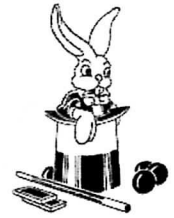


Ring 76 Chartered by the International Brotherhood of Magicians in 1958



# MagiCurrents



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Volume XVII No 2 February 2003

## 19 New Members to be Inducted into Ring 76

The International Brotherhood of Magicians is asking all Rings to have an official installation ceremony for all new members. In recent years Ring 76 has been remiss in carrying out these important ceremonies. The board of directors has decided to hold official installation ceremonies at our regularly scheduled meetings in February and August of each year.

Because we are having our first such installation at the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, we are installing all members who joined in the year just past, 2002. We have 19 new members: Gerald S. Jagorda, Lane Lee, Kenneth DeWoody, David Gutierrez, Lance Pollard, Phil King, Marc Halberg, Josh Jones, Paul Killea, Andrew Martinez, Billy Razor, Neal Reed, Dina Reed, Kenny Shelton, Charlie Gott, Howard Harris, Josh London, Ted Dunning, and Glenn Pinto.

All of these new members are asked to be at the February meeting if possible to receive their official Ring 76 certificate and be installed as members of our Ring.

This ceremony will be brief. It is an opportunity to officially say hello and welcome to each new member. Ring 76 President Don Soul and IBM Territorial Vice President Jeff Marcus will conduct the installation ceremony and hand out membership certificates.

Immediately following our new member ceremony, we will have our annual close-up magic contest.

## Annual Close-up Contest Feb 10th

The Ring 76, February 10<sup>th</sup>, meeting is one of the most anticipated evenings of the year: our annual close-up contest. This event is open to all members and each contestant is judged by the general membership. The winner will receive \$50; dollars, second place, \$25; dollars and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, 15; dollars.

The awards will be handed out in July at the Ring 76 Installation banquet. This is the first year we have offered a cash prize for second and third place winners.

**Last year's first place award of \$25; dollars went to Tom McCarthy.** This year a video camera and big screen television will be set up so that everyone in the room will be afforded a close up view of the action by each performer. Every member of Ring 76 is invited to take part in this contest. Performer sign-up is the evening of the contest.



Tom McCarthy receiving 1st Place award from Don Soul, July 2002

The Ring 76 Board of Directors has put a time limit of 10 minutes on each performer. Each contestant will be timed, and anyone going over the allotted 10 minutes may be penalized. There is no penalty for going less than 10 minutes. Ballots will be handed out prior to the start of the contest.

Everyone is encouraged to take part and be a contestant. Come early and get a good seat and cheer for your friends.

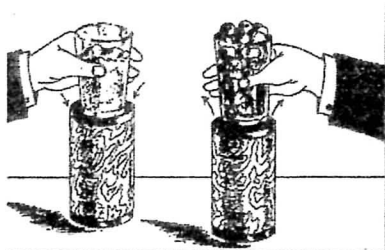
## January meeting brings variety and EST to our monthly gathering

The first meeting of the new year was presided over by President Don Soul and included several important pieces of business. Performers are needed for the Ring's public show in Oceanside, March 8<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to be part of that show, see Jack White. Rehearsals will be held in mid-February. Announcements for lectures were made and guests were introduced.

Entertainment Vice President Bob Ingalls was unable to attend following eye surgery to repair a detached retina. Taking over for Bob as Master of Ceremonies for the evening and doing a very good job was Richard Ustick, who had several snappy opening lines to get the program off to a good start.

The theme for our entertainment was a trick with EST. That means the bestEST, funniEST, fastEST, craziEST, wildEST, (you have the idea by now?). Jack White was the first performer and told the audience he was going to do the "sweetEST"

trick he knows. J.P. Jackson our resident collector found a very old version of EZ-Magic's *Candy Factory* with the large glass and the big plastic insert in a box of junk magic. The two of them polished



Candy Factory ad from 1948 Douglas Magicland catalog

up the props and worked out a routine that allowed Jack to ditch the plastic fake with the sugar in the well of a table. At the end of the routine when Jack showed the metal tube empty, a thunderous round of applause rose up from the surprised audience. Jack announced he began doing the trick when he was 13 years old. For the old-times in the audience, it brought back a lot of memories; for the

youngsters, they had never seen the trick before and it was something new to them.

Following Jack's presentation was skilled member David Guterrez, who with the aid of Diane Lane, switched a five dollar bill for a one dollar



David Guterrez & Diane Lane

bill. David called it his fastEST trick.

David has made great strides in his magic presentation. Next, cardman Kenny Shelton did his very beautiful version of card to the pocket that was climaxed by producing four aces, and finally, the whole deck found its way into the pocket. Kenny is a high energy performer and pushes hard. His trick was the finger-flingingEST trick.



Kenny Shelton



Tom McCarthy

Our close-up performer of the past year, Tom McCarthy, took center stage and presented a new and clever version of Three Card Monte with two blank cards, a face card, and a paper clip. The moves the way Tom presented them look perfectly fair and the spectator could never find the face card. This we can safely call the MontEST of all three card montes.

Next came another smooth and experienced performer, David Eldridge, who had Sherry Luft select a playing card. Then using unusual psychic powers, David influenced audience members to remove cards from the deck until only one remained – it of course was the card



David Eldridge

Sherry had earlier selected. It is a knockout effect that can only be called the bestEST.



