

Ring 76 Chartered by the International Brotherhood of Magicians in 1948



MagiCurrents

San Diego, California



Recipient of the IBM's Quality Ring Award

Honest Sid Gerhart
Ring 76

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Website
www.ring76.com

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Monday Jan 8th meeting is in the bag

Our January 8th, meeting will feature one of our special events allowing members who wish to take part to select a brown paper bag that is filled with props to make up a magic trick. Sometimes directions will be included, sometimes they won't be and it is up to you to make something out of what you get and present it to our membership.

Last year Richard Ustick took an odd gathering of this and that and turned it into one of the winning effects of the evening by adding a large helping of his own personality and showmanship to the routine he presented. Again this year, Bob Ingalls, Jack White and J.P. Jackson are putting together the bags with effects to be presented. The three of them have dug around and pulled together some unique items.

This is always an evening of fun for our performers and the audience as well; start the year off right and attend this meeting. We will also be officially inducting our new members from 2006 into Ring 76. If you are a new member, plan on attending and being officially welcomed. Meeting starts at 7 p.m. at Jack's Magic Place, 4275 University Avenue. Hot popcorn and soft drinks will be served.

Jeff McBride Lecture has been cancelled

In late December, Ring 76 heard from Jeff McBride, who informed us that he was cancelling all of his lecture series for January and February because he had just signed a deal for a big new show he is producing in Las Vegas. He has already begun rehearsals for the new show and that lets him out for our January lecture.

Jeff has promised us that he will reschedule his cancelled lecture in San Diego as soon as his schedule will permit. As for the new show, he could not give us much information on when it will open or where he will be featured. He advised us there will be a press release issued in the near future, and he will see that we are included in the distribution.

We still have Mark Wilson and Nani booked for February 13th, with a very good lecture that has useful information for magicians and other performers as well. Tickets can be purchased at the door for the Mark Wilson lecture, \$20 for members \$25 for non members of Ring 76. The lecture will begin at 7 p.m. with seating on a first come basis so don't be late.

Mark is bringing some rare videotapes of his performance on television and on tour that are seldom seen. He will also show some effects that are very commercial and work in all kinds of situations. He will also share some personal stories that you will find funny, as well as the kind of situations you can identify with as a performer.

Holiday Bash considered a huge success

Our December 11th meeting was billed as the “Ring 76 Holiday Bash,” and attracted 72 members and their guests. When members arrived at Jack’s Magic Place, they found Don Soul, Kenny Shelton, and Jack White, behind the bar making Quesadillas, a Mexican dish with flour tortillas, melted cheese, onions and jalapeos. Jack has created something new called a “Pizza-dilla” which is a quesadilla with pepperoni slices, tomato sauce, chopped onions, and melted cheese. This turned out to be the culinary hit of the evening. Jack says the recipe is something he whipped up years ago when he was in college and made them for his fellow students at San Diego State University. There were also nacho chips and melted cheese, and a big pot of chili, as well as a platter of veggies and dip. For dessert there were chocolate fudge brownies and a scoop of vanilla ice creme on top. Jim Whiting made sure the dessert department operated smoothly by scooping out more than two gallons of ice creme. The Ring paid for the dinner out of its treasury; there was no cost to the members.

While members were being served and getting acquainted, our International member Mago Ruly, who’s real name is Raul Rivera-Meco, from Tijuana, set up his guitar and sang for us in both Spanish and English; during this musical portion of the evening we actually saw several members dance with their wives, a rare sight for Ring 76 members, indeed!

There were a lot of cards being shuffled for card tricks at the various tables following the light supper and dessert. Then Ring 76 President Bob Ingalls took center stage and thanked all of our members for making his job run smoothly during the year just past. Bob then introduced Terry Lunceford, our 2nd vice president in charge of entertainment who brought on our entertainment for the evening: Whit Haydn, from the Magic Castle in Hollywood.

The dapper Haydn came on dressed in a tailored suit, hat, and sporting a moustache. His entire program is based on how anyone can do the tricks he presents and how they are done. Of course when the program is over you have no idea how he did any of it. What Whit Haydn does is entertain, and he does that very well. His four Linking Ring routine with a lady from the audience is masterful. When his act came to an end there was a standing ovation and Haydn graciously accepted the applause with an encore effect that involved mind reading and it, too, was knockout entertainment.

