

Ring 76 Chartered by the International Brotherhood of Magicians in 1948



MagiCurrents

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Recipient of the IBM's Quality Ring Award

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Ring 76

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

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Jim Riley to receive the 2006 Lifetime Achievement award from Ring 76

The board of directors of Ring 76 has voted to honor longtime Ring 76 member Jim Riley as our Lifetime Achievement award winner for 2006. Jim has been a dues paying member of Ring 76 since 1966, he is a member of the Order of Merlin, over the years Jim has served on the board and as President of the Ring. Jack White remembers that in 1969, Jim



Jim Riley Circa 1990s

would come to Jack's house one week before each month's Ring meeting, accompanied by George Edwards, and the three of them would put together the monthly newsletter called "The Seer" originally and then in the mid 70s its

name was changed to "The Spirit of 76." There was always a sharing of card tricks at these editorial meetings, some magic talk, a brief writing lesson from Jim and about ten o'clock each evening the newsletter would be finished and everyone would go home. Jack says that was a monthly practice for years.

Jim grew up in San Diego; his first exposure to magic was watching a pitchman doing the Svengali Deck at the fair in Del Mar. When he was in the 6th grade he met a man named Gordon Plummer who was a teacher, writer, scientist, musician and magician. Gordon became Jim's mentor in magic and a lifelong friend. (Gordon Plummer lived until just a few years ago; he was 99 and still very active

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March meeting includes J.C. Wagner Lecture

The Ring 76 Monday, March 13th meeting will feature a lecture by San Diego magic legend J. C. Wagner. John Wagner received his interest in magic from his



J. C. Wagner

grandfather and, by the time he was a teenager, began reading every book he could find on sleight of hand. As a youngman, he teamed up with another San Diego magician, Bob Sheets, and the two became famous for their work behind a bar entertaining with just a deck of cards.

If you attended the Ring 76 December meeting, you received a taste of the outstanding work of this performer. At his new lecture to be presented Monday evening, J.C. will present some of the material you saw in December, and you will see some new material he has been working on for this new lecture that will eventually take J.C. Wagner around the world.

A longtime supporter of the I.B.M. and Ring 76 J.C. says he is excited about breaking-in his new lecture for local members. After working in magic venues for nearly 30 years, J.C. took a few years off from the magic scene to clear his head of card manipulations and finger flinging. Then for the past several years he has quietly been working on some new material and refining some of his older tricks to include in this new lecture series.

That material is what Ring 76 members and their guests will be treated to this coming Monday evening.

Six clever Ring 76 members all take part in the Ring Close-up Contest at Feb Meeting.

One of the most anticipated meetings of the year for Ring 76 is the annual close-up contest held each February. There was a large turnout of regular members and a larger than usual guest list for this event this year.

Ring President Bob Ingalls called the meeting to order and announced that Jack White had suffered a heart attack the Saturday night before the Monday meeting and was in Mercy Hospital. Ingalls had visited the hospital and reported that White was doing well and would be going home later in the week.

Ingalls then turned the meeting over to first vice president Terry Luncford who explained the rules for the close-up contest. Only members of Ring 76 could vote, and each person could vote for only one contestant. In late January a field of 10 contestants auditioned for one of the six slots in the close-up contest.

next until they had performed for all five tables. The contestants included Kenny Shelton, Greg Wauson, Bob Pozner, Mago Ruly, Craig Stone, and Tom McCarthy. The contestants were graded on their skill, appearance, performing style, and quality of their magic.

All of the contestants will receive a certificate of participation; the first place winner will receive a gold medal and a \$50 cash prize. Second place will also receive a medal and \$25 cash prize. Third place a medal and \$15 dollar prize. The winners will be announced at our annual Installation and Awards Banquet to be held in July. Location and exact date will be announced in the near future.

This is the first time Ring 76 has put a limit on the number of performers. That rule was put into effect because in 2005 a field of 14 contestants turned out for the close-up contest that ran so long that many of t h e

audience members who all had a vote left before the contest was over, causing many of the closing acts not to be seen and judged by the entire voting population. It was decided by the board of directors to limit the contestants this year to six, a number that seemed to work very well.

President Ingalls said that while he received no complaints from any of the contestants or the members watching the contest, he was welcoming e-mail from any and all members who had thoughts on ways to improve next year's

close-up competition. Ingalls said he would share any of the written comments he receives with the Ring 76 board of directors for future consideration.



