



MagiCurrents



San Diego, California

Celebrating Sixty Years of Service to the Magic Community

Honest Sid Gerhart Ring 76

Website

www.ring76.com

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Len Cardoza Named Ring 76 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner for 2008

by Jack White

Longtime San Diego magician and businessman, and the oldest still active Ring 76 member, Leonard (Len) Cardoza, will be inducted into our Hall of Fame by becoming an Honorary Lifetime Member of Ring 76. Only a handful of members have received that honor. On March 8th, of this year Len and his wife Jane will be celebrating 66 years of marriage.

Len joined the I.B.M. and Ring 76 in January of 1950, and has remained active since that time. Having lived most of his life in Southern California, he graduated from the Brown Military Academy in Pacific Beach in 1942, and enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving until the end of World War II. After the war he attended San Diego State and graduated with honors in the field of Physics. He worked in research and development and technical management in the electronic industry. All the while working in his off hours as a professional magic performer.



Len Cardoza

Spend an hour or so talking with Len Cardoza about his past in magic and you will hear names like Jose Frakson, Jack Lukin, Sid Fleishmann, Sam Berman, Ted Angel, Art Hannum, Sid Gerhart, Eddie Holahan, Tommy Woo, Al Wheatly (Chop Chop), et al. The list goes on and the stories about his shows and days with Ring 76 bring laughs and warm memories of the past.

Len Cardoza's first interest in magic came when he was 11 years old sitting in the audience of the Porter & Jennings Tent Show that was playing in the Central Valley town of Gustine. Len remembers it vividly. It was an old-time, Rep Show with a play put on by the entire company and then there were several variety acts that followed the play. One of the acts was a magician. Shortly after that show Len sent away for a Johnson Smith catalog of jokes, novelties and magic tricks.

That was in 1934 and Len tells us he has been sending away for magic tricks and books ever since, still

finding the art of performing magic one of the most relaxing and exciting of hobbies. A few years ago Len thought about getting rid of his magic props but he says there is always the hope that he will be called upon to do one more "big" show so he keeps his magic ready just in case he is called upon to perform again.

Today, close-up magic is Len's favorite style of performing but he has done many large stage productions, at one time mounting a popular show that is still talked about at the Squaw Valley Inn at Lake Tahoe City. He has appeared at more Blue & Gold Banquets, Elks Lodge and other fraternal functions than he can even remember. Len has always had time to work a fund raising event for a worthwhile cause and has taken part in recent San Diego Blood Bank magic programs with the Ring. We at Ring 76 don't see Len too often at meetings these days because he does not drive at night any longer. But he still keeps up with all that goes on within the Ring.

So, after six decades of performing magic and helping to build the I.B.M. and Ring 76, we salute and honor Len Cardoza for his life long efforts in magic with our Honorary Lifetime Achievement Award. The award will be presented at our Installation and Awards Banquet, set of July 13th at the Cottonwood Country Club in El Cajon.

See photos from Len's shows on page 5.

TEACH-IN TO FEATURE TOP TALENT

For some years the Ring 76 board of directors have been asking prominent and skilled members of the Ring to conduct an annual round-table teach-in of magic. These sessions have always been popular because our members come away from these programs having learned a new trick or how to properly perform a special sleight or move for a card or coin effects.

Our first vice president, Kenny Shelton, has been busy all month lining up some very special instructors for this years Teach-In. Included are, Bob Elliott, Brad Burt, Dr. Jeff Pierson and Greg Wauson.

There isn't much we can say about Bob Elliott that has not already been said, other than his fine teaching techniques at the Tannen Magic Camp for more than 20 years made him a legend in the magic community and we are very excited about having him as one of your instructors.

Continued on page 5

2008 Close-up Competition Highlighted Outstanding Ring 76 Performers

It was a warm Monday, February 11th, and just over 60 people jammed into Jack's Magic Place for the Annual Ring 76 Close-up Contest. This is a big event each year and the turnout was very large. Five large round tables were set up and audience members were seated around the tables, in some cases three people deep to watch each contestant do their 10 minute act as the performers moved from table to table.

