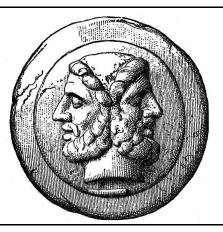


MagiCurrents



Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Volume XV No. 1 January 2001

Happy New Millennium

IBM Committee Working to Bring

2002 Convention To San Diego

In early December, IBM President Jack Greenberg confirmed that he and his committee are working to bring the IBM National Convention of 2002 to San Diego.

Greenberg said he and convention chairman, Jep Hostetler had successful meetings with hotels and theaters in San Diego, but to announce an exact venue for the 2002 convention would be premature at this time.

This will be the third time San Diego has hosted a national IBM Convention.

The last convention was held here in 1989.



(cover for 1989 IBM program.)

San Diego was also the first location for an IBM National Convention on the West Coast, the year was1978. Until then the IBM had never come west for their annual conclave.

The IBM did not begin holding conventions until 1926. In those early years as today some of the biggest names in magic attended these summer get togethers.

See Convention, Page 4

In Roman mythology, Janus (pictured above) was the custodian of the universe, the god of beginnings. The guardian of gates and doors, he held sacred the first hour of the day, first day of the month, and the first month of the year. It is for this reason that when the Romans redesigned their calendar they chose the name "January" for the first month.

Magic Notes from Jack White

Who Was "Honest Sid Gerhart?"

The photograph below is how most of us who knew him, remember "Honest Sid Gerhart" the flim flam man who did a pitch for the elixir that will cure everything from "aching teeth to tarnished silverware." Or his

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But Janus, as you have noticed, has two faces. One looks to the future, but the other is mindful of the past. This is the first issue of the rest of the century. While the future is now, and we look forward to the events and prosperity of the coming years, it is also a time to take stock, and look at were we come from. That is the foundation on which we build.

In this issue we pay special tribute to "Honest" Sid Gerhart. Most of today's Ring members never had the opportunity to meet this fine gentleman, and may not know why our Ring bares his name. We also look to the future at the upcoming IBM convention which may (or may not) be held here in San Diego. We then look at the past, and future, of legal actions against th IBM, and what effect that may have on our local chapter. Guest columnist Jon Hand asks the question, are "Mechanical Decks" really necessary, or is there an alternative? Finally, we have a look at last month's meeting/banquet, a New Year's message from our president, and a quick look at the magic news around San Diego.

We at MagiCurrents hope you had a safe and sane holiday season, and we look forward to new year, century, and millennium.

Richard Ustick

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Flea's,"

In real life Cecil Gerhart was anything but a "flim flam man". He was a successful businessman who operated a company known as S.O.S. Neon. As a youngman growing up in Indiana he learned the neon sign business inside and out. Sid was a very creative artist and in much demand at creating and servicing electric signs in San Diego County.

He and his wife and young son migrated from Indiana to the West Coast and San Diego in the late 1940's following World War II.

Fritz Lotze who was a close friend of both Sid and Helen's says that when their son was just a boy of eight

He became interested in magic. Sid took "PX" that is how the Gerhart's son was always known, to a magic (LeRoy Armstrong performing at ring reactivation program 1958.) shop. Sid found the tricks mildly interesting.

As PX progressed with his new hobby Sid encouraged his interest. At about age 14, PX found girls and deserted his interest in magic so Sid took his sons props and books and began playing with the hobby seriously

About that time the Gerharts found there was an organization called the Society of American Magicians and they had a chapter in San Diego. Sid joined the organization in the mid-1950's and was introduced to an entire new sub-culture of people known as amateur magicians.

One couple Sid met in the S.A.M. was Art and Pat Hannum, they shared Gerharts enthusiasm for magic and doing shows. They also found that a ring had been chartered for the International Brotherhood of $Magicians \ in \ San \ Diego \ in \ the \ late \ 1930 \hbox{'s and had been dormant since the War years.} \qquad So \ they \ reactivated \ IBM$ Ring 76. Now these magic addicts had a second venue for their hobby every month.

