

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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February meeting is the Ring 76 Close-up Competition

The Ring 76 Close-up contest will be held on Monday evening, February 12th, at Jack's Magic Place, the regular meeting room for the Ring. Six contestants met the deadline of January 22nd to be in the contest. They are Kenny Shelton, Loch David Crane, Mago Rully, Bob Pozner, Alex Greenbaum, and Diane Lane.

Five round tables will be set up and each contestant will go from table to table doing their act. They will have 10 minutes at each table and after the last performer does his or her act, members will be allowed to vote for their favorite candidate. The winners will be announced at the July awards banquet and awarded a gold medal and a cash prize. 1st place will receive \$50; 2nd place will receive \$25; and 3rd place will receive \$10.

Performers will be graded on their appearance, the material they choose and their skill. Some performers will have highly technical displays and others may have a clean routine and good comedy. We can only tell you that each act will be different and should be judged on its own merits.

In fairness to all of the contestants, we advertised a closing date to sign up for the close-up contest. If there were more than six people signed up, the Ring would hold auditions to cut the field down to six contestants. This year exactly six people signed up to take part.

Some of the acts will run less than 10 minutes and, should the person at your table finish before the whistle blows, we ask that you remain at your table and talk quietly among yourselves in respect for those still working.

The annual Ring 76 close-up contest is one of the most attended events of the year and is a much anticipated part of our annual program. Plan to attend the exciting event.

Mark & Nani Wilson lecture on February 13th

On Tuesday evening, February 13th, the evening following our close-up contest magic legend Mark Wilson and his wife Nani will present a lecture for Ring 76 at Jack's Magic Place, beginning at 7 p.m. If you pay prior to the event—that means Monday evening at our regular meeting—the cost of the lecture is \$15; if you pay at the door the evening of the event the cost is \$20. So far 16 people have taken advantage of the early cost saving program.

Mark Wilson raised to fame during the 1960s with his now well-remembered network television programs that were filled with stage magic and cleverly designed illusions, many of them never seen before. In fact many of the illusions were made in Mark's workshop



Mark & Nani Wilson

out of cardboard boxes just days before they were presented on television. In his lecture Mark will show some of those props and talk about how you can put magic that packs small and plays big into your shows.

There will be a lot of behind the scene's stories as well and useful information that you can incorporate into your act. Mark Wilson moved into County Fairs and Amusement Parks with his magic shows following his career in television, and he will touch on getting yourself ready for that style of entertaining. It will be an evening you will not soon forget.

In our research on Mark and Nana Wilson, Michael E. Johnson noted that Nani Darnell Wilson, one of the most influential women in the history of magic, will never

Continued on Page 4

The first meeting of 2007, brings a lot of original magic to the Ring 76 members with brown bag night

On a warm January 9th a smaller than normal group of members and guests showed up at Jack's Magic Place for the monthly I.B.M. Ring 76 meeting. Tom McCarthy worked the pre-meeting behind the bar doing some very clever card tricks with a regular deck of cards. Tom is a pro who worked many parties during the holiday season this year. He tipped the working on a very different four ace routine for those who wanted to know.

Ring 76 President Bob Ingalls called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. sharp and announced this was "bag night." That simply meant if you wanted to perform you had to select a brown paper bag that contained a magic trick, sometimes without instructions. You had to put a routine together and perform the trick when you were introduced. Bob and Jack White had made up the brown bags, and 12 brave souls came forward and selected their challenge for the evening.

There were a number of magic related announcements giving our performers a few extra minutes to study the prop or trick they had received and to create a routine for their moment in the spotlight. It was during this time that Ring 76 officially welcomed all members who joined the I.B.M. and Ring 76 in the year 2006, to our ranks.

The first performer for the evening was Kenny Shelton who selected a bag that contained Dave Powell's "Knife Thru Coat." Kenny is a very active performer and mostly a card man so this effect was totally foreign to him. He quickly studied the instructions and turned it into a very delightful presentation. The person who was most surprised was the man who loaned Kenny his coat.

Next was Charlie Gott, who selected a chain escape that was pretty beat-up. Charlie, who has been a gospel magician for years, had a routine and verse from the bible to go with this trick, and he made a clever and funny presentation out of the brown bag he selected.