After the Whit Haydn show, Bob Ingalls invited everyone to enjoy the company of fellow magicians and there was more close-up magic at the tables as coffee, tea and hot chocolate were served for those who wanted to stay. It was all out and over at 10:15 p.m.



The cooks for the evening left: Kenny Shelton, Jack White, and Don Soul were kept busy with orders for the Pizza-dilla.



While Mago Ruly sang and played his guitar Peg and Jeff Marcus and Joel and Arlene Moskowitz took advantage of the music and danced. This is a sight seldom seen at a magic meeting.



Jim Riley & Syd Segal saying
"I can't believe I ate the whole
thing."

Holiday Bash in Pictures



Special guest star for the
evening Whit Haydn, doing
egg and silk routine.



Joe Mystic & Bob
Ingalls, listening to
the music.



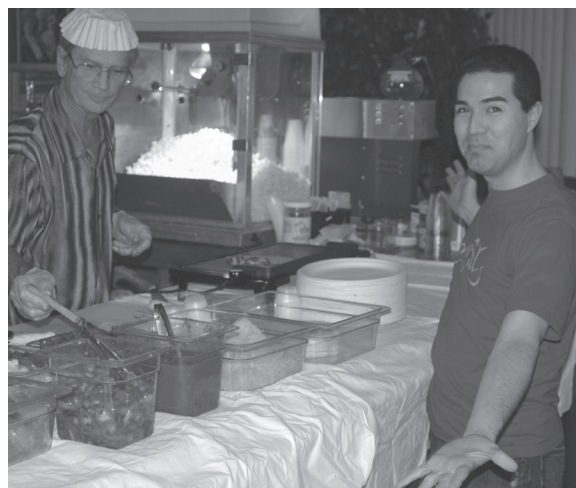
Mago Ruly showing off one of his many
talents other than magic by playing the
guitar and singing Christmas songs in
English and Spanish.



Bernita Whiting says:
"Let's eat!" as husband
Jim and Bob Pozner
talk a little magic.



These two beautiful young ladies
belong to Craig Stone. They are
his daughters.



Sal Barajas says call me anything but don't
call me late for dinner.

Magic Book Review by Dr. Joel Moskowitz



Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini by Sid Fleishman

It wouldn't be a surprise to learn that a survey asking "Name two famous magicians" would most likely elicit: Merlin and Houdini. Indeed, for many "Houdini" is symbolic of magic. The statistics might also reveal that books written about Houdini rival in number those written about Abraham Lincoln. So when Sid Fleishman, raised in San Diego, California, writes about Erich Weiss, born in Budapest, Hungary, who is the former and why should he write about the latter? *Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini* (Greenwillow Books. An Imprint of Harper Collins/Publishers, 2006, \$18.99, pp 210) reveals all. Don't get excited; Fleishman is a magician and as such has sworn not to divulge the tricks of the trade. But do not lose heart, much is revealed even for those Houdini addicts who are compelled to acquire anything which mentions the master name. These Houdini aficionados will benefit from this fresh retelling.

The publisher counsels that this book is for those ages 9 and up (which age curiously is the age alleged to be when Erich Weiss began his career in conjuring); it may be said that he was born twice. The second occurred when he became fascinated with the story of Robert Houdin, an internationally renowned prestidigitator. Houdin's fame in putting down a rebellion may have contributed to his title as the father of modern magic.

Erich's admiration and genius for publicity induced him to cloak himself in the modified title, Houdini.

With so many volumes dedicated to telling the tale of master self-promoter Houdini, why would another be of interest? No new trick secrets have been revealed since the first magic book I owned (at age nine, of course), written by Walter Gibson. But Author Fleishman does offer something new. He includes black and white photos given to him by Houdini's widow. As a youth, Fleishman was an accolade of the handcuff king and Bess, Houdini's widow, having relocated to Southern California, became the den mother to us young West Coast magicians, writes Sid. How lucky can one get?

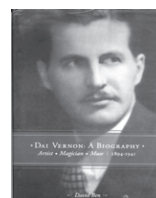
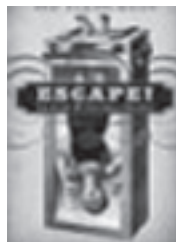
It is the friendly, peppy prose in this well crafted biogra-

phy that induce this reviewer to take, with admiring respect, the liberty of referring to Mr. Fleishman by his first name. In his self-revealing prior work, *Abracadabra Kid, A Writer's Life*, Sid describes his passion for magic. His enthusiasm translates into an attractive fresh history of an immigrant youth who when asked what was his greatest escape, responded, from Appleton, Wisconsin. Houdini was a determined entertainer. A contemporary, A. M. Wilson, Kansas City Editor of the leading magicians journal, *The Sphinx*, reacted negatively to Houdini shameless vanity and megaphone self promotion. Houdini countered, in 1906, by launching his own *Conjurers Monthly Magazine*, which quickly outsold *The Sphinx*.