On November 1, 1958 Ring 76 was reactivated and became the "new magic spirit" for San Diego. Dr. Hollis A. Burge who had an interest in magic was the minister of the Baptist Church on 5 th Avenue and was Pat num's father, he became a member of the ring and gave the magicians the basement of the church as a place

Dick Rowe was the first Ring 76 President, Art Hannum was Vice President and Pat Hannum was Secretary. Sid and Helen Gerhart were not officers that first year but it soon became evident they were the mortar between the bricks holding the ring together. Closing out the show for that first Ring 76 meeting was LeRoy Armstrong who is still a ring member today.



Honest Sid Continued from page 2



One of the reasons members did not go to the meetings is because each week there was at least one magic party at Sid and Helen's home. Above is a typical evening in the Gerhart living room. That is Sid and Helen setting on the couch in the back of the picture. Sid felt magic was a social art and that magicians should socialize. He and Helen provided the place for that magic social.

In the mid-1960's the war in Vietnam was sending many wounded Marines and Sailors to the Balboa Naval Hospital. Sid got a group of Ring 76er's together and began presenting monthly and then weekly shows for the injured military personal. For patients who could not go to the meeting rooms where the shows were presented Sid organized a group of close-up performers to work at bedside.

It was an effort that magicians who gave of their talents will never forget.

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In two short years Sid Gerhart would be elected President of Ring 76 and at the sametime was serving as the First Vice President of the San Diego Society of American Magicians assembly



Above the out going Ring 76 President Jerry Johnson on the right gives the very ample gavel to incoming President Sid Gerhart who would keep the job as President for three, one year terms. (1960 to 1964).

Fritz Lotze and his wife Shirley moved to San Diego in the mid 1960's. He had been an IBM member in Indiana and in the Linking Ring Magazine found Sid's name and called him up when he got to Southern California

Fritz said he did not know a single person in San Diego and Sid and Helen welcomed the Lotze's with open arms. Fritz asked Sid when the next meeting of the Ring would be held. Sid gave him the date and the location and then told Lotze to be sure and bring a deck of cards just in case no one else showed up the two of them could go to a restaurant and do card tricks for the evening.

See Honest Sid page 3



The above photograph was taken in 1968 following a ring show. This is the Gerhart kitchen where everyone Will Staar is behind the post, Art Hannum in the back of the photo. Helen Gerhart just behind Fred Schmeltz of Baltamore, Maryland's, shoulder.

Though you can not see it in the photo the plank on the in the front of the kitchen post carried the autographs and phone number of every ring member, and/or magician that visited the Gerhart house. was everyone's name from Blackstone to Zimmerman.

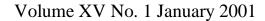
If they came to San Diego they had signed Sid's kitchen

That board and the signatures and phone numbers has survived all these years. When Sid died Helen gave the board with all the autographs to Fritz Lotze who happened to be remodeling his own kitchen at the time and found a place for it in his kitchen wall as a tribute to his longtime friend and fellow magician Sid Gerhart.

Another annual event that was created during this period was the exchange dinner with Long Beach Ring 96. The first year Ring 96 came to San Diego and they put on the show for our ring. to Long Beach and put on a show for them. Sid did his medicine show pitch and was a big hit. Chris Fair who was a junior magician from Ring 76 and had just been voted the "Top Young Magician in the Nation" at the IBM National Convention, was also on the list of performers from San Diego.



Honest Sid Continued from page 3



(Chris Fair IBM's Top junior magician in the nation 1960 Ring 76 member.)

The exchange visits between San Diego and Long Beach continued into the mid-1970's. his medicine pitch several times and decided it was time to change the routine. So he created the very funny and entertaining "Taming Wild Flea's" act that was as big of a hit as the medicine pitch act.

Sid Gerhart wanted everyone to participate in the ring activities. Magic had been very rewarding to him and he was eager to show others how exciting this hobby could be for them as well.

During these years Sid and Helen and the Hannum's were also active in the Pacific Coast Association of

(PCAM) and in 1963 hosted the annual combined convention of the PCAM and the Magigals at the U.S. Grant Hotel.

The success of that event put San Diego on the magic map and attracted the attention of the IBM Convention Committee who would hold the first ever IBM Convention on the West Coast in San Diego in 1979.

Sid and Helen Gerhart year after year welcomed new magicians to our community and made them feel at home in Ring 76 activities. One of those was Leo Behnke who in the 1960's was in the Navy and stationed here. He was often a guest at the Gerhart home. The meeting spots varied over the years, different people filled the job of president but always in charge and there to advise was Sid Gerhart.