Greg Wauson found that the deck of cards he received in his bag was incomplete and he could not make it into a trick so he dropped out. Alex Greenbaum had a funnel and Foo can and rather than doing the usual routine of the Foo can on the head and water out of the elbow, he created a different effect of disappearing water and its reappearance. His little routine was very entertaining.

Toni Perrine received a set of jumbo cards for a mental routine, but the rough smooth on the cards did not work, so, like Greg Wauson, the trick was retired. Jim Whiting selected what would be called a close-up effect, a ring on

string. But Jim turned the effect into a platform effect and amazed his audience with this very clever routine.

Jeff Marcus, an I.B.M. Territorial Vice President for Southern California, found his brown bag contained Joe Karson's "Zombie" and it was not in very good condition either. Jeff, with the help of Richard Ustick, located some perfect music for the Zombie routine and gave us a very nice presentation. Jeff said that was the first time he had worked the Zombie routine in many years. He gave us three minutes of solid entertainment.

Loch David Crane took over the stage with an effect that was called "Bill in Bottle." However, he did not do that trick; he created his own "Vanishing Bottle" out of the props he was given. It turned out to be a good comedy presentation. James Thayer received an old Abbott's effect with a small cabinet and a shot glass and golf ball. The golf ball is put in the box and magically ends up in the shot glass. The box was painted in San Diego Chargers colors and had a lightning bolt on the front of it, so there were the obligatory Chargers jokes. Jim turned this effect into a lighthearted affair that was also mystifying.

Sal Barajas, the Ring librarian choose a brown bag that contained another mental effect with jumbo cards. He showed a large fan of cards asked a spectator to look at one card and remember it. That card mysteriously disappeared from the fan and turned out to have replaced the Joker at the bottom of the deck. Sal kind of make up the routine because there were no instructions with the prop cards. Joe Mystic, a very busy professional performer in San Diego County, was next with a nothing effect that Joe turned into a miracle. Joe told a great story and hooked his audience before he ever showed us a giant playing card (the Queen of Spades.) that he put into a large envelope and then removed the middle of the Queen ala the Zig Zag illusion. It was a super presentation.

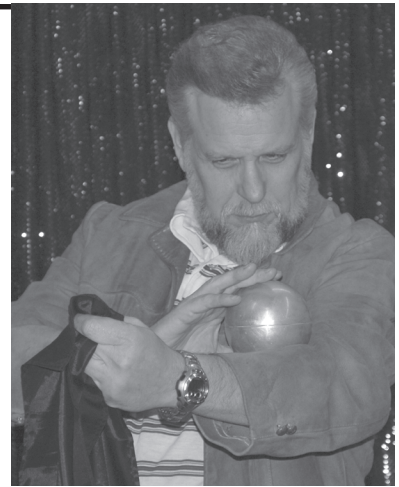
Our immediate past president Diane Lane was next and she selected Abbott's Dissecto - an arm chopper. Diane recreated her character of the 96-year-old magician and did a very suspenseful routine with the chopper and a brave volunteer from the audience. Diane was able to get about 14 minutes of solid entertainment out of this prop and her presentation.

Bob Pozner closed the show with his routine of "Sensitive Finger Tips." Bob had five or six brightly colored balls and a Crown Royal bag. The balls were dropped into the

bag, and just by touching the various objects in the bag he could determine their color. Bob used a one ahead principle and turned nothing into something.

There was a lot of laughing and talking following the meeting and members of the audience had suggestions for several of our performers and the effects they performed. Several members were at tables and did close up magic. Jeff Marcus gave a little lesson in cups and balls magic to several members.

January meeting in pictures



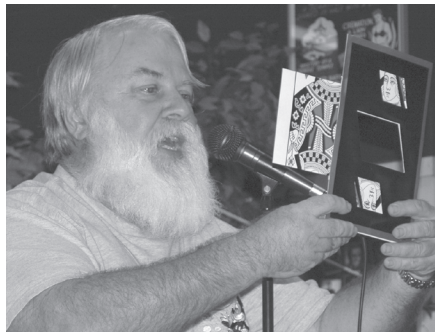
Jeff Marcus and the Zombie



Diane Lane with chopper and Sherry Luft victim.



Alex Greenbaum with
Foo Can & Funnel



Joe Mystic and the
Zig Zag Queen

All of those taking part in Brown Bag Night!



Front row: Jim Thayer, Sal Barajas, Diane Lane, Kenny Shelton
Back row: Loch Crane, Joe Mystic, Alex Greenbaum, Jim Whiting,
Jeff Marcus, and Charlie Gott.

