



I.B.M. Ring 29

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APRIL 2002

MAGIC MUSINGS

International Brotherhood of Magicians, Ring #29

8912 Stagecoach Road, #7, Little Rock, Arkansas 72209 • (501) 455-6242

Meets 1st Thursday of every month, Baptist Medical Center

April 4 is regular meeting: restaurant & close-up

The regular monthly meeting for Ring 29 for April will be a teach-in, featuring a panel of experts on "The Business of Restaurant and Close-up" magic.

We'll be at our regular time (7 pm) and our regular place (Baptist Medical Center) in our regular room (20), on April 4.

Here's the scoop: we have several successful restaurant magicians in our club. Let's pick their brains to see how they deal with all those things which make them successful, as well as those things which go wrong. For example:

- How to protect angles in close-up?
- How to re-set from table to table?
- How to deal with hecklers?

BITS & PIECES

● LAST MONTH the Ring 29 meeting theme was "My Favorite Trick." There were 33 members there and half of them (16) performed. Everyone had a great time and the magic was outstanding. Richard Knoll won the raffle of a Himber Ring and video. Get more details in the Ring Report in Linking Ring.

● PAUL CARLON performed at three of the four elementary schools in Benton during March, performing a Magic Drug Prevention Program. Paul has been lecturing and performing in the Arkansas Public School System for many years and is doing a great job representing the magic community. He is a church youth director.

● THE RING 29 MAGIC COOK-BOOK by our own Penni Springer, is still available for purchase from Penni or from Mr. Magic. She has reduced the price to \$5 each, so hurry and pick up a copy before they sell out. Don't forget, they also make great gifts. Buy several!

● REMEMBER, the Magic Collectors Weekend is set for May 16-18 in Fort Worth. Call Jim for more information.

● IN SPRINGFIELD, MO., at the Hammons Hall theater, Penn & Teller performed March 8th. Several of our members attended, we understand. We would appreciate having a report of the performance to run in this newsletter. Any takers?

At the same theater, David Copperford

- What tricks work and which don't?

You get the idea. They'll tell us a bunch of neat tips, demonstrate some stuff, and then answer all your questions about this popular and satisfying branch of magic.

Don't miss this one. Even if you don't do restaurant magic, you will learn dozens of tips on performing close-up magic, which is basic for most magicians.

Come early, go through the cafeteria and bring your tray to the meeting room to eat with fellow magicians.

NEXT MEETING:

- Thursday, April 4, 7 pm
Baptist Medical Center
Resturant & close-up

will perform his "Portals" Show on April 22. Tickets are \$32.50 and \$48.50. Call (417) 476-7849 for details and tickets. If you go, take notes and write us a report.

● MAXWELL BLADE'S Theater of Magic was open in March, and will reopen at the end of May. Watch for more details this Spring and Summer.

● RANDAL will be auditioning junior magicians at the Junior Magician's meeting April 21. He's looking for performers for his show in Hot Springs. What a wonderful opportunity for some young magicians to gain some valuable experience. The rest of you encourage them to audition.

● THE JUNIOR MAGICIANS will meet at Mr. Magic at 2 pm, Sunday, April 21. We had a terrific turn-out last meeting. Let's keep up the great momentum. Encourage young people you know to attend and take a look. You might call Mr. Magic a day or two before to confirm that the meeting is still on.

● THE WORLD CLOWN Association's next regular meeting was postponed to April 14 at 2 pm at Mr. Magic. If you or anyone you know is interested, call Don Bear or Jim Henson. We have been having a great time at these meetings so come have fun with us.

● THE FINAL REPORT is in on the Ring Auction in February, and the Ring made \$319. With such a great auction night, we're all looking forward to next February.

Nominations being accepted for board of directors

Nominations for the Ring 29 Board of Directors will be made at the May meeting, with the annual election being held at the June meeting and the installation banquet to be announced.

If you would like to serve on the board or know someone who would, please contact any current board member.

Ring 29 magic convention runs into closed doors

The Ring 29 board has been trying to put together details for the first statewide magic convention, originally set in the Fall in Hot Springs. But when one detail falls into place, another falls through. So it's back to the drawing board.

Alternate plans are being looked into but nothing is set yet. If you have any ideas about location, dates, or anything else, please contact any board member.

Bill Palmer to lecture in May

Bill Palmer is scheduled to lecture at the Ring 29 May meeting. We'll have more information about him and his lecture next month. For now, circle the May 2 meeting and keep it open for a great evening of learning magic.

The ladies know best!

Got those dry hand blues?

I know I'm going to hear it big for this, but I've just got to tell you.

It's actually a tip from Harvey Berg. If you have dry hands, the best thing for it is (are you ready?) - VagisilR Intimate Moisturizer.

Okay... I'll wait 'till the giggling stops. Truly, try it out -- if you're man enough to actually purchase it yourself -- and see how well it works! Remember... it's safe and effective! Bryan Dean

THE FINAL SECRET

by Joseph Creel Morgan (sawnhaf@msm.com)

I just found out Colonel Seymour died. It has still not quite sunk in. I'm sure I will cry later over the cranky old bastard, but right now I feel a need to tell someone about him, about the Colonel Seymour I knew, respected, and loved.

By the time I met the Colonel, the heyday was little more than a few old photos, some posters, and a simply humongous painting of the Colonel and Frances, his wife and assistant for lo, those many years, during one of their many thousands of performances.