See Honest Sid, page 4

One afternoon toward the end, Fritz Lotze visited Sid and told him the membership had agreed to name the ring "The Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76" Sid was too weak to acknowledge the tribute

The mast head of the Ring 76 newsletter that was in those days called the" Sprit of 76" bore his traditional straw hat and a magic wand along with the words Honest Sid Gerhart Ring.



For nearly twenty years the Gerharts went to at least one or two magic conventions every year. When they would get home they would have a party in their backyard and display

their latest awards or prizes or magic tricks from the convention. Then there was a barbque and a magic show.

In 1972 the Gerharts did not attend any magic conventions, Sid was not feeling well. In 1973 he was diagnosed with cancer and after a brief illness he died.

Magic in San Diego would never be the same. When Sid was ill it was decided that Ring 76 would be named for the man who had given it so much life.



No one would have been more proud of the growth and strides the ring has made over the years, than Sid & Helen Gerhart. Two people who loved magic, magicians and a good party

(Editors note: We wish to thank Art & Pat Hannum, Fritz Lotze and Jim Riley for photographs and stories used in this tribute to Honest Sid Gerhart.)

January is Comedy Month

Bring your favorite comedy trick to the January meeting and make your fellow magicians laugh.

Convention

Continued from page 1

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THURSTON streets of Lima, Ohio. He offered a thousand dollars to anyone who

The IBM's history is filled with colorful personalities. The 2002 event will nodoubt bring many of the most colorful people and names in magic today to San Diego.

Again from the past pages of IBM Conventions we look at a moment from 1928.



3,4,5 & 6 for the IBM Convention of 2002 in San Diego.

wore over his head.

(Lima, Ohio 1928)

could prove that he could see through the blindfold and the hood he

latest information on those attending and events that are being planned.

Above Josef Satani prepares to drive while blindfolded through the

Ring 76 members are encouraged to reserve the dates of July

MagiCurrents will have monthly updates on the convention and the

The above photo from 1926 shows four of the top performers of their day. Howard Thurston was at the peak of his career with his full evening "Wonder Show of the Universe". Axel Hellstrom was the eminent German Psychologist who could read minds. W.W. Durbin was the host for the convention in Kenton, Ohio and conducted tours of his Egyptian Hall Museum. Harry Blackstone presented features from his full evening show that was touring America.

These conventions have always been an opportunity for amateur and professional magicians from around the world to come together and

share common interest. that of entertaining with illusion.

Richard Ustick, Editor. All rights reserved. Some images copyright www.arttoday.com.

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

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

ManiCherenta is published manthly by Ring 76. od standing with the International otherhood of Magicians.

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New Year's Message from the President

Happy New Year!!!

I can't imagine that next year could be greater than this past year, but it can. Each year we build on our existing magical foundations adding new strengths and dimensions. I guess we can say we are seasoned. So if we look at what we have to offer and add something new and fresh, then we have



created something greater.

In the word of "magic" there is more than just an effect and a display for an audience. For this New Year appreciate the magic that you have within your children, your wife, your husband, your friend, or your parents. Appreciate the magic of a new career, new memories, new challenges, new fortunes, and new families. Just take a wonderful look at the difference magic has added to your lives. Each and every magician is rich deep into many millenniums. Have a healthy, safe, loving, and sharing magical NEW YEAR!!!.

Julie Dale

President

Mechanical Locations

Magic Shops make a lot of money selling Svengali Decks and Wizard Decks to beginners. Granted, in the hands of an experienced magician who exercises his developed presentation skills, these decks are a thing of beauty. For the beginner who has not yet learned the false shuffle and the false cut, using these classic Mechanical Decks is almost a time-honored tradition. For the stage professional, these mechanical decks can be an effort-saver when used as part of a larger routine. But are they really necessary? With a little bit of imagination and a tiny bit of work, the beginner or busy professional can create his own Mechanical Locations in only a few minutes.

Let us see how these locations work.

The Thick Card: George B. Anderson advises the thick card very strongly in his wonderful MAGIC DIGEST. While the book is aimed at adult beginners, it is too full of great tricks for an experienced magician to ignore. Glue a joker to the back of an indifferent card using a very thin layer Model Airplane Cement. Let dry thoroughly, and you have created a thick card.