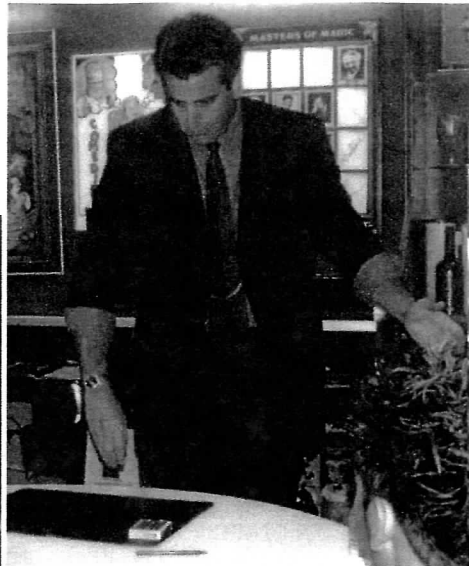
Bob Pozner, Craig Stone, Tom McCarthy, Greg Wauson
bottom row: Mago Ruly and Kenny Shelton

Five round tables were set up and each contestant had 10-minutes at each table to perform his act. The contestants would rotate from one table to the

If you were unable to attend the close-up contest, Bob Ingalls captured the action with his camera, and we share his photographs on this and the next page.



Bob Pozner



Craig Stone

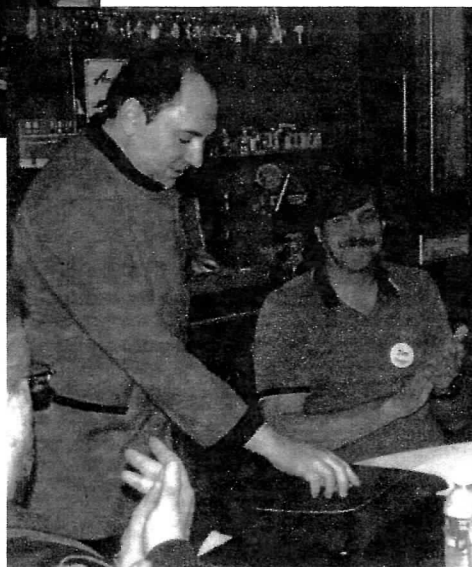


Greg Wason

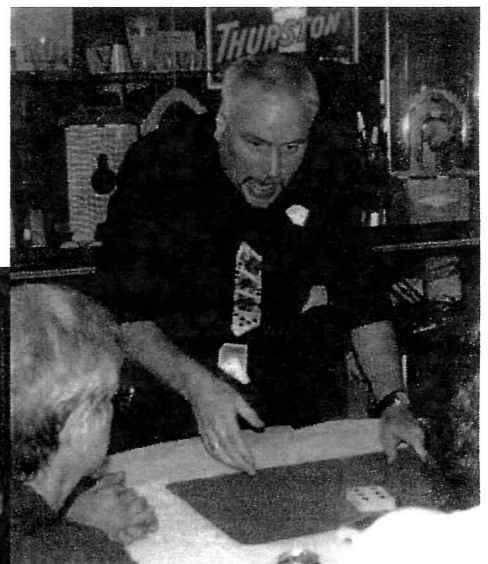
**The six
contestants in
the 2006
Close-up
contest**



Kenny Shelton



Mago Ruly



Tom McCarthy

Magic Book Review

by

Dr. Joel Moskowitz

**Discovering the New in the
Old**



In early editions of Doctor Spock's "Baby and Child Care," this psychologically savvy author reassured beginning parents with: You know more than you think you do. This same maxim applies to most who are magic enthusiasts. They know the "secret" of many more tricks (polititically correct term: effects) than they need to know. Another maxim counsels: If you want to hide a secret, publish it!

The wise thinking magician knows that Dover Publications offers the remedy. And the remedy is inexpensive. The earnest student of the art of magic will realize that, as is the case for concert virtuosos, the more they perfect a classic, the greater the audience appreciation. "Classic Card Tricks" by Edward Victor (Dover 2004 98pp \$6.95) brings together the card effects from "Magic of the Hands" published in London; "More Magic of the Hands" published by Max Holden in New York City (1942) and the sequel also published by Holden in 1946 "Further Magic of the Hands."

This Swiss born conjurer (last name actually Neuschwander, called "Teddy" by his friends) graduated from doing private parties to being a legendary stage magician. His cut and restored rope is an enduring standard. Most contemporary wizards will not know his name or his proficiency in shadowgraphy and manipulation.