Don Holcomb

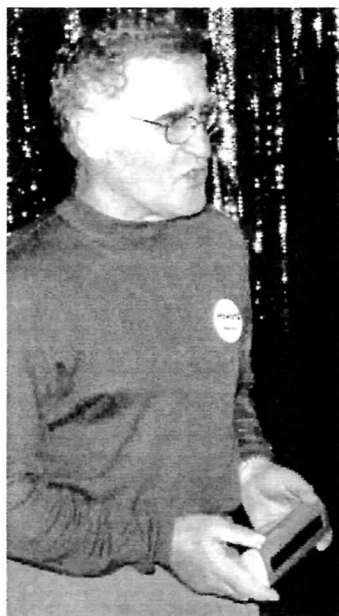
Veteran performer Don Holcomb brought out a box full of props and first showed us a fancy looking -but empty- silver cask. He then filled it with cotton balls; then, he took a paper cone and filled it with milk. When he opened the cask, it was filled with milk and the cotton balls were now found in the paper cone. It was some nice old

magic with colorful props that Don tells us are 50-plus years old. Making it the oldEST of magic presented.

Next up was the comedy magic of another veteran performer, Phil King. Phil had a card selected from a jumbo deck and then replaced anywhere in the deck. After some clever patter and funny material, the oversized card could not be found in the deck, in fact it had disappeared completely. But when Phil resorted to a regular sized deck, the card magically appeared. It was the biggEST card trick of the evening.



Phil King



The ever original Howard Harris exhibited an electronic desk calendar which displayed the greeting, "Hello Ring 76." On a screen on the other side

Howard Harris and his sensational clock trick

of the calendar was the day's date, time, and temperature. A card was then very fairly selected from the deck by a spectator. The card was replaced into the deck and, after some thought control, the name of the selected card appeared on the side of the calendar where the greeting to Ring 76 members had appeared earlier. This was the show stoppenEST trick of the evening.

Jim Thayer, who recently returned from a sea cruise, related a true story. It seems that Jim was doing some close-up magic for his dining room companions when the cruise director spotted him performing and urged Jim to become part of their Cabaret Night



Jim Thayer

Show. Not having any apparatus didn't stop Jim, he found a hank of rope and a pair of scissors and delighted his seagoing audience with a wonderful cut and restored rope routine. He called this his impromptuEST rope routine.

Territorial Vice President, Jeff Marcus then stepped forward to show us his mathematical prowess. He asked a member of the audience to think of a number between 50 and 100. The number 83 was selected, and Jeff drew a large magic square of 16 cells. Having random spectators point to a cell, Jeff quickly wrote a number in that spot. When all the cells were filled, the total of the number in each direction or any adjacent four cells totaled the selected 83. This was the difficultEST trick of the evening.

Our Ring's senior member Jim Swoger, who will be 86 in February, had Diane Lane select a card. Diane then cut and shuffled the cards. After several near misses, the selected card



Jim Swoger & Bob Pozner

was found, of all places, under Diane's firmly placed foot. Working from his wheelchair showed that he can still entertain when called upon. The seniorEST performance of the evening.

**Continued on next page**

*January meeting continued from page 3*

The final performer of the evening was cartooning wizard Jim Whiting, who opened a plain white paper napkin and displayed the front and back to the audience. Then, with his forefinger, he punched a hole in the middle of the napkin. Suddenly a metal thimble appeared on the end of his finger. Jim then did a series of vanishes and recoveries with that illusive thimble to a delighted audience. Leaving us with the magicEST evening we have had in a longtime.

We were able to round up all of our performers for one last photograph before the meeting ended.



Jeff Marcus, David Guiterrez, Phil King, Howard Harris, David Eldridge, Don Holcomb, Tom McCarthy, Kenny Shelton, Jim Thayer, Bob Pozner, Jim Swoger, Jack White, & Jim Whiting

Many of our members broke up into groups and watched at the bar as Tom McCarthy did some card tricks.

Others formed up at nearby tables for yet another session of magic. The after meeting is sometimes the mostEST fun.



Tom McCarthy, Don Holcomb, Diane Lane, Kenny Shelton & Bob Pozner

Magicians were still doing tricks for each other at 10:30 when Jack White called lights out. Many of those folks then headed over to Dennys coffee shop, for still more magic.

On Tuesday evening January 14<sup>th</sup>, another large group of Ring members showed up at Jack's Magic Place for a lecture by Jay Leslie who is a member of Ring 313 in Orange County. Jay operates the House of Enchantment in Huntington Beach. For many years he operated a

retail store; today he sells via the Internet [www.houseofenchantment.com](http://www.houseofenchantment.com) and manufactures a large number of effects and produces his own video tapes. His lecture included a series of ball minupulations, followed by his Ultimate Ring & String routine, and his coin through silver dollar effect. It was a full evening of stories and magic.

Jay had been active in magic when he was just a boy and assisted Bozo the Clown on television. Jay grew up in Jim Swoger's magic shop in Pittsburgh. Jay's mentor was on hand to heckle the lecturer, but Jay gave as good as he got. For Ring members this was a free lecture and everyone seemed to have a good time.



Jay Leslie & Robert Rabbit

On Wednesday evening January 15<sup>th</sup> Gary Dismukes brought Bill Goldman, popular Genii magazine columnist and magician, to San Diego. This was Goldman's final lecture of his current tour that has taken him across the country. The first part of his program was his show. He then went back and explained many of the effects he had presented. Bill does a lot of work with cards but has taken the difficult moves and sleights out of his work. He believes in simple, straight forward magic with a good story to go with his tricks.



Bill Goldman

Goldman made a great point about creating stories to go around your magic tricks. He likes to take interesting events that have happened to him and make them into stories for the tricks he presents. He says that way your magic becomes more personal for the audience. The second portion of his lecture included a lot of tricks that were not his and many thought it became more of a dealer demonstration than a lecture. Most people found something they liked and said they would use it in their future shows. The extra lectures made the second week of January a mini convention in San Diego.