Magic Book Review by Dr. Joel Moskowitz



Why Shouldn't A Woman Wear Red in a Casino?

By George Joseph

As a physician, it is common to get the question, I have this pain in my ribs what do you think it means and what should I do about it. Take off your clothes and I will have a look stops most. For others, I shrug and say, "Actually I am a morbid pathologist would you like to hear about the autopsy I did this morning." And if they still evidence interest, "Excuse me, I think I forgot to wash my hands." Until I read George Joseph's book, ***Why Shouldn't a Woman Wear Red in a Casino*** (2005 Edition pp 290), I hadn't considered that experts whose profession involves gambling or work in the casinos of Las Vegas are similar targets for advice. Financial planners and lawyers suffer similarly but I won't digress.

Why should a book by an expert in the ways of Las Vegas, cheaters and the casino business be of interest to followers of the magical arts? In a way, each discipline uses some of the same tools. Cards and dice for example. Just like construction contractors shopping at Home Depot and orthopedic surgeons (whose chisels are stainless steel) magicians and gamblers handle the same props.

The magic bug stung Mr. Joseph, as per the usual history, at age seven. Age 13 this morphed into study of the methods of dice and card cheaters.

The segue occurred courtesy of a vaudeville magician who provided the explanations. Like Colossus, George Joseph's path stood astride magic (He was the resident magician at Aladdin, Dunes and then became court qualified as the leading expert in surveillance and casino cheating.

The author describes how cards are marked and dice loaded, but the book's main thrust describes odds and strategy for the various gambling activities, including the horses. He answers the question about gamblers superstitions and also how the casinos are superstitious as well. The book is replete with topics that will enhance magician's patter when

gambling is the theme. One topic describes the most common method for cheating at poker. Gambling terminology is explained, i.e., What does it mean? The reader will also enjoy humorous stories that relate to many subjects, the 101 most asked questions about Las Vegas.

Casino logic and promotions are superb examples of conjuring doublespeak. We magicians understand that equivoque is subtle verbal mind twisting. Conjuring is deception. Let's be honest about that. When casinos boast that they return 97%, the eager future winner glows in the favorable odds. They fail to realize that while the casino may return 97%, it is your money that they return. For greater insights into the world of gambling, read this book. It is available from Worldwide Casino Consulting Inc 6130 W. Flamingo Rd #421 Las Vegas, Nevada 89103, Telephone 702 362 2101. WWW.GJLV.COM. \$19.95. I bet you will like it.

*No, the caveat that women should not wear red in a casino has nothing to do with the Dillinger story.

Wilson Story Continued from page one.

forget her ninth birthday on April 19, 1940. She says; "That was the day I moved to San Diego with my family." She went on to say; "I always considered San Diego my ninth birthday present."

Born in Ohio, and raised in Alton, Illinois, Nani came to San Diego when her father got a job in the booming aircraft industry. She still remembers the ten-block walk to her first school, Alice Birney Elementary in University Heights near El Cajon Boulevard. She attended Horace Mann Junior High, then really hit her stride at Hoover High School. Hoover school records listed her as Nancy Lou Arends.



Nani Darnell
circa 1941

As a senior, she was one of ten students in the entire high school (graduating class of 600) to be admitted to the elite service group "ECIVRES" which is "SERVICE" spelled backwards. One of her favorite accomplishments was helping establish the first senior clubroom at Hoover High, complete with a jukebox.

Throughout her youth, she kept a busy schedule of dance classes and performances. For two years she was Captain

Continued on page 5

of the Hoover High School Tumbling Team, performing for all the football games. Rainy weather made some performances challenging. "I remember tumbling in the mud," she told Michael Johnson.

On cleaner stages, she spent two seasons doing Gilbert and Sullivan at the Starlight Theater in Balboa Park. "I studied everything: piano, ballet, baton, acrobatics, and dance. She said, "I did drop the piano after a while."

Every Sunday, during World War II, she danced for wounded veterans in the aisles of the old Navy Hospital in Balboa Park. "There wasn't a lot of room, as I recall. But the audiences were appreciative."



Nani Darnell dancing at Balboa Park during the war

On Thursday and Friday evenings, she performed at the USO in downtown San Diego. Providing entertainment was her way of contributing to the war effort. She had a special desire to help, because her older brother Bill was in the U.S. Navy.