Terry Lunceford, President of Ring 76, called the meeting to order and reminded everyone that money would be awarded our winners so this was a serious contest and each performer deserved our undivided attention. He then turned the meeting over to Kenny Shelton, our 1st Vice President and timekeeper. Kenny and Terry moved the contestants to their first tables and started the evening of close-up magic.

Donna Greenbaum was taking part in her first magic contest. Dressed in a very nice sparkly black evening gown she went into her act. Donna arrived in magic by way of her son Alex, who is now a college student in Orange County. Donna brought Alex to magic meetings because he was interested in learning more about performing. During that experience the magic bug bit mom and now both mother and son are interested in learning more about magic.

Donna incorporated much of what she and Alex learned in the past couple of years by watching lectures at Ring 76, her "Knot and No Knot" and her "Ring on Rope" were but two of the highlights of her routine. Her comment following the competition was, "Even though I might not win a prize, it was a great experience taking part in the contest."

Appearing in his second Close-up Contest as a performer was John London who, when not doing magic, is a serious film student in college. John has been a member of Ring 76 for several years and has taken part in a lot of stand-up magic shows, most often doing a routine featuring mental magic or mind reading. We learned that John is also a student of comedy magic on a one-on-one basis. He works with coins and cards while sporting a dapper black hat and coat with an open collar shirt giving him a suave, hip, and modern look.

Mago Ruly is a bit of an international star, having worked in television in Mexico and many children's parties on this side of the border. Mago Ruly works in a bright uniform-style costume that attracts immediate attention. A very skilled performer of both close-up and stage magic, he was right at home with this audience.

For Mago Ruly, English is a second language but he has designed his close-up act so that language is no barrier. He is a past winner of this contest and it was clear he was out to be a top competitor again this year. Working with very different kind of playing cards that had pictures of animals on them, he created a bit of a miracle with his sudden rising card out of a deck that is just leaned up against a drinking glass and that was a real applause getter.

Michael E. Johnson has developed a new look and style to his magic by dressing in a true top hat and a cut-away gray morning suit complete with ascot and gray dress trousers with a silk stripe down the leg. Michael has the tall lean body to make this outfit look great on him. A professional performer, he was right at home table-hopping with his clever story telling and mysterious manner. His "Folded Card in Box" is very nice as is his work with coins that get larger and larger for a very funny and surprising finish to his act. Michael was the only contestant that worked right up to the whistle sound at each table giving a full 10 minutes of magic entertainment.

Tom McCarthy is the ever-ready professional performer having honed his skills behind the counter of Brad Burt's old magic shop and he has encountered every kind of distraction a magician can encounter while table hopping and working the bar at the Gathering Bar & Grill and many other restaurants where he displays his many talents. Tom worked mainly with cards and did an "Oil & Water" routine that was superb and had his audiences scratching their heads in disbelief. Tom McCarthy is a very animated performer who knows how to draw his audience into his work with an economy of props. Tom's great personality and superb technical skills are his strongest assets.

Craig Stone, another of our top professional performers, was on hand to add to the high caliber of close-up magic that was presented on this evening. Craig, who has been changing his performance character for a while now, dressed in a zoot suite that was right out of a Cab Calloway movie of the 1930s. When he approaches your table you know he is sincere about entertaining you with some different magic. Craig is another performer who has honed his skills behind a magic shop counter and has worked many restaurants and bars. He is another high energy, skilled performer who knows how to entertain with magic.

This was tough competition when it came time for the members to vote.



Close-up Contestants



**l. to r., Donna Greenbaum, John London, Craig Stone, Mago Ruly, Michael E. Johnson
in front, Tom McCarthy**

Magic Book Review

by

Dr. Joel Moskowitz, M.D.