## Magic notes from Jack White

### Getting tied up in magic

I was in Las Vegas a few weeks ago and caught a magician doing walk around magic at a casino. The area the magician was working in had games for young people to enjoy while their parents were in the casino gambling. One of the routines this magician presented was a "thumb tie", and he got a lot out of it. Watching this fellow work reminded me of a tie that was shown to me by an old-time showman I met while I was in the Army and stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I used this method while in the service on a number of occasions and made it up with the help of my handy U.S. Army sewing kit.

I talked the supply sergeant in to giving me a section of an old bed sheet and then proceeded to cut the material into a series of strips about an inch wide and 6 inches long. Cross two of the strips at right angles and sew them together with a couple of loose stitches of white thread. You will also need two more strips that are not stitched. A pair of scissors, a couple of single hoops or linking rings, and you are ready to perform.



Invite a spectator to come forward and pick up the two loose pieces of material and lay one inside the other at the center, so when you hold the ends of the bottom strip, the top strip hangs down over the center. Place the spectator's right thumb inside the top strip of material and tie it tightly around his or her thumb. Then place the other thumb under the bottom strip of material and tie it tightly so that both thumbs are tied securely. Have the person walk around and show the other spectators he is securely tied. After you have proven he is well-tied, with your scissors, cut the spectator free.



You have now in effect shown the audience what you want them to do to you. Now you pick up the strips of material that are sewn together. Casually show them, no one will think they are gimmicked in anyway because you just did the same thing to the spectator. What you are doing is putting your thumb in the center of the top tape that is held together by the stitches you put in earlier. Have them tie your

thumb securely, and then quickly do the something with the other thumb. It now appears you are tied up the same way as you earlier tied the spectator.

All you have to do is turn your thumbs slightly sideways and you will break the thread and you can pass your "tied-together" thumbs through solid objects, catch rings on the arm or pass your hands through a pole or walking stick. When you have finished your routine, have the strips of material cut off your thumbs by a spectator with the scissors.

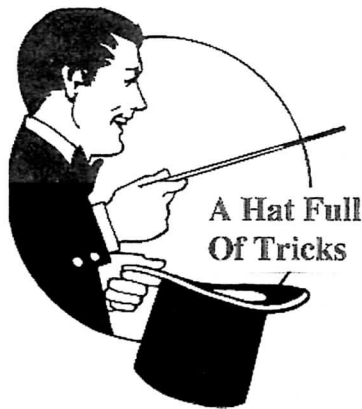


I suggest that anyone serious about doing a thumb tie routine read volume 4, lesson 53 on thumb ties in the Tarbell course on magic. That book is in the Ring 76 library and is available to all members. There is a number of different ties in that chapter but most of all Tarbell talks about the importance of showmanship in presenting this effect.



The old magician who taught me the above routine and the fellow I watched recently in Las Vegas really knew how to sell this effect. They truly made it look as though the objects were magically melting through their tied hands. Frances Willard, a few years ago, told Ring 76 members in a lecture that the only trick her father, Willard the Wizard, included in every show was the thumb tie. It is one of those great effects that packs small and plays big and is always amazing if presented with good showmanship. It is a bit of business that can be made up for only a few cents. Take the time to work up a good routine and present it at a future Ring event. I want to thank Don Soul for making the drawings to illustrate the workings of this routine.

A couple of after thoughts on doing a thumb tie routine. Along with good showmanship, it takes a little acting ability and a lot of nerve to pull this trick off. Work out the kinks at home and then give it a try in a show. At first, don't make it a feature effect; audience test it a couple of times. When you start feeling comfortable with it then make it a feature of your act.



By Josh London

**(Editor's note: We asked Josh London to write a column on his first lecture tour that was conducted in early January. Next month Josh will return with a trick or two.)**

"So, how was it?" This is a question that I got asked numerous times after my first lecture tour. My little brother Jared, and I embarked on a three-day lecture tour to Palm Springs, San Jose, and Santa Clarita. It started on January 7, 2003. The first lecture in Palm Springs (which, by the way was only my 2nd lecture) was great. Except for the flat tire I experienced on the way to Palm Springs.

We arrived in Palm Springs around one o'clock in the afternoon, checked into the hotel, and walked around the city. Then we went to the lecture. It was held at the local YMCA building. They meet in an aerobics room, because there is a huge mirror behind the audience, I used it to its full advantage. I had a card picked, looked in the mirror, saw the card then replaced it in the deck. I then told them the card; they were amazed. There were about 15-20 people at this lecture. After the lecture, my brother and I went back to the hotel and went to sleep. We were up at 7 a.m. and on the road to San Jose.



In the car my brother told me that some guy came up to him and said that he has been doing magic for fifty years, and my lecture was the best



Josh London in Palm Springs

he had ever seen. That felt really good. The folks in Palm Spring went out of their way to make me happy, and I will definitely remember that!

In San Jose we found the location of my next lecture, drove around to find a hotel, then decided on the Super 8. The hotel was only a block away from the lecture which was held at the Old Republic Title Building. When we arrived for the lecture, there were



far more people here than at Palm Springs. There were 40-50 people here. I set up did my thing and received a great response. It seems (and this is an ongoing thing at each lecture) that everyone wants to come show you their newest effect.

So as usual this kid comes up with a deck of cards. He was really shy. He said, "can I show you something?" I said sure. I thought that he was going to show me a double lift or something. But no, he showed me a 10 packet false cut that used his chin. I couldn't believe it. I have never seen a 10 packet false cut! I was blown away! Anyway, on to Santa Clarita.