To use the card, get accustomed to finding it by touch (a very easy task, indeed). Shuffle the thick card to the center of the deck. Have a card chosen by the spectator, and while he shows it around, cut the deck at the thick card, including it in the cut-off portion. Have the spectator replace his chosen card on top of the lower portion (your left hand, for most people), and replace the top. Now you can do a casual overhand shuffle and a few cuts to "lose" the card, keeping the thick card on top of the chosen card. For your final cut, cut to the thick card, including it in the top half, and complete the cut, leaving the chosen card on top for your pleasure. Anderson assures us that the thick card will NEVER be noticed by a spectator, and that he never had one discovered in years of using it.

The Slick Card: Put a thin layer of Simonize paste wax on the face of an indifferent card. Allow to dry a bit, rub off excess, and buff well. The

card face will be very slick.

Your handling is very similar to the thick card handling. Have a card chosen. Shuffle while

the chosen card is shown around, and then place the deck into the left hand. Put a bit of pressure on the deck with the right hand as you reach to cut, and the deck will cut automatically at the slick card. Pick up the top half (the slick card will be on the bottom of it), and offer the middle of the deck (left hand) to the spec to replace his chosen card. Replace the top half, and the slick card is above the chosen card. A brief overhand shuffle and a few cuts will make the card seem lost without separating the chosen card from the slick card. To find the card, a slight bit of pressure on the top of the deck during your final cut will cause the halves to slide apart, leaving the chosen card on top.

Incidentally, if you can do a really clean riffle shuffle, the slick card will then be TWO cards above the selected card. This means that after the final

View From the Cheap Seats

cut, you are all set for any kind of routine which needs a double lift to show the chosen card on top, such as AMBITIOUS CARD.

If you can force the Slick Card, then you can cut to it anytime you want, which might make a neat running gag in a series of card routines (i.e, revisit the first card chosen by cutting to it after every trick). You could even end this running gag, and perhaps your show, by putting the deck on the floor and giving it a gentle sideways kick; the deck will cut at the slick card, which you lift and show around for the final time as you take your closing bow.

If you have the patience and time to Simonize a whole deck, then you can change the value of the slick card to anything you wish from show to show; just remove the previous slick card from the standard deck and put in the new one between shows. Don't forget to remove the matching clean card!

Jon Hand

February is Closeup Month

This Year the Ring 76 Closeup Competition will be held at the meeting, February 12. Winner of the contest is determined by a vote of the attending members. All members are encouraged to step up and strut their legerdemain.

You Could Be Closeup Performer of the Year

IBM Threatened With New Law Suit

Several years ago the International Brotherhood of Magicians paid attorneys several hundred-thousand dollars to represent the organization in a lawsuit brought by a small committee of concerned members.

The suit alleged that the directors of the IBM had mismanaged the funds of the organization and demanded that the IBM open its books to the membership. The court found in favor of the (plaintiffs) the group bringing the suit and the IBM's books were then opened to close scrutiny by an auditing firm representing the membership and by those bringing the suit.

Now almost two years later Ken Klosterman, Scott Meyer and Glen Weissenberger the men who



Brotherhood of Magicians is forbidden in IBM bylaws from reporting any of these issues within its pages. Or from taking an editorial stand.

Holiday Banquet an Entertainment Feast

Interestingly in all of this the Linking Ring the official monthly magazine of the International

The December meeting for Ring 76 is our traditional holiday potluck dinner. This year over sixty-five members and guests gathered in the big room of the American Legion hall to raise a glass of holiday cheer and feast on favorite seasonal dishes. The Ring provided a ham and turkey, and each family brought a side dish, dessert, or drink. To paraphrase Dickens; "Heaped up upon the tables, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, hams, poultry, great bowls of chilly, heaps of salads, chowls of chips, baskets of warm breads, caldrons of casseroles, fruit-pies, glazed cakes, crunchy cookies, and large bottles and cans of carbonated beverages, that made the chamber din with sound of their fizz."

The evening started with a no- host social hour where members and guests mingled and talked of plans for the season, news of the day, and tricks of the pocket. Then everyone lined the food tables and sampled the fare. No one left for want

After the food had settled Territorial Vice President **Dick Dale** presented President **Julie Dale** with a "Certificate of Recognition" from International President **Jack K. Greenberg.** It was for **Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76** for "Fifty years of excellence in promoting the ideals of brotherhood and artistic achievement from 1949-1999." It was a great honor for our group.