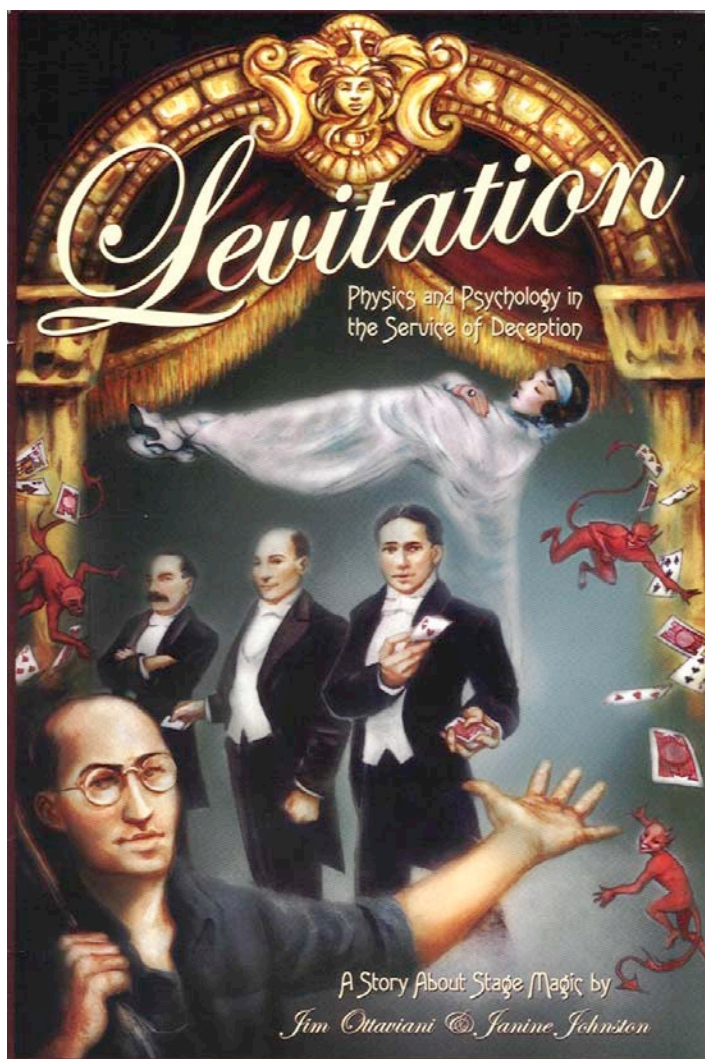


HIGH FLYING MAGIC

Arthur C. Clarke is reputed to have said: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Ottaviani posits that amazing effects such as levitation may make the magician but science makes the magic. For example, the idea that something so intangible as sound can lift objects may seem unbelievable, but it's a real phenomenon. Acoustic levitation takes advantage of the properties of sound to cause solids, liquids and heavy gases to float. The process can take place in normal or reduced gravity. In other words, sound can levitate objects on Earth or in gas-filled enclosures in space. The act of ascending into the air and flying in apparent defiance of gravity as performed by conjurers defies scientific reason...or does it?

Ricky Jay, in his erudite *Jay's Journal of Anomalies*, provides the thesis that audiences are prone to intuit the mechanism by which wondrous effects are achieved that satisfies their mental inquiry but invariably they are wrong! So it is when magicians challenge reality by levitating their comely assistant or themselves.

The book "**LEVITATION**" Jim Ottaviani and Janine



Johnston, might be mistaken for a comic genre publication when actually it is a graphic nonfiction story on a par with the recent "Illusionist". Magic is all about seeing. Can you imagine doing magic for a blind person? Janine Johnston (Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi - artist) teams up with Jim Ottaviani (much acclaimed author) to masterfully paint the story behind the curtain surrounding the invention and display of conjuring levitation. Readers of the magical brotherhood might feel the hair on the nape of their necks rigid with "Not another expose!"

While this book is a show and tell story of how and why, we conjurers can relax. Penn and Teller, the original 'bad boys of magic', revealed much and thereby soared to the heights of magicdom. We can take comfort in the maxim that if you want to keep a secret "publish it!" Additionally, those of the public who truly want to know can readily find out. And when they 'know' they tend to feel initiated in the secret society and are loathe to reveal to others.

So of what value is this book? Allowing for the artful craft of Ms Johnston who blends victorian settings (It is, after all, primarily a tale of the greats of illusion of the 18th century) with diagrammatic illustrations. (Note the core words 'illusions' and 'illustrations'), author Ottaviani specializes in telling about science with pictures. Although the full title is "Physics and Psychology in the Service of Deception" it is not formally explained. The premise that by simulating physics (and using machinery) linked with the inborn propensity for humans to marvel at exceeding the limitations of reality, gives us glee is told.

