

# Learning Magic From Sam Snead and Ted Williams

Prodigies and exceptionally gifted people have NO idea how difficult things are for mere mortals.

Sam Snead, the greatest natural golfer I ever saw, was once asked how he made the ball fade (move left to right). He said it was simple, *just think right*. Of course, to execute a draw, one merely thinks *left*. Sure, Sam.

Ted Williams at one point tried to coach baseball. He couldn't understand why a batter couldn't see the seams as the ball left the pitcher's hand, calculate the rotation and swing accordingly. Hell, most of us can't even see the ball. Ted finally became frustrated and gave up.

Larry Bird tried to coach basketball and didn't seem to comprehend that he could drop in the ball from 30 feet easier than you and I can hit an elephant in the ass with a 2×4.

What does this have to do with magic, you say? Well I recently had a chance to review Richard Turner's *Fans, Flourishes, and False Shuffles*. It was OK, I guess, but over and over I felt the descriptions were woefully inadequate. For instance, the pressure fan description was basically, put the cards in the left and spread them from 4 o'clock to 8 o'clock. No finger positioning, no tips - no nothing.



It's always enjoyable to watch a person as talented as Richard Turner perform - he makes some very difficult things look trivially easy, but I can't recall a single tip to help the learning process. There's always merit in watching a move done well and it is an *aid* in the learning process, but it is not teaching.

Compared to Richard Kaufman's sleep walking exhibition on his teaching DVDs, Turner is a ball of fire — but, then again, who isn't.

The DVD is priced at the lower end and if you enjoy watching him work, please feel free, but don't expect to learn much.

Take care.....



## Drivel & Drool

### **This Month's Disposable Douche**

This month's honored guest at the Cafe' was Al Schneider. I've watched Al for 35 years in various venues and, let's be honest, he invented *Matrix*. That's it.

Sure, he writes esoteric crap and looks like he's got terminal hemorrhoids, but most of it is just a tired rehash. In his Cafe' appearance, he said he didn't know who Ross Bertram was. I'm sorry, but that's ridiculous. He did refer to him as *the guy with the hair*, when someone reminded him of the *Stars of Magic*.

Al seems harmless enough, although I personally, could do without his conclusion that he was better than other magicians because he drove a Jaguar. Obviously, his superior intellect was being rewarded by some sort of cosmic feng shui.

Anyway, at some point, Al mentions the derivation of a move and one of the Cafe's *greats* and our award winner, Paul Chosse, steps in with:

*I'm surprised to read your recollections of Larry and the Detroit crew above. I've spent hours with Milt Kort and Bob Stencil, and took tons of notes. They remembered things quite differently from what I'm reading here. If you'd like me to post some of those recollections keep revising history. We'll put up both stories and let the cards fall where they may...*

What's the purpose here Paul? Is this just to embarrass Al or are you just a congenital bastard, totally incapable of keep you mouth shut?

I've been around magic a long time and, frankly, I never heard of Chosse. Apparently, he's some sort of minor god that we should all listen to in hushed reverence. My first serious notice of him occurred during the St. Youell extravaganza. It's interesting to me, that his holiness blamed some of his problems on people promising material and not delivering. I'm guessing our boy was one of them. It's too bad we couldn't have more of those exciting interviews. It was like reading toast.

I don't know or care what kind of deal Chosse has with Brooks regarding his *blog*, but it's been nearly 4 months since he posted. He certainly has plenty of time on his hands, based on the large number of posts.

Like the IBM Gold Cups we don't award the *i/m Disposable Douche* very often.



A person must exhibit exceptionally uncommon boorishness and a total lack of civility. This month's recipient is highly deserving of the honor.

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## Something To Think About

Blogs such as i/m sit on the edges of the mainstream. If the Internet was a newspaper we would be one of those fillers used to complete a column. You know - the *average summer temperature in Sioux Falls is 70* or we would be the sleazy massage parlor ads in the back of the sports section. Hopefully, on a good day, we're the comics.

On the other hand, blogs like John LeBlanc's *Escamoteurettes* are the editorial page - the leading articles. Hell, I can't even pronounce it. John is a thoughtful, careful writer, generally with something to say. Even the header screams *class*.

In his most recent article ([Click here](#)) John takes a cut at the theoretical five foot shelf. The list shows his usual careful thinking and even gives some of the history behind this exercise.

