

Press-to!

Assembly 206 News

Calendar Reminders:
 Monday, Aug. 17th - 206 Monthly Meeting
 September 4-7 - T.A.O.M. in Houston

NEXT MEETING:
 August 17th @ 7:00 pm at the Omni Southpark

Showmanship & Presentation:

a self-evaluation!

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From The President:

Hull Youngblood

A Night in Buffalo

This is not a convention review. I spent 3 days at the SAM National Convention in Buffalo. For four hours one night I sat at a table in the hotel bar with card mechanic Richard Turner, space magician Richard Garriott, and close-up magic legend Garrett Thomas. There were also 50 other people crowded around that table, who watched the show these three gifted people put on. I got to sit right next to them and just watch. (The following night I also got to see Michael Tallon’s award winning performance in the Stage Contest – it was his best performance EVER - of his hilarious card routine. Congratulations Michael!) Now, back to the table in the bar.

Most of you have had a chance to see Richard Turner do things with cards that just about no one else can do. He has mesmerized us all at SAM 206 meetings in the last year or two. He is dedicated, gifted, entertaining, and he was all of those that night at the hotel bar. There were two folks from the local TV station at our table,

who were magical neophytes – they had never seen magic that close, in person. You can just imagine the impact that Richard Turner had on them. Mr. Turner made them believe.

Next, Richard Garriott fired up his Apple laptop, and showed movies from space of his magic and juggling, his science fiction movie and scientific experiments. He talked about being weightless, the liftoff, the re-entry, his time in recovery, etc. As he spoke you could see the desire in his face

From the President (cont.)

(and feel the passion in his heart) to get back into space. His enthusiasm and excitement was contagious. He kept the crowd stunned while he talked about his adventures. Kids and parents continually approached him during his two days at the convention, and asked for his autograph and pictures. As he always is, Richard was receptive, responsive, and gracious every single time – especially with the kids. Richard Garriott is an uncommon adventurer who still connects with everyone.

Garrett Thomas, the much sought after creator of new effects (and guru of character development) did part of his close-up routine that night as well. His coin work is extraordinary and entirely inexplicable – and coin work typically bores me – but not this stuff. He then brought out a Rubik's cube. Having seen Bradford Parker's routine at our contest, I was interested to see Garrett's work on this. Three minutes later Garrett had us all lip-diddling as we watched the cube get solved and unsolved in seconds.

Later, Garrett showed me the handwritten journal that he kept as he developed his Rubik's cube routine. There were 50 or 60 pages of meticulous diagrams and formulae for solving Rubik's cube problems. It had taken him months to break down all the moves, and practice the one-handed solutions that he created. Yes – one handed solutions to a Rubik's cube. He had taken the time to actually think about every single move he was making, and how he could make every single move better. The standard Rubik's cube effect is for sale.

It comes with instructions. Garrett does not follow instructions.

I learned a lot from Garriott, Turner and Thomas that night. I learned I know very little about space, but I know someone who has immersed himself in every possible nuance of space – and is making it his life, and spreading that enthusiasm. I learned a new card move, taught to me by Richard Turner. A card move that he realized I could do, by the way I like to shuffle cards, and he took the time to teach it to me. Thanks to Garrett Thomas I learned that with focus, analysis and effort, three coins, a finger ring, and a child's Rubik's cube, can be things of astonishment and wonder.

Focus. Dedication. Willingness to help; to teach; to connect.

Great reminders and lessons from a night in Buffalo.

Hull



Assembly 206 July Meeting Report by:**Opie Houston****Dealer Night**

Hull Youngblood, President, began the perfect follow-up to last month's Austin Magic Contest, by opening with a warm thank you and welcome to the KLRU Austin City Limits crew, who helped us produce the perfect magic event in the KLRU ACL theater, a most-famous landmark in our fair city. J.J. Webber, KLRU Broadcast Operations Director, was quick to give credit to the outstanding work done by his crew members and praised the obviously-expert technicians among our own members, amid much applause and vocal friendly hoots. J.J. made it clear that SAM 206 will have easy access to their internationally-famous TV Studio. Who knows!! Maybe we can get Willie to join us next year.