It is my opinion that much of magic is bereft of a story which gives reason for the performers being on stage. Not only is this a "story about stage magic" as promised, it is well researched. Ottaviani provides references he used which include but are not limited to TOPS *Treasury of Illusions* by Neal Foster (1965), wherein he found Keller's patter when he performed the levitation; David Price's *A Pictorial History of Conjurers in the Theater* (1985); he had access to my friend, and much missed Marcello Truzzi's collection of magic ephemera and even Thurston's patter which Thurston had developed for an experimental version of the levitation effect (1920). The portrayal of Guy Jarrett, who perfected the illusion, is firmly based on true history.

The essence of the plot is that John Neville Maskelyne (British - not some Fakir from India) originated the levitation illusion whence it was stolen by Harry Keller (American) who took it back to the States. Later it was passed on to Howard Thurston, who presented it as though he was a carnival barker with the voice and bearing of a preacher. If reading is not your thing, Ms. Johnston's illustrations will gratify you. As a bonus, Mr. Ottaviani appends: The Egyptian Hall Program 1900, The Entranced Fakir; two Keller poster reproductions, 1899 and 1900 - the latter with him doing a levitation; a poster of Thurston, 1908, Keller predicting that Thurston will be the greatest magician ever known; a 1921 diagram of the workings of the levitation apparatus; the program from the Lyric Theater February 27 1921 describing what Thurston will amaze his audience with - note that there will be shown "The Levitation of Princess Karnack"; and a sheet giving the history of Thurston's lucky charm talisman.

This paperback, 6 x 9, 72 pp \$12.95, has been published by G-T Labs and distributed by Diamond Book Publishers (410 560 7100) G-T Labs' address is P.O. Box 8145, Ann Arbor, MI 48107, e-mail: jimO@g-t-labs.com; voice: 1 734 994 0474. In this reviewer's opinion, readers will have an uplifting experience. Buy this book.

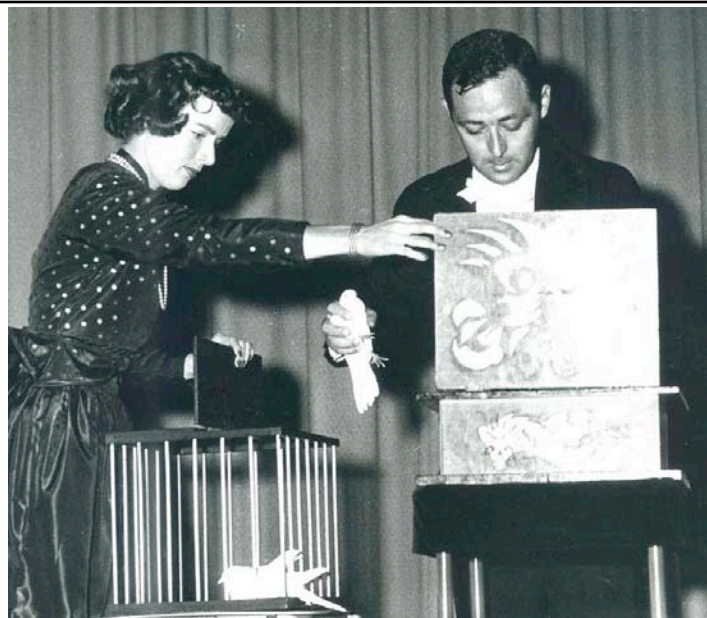
Teach-In *Continued from page 1*

We are equally happy to have another local legend Brad Burt, a past president of Ring 76, and the man who operated San Diego's most prominent magic shop for several decades, as our second instructor. Brad, you will remember, produced a very popular series of magic videotapes and is another much admired teacher of magic.

Dr. Jeff Pierson has had a great deal of experience with close-up magic and performs daily for his patients and he is always doing magic wherever he goes. Whether it's a restaurant where he is having lunch or a meeting with other doctors and patients he always has a trick ready to present.