Victor counsels two basic ingredients are necessary for any trick. They must contain the elements of being definite and offering surprise.

Although "Classic Card Tricks" doesn't include any coin tricks, it may persuade the potential reader when they know that in "Magic of the Hands" (circa 1937), Victor explained his refined handling of "Florin vs. Penny," an ancient conversion of one coin for another and back again, with the hands being shown empty throughout. This was a variation of an early routine in the March 1899 issue of Mahatma by Ellis Stanyon. Contemporary conjurers will know Dai Vernon's "Spellbound" from Stars of Magic (circa 1940) as being virtually the same trick! He inspired Marlo as well as Vernon, and successor close-up entertainers owe much to Edward Victor.

Those in the know will recognize the foundation for "tilt" and convincing control in Victor's writings.

Some of the subjects included are: Victor's Invisible Double Lift, a substitute for the in-jog, a false riffle shuffle, the diagonal palm shift and the haunted pack together with routines and entire effects.

Is the reader convinced? Study the classics! Dover brings you another you may also have missed: "Magicians' Tricks" by Henry Hatton and Adrian Plate (2002, pp344 \$12.95). This is an unabridged reprint of the book originally published in 1910. Although one might have no need for the formula for Magicians' Wax and Flash Paper (available from your local bricks and mortar magic dealer), the detailed instructions are included in this text. The contents range from sleights with cards, coins, balls, eggs, and handkerchiefs, to after dinner tricks. One third is devoted to "miscellaneous."

Included in Hatton and Plate's book are: Three methods of shuffling a pack without changing its order; more than three rising card variations; peripatetic, walking, wandering, disappearing coins; billiard balls and eggs cavorting; handkerchiefs having seven corners; rings, matches, glasses, goblets, paper, dice and ropes divided, multiplied, added and subtracted and deformed in a multitude of manners only to be synthesized again.

Sophisticated performers (examples being Mike Skinner, Derek Dingle) studied early writings and offered variations, interpretations, modifications, improvements, modernizations but basically what they created was a variation of an "old" trick.

This reviewer has a quarrel with the authors: In their Forward, they state their aim is not to furnish an essay on magic as a fine art. This follows their having quoted noted English Magician David Devant's remarks about the magician being an actor (attributed to Keller and others). Hatton and Plate miss the essence of "fine art" is that, like music, the effort is intended primarily for beauty rather than utility.

What can be the functional purpose in manipulating pieces of cardboard in the form of a deck of cards? QED, deft deceptions are fine art. Those seeking proficiency in techniques and skills needed to be an effective magician would be well advised to buy and study classic literature.

"Magicians' Tricks" and "Classic Card Magic" published by Dover Publications, Mineola, New York are good places to start.

Jim Riley Lifetime Achievement Award Continued from Page 1

when he died.) After studying under Gordon Plummer's watchful eye for several years Jim's hobby of magic became an avocation. Jim spent most of this idle hours reading, practicing, and doing magic.

In the early 1960s while still in school Jim filled in during weekends and holidays as a demonstrator at one of San Diego's wonderful old magic shops run by Peggy Harbin. It was called the "Fun Shop" and was located just behind the California Theater at Third and C Streets in downtown San Diego. The front of the shop was filled with gags, jokes and risque cards; the back of the shop was where the magicians gathered and the magic was displayed and sold. Veteran showman and performer Tommy Woo had



Jim Riley at the "Fun Shop" 1961

worked in the shop for many years and the San Diego Fun Shop was always a destination for the many professional magicians who passed through or visited the city by the bay.

When Jim joined Ring 76, in 1966, he was out of college and had begun a teaching career. During this period the Vietnam War was filling the Navy Hospitals at Balboa Park and Camp Pendleton with injured Marines & Sailors. The Ring organized special groups of performers to visit the hospitals with shows. Sometimes we performed at bedside and other times we had a makeshift stage and presented a stage show. Jim Riley was an active part of those programs for several years.



Jim at Navy Hospital 1967

It was during this time that Jim organized his now famous Magic Club for students at Jones Elementary School. The after school magic program ran for 12 years and when Jim would move to a new school the club moved with him. Over the years he has been

responsible for teaching hundreds of youngsters about magic. His students are responsible for hundreds of Halloween Magic Shows and other special magic programs. For Jim's students it was an opportunity to learn about an art form and use its strengths to overcome shyness, as well as learn the elements of showmanship. Today Jim looks at photographs of his students and remembers with pride the accomplishments they attained through magic.