One of the local television stations had even filmed a series featuring the two of them for broadcast back in the heyday, but that too was now just so much degraded celluloid.

I found the Colonel by accident, really. I was working for the Missouri Pacific Railway Company in 1981, and in December of that year, MoPac had a massive system-wide layoff of almost half their employees. I was one of them, 21, married, one child, and no real job skills outside the railroad. Railroad unemployment is good, but it won't feed, shelter and clothe a family, so I began falling back on what I knew from childhood -- magic. I began doing children's parties again, with rope, handkerchiefs, plastic Solo cups, and pompons. It was when I went looking for more supplies that I met a man that I could only describe as a disgruntled, curmudgeonly, cranky old elf. That man was Colonel Frank M. Seymour -- "Southern Colonel of Corn".

I don't know what it was that sparked his interest in me -- I was, at best, a mediocre magician at the time, had never even seen a palm, much less done one. Perhaps it was my youthful enthusiasm -- or maybe it was just so there would be someone to do the lifting and toting. Whatever the reason, he stopped charging me for magic lessons, and made them more about working than performing.

Then one day, he took me into his studio -- the building out back where he did all his sign painting -- and began to teach me how to make a living painting signs. Most people don't know it, but the big red razorback hog that was on the back of the Razorback Drive-in's screen on Cantrell Road in Little Rock was the Colonel's creation. He painted it all himself from a boson's swing chair hung from the top of the screen. He also painted his car. Gold. Look close enough, you could see the brush strokes. He was an artiste in the truest sense. He taught me how to letter and

create in paint, and how to build sturdy magic stands that weighed a ton, but simply could not turn over. Colonel Seymour paid me to paint his house. He said it needed painting, and I might as well get the money as a stranger. It didn't last long. We found out quickly that I was not cut out to be a house painter, when I dumped a full bucket of paint on my head off the ladder, and had to take a shower in their house. Frances had to wash my clothes for me. I felt really bad about that, because of her rheumatoid arthritis. It was one of her good days, but I could tell it still hurt her, and that hurt me, because she was the sweetest of God's creations, and yet was bedridden most of the time. She never said a word, only smiled, but I knew.

I figured he would be done with me after that, but the Colonel had other plans. He began to teach me the fine art of relieving the public of its' hard-earned ducats, and making them like it, through the fine art of prestidigitiation.

I came over that Saturday, and the Colonel was out in his yard, grinning like he'd struck gold. He was holding an old metal folding stand. We painted it that morning, and used an old metal medicine cabinet for the top. We left the handle on it, and painted the whole thing black and lettered "Morgan the Magnificent" on the front, then I put red felt on the outside of the cabinet door. This was my huckster stand, with a built in place to keep my stock.

The Colonel proceeded to teach me how to pitch magic to the common folk. He supplied me with stock, we made a reasonable business arrangement (reasonable for me, expensive for the Colonel), and I began selling magic in four different flea markets in Little Rock.

I guess the rest is history, as they say. I supported my family as the sole provider of income for two-and-a-half years, painting signs like the Colonel taught me to do, and doing and selling magic the way the Colonel taught me to -- more of the latter than the former: sign painting is too much like real work. The Colonel gave me one of his old tweed coats to wear when it got chilly (I doubt it had ever been worn), and bought the lumber needed to build my magic stands the right way (I learned to paint some mean rabbits on those stands). He never once asked for anything in return, so I went out of my way to try and help out. I helped him finish the Coppings Liquor awning sign -- it tired him out to work

on such a large piece -- and the non-running vans for a dry cleaning business owner that would take the vans out and leave them in parking lots all over town, until they were towed off. The Colonel really liked that guy.

I went to college, and sort of lost touch with the Colonel for several years. By the time I went back, Frances had passed, and the Colonel had lost a great deal more of his hearing, making him unaware of much of what was said to him. He was still just as sharp mentally, but the body was betraying him. Arthritis had taken the once-nimble fingers, the vision was clouded, and the world had almost stopped talking to him.

He was sitting in his yard when I drove up. It was sunny, and the tree there at the fence was providing him mottled shade. We sat for awhile, and talked about what all had happened since last we visited. He was real interested in the magic I was doing on campus, and we talked about the money possibilities there. Some of that old curmudgeonly elf showed itself when we discussed the prices. Some things never change.

Then I told him why I had come to see him. I told him how much he had meant to my family back then, how his tutelage had made the difference between an apartment, and an apartcar. I told him how I had continued to fall back to his magical training throughout the years, and how I could still always turn a buck if I needed to, by paint or prestidigitiation. And then I told him what someone had told me just few days before - "never let the chance to tell someone thank you for a great kindness they have shown you slip by. You may not get another...". I told him thank you. For all the wonderful differences he had made in my life, and for the better man that I am for having known him, I thanked him. One of us cried. Hell, maybe both of us did.

Whichever, I know he knows. I am glad I stopped by that day. I'm glad I had that chance. I'm glad he knows. Now you do. Never let the chance slip by, to tell someone thank you for a great kindness they have shown you -- you may not get another.

Well, I have bored you all enough with this, but I wanted someone to know the Colonel Seymour I knew. Please take a quiet moment and honor this passing of an unsung "worker" in our magical realm. The wand is broken, the final secret revealed.

Colonel Seymour, 90, passed away in his sleep, Feb. 28, 2002.