Hull kept up the excitement by announcing that SAM 206 members, Michael Tallon, Richard Turner, and Richard Garriott had been praised with standing ovations for their performances at the SAM Buffalo convention. Then, on cue, Chris Walden cranked up his laptop and projected some clips from the Austin Magic Contest, beginning with a Blues Brothers skit, performed by Chris and Hull. They plan to present it at the Houston TAOM in September to kick off promotions for an upcoming 2010 program here in Austin. You will hear a lot more about that from Houston, but for now, let us get into the Program.



Magic Dealers, moderated by J.D. Stewart, supported and cajoled by fellow dealers Cy Albertson (Texas Magic Supply, Cedar Park, TX who soon will add a second store in south Austin), Lee Robertson (King's Magic, Austin, Tx and Indonesia), and Richard Hatch (H&R Books, Humble, TX), did a tag team of presentations, hawking their wares, but mostly having fun and showing us some of their favorite "what's new" oldies. The group could not have worked better together; it was almost as if they had rehearsed (Heaven forbid!!!!).....haha. Not even the visiting muggles blinked at a few high-ticket items for sale, but we all blinked and clapped when the dealers did a final curtain call, bringing with them hands full of tricks and books to give away in a mass drawing. I did not catch the name of everything that was given away and/or performed, but some items are listed below:



Vanishing Mikes, Cardiograph, Stripper Deck, Aunt Mary's Terrible Secret, Dragonfly, Mental Yarn, Mirage Deck, Something from Nothing, ESP Deck, Phil Harthing's Lecture notes,

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Assembly 206 July Meeting Report (continued)

Color Changing Ribbon/Scarf, Time Trapper Clock, a T Shirt, Notebook and bookmark (autographed by Hatch....you had to be there to appreciate the tongue-in-cheek pitch of a regular three-ring notebook for eighty bucks), Brainwave Deck, Invisible Deck, Broken/Restored Thread (using Punch Embroidery Thread), Cut and Restored Card, Jumbo Three Card Monte, etc.



Ron Cartlidge, Ramon Galindo, and Bertil Fredstrom were noticeably absent, since they are en route to China for FISM. Break a chop stick, guys. Oh, and welcome to Dan Page who received his new-member pin and plaque. Prepare to go to work, son; SAM 206 is on a roll, and we need all the newbie workers we can get. Go round up some prospective members and bring them to our regular meetings on the third Monday of the month at the Omni Southpark Hotel, at 7:00 p.m. See you there.....Opie Houston

By-law Amendment to be Proposed

SAM 206 current by-laws require nominations for officers in October, and then elections for officers in November. Considering the fact that SAM 206 meets on the Third Thursday of each month, this means that many times SAM 206 elections are held around the Thanksgiving holiday. For example, this year the November Meeting will be held on November 20, and Thanksgiving is November 27.

Currently SAM 206 new officers (who officially take office in January of each

year) have less than 6 weeks to prepare for the upcoming year – and those six weeks are filled with the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years holidays!

So, at the August meeting, a proposal will be made to change the SAM 206 bylaws to allow for nominations for new officers to be made in September, and elections to be held in October. This will give our new slate of officers more time (and time that is not consumed with holidays) to plan for the upcoming year.

Membership Dues Reduction?

We have not received the final numbers on membership from national. However there was some good news coming out of Buffalo. According to President Mike Miller, you can now pay \$45 per year in S.A.M. National dues instead of the regular \$65.

Last year we had a slight dues increase. Here is the catch: if you would like the reduction, you will have to read your M.U.M. magazine on-line. If you still want the hard copy then it is \$65. More on this at the next assembly meeting.

Among Our Members:**by: Ron Cartlidge**

RAY BROWN was spotted on Fox 29 in July advertising the new Harry Potter movie. Ray performed two card tricks, the first having a card picked from the deck and signed and then producing the folded card from his mouth. In the second effect which Ray has done many times for assembly members, a signed and picked card from the deck is pulled from a balloon that had been selected by the person who signed the card. Ray has also recently vacationed in sunny Florida.