The next order of business was entertainment. This was provided by this year's Close-up Performer of the Year, Terry Godfrey. An accomplished showman, Terry eagerly took to the stage. His first miracle was a monetary one. Popularly know as a "Miser's Dream," with the help of volunteer Alex Ustick, Terry produced dozens of dollars, and countless coins, not only from the air, but from the ear, nose, and throat, of his willing assistant. Next Terry dazzled the audience with his famous "Chinese Rings" routine. This time his audience volunteer was the lovely Cristina Ustick, whose giggles and blushing were almost as entertaining as Terry's magical skills. Following the rings Mr. Godfrey produced a long rope and told of how he entertains his pets by making the rope have two ends, three, and then four. Then Jolene Sebastian came up on the stage and helped Terry with a dazzling display of the classic Egg Bag. The final effect of the evening was a great Cups and Balls routine. This is what Terry Godfrey is known for and we all could see why.

The end of the evening was the holiday gift exchange. Everyone inclined brought a simple gift and placed it on the gift table. Numbers were drawn and the presents passed out. Some were magical treasured, some were videos, others were seasonal treats. The imagination of Ring 76 was well represented.

With the evening at a close, everyone packed up, cleaned up, swept up. We then all vanished into the cool Southern California night, with the glow of the holidays in our hearts.

brought the original suit are once again threatening to take the IBM's board of directors back to court for failing to comply with the earlier ruling,

Klosterman, Meyer and Weissenberger say the earlier litigation ensured their rights to inspect all the books and records of the IBM. Now they allege that certain important documents, including hotel contracts have been withheld from their inspection.

Meanwhile the IBM Board of Directors say the only items withheld were the fees paid to entertainers for performing at various IBM Conventions. For professional reasons those fees are kept private.

The issue took on new prominence in the December issue of *Genii*, an independent monthly magic magazine. Those suing the IBM took out a double page advertisement reprinting a complaint they made to a judge in Cincinnati, Ohio where they originally filed their lawsuit.

The complaint states that if the withheld information is not supplied the three concerned members will bring a new lawsuit.

On December 8th the Wall Street Journal newspaper caught up with the story and reported a second lawsuit could destroy the International Brotherhood of Magicians by depleting its treasury to pay expensive legal costs.

The IBM has threatened the plaintiffs with personal liability if they continue their legal actions. However the IBM made those same threats in the past and lost.

Now that the issue of this legal action has moved outside of the pages of magic journals and into the mainstream news media. You will no doubt be reading and hearing more about these ongoing legal maneuvers



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Magic



Newsline

San Diego Magician *Craig Stone* in addition to working for several cruise lines is now also part of the Fujitsu Road Show. Fujitsu operates 40 companies in the United States and Craig does magic at their promotional seminars around the country. He was on the Monarch of the Seas from December 3rd to the 10th. On December 11th he was in Fort Wayne, Indiana for Fujitsu, on the 12th in San Diego for NCR, on the 13th in Napa for Fujitsu, on the 16th back at sea on the Majestic of the Seas to January 15th. That is a busy magician. The best part was that his wife and daughter got to travel with him at sea during the Christmas Holidays.

New Years resolution for Las Vegas Magicians *Siegfried & Roy*, they will charge a little more to see their show after January 1st. Admission to the Mirage Showroom for S&R will jump to \$100.50 per person. The magic duo has also cut the number of shows they present every week from 10 to 8. The famous team of illusionists have two years left on their contract at the Mirage and there are persistent rumors that both men are ready to retire from performing when this contract ends. The Siegfried & Roy show has always been one of the priciest tickets on the Vegas Strip.

On December 7th, 20 members of *Mary Brown's* Junior Magician's group from Francis Parker School toured *Jack White's Magic Museum. Bob Ingalls* was also on hand to do some magic for the excited youngsters. Jack presented John Booth's "Hydrostatic Glass" effect using the same glass that Booth himself used from 1932 to 1958. Bob Ingalls did his clever and funny, "Cards Across" routine. Jack talked about the importance of preserving the props and books of the past. He then produced several very old and prominent pieces of magic apparatus and talked about their history.