Houdini refused to be defeated. One story is particularly charming: Locked in the cell which had held the assassin of President Garfield, a brick cell with a specially recessed iron gate whose lock was deviously located three feet away around a corner, Houdini escaped! As if this miracle was not enough, he proclaimed that he had released the other prisoners as well. The shocked warden rushed, expecting to find a disastrous situation. The prisoners were in the cells, but Houdini had released them but placed them in other than their original cells. There was no end to surprises when Houdini was in the act.

For the youthful reader, Houdini's struggle, out of handcuffs, trunks, straightjackets, and out of obscurity as just another card conjurer, his ventures into cinema and becoming the first to fly a plane in Australia can serve as a model for tenacity leading to achievement. Some had theorized that audience intensity was predicated on their hope that they were grimly obsessed with seeing danger triumph. Conversely, time and time again, Houdini proved he could master the impossible. If he could, could they?

Writer Fleishman is an award-winning author. Recipient (in 1987) of the Newberry Medal for his book *The Whipping Boy* (Greenwillow) he was honored for a most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. His son won the same medal two years later. Readers won be surprised when *Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini* results in Mr. Fleishman receiving another medal.



Magic Book Review by Bob Pozner



Dai Vernon Biography by David Ben

I am an avid reader of biographies and Mr. Ben's book is one of the best I have read. The book is meticulously researched from interviews, written material and taped sessions at the Magic Castle. It covers the first half of Vernon's life but Mr. Ben told me that he is writing a second volume, 1942 until Dai's death in 1992, and it will be published in about three years. No member of the Magic Castle was more beloved than Dai Vernon. The Professor was the grand old man of magic.

Dai Vernon's birth name was David Frederick Wingfield Verner but he used the Welsh nickname for David which is Dai (pronounced as day) and changed his last name to Vernon because he thought it sounded better. Dai was born in Ottawa, Canada, attended Ashbury College where he was on the hockey team and the Royal Military College.

Dai's interest in magic began at age seven when his father showed him a simple parlor trick involving colored chalk and a cup. Soon he became interested in playing cards and, without formal instruction, devised several original tricks. On a trip to New York, his father bought him "Expert at the Card Table" by Erdnase. Vernon mastered every sleight in this book in the period of a year.

Moving to New York at the age of twenty-one, Dai attended the Art Students League where he learned to cut silhouettes, a popular art form of the time which was, along with magic, Vernon's livelihood for the rest of his life. He cut silhouettes in the mornings at Coney Island and visited magic shops in the afternoon, making new friends and sharpening his skills which by this time were considerable.

This book is rich with magic history, too. Harry Houdini, 'The King of Cards' had a standard challenge: He could only be fooled by any card trick two times. After seeing it the third time he would not only know the method but might be able to do the trick himself. Vernon met Houdini in his dressing room following a performance and did an Ambitious Card routine. He fooled Houdini three times and then he fooled Bess Houdini while Harry looked on. Dai then billed himself as "The Man Who Fooled Houdini."

Apparently Houdini had a temper that matched his ego. When Sam Margules suggested to Houdini that the 'King of Cards' should take lessons from Vernon. Houdini punched him. Since Margules was a very large man, he was unhurt and others separated them and escorted Houdini from the building.

Dai Vernon sought out and learned from the card cheats of the day and he could do a perfect center deal. Cheats were not referred to as cheats but rather as 'advantage players.' Learning magic was expensive in the early 1900s. A single effect might cost as much as twenty-dollars to learn (\$100 in 2006) and the good stuff was never published. Magic was kept secret not only from laymen but from magicians as well.

This marvelous book ends with a story about the only real job that Dai Vernon ever held. It was on a building construction site in New York and lasted one week. While traveling across a scaffold eighty feet in the air, Vernon fell into the filthy East River, breaking both arms. When he reached the hospital, he was asked to sign a release allowing surgeons to amputate his right arm which was so badly mangled with a compound fracture that repair seemed impossible. Dai asked them to call Doctor Jacob Daley, a New York surgeon, amateur magician and a friend. Daley operated and his skill saved the arm.