Since I tend to collect magazine compilations, I was interested to note that his personal list was over 1/3 magazines by count and probably close to half by size. Personally, I would probably add *Richard's Almanac* and the bound *Phoenix* volumes.

John's article also reminded me that I must pick up *Maximum Entertainment* by Ken Weber. I've heard a LOT of good things about it.

Anyway, hop over to John's blog and add your thoughts. It's an exercise worth repeating periodically.

Take care.....



## Drivel & Drool

**Have a great Thanksgiving!!**

Enjoy the kids, friends and family. This magic crap is so insignificant it isn't even on the radar.

Remember the important things.

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## A Mike Close Perspective

I believe it was a Genii reviewer that commented that after reading/viewing a Mike Close trick explanation he realized how woefully inadequate and superficial most other magic instruction is. From my perspective, nobody develops performance items better than Mike. The depth of thought is incredible and he only seems to publish what he performs. I never get the feeling that he publishes hypothetical crap. Admittedly, there's nothing he does that is extremely simple and a lot of it is damn difficult.

To those that followed Mike through his years at Magic Magazine, you know there was a period when he became disillusioned and downright cranky. Maybe looking at all the crap that comes out month after month finally gets to you. He seems to be past that now and I, for one, am glad.

What brought this to mind, was my development of some new strolling routines and I, again, read and began working on his *Pothole Trick* and *Dr. Strangetrick*. The latter is the most inexplicable and refined version of *Card Warp* ever created and *The Pothole Trick* must be one of the top 10 close up tricks of all time.

His revised *Workers* series – available in ebook format – and his L&L DVDs are magical treasures. If they are not on your shelf – they should be.

Take care.....



## Drivel & Drool<sup>✖</sup>

### ***Things I'm Thankful for:***

I'm thankful that I'm not downwind from Steve Brooks after his Thanksgiving meal

I'm thankful for holy men like Stephen F. Youell to monitor our morals

I'm thankful for Thomas Wayne so we can all feel better about the bastards in our personal lives

I'm thankful that Harry Lorayne has allowed we mere mortals to exist on the same planet

I'm thankful there are so many pricks in magic that there is always something to write about

and remember.....

***I believe that every human has a finite number of heart-beats. I don't intend to waste any of mine running around doing exercises.***

***- Neil Armstrong***

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# I Must Be Getting Easy



I'm supposed to be a cranky old goat pissing on anything new that comes along, but I've recently reviewed and studied 2 new DVD releases that I think are terrific. Additionally, the *one trick - one dvd* ratio seems to always be a screwing waiting to happen, but I'm highly recommending these:

## **The first is Tom Dobrowolski's *In The Hand Wild Card*.**

I have long maintained the the best card ***effects*** are created by skillful sleight of hand, combined with judiciously used gaffs. Tom's routine is a perfect example of that. It's an ideal trick for walk around and table work. Combine this with John Bannon's *Twisted Sisters* and you've got a couple of tricks that will carry you a long, long way.

Tom's routine is the result of years of performance and refinement. There is a logical reason for everything, even bringing out the special set of cards. The spectator is never challenged, made to feel stupid or held out for ridicule. The only danger I see is some douchebag has every opportunity to drag out the *no, the clean one* line. You have my permission to shoot on sight.

Additionally, Tom is a heck of a nice guy. I like to see the good guys succeed.

## The other one is *Masterminds Volume One* - Criss Angel



I really didn't want to like this. It's pretty easy for a guy like me to write off Criss as nothing but hair, tattoos and nipple rings, but this is good. Damn good!

I'm sure by now anyone reading this knows this is the long awaited explanation for Wayne Houchin's *Quarter In Soda Can* routine. Off hand, I can't think of a better impromptu trick. Wayne's explanation is complete and concise. It will take some work, but it's not a killer. No real finger flinging, just timing and naturalness. If you haven't seen it, watch the performance first. I'll bet it fools you.

Criss comes off as somebody that really cares and thinks about his magic and is a nice guy. I'll never like his performance style, but his magic isn't aimed at me - as they say, I'm not in the *target demographic*. Criss has received some criticism for making this publicly available, but I can't imagine many layman laying out 30 bucks for the secret. Hopefully, it doesn't get prostituted too badly on the net. Good job, fellers.

Take care.....