Greg Wauson has been a longtime member of Ring 76 with a deep interest in magic of all kinds. Greg has taken part in many of our competitions and general programs always coming up with something a little different and always mystifying. We think you will find his unique approach to magic very refreshing and we look forward to his contributions to this session.

A fifth teacher will be on hand for the event but that person has not been confirmed at our newsletter deadline time. Five tables will be set up, much like our close-up contest and the instructors will go from table to table teaching their tricks. There will be an opportunity for members to ask questions during each 15-minute session. This is always an exciting, educational evening.



More shots of Len performing



"MagiToon"

by Jim Whiting & Ellen Friedman



Len entertains "the troops" with silks on a rope.





Message from the Ring 76 President

I am writing this column from Maui, in the Hawaiian Islands, Lynn and I are here for a little rest and relaxation. I plan to drop by the very popular magic nightclub in Lahaina, called: "Warren and Annabelle's" where the company is friendly and there is always a lot of magic going on at the tables and bar. If you are planning a visit to Maui you must plan to pay a visit to this popular magic nightspot, but I have a word or warning, call a head for a reservation because this is a very busy place and you will need a reservation.

I will be home in time for our March 10th Teach-In program. Kenny Shelton is busy putting together a great group of instructors for this meeting. You will come away from this meeting having learned a new trick, sleight or move, perhaps all three. I hope you are planning to attend this event and bring a friend or potential new member to this meeting.

Because of some technical problems Michael E. Johnson was not able to get the new membership roster out at our last meeting as planned. Michael assures me it will be ready for the March meeting, so that is yet another important part of our monthly get-together. One more reminder about our April meeting which is

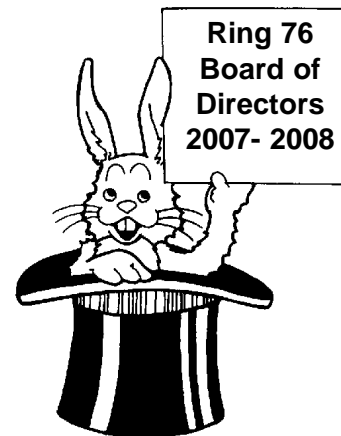
the annual Ring 76 Swap Meet. If you want a table to sell your magic or if you want to share a half table see Richard Ustick as soon as possible, we only have so much room and when it is gone, there is no more. This is a great opportunity to get rid of all of that unwanted magic you never use and recycle it for something new.

This is a bittersweet moment, as many of you know Jack White is stepping down as the Ring 76 Secretary in preparation of becoming the I.B.M. President. As Jack turns his duties as secretary over to others we will transition our newsletter from printed form to online distribution. All of that starts with this issue, some of you are reading this online, but you will also receive a printed copy of the newsletter as usual. This will be the last printed issue for the general membership. I want to congratulate Don Soul for his excellent job of making all of this work online through e-mail.

I also want to say congratulations to Len Cardoza, for becoming our new Honorary Lifetime Achievement Member of Ring 76 for 2008. I hope you will all read about his achievements elsewhere in this issue of MagiCurrents.

Until March 10th I say Aloha!

Terry Lunceford
Ring 76 President



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*denotes past Ring 76 president

For information on membership or Ring events contact secretary Jack White by e-mail at prestoone@cox.net or by phone at (619) 299-9037

NEWS

Good news for *Houdini* fans and those who would like to know more about him. The Miracle Factory is producing and releasing a 3-DVD set titled: "Houdini: The Movie Star." This set will offer clips or in some cases the complete versions of Houdini's movies, included will be his first film, a serial: "The Master Mystery" (1919) "Terror Island" (1920) A short clip of "The Grim Game" (1919) "The Man From Beyond" (1922) and "Haldane of the Secret Service" (1923) the last feature was taken from an original 35mm print of the famous silent film. In addition to the feature films and serial this set will include many bonus newsreel stories of Houdini's escapes and some home movies taken by Houdini's family and friends as well as a clip of the Metamorphosis as performed by Houdini's brother *Hardeen*. The DVD set will be available in April and will cost \$50. Contact **Todd Karr** at toddkarr@aol.com for more information on availability and further information on ordering.