Jim was also active in producing the annual Ring 76 Junior Magician's contest that was staged each year at the Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater in Balboa Park. Dozens of youngsters, some of whom have gone on to greater opportunities in the

entertainment business, were contestants in the Junior Magicians Programs. Each year the programs became bigger and there was more work involved, and Jim always faced the challenge and the show would come off with great professionalism. These events brought enriched public relations to the I.B.M. and Ring 76 and lasting accomplishment to the young people who took part.



Jim and his students 1960s



Jim's first arm chopper 1963

During all of his efforts in teaching young people magic, Jim kept up an active schedule of working with Ring 76, doing magic shows for charity and for fund raising events. He took his magic club

Continued on page 7

View from the Cheap Seats



By Jon A. Hand

There is an old saying: Quality cannot be rushed. And so it is with the Slydini Classic for Standup that I promised at the end of the last month's column (a Benson Classic for Standup). The problem is that I have worked out two ways to do the effect, and I am practicing each to see which has the most impact. I don't really want to present two ways to do it and dilute either one. So, in the meantime, here is my *Review of Seriously Silly* by David Kaye.

I was tempted to do this review in one word: "Yep!" This book is that good. But you will want to know more than that, I feel certain, so let's take a look.

David Kaye is a children's magician of the first rank. He is heavily in demand at magic conventions, and his presentations at KIDABRA here in Tennessee draw large attendance. His character, Silly Billy, drives his presentation style. *Seriously Silly* details his approach to children's magic, and I cannot think of another more practical magic book in *any* realm of magic. Less than a year old, the book is already in its second printing, which tells one something about the enthusiastic reception given this large format book from Kaufman Publishing. Kaye's more than 7,000 performances at the time of the 2005 publishing makes him an unabashed expert at his style of performing. Make no mistake about it: even if you find his style too broad for you, there is much to be learned from this book. Take what you learn and build upon it, enlarging your style and increasing your strength as a children's performer.

Kaye outlines his philosophy and details how to make the same magic show work for three different age brackets! When a man of this experience tips his hand so freely, other magicians should sit up and take notice. His discussion of what makes children laugh is priceless, and required reading for the children's performer. Kaye spells out meticulously how to make a trick interesting for children: have a fun ride, and eventually get to the destination. I won't spoil his wonderfully clear writing by telling you more, but his case for more fun and less magic is

very strong. Ultimately, the performer would need to carry fewer props and do more with them, always a desirable element for a working magician.

Kaye teaches tricks, of course, but you basically know them all anyway. What he is teaching is how to adapt your repertoire to make children deliriously happy. Learn from his many examples how to make your favorite tricks resonate with the children. When Kaye teaches his routines, each ends with a recap that illustrates how his presentations meet all of his salient points, allowing you to then structure your own routines. It is almost like having a blueprint to make your repertoire kid-friendly.

A major asset of the book is how to make your routines bulletproof for children. The advice for the older kids' show, say ages 10 to 13, is sage and should be incorporated into your thinking immediately. Recently I watched one of my band students, a 7th grader, push a quarter into her ear and spit it out through her mouth. While her technique was not flawless, it was very effective, and I was impressed. What then struck me was how her friends, in the 8th and 9th grade, then tried to explain away her trick. All but one of them was completely wrong, but all were convinced that they had deciphered the secret of her miracle. My thoughts went immediately to Kaye's methods for bulletproofing a trick, and here was a real-world example of the need for his methods without my having to try them out myself. I learned much from watching my student's impromptu trick when I applied Kaye's thinking to why it didn't work for her.

More than any other professional performer, the children's magician must constantly deal with distractions in his performance, not only from the children but also from their siblings, their parents, the family pets, and more. Children don't have the life experiences to sit for a formal performance like their parents and older siblings do, and Kaye's advice for eliminating their distractions is an essential part of the book.

Kaye likes to organize his thinking into amplified lists. Far from being pedantic, this aspect of his writing enables the reader to find and absorb information quickly. Each item of a list is described with real-world examples cited. Having set up a list of five ways in which any children's show problem can be solved, he then amplifies this list with another list of the top ten problems of children's show and how to solve them from his list of five ways. This is priceless, personal information, and one gets the feeling that Kaye is speaking with you rather than

writing a book.