On the way to Santa Clarita, my antenna (which was broken from when I went through a toll booth, and the arm thing came down on my antenna) finally broke off. I stopped and got some duct tape and fixed it. Thank goodness for duct tape! In Santa Clarita, their meetings were held in the Hilton Hotel right across from Six Flags. We got a room three feet away from the room where I was lecturing. There were about 20 people at this lecture.

A fellow got up and talked about how to make flash paper; it was rather boring. This whole production took about 30 minutes. Suffice to say, the lecture did not go as well as I thought it would go, meaning I didn't even make enough to cover our room rent. That, of course, was not the case the other two nights, when I was pulling in \$250-\$300 a night. As it was a free lecture I expected to make a little more money than I walked away with. For me it was a good learning experience.

All in all, I had a great time, and I am now setting up another lecture tour. At this writing I have Hollywood, and the IBM in Orange both scheduled for February and Orange County Ring 313 in June.

So to answer everyone's question, "How was it?" All I have to say is, "Very lucrative!!" and very educational.



## Magic Pro-Tips

By Brad Burt

**Making Our Magic More....Well, Better!**

This month's magic philosophy beast comes snarling into the light from I know not where. I always wanted to use the word "snarling" in one of these musings.

That said, it came to me that we all can make our magic better and with a little thought I came up with a gazillion different ways.

Well, maybe not a gazillion, but quite a few. Let me list some of my thoughts, I'd like all of you that are interested to think of your own pointers and let me know what they are at [www.magicshop.com](http://www.magicshop.com).

To start: *Voice*. The human voice is a powerful performance tool. Is your voice interesting? Or is it so bland that it can put people to sleep with bore-

dom? Do you take command with your voice or does it trail off and lose your listener? What can you do to make your voice more interesting without spending a ton of money on voice lessons? The answer to that question is to everyday read out loud from various books or newspapers in differing dramatic styles varying your tone, quality and volume. Learn to speak clearly so that each word is understood by every member of your audience. Read sections of Hamlet with a barely suppressed laugh or a comic piece as if you were delivering a funeral address.

Our hands, the second most visible thing we use in our performance. Are they clean, neat and well cared for? Do we use them consciously and with flair. Do we use them expressively? Try this: Stand in front of a large mirror and practice moving your hands. Find moves that work for YOU and work on them.

That's it for now, but WHAT can you think of that ANY performer of magic could attend to that would help improve their overall performance? I would like to hear from you, so e-mail me.

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## View from the Cheap Seats



**By Jon A. Hand**

Review: 101 Magic Tricks Exposed, by Herbert L. Becker, published 2002.

This slight paperback may well be the single most destructive book in the history of magic. In this, his third volume, Herbert L. Becker continues his sheer exposure of valuable methods in active use by professionals around the world. However, instead of deconstructing grand illusions as he did in the previous two books, Becker attacks close-up tricks, parlor & stage apparatus magic, and small illusions. My quick skim through the table of contents at the nearest Books-a-million showed a horrifyingly complete list of methods of active repertoire waiting to be "revealed" to the uninitiated.

Becker makes no pretense of teaching, or even serving as a consumer buyer's guide for developing magicians. On the contrary, the book absolutely lives up to its title, offering only cursory descriptions of such classics as Four Ace Assembly, Needle and Balloon, Dove Pan, Vanishing Bowl of Water, Harbin's Chair Suspension, and Gwynne's Flying Carpet, to name only six of the 101 tricks that Becker destroys for the reader. And cursory they are; there are thankfully few illustrations, and most of the 101 tricks entail less than two pages each for their secrets to be desultorily revealed. The young wannabe magician and the curiosity seeker alike will find this book disappointing, because it will crush the life, the wonder, out of these 101 tricks.

**I considered buying this book merely to get it off the shelf in the bookstore. Then I reasoned that productive sale of the book would mean reorders, more printings, and possibly even a fourth volume, so I abandoned that idea. I surely hope that no one makes the mistake of getting this book onto the list of recommended books for school and public libraries, for in such places it would do serious harm, both to magic as a form of entertainment and to the future of young magicians who would otherwise get their start**

**in real beginner magic books in such libraries.**

Becker should be ashamed. This effort, like his previous two volumes, is detestable. Avoid this like the plague, and bury it in the stacks if you find it in your local bookstore. If it doesn't sell, it will go away, and Becker will not be able to write another one. Absolutely, positively NOT RECOMMENDED.

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Review: Darwin's Inexpensive Illusions. by Gary Darwin, foreword by Lance Burton. Self-published 1995. \$29.95 gets you an autographed copy postpaid from the author.

I have seen the advertising copy for this booklet in catalogs for the last several years, but it sounded too good to be true. After all, the subtitle promises 40 inexpensive illusions in only 25 pages! Recently, however, I picked up a used copy of the book for the paltry sum of only \$10 (one cannot get two comic books for \$10 these days!). Nothing sparks the imagination of the public like an illusion using a human being as the focus of the magic, so I happily acquired the book for my collection.

The book is a gold mine of ideas for the magician who wants to add an illusion or two to his act. These illusions are short on expense and high on entertainment value. By choosing his materials and construction carefully, the performer could fit almost any one of them into his car. The stage and platform magician who chooses his material carefully could do an entire show out of one briefcase (see View From The Cheap Seats from 2002 for a pair of articles dealing with just that subject) and close with one of these illusions to leave the impression of a "big" show.