Many Ring 76 members will remember *John Dahms* who lived in Escondido and whose wood-working skills created some highly collectable and beautiful magic props. John died some years ago, now we have learned his widow *Harriett Dahms*, died January 1st. Harriett had been living in an assisted living facility in Fullerton. She died just two weeks after her 96th birthday.

According to a story in the San Diego Union-Tribune, February 12th, Illusionists *Siegfried Fischbacher* and *Roy Horn* are planning to make a one-night only comeback next February, 2009 performing their signature show at a fundraiser. Their appearance will be the first in more than five years after a tiger attack ended their long-running production



on the Las Vegas Strip. Siegfried & Roy will perform at the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute's "Keep Memory Alive" fundraiser in Las Vegas at a location yet to be confirmed. You will recall, Roy Horn was critically injured when the white tiger, *Montecore*, sank its teeth into his neck and dragged him offstage in front of a horrified audience at the Mirage in October 2003, ending one of the most successful casino shows in Las Vegas history. The pair continue to believe that Montecore sensed Horn was having a mini-stroke and was dragging him to safety, rather than attacking him.

We learned in February, that *Les Smith* (92) who operated Owen Bros., Magic Supreme, died after a lengthy illness. Under Les Smith's, watchful eye and with the help of the late *Carl Owen* the company produced high quality magic apparatus for top name performers around the world. The company was originally the Thayer Magic Company and continues to produce many of the original Thayer items. Smith's son-in-law, *Alan Zagorski*, will continue to operate the manufacturing center and retail store in Azusa, which is east of Los Angeles.

Terry Godfrey has been putting this years fair schedule together and so far he has booked 55 days of work. He is hoping to make it 75 days for the season that will take him into October. Terry has become one of the best known of Western Fair Association magicians on the road. Perhaps one day we can have him do a lecture on his fair show experiences?

BRIEFS

A man, *Dennis Regling*, who writes and edits a Website called "BellaOnline, the Voice of Women in Magic," recently released his listing of prominent women magicians and close to the top of the list is our own *Diane Lane*. Beside her name the copy reads: "Diane is one of San Diego's finest family performers and holds the title of "Stand-up Magician" of the year 2001. She has her own Magic TV show that airs weekly in San Diego. Some great "ink" for Diane.

Joshua Jay, magician and prominent magic writer was especially taken by the beautiful California weather while he was here in San Diego, for a magic lecture on February 25th. Joshua is now living in New York City, and for three years has been working on a beginner's book of magic that will be published later this year. His lecture here in San Diego brought out a huge number of people most of which are not members of Ring 76. If you have a friend interested in magic and they are not a member of the Ring, bring them to a meeting.

This issue of MagiCurrents is being mailed via the U.S. Postal Service as usual to all of our Ring members. You will also be receiving an electronic version of this newsletter. If you did not receive the e-mail version it is because we probably do not have your correct e-mail address. See *Michael E. Johnson* to make sure we have your correct membership information. In the future our newsletter will be sent via e-mail. Those who do not have e-mail will receive a cut down version of a printed newsletter. We are excited to report that *Don Soul* has taken over the job as new editor of the newsletter; *Jack White* will stay on as advisor-editor until July.

Coming Attractions

Monday, March 10th, Magic Teach-in Session. If you would like to be a teacher see Kenny Shelton for details.

Thursday, March 20th, dove master Tony Clark Lecture 7pm at Jack's Magic Place - \$20 at the door.

Monday, April 14th, Ring 76 Swap Meet, an opportunity to get rid of all that unwanted and unused magic Jack's Magic Place. Doors open 6:30pm.

Tuesday, April 15th, a special dealer demo lecture of the latest magic apparatus by the "Ickle Pickle" magic company 7pm at Jack's Magic Place - \$5 at the door.

Tuesday, May 6th, Aldo Colombini Lecture 7pm at Jack's Magic Place - \$20 at the door.



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MagicCurrents is published monthly by Ring 76 and is edited by Don Soul. We encourage articles, stories, pictures and news items of interest. All material should be submitted to Don Soul by e-mail at dsoul@san.rr.com or written manuscripts may be submitted to Don Soul, 10068 Branford Rd., San Diego, CA 92129-3223.