## Drivel & Drool



✖ Our last D&D on magicians' willingness to be hosed over and over by our purveyors things magical brought a couple of public comments and several private.

Our friend Scot weighed in with:

***You really hit the nail on the head with this one. But until we stop buying this crap that's out there, it will never stop.***

I agree Scott, but identifying the bad guys gets pretty tough. This is compounded by many of our compatriots benign acceptance and constant public apologists. Until we accept that a failure to do what is promised and advertised is just plain wrong, we all better buy a large tube of K/Y. We're going to need it.

An anonymous poster chimes in with:

*I have always been shocked by the total lack of standards exhibited by professionals in magic when it comes to undertakings such as trade magazines and newsletters. Stan Allen at Magic, I think, raised the bar by producing a timely, quality product, a standard unheard of in the magic world before the inauguration of his magazine. The "Always late but always great" Genii, for example, was a travesty until Richard Kaufman took the reins and placed it on a more professional footing. Most newsletters have taken subscribers' money and never fully delivered. I believe that once a person takes money for a performance there is a contract to deliver. All the subscribers get is whiny excuses like the dog at this issue. Where are the final issues of Ted Lesley's, Dan Harlan's, Bob LaRue's newsletters? Again, although very late, Richard Kaufman at least managed to produce all four issues of Looking Glass. The standards (and I use that term loosely) experienced in magic circles are appalling. I am sure the producers of these perennially late and incomplete publications would be first to decry a professional performer who did not show up to a performance on time; but their own practices in failing to deliver promised issues is the equivalent of not only failing to show up on time, but also failing to show up at all AND taking payment for the performance never delivered.*

*Spare me from the sob-sister apologists who tell us that we should be grateful*



*that we get even the aborted subscriptions. I am not so ravenous for “secrets” that I would find this behavior acceptable. I say that if someone undertakes to do something and takes payment for it, he better follow through. If he can’t, he had no damn business taking a subscriber’s money in the first place.*

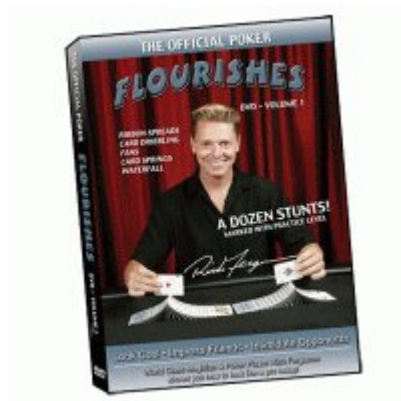
*Now, THAT’S a real ethical gap.*

AMEN!

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## A DVD I Didn’t Plan To Like

I saw this DVD advertised recently and bought it on a whim:



The DVD doesn’t cover a lot of flourishes:

- Ribbon Spread
- Ribbon Spread Turnover
- Double Ribbon Spread Turnover
- Ribbon Scoop
- Dribbling
- Thumb Fan
- Closing Fan
- One Handed
- Giant Fan
- Pressure Fan

- Split Fan
- Two Handed Split Fan
- S-Fan
- Corner Spring
- Middle Spring
- Sideways Spring
- Anti Gravity Spring
- Waterfall!

but it does a better job than anything else on the market. Moves like the hand to hand spring, dribble and pressure fan can actually be learned from this DVD. Interestingly, this isn't aimed at magicians, but poker players. It sells for 30 bucks or so and your local dealer should have it.

Don't miss out here.

Take care.....



## Drivel & Drool

### **Fuck me - I'm a magician**

I'll **never** understand why magicians are so prone to apologize for the lame, even criminally bad, treatment they get from various purveyors of magic apparatus, books and all other forms of selling secrets. Going back to my favorite Holy Man, Stephen F. Youell, to Cafe insider Tom Cutts and his AM/PM magazine, to Jon Racherbaumer and his unrefunded Hierophant, to the ongoing furor around the recent *Martin Nash* book, to..... You name it and magicians have had one shyster after another ram a dry one up their ass, yet they continue to apologize and even defend this shoddy treatment.

This isn't a matter of *turning the other cheek*. That's a noble thing to do. It's just an unfathomable willingness to to accept liars and cheats into the fraternity and make no mistake - that is what most of them are.