Children have real problems with their powerlessness, especially the younger ones. Parents and older siblings know more, can do more, and do not have to depend upon others to help them constantly. Kaye has addressed ways to make the children feel empowered, a rare feeling for them, and this empowerment adds to the joy and excitement of his show. This aspect of children's performing has been hinted at in other magic books on children's magic, but no one has nailed it like Kaye. This section will convince you to change your routining more than any other in the book, in my opinion. If there is a theme running through the book, this is it.

The appendix sections of the book, three deceptively simple list pages in appearance, are a very helpful addition. It is almost as if these are afterthoughts that Kaye felt needed to be collected all in one place, and they can and will change your thinking about your presentations. However, they are an integral part of the book, and Kaye refers to them in many places in the main body of text.

A few years ago I gushed similarly over Schenk's and Sondermeyer's *Performing Magic for Children*. I still stand by that review, as it was the best book of its type at that time. Its only faults were that it moved a bit slowly at times because it was a translation from German, and that it required that nothing be skipped in the book in order for the reader to get maximum knowledge from the material presented. I would still recommend that the children's performer get and read this fine book also.

In contrast, *Seriously Silly* presents its information so logically, so personally, and so convincingly that it is a quick, engaging read. It is also easy to return to the book and review sections desired because of the amplified list format. The full depth and breadth of the knowledge presented will become more apparent after some of the concepts are incorporated into your show. Then you will find yourself racing back to the book to remember greater detail, and to glean more nuggets that you glossed over in previous readings.

Perhaps the greatest compliment that one can give any piece of art, literature, music, etc., is that it has enough depth to endure repeated exposure and still present new emotional content. Viewed from this aspect, *Seriously Silly* is one of the finest magic books ever.

"Yep."

Jim Riley Tribute Con't from page 5

members once a year to Hollywood and a visit to Joe Berg's famous magic emporium. He brought in people like Ed Greene to help build illusions for his student's magic shows. He taught his students the importance of creating good clever patter to go with their tricks. He would have his students brainstorm ideas for good lines to go with each trick and taught them how to write a script for their shows.



Jim Riley at a recent show.

Today Jim still enjoys a good magic show or convention and takes great pride when he sees one of his former students making a name for him or herself

in magic. He still helps with the monthly Ring 76 newsletter and when he can he still accepts a date for a magic show, especially if the show helps to raise funds for a favorite cause.

At our Installation and Awards Banquet in July, Jim Riley will join an exclusive group of Ring 76 Lifetime Achievement honorees that include Roy & Betty Armstrong, Art & Pat Hannum, Al Knox, Jim Swoger, Jack Evans, Joe Bertuzzi, Robert Pozner and Vi Freeland. These members have all been recognized for their continuing efforts at promoting the I.B.M. Ring 76 and the Art of Magic in our community.

"MagiToon"

by Jim Whiting & Ellen Friedman



"Which one of you is the magician?"



Message from the Ring 76 President

I want to send my congratulations to Jim Riley for being honored with the Ring 76 Lifetime Achievement award for 2006. If you haven't read the story elsewhere in this newsletter about Jim please don't neglect looking it over.

Jim will be honored at our annual Installation and Awards Banquet in July. At this time we have not selected a location or date for that program. At our March meeting I will be asking for volunteers to serve on the planning committee for that event. Last year Greg Wauson and Richard Ustick put the program together and got the location and planned the menu. They did a superb job, and I did not hear one complaint about last year's event. Richard Ustick will again be the board member on the planning committee along with Diane Lane. We now need one or two members from the general membership who are willing to help with the planning and help with some of the logistics the evening of the event. When I call for volunteers, if you can help out, please let us know. A good planning committee is vital to the success of this event.

On another front, I want to talk about the parking situation for our meetings. The parking lot next to Tortilla Lilly's is not owned by the tortilla factory; recently the property owners have closed the lot and are currently looking for

someone to lease the lot on a full-time basis. When that happens, we will work a deal to rent the lot for our exclusive use on meeting nights and when we have lecturers and special events in our building. But until a new lease agreement is signed, the lot will be locked and unavailable for our use. We are hoping something can be resolved soon.

This year's close-up contest was smooth and trouble free. All of the contestants were excellent, and I have received nothing but great comments on the way things were carried out by each performer. This year's contest will be hard to top; if you have some idea's on how we can make the contest better, send me an e-mail with your ideas. I will present them to our board of directors for future consideration.

I am very excited about having J.C. Wagner as our special lecturer at the Monday night meeting. If you saw his wonderful program last December you know you are in for a wonderful treat at our next meeting. In April, our annual magic swap meet, if you have some old magic, books or videos and you want to get rid of, sign up for a table and sell them at our always exciting April meeting.