There are basically three concepts employed here, and they are expanded into 40 different illusions. Although the three concepts are well-known both to the average well-read amateur magician and to most pros, no one seems to have given their implications as much thought as Darwin has. In fact, Darwin states in the book's introduction that he worked on the book for 20 years. The variety is superb: vanishes, productions, transformations, levitations, substitutions, transpositions, penetrations, and more. Many classic effects are here in inexpensive form: Film To Life, Things That Go Bump In The Night, Sub Trunk, DeKolts Chair, Sawing In Half, Shadow Production, Stretching A Girl, Doll House, Sword Box, Cargo Net Vanish,

**Continued on Page 10**





## MIND OVER MATTER

By David Eldridge

### Flip Flop

This is a nice little card plot. It is similar to a Max Maven effect that was presented on television a few years back.

**Effect:** An envelope with a prediction inside is placed in full view onto the table. Five spectators are each given a set of five ESP cards. Each spectator freely mixes his or her cards. The cards are then given a Random Mixing Procedure that puts cards face up and face down. The mentalist then points to one spectator, and informs her that she has only one card face up, in the center position, and it is the star card. She spreads her packet, and finds that that's indeed the condition of her cards. Now, the other four spectators are instructed to spread their packets. When they do, it is found that all of the packets are in the same condition. The prediction is then removed from the envelope. It is a packet of ESP cards in the same condition as the spectator's packets.

**Method:** Into a coin envelope, place a packet of five ESP cards with the star card face up in the center position. Place this envelope into full view, and you are ready to perform.

Give up to five spectators a packet of five ESP cards, one of each symbol. Have each spectator freely mix his other cards as much as they like. When they are satisfied, take the packet from spectator A, and turn it face up to casually show the mixed condition of the cards. As you do, cut the packet so that the star Card ends up second from the face. The positions of the other symbols are irrelevant. Do this with each of the other packets. Thus, this is why you only want to do this with four or five spectators, and not the entire audience.

You will now have the spectators go through a "random mixing procedure." You will have them do it twice. The first time will be to set the cards, and the second time will be to arrange the final outcome. Of

course, you will not inform them of this. I am going to explain this in numbered steps. It is easiest to follow along with cards in hand. In fact, in performance it is a good idea to have a packet of cards yourself, so that the spectators will have a visual idea of what you need them to do. However, do not show them the outcome of your packet at the end.

1. Hold the packet face down in dealing position. Place the top two cards, as one, to the bottom of the packet.
2. Turn the top two cards over as one, and place them on the bottom of the packet. Repeat this step two more times.
3. Turn the entire packet over.
4. Place the top two cards, as one, to the bottom of the packet.
5. Turn the next two cards over as one, and leave them on top of the packet.
6. Turn over the top single card.
7. Now, I will give you a choice. You may either turn the next two cards over as one, OR you can leave them as they are.
8. Turn over the top three cards as one.
9. Turn over the top four cards as one.
10. Turn over the entire packet.
11. The entire packet is now composed of a face up face down mix. Place the top two cards, as one, to the bottom of the packet.
12. Again, I am going to give you a choice. You may either turn the next two cards over as one, OR you may leave them as they are. Now, place them as one on the bottom of the packet.
13. Turn over the next two cards as one, and place them on the bottom of the packet.
14. Once again, you have a choice. You may either take the next two cards, as one, and turn them over, OR you can leave them as they are. In either case, place them, as one, on the bottom of the packet.

**Continued on page 11.**

## Continued from page 8

Cremation, and many more. As Darwin's Introduction points out, most of them would be more effective in these versions than in the expensive and bulky cabinet versions, since the articles used are so obviously ordinary: tables, chairs, sheets, and cabinets made of foam core or corrugated plastic. I would think that most of these illusions could be made for under \$200 each. Despite the use of only three basic methods, there are enough redressings of appearance and replottings of illusion that the materials for one illusion could easily be reused for a completely different illusion, making changing illusions from one year's tour to the next even less expensive.

The book is basically a working notebook of simple sketches and hand-lettered instructions. Two of the three basic concepts are presented in the first two pages, and the third is implied in explaining alternative approaches to the others on those same pages. Because these three concepts form the core of the book, making the leap from them to the 38 other illusions is not difficult. Rarely is there insufficient information to prevent the making of any of the illusions, and essential details are provided in the author's own hand. In some cases, only the picture is necessary if the underlying concepts are understood and the plots of the illusions are known.

There are several points which should be addressed. First, the book is weak (and sometimes non-existent) in presentational hooks, which I feel is a good thing. Each performer should use his imagination to present and justify the plot of an illusion for his audiences. Individuality of style is the hallmark of a good performer. Secondly, the instructions on lighting are very vague, but many of the illusions depend upon lighting techniques that contribute mood and help hide methodology. As a result, the performer will have to resort to trial-and-error to make his illusion work as expected, which is also a good thing. Superb illusions require split-second timing and effective lighting for their success; using trial-and-error will result in the performer's giving adequate preparation time that can turn a puzzling illusion into a miracle. Thirdly, no suggestions for music are included (indeed, there is not even any mention of music). Effective illusions need strong music to underscore their moods. Think of the illusions as little plays, or live movies, in which the music does as much as the visuals to create audience impact.

Lastly, there are numerous misspelled words

and inadvertently omitted words which make the reading a bit irritating at times.

Despite the above shortcomings, I suggest you purchase this booklet. Perhaps \$29.95 is a bit pricey for a 25-page hand-written manuscript, but the concepts are excellent. If you use even one illusion idea in a paid show, the book has more than paid for itself.