This book is highly recommended and would be a welcome addition to any library. It may be purchased on-line from Amazon.com for \$39.95 or from your favorite magic dealer.

"MagiToon"

by Jim Whiting & Ellen Friedman



FRIEDMAN
Whiting

Magic Notes From:



Some things that have happened in recent months

This is the first time since my heart bypass surgery in October, that I have taken the time to sit down at the computer and write a column for MagiCurrents. I want to thank everyone who called, sent e-mail messages and get-well cards. I appreciate all of your words of encouragement and as a result of the outpouring of kindness, I am returning to good health as the year 2006 comes to a close. Again, thank you all for your very kind support during a trying period of my life.

Two Ring 76 members who never seem to receive the recognition they should get are Ellen Friedman and Jim Whiting; together they do our MagiToon each month. Ellen dreams up the ideas and Jim does the drawing. If you attended the December meeting and watched the talented Whit Haydn do his Linking Ring routine, you will be able to identify with this month's MagiToon. As Ellen watched Whit's performance, she was amused with his counting the rings to the assistant and when he asked: "Which ring is this?" Ellen answered in her mind: "It's Ring 76." The more she thought about it the more she thought it would make a great cartoon. The next morning she sent her idea to Jim Whiting who turned it into a drawing. Take a look at it on page 5. I think you will agree it is well done.

Ellen and Jim's MagiToon's have become so popular that other Rings around the country have been writing to us, asking if they can use them in their newsletters. It would appear that Ring 76 is very much admired for the monthly gags and cartoons these two talented people create for our newsletter. So we all say; "Thank you, Ellen and Jim, for your great work."

If you are one of those people who read the masthead of news letters like the one you are currently holding, then you know that MagiCurrents has turned 21 years old with the publication of this issue. When I joined Ring 76 the newsletter was called the "SEER" and was put out each month by George Edwards. While I was president in the mid 1970s George changed the name to the "Spirit" and in 1976, he changed it again to "The Spirit of 76." It was during this period that Jim Riley and I joined George Edwards in editing the newsletter. We have been

working on this sheet off and on for more than 30 years and it seems to get more exciting for us with each new issue.

A man by the name of Frank Siren was appointed editor of the newsletter in 1985, by J.P. Jackson who was then president of the Ring; Frank and J.P. polled the various Ring members and asked for ideas for a name for the newsletter. Of all the names turned in, MagiCurrents seemed to be the one everyone liked the best, so it became the new title on the masthead of each issue. To this day we have no record of who actually came up with the name but with this issue the MagiCurrents name turns 21 years old and we say happy birthday to the newsletter.

On Tuesday, November 21st the 28th, annual Chargers Blood Drive was held at the Town & Country Convention Center in Mission Valley. More than 100 entertainers donated their time and talent to this event. Among the specialty acts were several members of Ring 76. They included: Magic Mike Stilwell and Vic, Jim Whiting, Charlie Gott, Diane Lane and her parrot Cassi, Len Cardoza, Terry Godfrey, and Kenny Shelton.

More than five thousand people turned out to donate blood and, at one time or another, Ring 76 members were on hand in the donor room, the registration area and on the stage in the auditorium to entertain those waiting to give the gift of life. Over two-thousand pints of blood were collected in that one single day. Those donations helped hospitals get through the critical holiday period of Thanksgiving and Christmas with a good supply of blood for emergency use. Our photographer was not on hand to snap pictures of everyone, but we do have the pictures on the next page of several of the performers. Their efforts are much appreciated by the entire community.

As we close out the year 2006 and begin a new year, it is important to remember that our magic as a group and individually can play a very important part in helping and entertaining the people of this community.

There has been some quiet planning work going on in recent weeks to begin to put together a summer picnic for all of the Southern California Rings. The committee working on this project include Belinda Kaesler, Jeff Marcus and myself.

I hope to have e-mails back from all of the Ring presidents in Southern California by mid January, and we will know better if they are interested in this get-together and where would be the best place to hold such a picnic. We hope to have a progress report for you in February.

Happy New Year to all.