See you all at the Monday meeting.

Bob Ingalls
President Ring 76



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For information on membership, or Ring events, contact Jack White, Ring 76 Secretary by e-mail prestooone@cox.net or by phone at 619-299-9037

News

Jack White wants to thank all of the Ring 76 members who took the time to call, send e-mail and cards during his recent stay in the hospital. Jack is back and says he is doing well. He is on a new diet and taking things a little slower for now.

"It's Magic" will be at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido, for one performance Sunday, March 12 at 3 p.m. Featured on the Sunday program will be **Chuck Jones & Company, Dan Birch, Mark Kornhauser, Tina Lenert, and Les Arnold and Dazzle**. Ticket prices range from \$27 to \$45 per person. For ticket information call 800-988-4253.

The man who has produced the "It's Magic Show" for 50 years and given us the Magic Castle in Hollywood, **Milt Larsen** will be honored along with his late brother **Bill Larsen** with a star on Hollywood's walk of fame on September 15th. A few days later at the Kodak Theater, home of the Academy Awards, the 50th annual It's Magic Show will be presented featuring an all-star cast of performers. That show is set for September 19th.

J.P. Scirica who operates the Grand Magic Shop in Escondido has moved to a new location at 130 East Grand Avenue. The new store will have more square footage, a larger inventory, and include more opportunity for private parties and magic lessons. J.P. says the move is on schedule and he hopes to be open for business on March 15th. Let's all support our local magic shops.

Sam Blankenship, who operates the "Trick Shop" in Temecula, has



recently taken over the duties of manager of Penguin Magic in Las Vegas. Penguin Magic has received some bad public relations concerning the sale of "knock-offs" of other magic dealer's tricks. Blankenship was brought in to reverse the trend and bring a new image to the popular online magic shop. Sam has done an excellent job with his Temecula shop and says he is up to the challenge of helping Penguin.

Alex Greenbaum will be presenting his magic act as part of a talent show March 23rd at the San Dieguito Academy in Encinitas. The show begins at 7 p.m. at the school, tickets are on sale at the door.

Joel Ward will be appearing at the Four Seasons Hotel in Carlsbad on March 30th in a special program open to the public. Show time is 3:30 p.m. For more information call Joel Ward Productions at 760-436-1055.

The always popular **Terry Godfrey** will be presenting his magic act at the West Plaza Stage of Seaport Village, March 19th and 26th at 12-noon and 1:30 p.m. If you want to see a professional work the crowd, drop by and watch Terry's show. You can also drop by the Seaport Village Magic Shop and check out their new merchandise.

Briefs

A large group of Ring 76 members attended the World Magic Seminar, February 19 to the 23rd in Las Vegas. **Bob Ingalls, Jack White, Diane Lane, Kenny Shelton, Tom La Chance, Joe Mystic, Ken Ball, Jose Sanchez, Joel Ward, and Len Cardoza**. **Kenny Shelton** took part in the close-up contest and **Bob Ingalls** and **Jack White** both presented tricks in a program titled: Learn from the experts portion of the convention.

Hyman Kotkin, a 30-year resident of Rancho Bernardo, in Northern San Diego County and father of magician **David Copperfield**, died of complications from Alzheimer's disease February 23rd. Kotkin was the president for many years of the David Copperfield International Fan Club and he headed fundraising for Project Magic, teaming occupational therapists with magicians in medical settings to help patients. Hyman Kotkin was 83; services were held Sunday, March 5th in San Diego.

It is now official: the location for the 2008 Combined I.B.M./ S.A.M. Convention will be Louisville, Kentucky. The dates will be early July. This will be a major magic convention. Start making your plans to attend now.

Coming Attractions

March 13, 2006, J.C. Wagner will present his long-awaited lecture, "free" to all Ring 76 members. This is a must-attend meeting to see J.C., a past Ring 76 member and legend in close-up magic. There will be a few surprises at this meeting as well.

April 10, 2006, Ring 76 Swap Meet. A chance to sell your unwanted magic. See Terry Lunceford or Richard Ustick to reserve a seller's table.

May 8, 2006, Ring 76 Stand-up contest. Get your stage act ready and sign up for the contest. Cash awards to the winners.

June 12, Ring 76 magic auction. You will have the opportunity to bid on a wide range of magic from close-up to illusions.

The next Ring 76 board meeting will be Monday, March 20th at Jack's Magic Place; all interested members are invited to attend.

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