Finally, to point out just how effective these illusions are when performed correctly, I note that Lance Burton's *Duel of Death*, David Copperfield's *Bumps In The Night*, and Okito's *Shadow Box* were all performed using methods similar to these. So, choose an illusion, devise its presentation, construct it, practice it incessantly, add your music and lighting, practice it incessantly again, and go knock your audiences cold! **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

### MagiCurrents on Ring Website

Ring 76 President Don Soul, who is also our Webmaster, has been for a long time trying to find a way of putting our MagiCurrents newsletter on our Webpage. With the January newsletter the problems were worked out and you can now read your MagiCurrents online. As a bonus the pictures in the online version are in color.

To quickly download the newsletter from our Website you will need a handy little program called Adobe Acrobat, which is free and can be downloaded to your computer. Our Website will have instructions for those of you wanting to download the program. This is another giant step forward in streamlining our Ring and our Website.

[www.ring76.com](http://www.ring76.com)

### A MagiToon

by Jim Whiting & Ellen Friedman



"Don't come any closer.  
This thumb is loaded!"

## San Diego Clowns bring gifts & magic to Mexico Holiday

by Diane Lane

Just when you thought the holidays were over, on January 5<sup>th</sup> all of Mexico celebrated The Day of the Kings. Early that morning I joined about 20 members of the *San Diego All-star Clown Club* at the San Diego



Railroad Museum in Campo, in the east county, for a train trip to the Mexican community of Tecate, across the International Border.

The train was made up of historic rail cars and had volunteers to help brighten the holiday season for thousands of children who, with their parents, live a meager existence in Mexico. The train was loaded with gifts and entertainers for an afternoon of fun.

Upon our arrival in Tecate, the train was met by a hord of people; eager children and adults were



waving from the side of the tracks. All 20 of the clowns in full make-up and costume were hanging out of the open windows of the vintage train

and waving back to the crowd.

We are talking about people who live in real poverty and this was truly a special day for them. Each child was given presents that included a toy of some sort, notebooks, pencils, a variety of small toys, apple, toothbrush, toothpaste, and a lot of other items that had been donated by merchants in San Diego.

For the clowns it was an opportunity to entertain: some juggled; others had comedy bits that transcend the language barrier, and still others did magic for the youngsters. You become so involved in making sure that all of the children are taking part and enjoying the entertainment that it is suddenly time to pack up and leave. The train whistle sounded and we all boarded the cars for the trip home. It was a quiet ride back as we watched the rugged terrain fly by and reflected on the day and gave silent thanks for the many blessings we have.

## **Mind over Matter Continued from page 9.**

15. Turn the entire packet over.

16. You may now turn the top two cards over as one or leave them alone, but whatever you decide, put them on the bottom of the packet.

17. Turn the next two cards over as one, and leave them on top of the packet.

18. Turn over the top single card.

19. Turn over the top two cards as one.

20. Turn over the top three cards as one.

21. Turn over the top four cards as one.

22. Hold the packet in your hands.

If the instructions have been followed, there will only be one face up card in the center of the packet. It, of course, will be the star card.

## Appeal for Help to save life of IBM member's daughter

What do you do when you learn that your child has been diagnosed with aplastic anemia and their only possible chance for survival is a bone marrow transplant, but the National Bone Marrow registry with millions of samples does not have the perfect match to save your child's life?

**You ask for help! That is what long-time IBM member and TVP for Colorado and Wyoming, Ed Hurtubis, is doing right now. He is asking all IBM members to go to their local blood bank and have your bone marrow typed. He and his daughter are hoping that someone will be a perfect match and be able to supply a few ounces of their healthy bone marrow and save his daughter's life.**

Robbie Willmarth, the IBM National Membership Chairperson, is urging all members between the ages of 18 and 60, in good health to become a member of the Bone Marrow Registry. You might be the perfect match for Ed's daughter or for one of the other 3000 people who are in need of a bone marrow transplant today.

If you can help by being a match you are producing the miracle of life. Now, that is real MAGIC.

## Mark's Magic by Mark Stone

**Editors note:** This month we begin a series on platform magic routines by Mark Stone who is also known to many as Marcos Dimenstein, the man who founded and operated, *Cosmar Magic Company*, during the 1980s and early 90s. His magic props and original effects were admired around the world. Mark has been interested in performing since he was a youngman and is a past president of Ring 76. He is sharing with us many original effects that he intends to put into a book. This is the first in a series of **Mark's Magic**. We are indebted to him for once again sharing with us.

### TRANSPARENT TOP HAT

The transparent top hat was at the time of its release in 1985, the most successful item sold by Cosmar Magic. Immediately after the ads appeared in *Genii* magazine, orders for this item came flooding in from around the world, then almost immediately cheap pirated copies of this effect began showing up in Japan and Mexico and quickly made their way into the U.S. marketplace. What I present here is my original idea and routine.

The clear plastic top hat can be found from time to time on used magic lists or the online auction Ebay. You can also find a couple of different style clear heavy glass top hats in novelty and antique shops.

### EFFECT

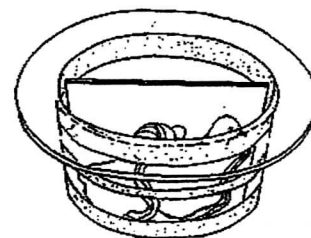
The performer holds and shows empty a clear lucite, normal size top hat. He covers the hat with a silk, makes a magic pass, and without any extra movements, whisks the silk away. In a flash, multi-color flowers fill the hat and fall in a cascade to the floor. At the end of the flow of flowers and for a dramatic finale, a white dove flies out from the hat.

### APPARATUS DESCRIPTION

The Transparent Top Hat is a replica of a normal size top hat but made in clear lucite, a plastic removable mirror fits at the center of the hat. If the prop is covered with a foulard and the performer grabs the foulard and mirror the edge of the mirror will be evident to the spectators in the foulard's fabric. To

avoid this problem a piece of wide white ribbon has been stuck in the back top edge of the mirror.