Mike Meadows (center)

MIKE MEADOWS, who is with the band Porter Davis, played recently at Gruene Hall in Gruene, Texas. The venue is the oldest dance hall in Texas. Mike tells me that he plays about once a month at Gruene Hall. I took the trip down to the site near New Braunfels on a Saturday afternoon to see Mike perform. He has invented a new drum which is produced by his company Black Swan. The drum caused quite a stir that afternoon as many people took photos as it is quite unusual to see a drummer sitting on his drum and playing.

Porter Davis is an outstanding trio of talented people. That afternoon they played from 1-5 p.m. and the event is free.

Of course a tip jar is passed through the crowd and because the music is so good, it fills up fast.



Black Swan Drum

DOC SEATON has returned from several weeks in the Blackpool area. He spent most of his time working, but had time to spend a week off the coast of Spain while he was away.

BERTIL FREDSTROM and **RAMON GALINDO** made the trip to Nashville for the IBM convention this summer. **J.D. STEWART** also made the trip to the music city. All three said that they had a great time. Bertil and Ramon continued on to F.I.S.M. in Beijing, China as did **RON CARTLIDGE**. Ron and Ramon spent 17 days in China touring for a week before the convention and then hooking up with Bertil when F.I.S.M. started. Ron returned home only to spend his first two days back at St. David's Hospital.

August Program: Showmanship & Presentation

... a self evaluation!

When was the last time you took a serious look at how and why you perform magic? That is probably too long ago. To borrow a line, "You got to be there" next week to take a closer look at what makes good magic and what makes better magic. Please bring your favorite small item magic effect you enjoy performing (you will NOT be asked to perform for

the audience). There will even be an appreciation gift for all those who come prepared. We will look at the various aspects of presentation as well as showmanship as seen by various well-known performers. You may even go away a slightly better performer. See You Monday night 7:00 p.m. August 17th.

Magically Yours, - Carl Seagren

Membership Information Just In!

by: Ron Cartlidge

Congratulations, we were one of the growth assemblies of the Society of American Magicians. If you remember, our membership had dropped to the 90's back on January 1, 2009. Our starting point on May 31, 2008 was 109 members.

Since the final membership totals are taken on that date each year, we had a lot of ground to make up. In just five months, we added at least 15 new members and even better than that, we retained about 80% of our old members who were coming up for renewal. Our total membership stands at 111 and this will be our starting point for the coming year that runs from June 1 to May 31.

We continue to be the third largest assembly in the world. Here are the assemblies that we will compete against in the coming year and their final order for 2009:

1. Assembly #1, New York City, 135
2. Assembly #4, Philadelphia, 119
3. Assembly #206, Austin, 111
4. Assembly #22, Los Angeles, 78
5. Assembly #104, Salem, Mass., 67
6. Assembly #8, St. Louis, 64
7. Assembly #19, Houston, 63
8. Assembly #112, Pleasant Hill, CA., 60
9. Assembly #9, Boston, 51

More on membership in the next issue!!!

Member Spotlight (continued from p. 8)

having served as SGT of Arms and Secretary for Assembly 206. He has been a regular participant in the local magic competitions, as well as TAOM. His current interests are close up magic,

focusing on cards, and more recently coins. He is interested in spending time with anyone interested in magic, so the next time you see him, please take the time to introduce yourself.

IBM Ring 60 Clinic

by: Roger Gorss

Red is Right!

If you weren't at the Saturday morning, IBM Ring 60 Audio Workshop, this article's title may seem a bit odd. Ten local magicians gathered at Texas Magic Supply for another successful (Free) workshop. To quote one of the participants, Hull Youngblood, "The Saturday Audio Workshop was OUTSTANDING!!!! The preparation, the handouts, the resources, the explanations, the patience, the piles of audio stuff that you brought in and let us touch, etc. etc. etc, it was all just SUPERB! I was really impressed and I learned a lot."