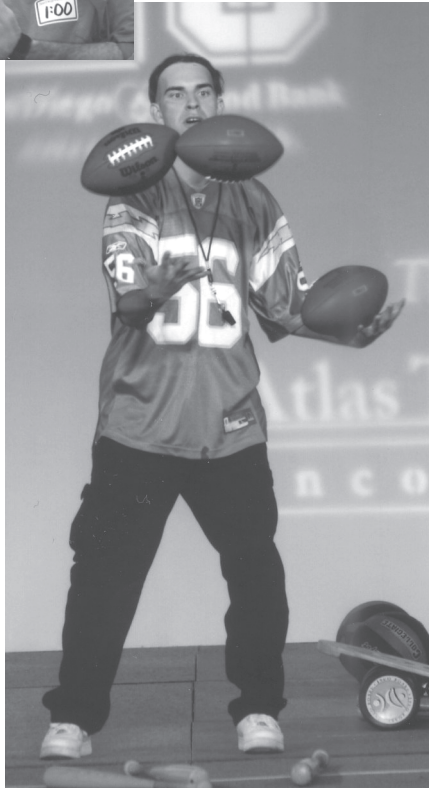
Diane Lane has been a volunteer performer at Charger Blood drives for 12 years and 2006 was no different.

Ring 76 members perform at the Chargers Blood Drive 28



Jim Whiting in the donor room at the Town & Country Resort, receiving a standing ovation for his clever rope routine at the Chargers Blood Drive 28.

**Go
Chargers
Go**



Kenny Shelton juggling footballs on stage at the Charger Blood Drive 28

**Charger
Fever**



Kenny Shelton in the donor's room entertaining a young patient and his family at the Chargers Blood Drive 28.



Charlie Gott did a little close-up magic in the donor room. Charlie spent five hours at the blood drive.



Message from the Ring 76 President

The holidays have come and gone and we are into a new year. It seems to me that things get more hectic each year during the holidays! On January 8, we will honor all of the folks who joined the I.B.M. and Ring 76 in the year just past. There will be an official swearing in ceremony and welcome, so if you are a new member, please try to attend that meeting which is the second Monday of the month.

Magic is one of the most exciting hobbies you can become involved with. If you have a friend who is interested in magic, bring him or her to one of our monthly meetings. Share the magic with others and introduce them to our group.

This summer the I.B.M. Convention will be held again in Reno, Nevada, June 26-30 at the Grand Sierra Resort. Jack White and I are on the convention committee and this year the I.B.M. is pulling out all of the stops to bring you a truly grand event, it will be non-stop magic for 5 days: Shows, lecturers, special events, contests and the biggest dealer's room you have ever seen. This will be the last time an I.B.M. Convention will be in the west for several years, so make plans to register soon. Registration is \$175 per person with hotel rooms \$99 a night. We had such a good time in Reno two years ago we are going back again this year. For more information on the convention go to www.magician.org and then look up the convention page. I know a number of people from San Diego are

planning on attending: ask around—someone may want to share a room with you.

I want to remind everyone that February is our annual close-up contest and again this year we will set up the room so the contestants can go from table to table, showing off their skills. All members will be allowed to vote for their favorite contestant and the winners will be announced at our installation banquet in July and awarded cash prizes. If you are planning on being a contestant, see Terry Lunceford or me for more information. We want to keep the field of competitors to 6; if we have more we will have an elimination process prior to the regular meeting, so it is important that we know well in advance who is going to be taking part in this much-anticipated contest. So let us know soon if you intend to take part in the close-up event. If we have an audition event, it will be Monday, January 22nd at 7:30 p.m..

The Mark Wilson lecture for Ring 76 is coming up in February, and it will be a truly exciting event. Mark has given me a little overview of what he will be presenting and there is something for everyone in this one lecture. Mark Wilson's magic has always been commercial and that is one of the important segments of his lecture: how to make your magic commercial. If you can only attend one lecture this year, make sure it is this one.

See you Monday evening at the first Ring 76 meeting of 2007.

Bob Ingalls
President Ring 76



President

Bob Ingalls

1st Vice President

Terry Lunceford

2nd Vice President

Kenny Shelton

Secretary

Jack White*

Treasurer

Richard Ustick

Sgt at Arms/Librarian

Sal Barajas

Member at Large

Donna Greenbaum

Immediate Past President

Diane Lane*

Territorial Vice President

Jeff Marcus*

*denotes Past Ring President

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

Michael E. Johnson tells us that the price of a ticket for "**Ricky Jay** and his 52 Friends" show in Los Angeles during January is \$350; however, the show is sold out, so to get tickets you have to go through scalpers who are now getting \$500 a seat. As one person was overheard to say; "I wouldn't pay that to see **Houdini**, if he came back."