This way the performer will pinch with only two fingers, making it easy yet



deceptive to remove the foulard and mirror. The sudden production of the flowers and later the dove take the heat off of the gimmick or mirror under the foulard.

To enhance the effect of emptiness, the hat is decorated with reflective stripes that shine in the mirror, giving a perfect illusion of a unprepared clear, empty hat.

### PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE

Also needed for the production items are about twenty spring flowers. I recommend the kind of flowers that are made with a shiny, colorful mylar finish. Also required is a dove and an opaque twenty four-inch silk or a foulard.

Due to the central mirror, the upside-down hat is divided into compartments, the back compartment facing the mirror's dull side and the front compartment facing the mirror's polished side.

The load, that includes dove and folded spring flowers, is placed in the back compartment; the ribbon attached to the mirror's top edge is placed on top of the load. This effect can be presented as a opening or anytime during your performance. I like it best as the finale to my act.

The upside down hat is held in the left hand on your palm with the load facing the performer. The hat's brim should be up to about the performer's chin and about 10 inches from the body. The foulard is draped over the left arm.

### ROUTINE

The hat is shown (as mention above) "empty" to the audience for just a few seconds; next the foulard that is draped over the left arm is taken with the right

**Continued on page 13**



hand and placed on top of the hat, covering the hat completely.

The performer at this moment, with the left foot advanced a step forward, makes a magic pass with the right hand over the hat, and immediately the right thumb and middle fingers pinch the foulard and ribbon attached to the back of the mirror and whisks both away. The instant the mirror is removed, the spring flowers unfold and fill the hat, the dove remains unseen covered by the paper spring flowers.

Without delay the hat is shaken with short up and down movements and the flowers fall from the hat in a colorful cascade. At the end of the flow of flowers, the hat is given a upward short tossing motion and the dove flies out from the hat and perches on the hat's brim.



With the left hand holding the hat and producing the flowers and dove, the right hand hangs naturally at the performer's right side and, because the left leg is slightly forward, the right hand with the foulard and hidden mirror, go unnoticed by the audience.

## Survey of Holiday Shows

In an independent survey of performers and their shows during the holidays just past we found some interesting information. MagiCurrents talked with 22 performers that ranged from magicians and clowns, to disc jockeys who have portable units and provide music for partys.

Repeat business was how the majority got paying jobs. Only six reported they had more than three new gigs during this holiday season. Sixteen of the performers said they had fewer jobs than the year before. All said their fees have not increased in the past three years. All reported they were sending out more advertising materials promoting themselves and their entertainment.

The photo to the right

is of Mike Stilwell, one of our local performers who was kept very busy during the holiday season just past. This photo was taken the weekend after New Years at a private party Mike has worked for the past five years in Escondido. Magic Mike has cut his performing schedule to spend more time at home with his sons, but was kept busy this holiday season.



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## Message from the President

I'm really looking forward to this month's Close-Up competition. I reviewed our board notes and found the prize values for both the stand-up and close-up competitions to be \$50 for 1st place, \$25 for 2nd and \$15 for third. Certainly, that's incentive enough to prompt you to roll up your closeup mat and jump into the contest. The cash awards will be given at the installation banquet in July.

Got a call from Kathy Bruhn, docent for La Playa Children's Hospital Auxiliary, asking for volunteers (i.e., no remuneration) to entertain kids terminally-ill with cancer at the annual fun run at the Seaport Village embarcadero park. Please, if you can, plan on performing for awhile between 10 and noon on Saturday, May 17th. Give Kathy a call at (619) 224-7793 if you want to do anything to help, be it balloon blowing, magic, clowning or whatever your entertainment skills are. It's a good opportunity for those who want to test the waters of entertaining for a crowd and your time will be well appreciated.

Last month I made reference to the notion that Ring 76 will be offering professional videotape production of meetings and requested that members refrain from setting up their recording equipment for the convenience of other members. Such idea met with resistance and my ultimate responsibility is to allow the membership the freedom they desire. At this point I see no reason to discourage anyone from taping meetings (lectures excluded) but request that photographers be respectful of others.

*Don Soul, Ring 76 President*

## Classified Advertising

**Grant's "Silver Spout Keg"** here is a beautiful vintage, liquid production of "any-drink-called-for" from a medium sized keg. (8 1/2 X 5 1/2) Keg shown empty, ends capped with tissue and silver bands, silver spout pushed through tissue and drink production begins. Complete with original instructions. Very good condition: \$75.00

J.P. Jackson phone 858-569-0096

**Original Al Baker Rice Bowls:** Rare

Large china bowls. These are very hard to find in this new condition. Standard effect: rice doubles in quantity, then rice changes to water and is poured from bowl to bowl. Charlie Miller used this effect in his cruise ship act. This set includes the rare rubber cover. \$45.00

J.P. Jackson phone 858-569-0096

**Real Doctor's Bag...** Carry all your close-up magic in this great case. Good used condition, hard to find item. \$75.00 Phone Bob Ingalls 619-990-6822

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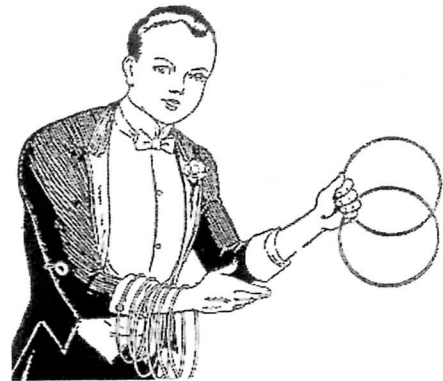
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## MagiCurrents:

MagiCurrents is published monthly by Ring 76, San Diego. Editor is Jack White, editorial offices are at 4275 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105. All submissions and letters should be sent to the above address or e-mailed to prestoone@cox.net,

## News

**Terry Lunceford's** popular magic effect, the Snake Basket, is prominently featured in a play at the Mystery Dinner Theater at the **Imperial House** on 6th Ave., in San Diego. One of the performers has a very different routine with the basket, as well as the head twister illusion. This show opened in October and will run through February. The magic is a surprise and draws good reaction from the audience.