For some shows, the military brought Nani and the other performers to the many bases scattered throughout San Diego County. The entertainment would be transported in covered trucks, to keep the locations secret.

At one time, Nani was the Head Majorette for a special Girls Band sponsored by Merkley-Austin Mortuary in Hillcrest. She danced in parades all over the county.

Keeping this schedule wasn't easy, since Nani's parents expected her to maintain a straight-A grade average.

After she graduated from Hoover High School, she traveled the next day to Hawaii to accept a professional dancing job in Honolulu. More dance jobs followed, and then a job opportunity as a stewardess for American Airlines.

But everything in her life changed on New Years Eve, 1953, when she met her future husband, magician Mark Wilson. Nani remembered; "I wouldn't marry a Magician." She told Mark to get a real job before she would marry him, and he did.



Majorette Nani 1940

Nani kept working as a stewardess until the day before she got married on August 29, 1953. Mark worked his steady job for two months before the wedding date, and one month after. It was then that they began working in television, and that was the beginning of their now famous careers.

Nani says she has fond memories of growing up in San Diego, especially memories of the zoo and museums in Balboa Park, she says she is looking forward to a return engagement in the city where she debuted as a young performer, and we are all looking forward to welcoming her home.

"MagiToon"

by Jim Whiting & Ellen Friedman



"Ted is new here. I'm showing him the ropes."



Message from the Ring 76 President

I begin this month by letting everyone at Ring 76 know I have spent a little time in the hospital but I am improving and feeling much better. You can't get rid of me that easy!

I thank everyone who has called or sent me e-mails of best wishes. Thank you all.

I just read Jack White and Michael E. Johnson's story on Nani Wilson in this issue of MagiCurrents. I have known that Nani had close ties with San Diego, now I know about all of those shows for World War II G.I.'s and her dancing abilities and I must tell you I am impressed. I also remember one afternoon while talking with magician John Calvert, he casually mentioned that Nani Darnell was once an assistant and boxjumper in his show. Long before she teamed up with that other magician, Mark Wilson. We are all looking forward to the Mark Wilson lecture on the 13th. You will be sorry if you miss this one, so plan to attend.

While I am talking about magicians, I want to add my congratulations to Samuel Patrick Smith, who has become the new Editor of The Linking Ring magazine replacing Phil Willmarth, who will become the new President of the I.B.M. on June 30th at the I.B.M. Convention in Reno, Nevada, June 26 – 30. I should also tell you that Phil Willmarth is receiving the Academy of Magical Arts "Literary Award" on April 7th at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. That is a great honor

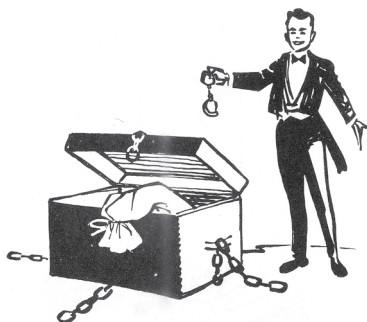
and long over due in its presentation to Editor Willmarth. Phil has been a good friend to Ring 76, and we look forward to a visit from him during his year as President of the I.B.M.

If you know someone who is thinking about joining the I.B.M. tell him or her to do so quickly because beginning May first, the dues for the I.B.M. will be increased by \$10. This is the first dues increase by the International in six years and is necessary to keep up with the rising costs of doing business and publishing the quality magazine the I.B.M. puts out each month. On a similar subject, I will recommend to the Ring 76 board of directors that we hold the line and not raise our Ring dues for another year, and ask that they remain at \$25 annually.

The annual Ring 76 close-up contest is always a lot of fun and creates a lot of excitement. I hope you are planning on attending Monday evening, February 12th and then the following evening, attending the Mark Wilson lecture, these will be two exciting days of magic in San Diego.

See you Monday evening.

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 prestoone@cox.net or by phone at 619-299-9037

News

John Fedko, longtime Orange County magician and past president of Ring 313 is about to celebrate his 78th birthday. John is taking the best material from his 13 different lectures and putting that material in one final lecture to be presented throughout year 2007, after which he plans to retire. "The Best of John Fedko" will be presented at the Magic Castle in Hollywood on March 11th. Ring 76 is trying to work out a date to present the Fedko lecture to Ring 76 members later this spring. Fedko is a magician who presents material we can all do with maximum effect.