Local magician and award winning performer Chris Walden organized what is now another successful, monthly workshop. Chris enlisted the help of nationally known, locally grown, professional magician CJ Johnson and audiophile/magician David Frenkel. Hundreds of pounds of audio equipment were brought into the classroom for what proved to be an interactive, hand on audio workshop. Every aspect; why and what to use, how to connect it all together, troubleshooting, microphones, types of cables, connectors, "knobs", software, websites and computers were all covered. The level of preparation and the genuineness of delivery by all three of the presenters set a high mark for all future workshops. Chris, CJ and Dave, Thank You!

Each month, IBM Ring 60 sponsors a free workshop at Texas Magic Supply, our gracious hosts allow us to conduct workshops, the third Saturday, monthly from 10 am to 1pm. These workshops, the brainchild of Magician at Large Lou Hornung have been going on for almost five years. The topics are varied and are often taught by local professionals (Kent Cummins, Ray Anderson, Brian Brushwood, Brad Henderson, Cody Fisher and CJ Johnson) to name a few, volunteering their time to make each of us a better performer. Future workshops include "a simple coin routine" with Opie Houston, an award winning ball vase routine with Kent Cummins and "Rubber Band Magic" with Marcus Eddie. I know we all enjoy going to the meetings, but if you really wanted to learn magic, hands on, you should be coming to these workshops. If you would like to host a workshop or just attend, you can contact organizer Roger Gorss at (254) 289-4305 or roger.gorss@us.army.mil.



Clinic Participants (l to r): Opie Houston, David Luther, Roger Gorss, Hull Youngblood, David Frenkel, Eddie Boswell, C.J. Johnson, Chris Walden, Robert Castillo, Larry Johnson.

Member Spotlight: Roger Gorss

Roger Gorss recalls the first magic he ever experienced. As a young boy, maybe five years old, his family vacationed in Florida for a family wedding. His cousin pulled a potato chip from his ear. "I really felt it come out of my ear", to this day, the illusion is so strong; he can feel it, as if it were only yesterday. During middle school a magic shop opened in Auburn, New York where he grew up. "I spent a lot of weekends visiting the store, but unlike our community, they didn't have real magicians working the store, or maybe I was too young for them to pay attention to, but no one took an interest in the young magicians in the area". Eventually the store sponsored a club for the young magicians, more a gimmick to sell them new tricks. "No one ever taught us anything." However, they eventually put on a show for the public; the only thing he remembers was he had a squared circle he had built himself. At the time, Roger didn't understand fully how the gimmick worked, so he fixed it to the base. All in all it was a pleasant first time on stage.

But the bug had bitten him hard. In 1978, Roger joined the Air Force, when he got to his first permanent base; his parents brought a full steamer trunk full of his magic to him. "I use to perform for my friend in the barracks back then and there was a guy who really good with cards, as I remember it". Unfortunately, the military didn't pay much to its young enlisted airman back then and he regretfully sold all but a brief case of odds and ends, which he still has.



Roger Gorss

Well, fast forward to the 90s, Roger was divorced with a young daughter, whom you all know as the lovely Stephanie. He had kept his interest in magic up through the years as a hobby, but now, he used magic as something he and Stephanie could do together.

First it was just little tricks here and there, but as she grew, so did both their appreciation for magic. In eighth grade, Stephanie wanted to become a baby sitter. Well, that didn't sit well with Roger, so he convinced Stephanie that they could use their magic to make some extra money. As luck would have it, on their first time out, a booking manager observed them. She offered to manage the two of them, so "The Dad Daughter Duo, 3D-Magic" was born. For the next six years, 3D Magic was booked weekly in local restaurants and performed hundreds of magic shows in the Killeen area. It was truly a busy time for them. Both Roger and Stephanie look to local magician Brad Henderson as a mentor. Brad has taken a great deal of his personal time to work with both Roger and Stephanie.

Roger is very active in the local magic community. A member of SAM 206 and IBM Ring 60, he is a past officer in both clubs,

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Feature Article**by: Kent Cummins****Practice!**

...and why you need to perform your routine 71 times in front of an audience before it's ready for prime time!