Magician **John Bahu**, who works part-time at **Brad Burt's Magic Shop**, is a professional photographer when he is not enjoying his hobby of magic. John recently sold a beautiful color aerial photograph of the Hotel Del Coronado to a San Diego, calendar company. His photograph is featured above the month of December.

Two Ring 76 members are recovering from serious health challenges.

**Loch David Crane** is at his Pacific Beach home after doctor's removed several skin cancer from his right leg. He has to stay off of his feet for six weeks. That is difficult for the active Bafflin Bill Cody. **Bob Ingalls** had a torn retina in his right eye repaired and was forced to cancel his planned trip to Las Vegas and the World Magic Seminar in mid-January. Doctors believe Bob will experience a full recovery and not lose any sight in the affected eye. He should be able to remove the patch over his eye by late January.

Former San Diego magician and Ring member **Joe Thompson** died December 30<sup>th</sup> 2002, at this home in Columbus, Pennsylvania. Thompson was a maker of underwater films and was associated with the legendary Jacques Cousteau. Over the years he won several Emmy awards for his adventure documentaries. Thompson developed an interest in



magic as a youngman and continued that interest most of his life. He came to San Diego in 1964, working out of his home and studio in Point Loma, living just around the corner from **Jane Thurston Sheppard**. He was a member of the IBM, Ring 76 and the Magic Castle. His library and collection of magic was impressive. He returned to his native Pennsylvania in 1990. Cause of death was complications from diabetes and heart disease; he was 73.

One of San Diego's busiest magicians **Terry Godfrey** attended the Western Fair Convention in Las Vegas in early January. At that meeting, exhibitors and performers of all variety meet with the managers of the various fairs in the 11 western states. This year Terry was handing out a booklet he has written titled "The Ultimate Entertainment Plan," his amazing secrets for using entertainment to guarantee fair patrons return year after year. His publication was eagerly accepted by fair management, and he is hoping for a full schedule of performance dates this summer. Nice piece of promotion, Terry!

Longtime Ring 76 member **Jim Riley** was recognized for his work at Children's Hospital. Jim is a volunteer at the hospital. "Caring...The Children's Way" presented him with an award for his continuing service. **Roy and Betty Armstrong** are also featured in a beautiful color photograph in the hallways of Children's Hospital for their efforts as volunteer entertainers.

## Briefs

These efforts make us all proud of our fellow magicians and the many hours they donate to the community.

**Tom McCarthy** has signed on as the regular Sunday night magician at the **Gathering Restaurant** in Mission Hills. Tom is replacing **Jeff Smith**, who is relocating with a new job to Florida. McCarthy is a superb close-up performer and should create a lot of interest among the regular patrons who go to this popular restaurant to see good magic.

**The Sphinx Magazine**, published from the 1920's until 1951, will be reissued on CD Rom in the next few months. Every page of the famous magazine, with all of its pictures articles and tricks, will be available as an E-book. If you had a complete run of magazines it would take at least six feet of shelf space to store it all. It is not clear what this new E-book will cost or how many discs are in the set. It will take less than six inches to display five decades of magazine on CD Rom.

At the World Magic Seminar in Las Vegas in early January, **Jason Lattimer** received the Sarmoti Award and a big cash prize from **Siegfried & Roy, Masters of the Impossible**. Jason is a friend of Ring 76 member **Ralph Mauzy**. After receiving his award Jason invited Ralph to accompany him to a reception hosted by Siegfried & Roy. The guest list included most of the talent agents in Las Vegas, who all agree Jason Lattimer is a rising star. At the party, Ralph had a long talk with Siegfried, who says it is tough doing the same show night after night, year after year.

**Diane Lane** tells us her **Magical Moments TV Show** is now seen on Time-Warner Cable on Mondays at 5 pm. Channel 19. On Cox Cable the time remains Sunday at 8 pm.

**February 10th Meeting: The Ring 76 Annual Close-up Contest:**  
Jack's Magic Place, 4275 University Ave. Pre-meeting at 6:30 pm.  
Meeting at 7 pm. The contest is open to all members, with a time limit  
of 10-minutes per-contestant. First prize is \$50.00 Also, installation  
of all new members. See list of names on page 1.

**February 6th, Paul Green Lecture, sponsored by Ring 292 at Bakers  
Square Restaurant, 7 pm., 1630 Descanso Ave, San Marcos.**

**February 24th, David Regal Lecture: Jack's Magic Place, 7 pm. \$20 at  
the door. See Syd Segal for advance tickets which are \$15.00.**

**March 8th, the Ring 76 Public Show in Oceanside at the Star Theater  
March 10th, Meeting exchange show with Ring 292 in the North County;  
they will bring a program to San Diego.**

**April 14th, Ring meeting is our annual magic swap meet and auction:  
Reserve your seller's table early so as not to be disappointed. See  
Richard Ustick.**

**February board meeting on Tuesday, the 25th, a day later than usual  
because of the David Regal lecture.**

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