3747

6:30 pm American Legion Hall

Ring 76 is Online!

Want to see plenty of pictures and information on Quality Ring 76? Want to find out what is in

our library? Want to read past issues of MagiCurrents?

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