Magician **David Copperfield** is bypassing San Diego this year and will play the Pechanga Resort and Casino in Temecula, instead on Saturday, February 24th and Sunday February 25th. He will have two shows each day with orchestra seats going for \$79.50 and Mezz \$60. Reservations can be made online by going to the Pechanga Website. Pechanga is about an hour drive north of San Diego, on I-15.

Former Ring 76 member **Roy Shank** is currently the closing act in the "World's Greatest Magic Show" at the Greek Isle's Casino in Las Vegas. Roy told **Jack White**, following a recent show, that he has been working and living in Las Vegas for 10 years. His mother still lives in San Diego, and he says he will drop by a Ring 76 meeting and say hello the next time he is in Southern California.

Syd Segal has been busy booking **Alain Choquette**, an outstanding magician from Canada, who is doing a tribute lecture to **Gary Ouelett** on Sunday, February 25, at the old or first site of the Grand Magic Shop on Escondido Blvd. Admission for this lecture is \$10 don't be fooled by the



lower than usual cost, this is a lecture filled with material that anyone can use. To make advance reservations and exact location of the lecture call: (619) 300-1344.

A new magician to Southern California received some good "ink" in the North County edition of the Union-Tribune in early January. **Tomas De la Cruz** started performing magic as a teenager on the streets of New York City. He also had a job at the Bank of America, Securities department and would have been at work in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, but that day happened to be his day off. Following the terrorist attack, Tomas wanted to do something for his country besides work at a bank. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps and has now made several deployments to Iraq. He is still in the Marine Corps, and he still is doing magic. You can see him on Tuesday evenings 9 to 11 p.m. at Hennessey's Tavern, 2777 Roosevelt Street in Carlsbad. He has become a popular magi in the North County doing both close-up and platform magic. He recently told reporters he wants to use his magic to raise \$100,000 dollars for various charities in the Southern California area. If anyone sees this magician who calls himself "The Ghetto Houdini," invite him to a Ring 76 meeting. We would like to meet him and shake his hand.

Michael E. Johnson tells us that **Mark Wilson** will hold one of his rare private workshops the night

Briefs

following his lecture at Jack's Magic Place. On Valentine's Day, February 14 from 6 to 8 p.m. Wilson will present a special workshop for the serious students of the magical arts. Attendance is limited to fifteen people only, tickets are \$50 per person. See Michael E. Johnson for more information or call him at (760) 747-4627.

Michael E. Johnson is also hosting his third annual "Magical Mystery Trip" to Hollywood on Sunday, February 11th, sponsored by Palomar College Community Development. The cost for the trip is \$99 per person which includes transportation, brunch, show and close-up magic. The bus departs at 8:30 a.m. from parking lot #1 at Palomar College, with an estimated return at 5:30 p.m. When we asked Michael what the dress code for this event would be he told us "elegant." For more information on this event call (760) 744-1150 x 2702.

The I.B.M. Board of Directors two weeks ago at their mid-year meeting in Las Vegas voted to raise the prize money for the Gold Medal and Gold Cups award at their annual convention in Reno, Nevada, June 26 – 30 to \$5000. The Gold Medal is awarded to the best stage performer and the Gold Cups are awarded to the best close-up worker. The Gold Medal and Gold Cups are not awarded every year. They are given to exceptional contestants who perform at the annual I.B.M. Conventions. If you think you have that very special act that is a winner, then go for the gold and some very nice prize money. On a related note, former I.B.M. President **Michael Stratman** has been named the new I.B.M. Convention Committee Chairman for 2007.

Coming Attractions

Monday, February 12, the much-anticipated Ring 76 Close-up contest. Jack's Magic Place, 4275 University Ave. Meeting begins at 7 p.m. this is always a fun evening of magic.

Mark & Nani Wilson lecture, February 13, Jack's Magic Place, at 7 p.m. \$20 dollars at the door. Save \$5 pay Monday night at the meeting. This is going to be a very special event bring a guest and see two legends of magic. The following evening Michael E. Johnson will host a Mark Wilson Workshop see news briefs for more information.

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! Start putting the magic you no longer use aside and reserve a table at the swap meet. Turn your old unused magic into cash.

Monday, February 26th, Ring 76 Board of Directors meeting will be a week later than usual because of the World Magic Seminar in Las Vegas. 7 p.m. These meetings are open to all Ring members who may want to attend.

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.