On the subject of junior magicians, no one has come forward to assume a leadership role for the **A.C.E.3** (Artists Circle of Enchanting Sorcery) a group of young magicians 14 to 19-years of age. **Rick Bruce** who founded and mentored

the active junior prestidigitators for five years says he expects the group to d isband in late January. Rick says he no longer has enough time to devote to the vibrant young magi. His appeal for help and a new leader has gone unanswered at this writing.

We have learned that **Vincent Herman** who as a boy assisted his father **Frank Herman** in his magic act, has died. Vincent's death came in late September, his father an Honorary Lifetime Member of the IBM preceded his son in death in January. Our deepest sympathy go out to Vincent's mother **Georgia Herman** of Carlsbad.

On a recent Thursday evening the President of the IBM Jack Greenberg and his wife Carole were seen having dinner at the Gathering, a restaurant featuring magicians in the Mission Hills area. Joining the Greenberg's was Ring 76 President Julie Dale and IBM Territorial Vice President Dick Dale. The Greenberg's were here to begin to finalize details of the 2002 IBM National Convention. These are exciting times for local magicians.

Ring 76 member *Don Soul* was a featured performer at the Southern California Cartoonist Society Christmas Party in December. As after dinner entertainment Don had a pizza delivered and caused it to jump from one pizza box to another much to the delight of the surprised audience. On the same program was another longtime Ring 76 member *Bob Ingalls* who was able to demonstrate his drawing skills for the cartoonists. Bob performed Martin Lewis' rising card on a drawing board. The cartoonists were very impressed.

Longtime San Diego County magician Jack Evans has had a very busy holiday season in 2000, and has added a new mechanical clown to his act. The clown dances the "twist" while Jack's other mechanical friend; a monkey plays the symbols and upstages the magician. Younger audiences are especially delighted with this combination of comedy and mystery.

If you do kids shows you might want to read Jeff Brown's new book "Crayon Magic" published by Sammy Patrick Smith. Two San Diego County magicians are contributors, Stacey MacKenzie and James Swoger. Swoger has given a dozen of his pet secrets on crayola magic to the book including his "Color-Changing Crayons" and a very clever mental routine titled "Colorful Thoughts". Stacey MacKenzie has an equally baffling routine with crayons that get eaten up in the crayola sharpener. Some good material from two talented San Diego magicians.

Gary Salisbury magic enthusiast and collector has built a new magic room and library in his home and dedicated it to San Diego magician *Phil Stagg*.

Gary says his magic den is complete with an automated Gypsy Fortune Teller, a door that leads to a secret room, his magic collection and his library of 300-plus new and vintage magic books as well as a collection of 350 video tapes on magic.

Gary became interested in magic when he



was 7-years old watching a magic shop demonstrator do the "Imp Bottle". Now that his magic room is finished he is starting to remodel his kitchen. Good luck Garv.

Amusement Business Magazine reports as the U.S., economy clipped along at a steady pace, people were willing, if not eager, to get out and have a good time in 2000. Theme Parks reported record attendance in the year just past. Attendance increased just over four and a half million people in the U.S. The most popular amusement park remains Disney World in Florida. Sea World of San Diego ranks 11th in the top 50-parks. The publication goes on to say that more magic shows were on tour and more magicians were working than at anytime in show business history during the year just past.

Do you do MAGIC?

Or Just Tricks?

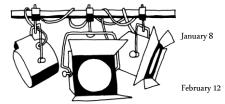
 $Knowing \ the \ principles \ of \ performance \ and \ stage \ craft \ can \ be \ the \ difference \ between \ being \ amusing, \ or \ being \ an \ ENTERTAINER$

Come early to the January meeting and hear the value of performance and

stage craft. Even if you only do closeup, you're bound to learn.

6:30, January 8, American Legion Hall, La Mesa

Upcoming Events



6:30 Pre-Meeting: Principles of Performance and Stage Craft
Meeting Theme: Comedy Magic
Bring your favorite comedy trick to perform for the members

Annual Close-up competition

Doors open at 6:30 Show starts at 7:00

All members in good standing are encouraged to participate



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Bring all of your slightly used treasures to sell ${\hbox{Or come for the}} \quad {\hbox{bargains}}.$

April 9

Guest Lecture TBA
Ring membership due



6040 Bob St.

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