The August SAM Assembly 206 meeting, to be moderated by Carl Seagren, is on "Presentation." I have no idea what Carl is going to present or how he's going to present it ("The medium is the message."), but I eagerly look forward to it. After all, "presentation" is what turns tricks into magic!

We all (even C.J.) know that it is necessary to practice if we are to become credible performers. Here is "Rule 3" for magicians, published years ago by Magic Hotline, and currently used at the Magic Camp:

***"Practice, practice, practice!
Even the easiest tricks must be carefully rehearsed if you are to become a competent magician. Practice in front of a mirror until you become confident. Then practice some more."***

When we teach beginning magic, whether to adults at UT or to kids at Magic Camp, we will often ask, "Where is the best place to practice?" An answer that we suggest is, "the bathroom!" First of all, when you are in the bathroom, people don't usually bother you or ask you what you are doing.

Second, in most homes the bathroom has the most mirror for the money. You can see what the audience sees, which literally puts a whole different perspective on that French Drop. (I love performing the paddle move in front of the mirror...I swear that I can fool myself!)

Many magicians make a distinction between "practice" and "rehearsal." It seems like mostly semantics to me, but the idea is that you practice your sleights, moves, and timing...and then put it all together in rehearsal. With video so easy to obtain (do you have a smart phone?), there's really no good excuse for not also watching some of your rehearsals and critiquing yourself.

When I was still "Mysto the Magician," my mom used to say that she always knew when I was doing something sneaky (even when performing magic), because I would blush! Clearly, I had not practiced enough. These days, I know that I haven't practiced enough when a particular move or bit is not always the same when I perform it.

It's an "in joke" in the magic club that C.J. Johnson doesn't like to rehearse (C.J. himself started the rumor...), but have you seen C.J. in public performance? He may not like rehearsal, but he manages to somehow get it done. (Either that or he's brilliant at improv.)

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I have a confession to make: I LOVE to practice/rehearse! In fact, I may actually enjoy rehearsal more than performance. For me, there's something exciting about a rehearsal that allows me to express my creativity as I improve my performance.

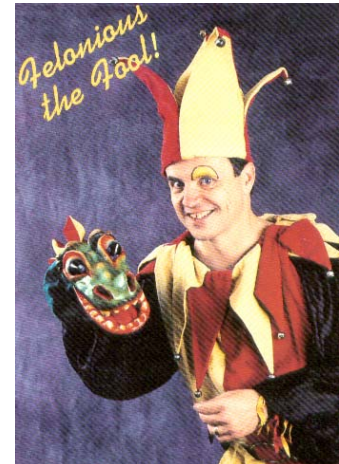
But once you have rehearsed a routine to the point where you are ready to try it in your show (and that point is vastly different for different performers), why do you need to perform it 71 times? Why not 48, or 75?

Let me tell you a story:

In 1986, when I traveled with the Mighty Thomas Shows Carnival, I kept track of every performance on the bally platform. We traveled up IH 35 into Canada, took a left (west), and eventually came back down through Wyoming, Colorado, and some other states that all looked the same from the highway. When I got back to Austin, I did some analysis on this, my first and only carnival road trip. I had done 71 shows during the trip. At the next magic club meeting, I performed my bally platform magic show for the club. I had to admit that it was SMOOTH! My friends were enthusiastic in their applause.

Let me tell you another story.

For several years, I explored renaissance festivals with a character that I developed called, "Felonious the Fool," designed to allow me to use magic, music, juggling,



Kent on the carnival road trip (left) and as Felonious the Fool (right)

puppetry, poetry, and physical comedy all in one character. Once I felt ready, I auditioned for Scarborough Faire in Waxahachie. I worked there for one complete spring season, and in addition to walkaround and leading the parade, I did scheduled shows on several of the small stages. At the end of the season, I analyzed my performances. I had done exactly 71 shows. When I returned to Austin, I was hired for a renaissance-themed corporate event. Felonious the Fool performed his Scarborough Faire act, and it was the hit of the event.

Believe it or not, I have even more examples...but you get the idea. After 71 shows in front of real audiences, each show was smooth, ready for prime time. You may think that 70 shows would be enough...or that 72 would be better. But you'll never convince me! - Kent