For more than 26 years, **Jerry Hager**, better known as **Kazoo** the Mime, performed at Seaport Village. Because of a change in Seaport Village's entertainment policy, Kazoo was eliminated from their future program schedule. On December 30th, his last day, many friends and former Seaport Village entertainers showed up to wish the popular mime and entertainer well. One of the many attending the farewell program was magician **Terry Godfrey** who has spent a lot of time over the years in front of Seaport Village audiences himself.

Exciting news from **Joel Ward** who recently signed a four-month contract with the Horizon Casino & Resort in South Lake Tahoe. Joel will be doing two shows a night except Mondays from January 12th to mid April 2007. He also appeared on a new network television program that features the Magic Castle in Hollywood on Saturday, December 16th; Joel is hoping the program will be picked up as a regular series program on network television. If all that is not enough, Joel has also produced a new instructional magic DVD that is perfect for young people wanting to get into magic. The DVD sells for \$20 and can be purchased online at http://joelwardmagic.com/product_67_detailed.htm.



In mid-December we learned that legendary circus magician **Lubov Sudarchikova** died in St. Petersburg, Russia. She and her husband, Anatoli, developed an illusion act utilizing instantaneous costume changes that were subsequently copied, modified and performed by hundreds of circus and variety artists throughout the world. Their "quick change" act developed illusions that were impressive on stage but became spellbinding when performed in the round in full view of the audience in the circus ring. The Sudarchikovi were headliners with the Moscow Circus both at home and throughout the world. They also appeared with the Big Apple Circus in 1996, in the United States.

Did everyone see **Loch David Crane** on network television (NBC) during the pre-game activities for the Chargers vs. Chiefs game? Loch was invited to wear his Santa Claus outfit and take part with a group of other entertainers at the stadium for the pre-game activities before the San Diego/Kansas City game December 17th. As the network cut to San Diego to begin the broadcast, the opening shots included a tight shot of Loch and others just moments before the kickoff. They used videotape of Loch toward the end of the game as well. Too bad you can't get residuals on that appearance, Loch.

Former Ring 76 board member **Sumit Dua** visited San Diego during the holidays and took the time to call many of his friends. Sumit is taking

Briefs

a year off from medical school at S.C. to help family members set up a new online computer business that serves doctors offices in their billing of patients and insurance companys. All the while, Sumit continues to remain active in magic and can often be seen with friends at the Magic Castle in Hollywood.

Dan Thomas, who operates the Gathering Restaurant and is an excellent magician, says his restaurant will reopen for business on March 7, 2007. You will remember the Gathering caught fire and burned last May. So far, the insurance company has spent more than a million dollars to repair and remodel the facility. The big sticking point is the city, in approving all of the permits necessary to get the doors open for business. Dan says the restaurant will continue to offer a good helping of magic with the food when he gets his neighborhood eatery going again. Hang in there Dan; we are all anxiously waiting for you to reopen.

A recent visit with **J.P. Scirica**, at the Grand Magic Shop in Escondido, brought a report that his December, business has been so good that he has decided to continue to operate the magic emporium in the north county for another year. J.P. told MagiCurrents that he has worked so hard to make the store a success he just couldn't give it up, so he is staying on. That comes as good news for local magi who need a place to hangout and purchase books, videos and effects. If you have never visited the Grand Magic Shop, it is worth the effort to make the trip to Escondido, right now a lot of magic is on sale.

Coming Attractions

Monday, January 8, at 7 p.m. The first meeting of 2007 will feature the installation of all new members in 2006. It will also be bag night: you can select a brown paper bag with a magic trick inside, and then create a magic effect with the props you receive in the bag. These are always fun evenings.

Monday, February 12, the much-anticipated Ring 76 Close-up contest. Information on becoming a contestant will be forth coming.

Monday, March 12, the Ring 76 Trick Parade, present a trick or routine of your own creation and then explain it to our members.

Monday, April 9, Ring 76 Swap Meet!

Monday, January 22, Ring 76 Board of Directors meeting. 7 p.m. These meetings are open to all Ring members who may want to attend.

Mark Wilson Lecture February 13, at 7 p.m. Jack's Magic Place.

Watch for our re-opening soon



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MagiCurrents is published monthly by Ring 76 and is edited by Jack White; Associate Editor is Jim Riley. We encourage articles, stories, and news items. All material should be submitted to Jack White by e-mail at prestooone@cox.net. or written manuscripts may be submitted to Jack White, 4288 Arguello St., San Diego, CA. 92103.