Anyway, what brought this to mind was a recent post on the Cafe. You don't have

to read this blog for long to realize that I think Harry Lorayne is a world class ass – an egotistical, industrial grade tool writing way beyond the time when he had something to say. Anyway, his last last book was a rewrite of some of his earlier works. Actually, not a bad idea as the writing was somewhat lame and they could use an update. According to his advertising, the book was only available from him. OK, it's his book and he can sell it anyway he wants. This means it will not be available from discounters and if you want it – pay the full price.

After Harry milked it for all he could, he gave it to a distributor and now you can get it EVERYWHERE and for considerably less than Harry was charging. Some guy wrote on the Cafe that he was disappointed that Lorayne had backed off his original release and wondered if anyone else felt the same way. No one, not a single person, took the time to agree. Two doo rags did write to say they enjoyed the screwing. It's incredible.

Till next time—  
i/m

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## On Developing A Character

I mentioned recently that I attended Bill Goldman's lecture. One of the attendees paid him a tremendous compliment when he said *I can't tell when you're talking to us and when you are about to do a trick*. It was true – Bill was the same performing a trick, teaching a trick or just bull shitting before and after the show. This is the essence of what Vernon was talking about when he talked about *being natural*.

If you're working a party or a restaurant, then the fellow performing the magic should be the same fellow that, hopefully, ingratiated himself to his audience before the magic began. I so often feel like I'm watching 2 different people – the guy who introduced himself and the magician. I keep waiting for him to turn around and then turn back as Elvis Presley, a la Andy Kaufman. I believe it was Leipzig that said *people like to be fooled by a gentleman*. Certainly he lived in a simpler time, but I believe it still holds true.

However, suppose you are an incorrigible ass hole. What can you do?

There are options:

- Do a mime act
- Hide behind some exaggerated character
- Make balloon doggies to music
- Start an Internet magic talk forum
- OK - before someone else says it - Write a magic blog!

Actually, there's a time and place for character magicians, but not when personal interaction is involved.

Take care.....



## Drivel & Drool

### *Things I find useful:*

**Evernote** - someone recommended this to me recently as a free form database to use while browsing the Internet. Really well done and free. The web site is <http://www.evernote.com/en/>.

**IESpell** - A nice spell checker that integrates with Internet Explorer. When you are typing a message online or filling out a form, just right click and choose *Check Spelling*. It's as easy as that. Check it out [here](#).

**Roboform** - Roboform is a Password Manager and Web Form Filler that completely automates password entering and form filling. I find this indispensable. I don't know about you, but I have a boatload of log ins to track and am constantly filling out forms. Roboform is the best at making this job tolerable. They are at <http://www.roboform.com/>. Oh, it costs 30 bucks. They have a *free* version, but it is virtually worthless.

**Irfanview** - Since it's free, I'll let the web site do the talking:

IrfanView is a very fast, small, compact and innovative FREEWARE (for non-commercial use) graphic viewer for Windows 9x/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003.

It is trying to be simple for beginners and powerful for professionals.

IrfanView was the first Windows graphic viewer WORLDWIDE with Multiple (animated) GIF support.

One of the first graphic viewers WORLDWIDE with Multipage TIF support.

The first graphic viewer WORLDWIDE with Multiple ICO support.

- Some IrfanView features:
- Many supported file formats ([click here](#) the list of formats)
- Multi language support
- Thumbnail/preview options
- Slideshow (save slideshow as EXE/SCR or burn it to CD)
- Show EXIF/IPTC/Comment text in Slideshow/Fullscreen etc.
- Support for Adobe Photoshop Filters
- Fast directory view (moving through directory)
- Batch conversion (with image processing)
- Multipage TIF editing
- Email option
- Multimedia player
- Print option
- Change color depth
- Scan (batch scan) support
- Cut/crop
- IPTC editing
- Effects (Sharpen, Blur, Adobe 8BF, Filter Factory, Filters Unlimited, etc.)
- Capturing
- Extract icons from EXE/DLL/ICLs
- Lossless JPG rotation
- Many hotkeys
- Many command line options
- Many PlugIns
- Only one EXE-File, no DLLs, no Shareware messages like “I Agree” or

“Evaluation expired”

- No registry changes without user action/permission!
- and many more

This is an incredible piece of software AND they update frequently. Go to <http://www.irfanview.com/> and see what I mean.

There once was a man from the sticks  
Who's hobby was writing limericks.  
But he failed at the sport  
'Cos he wrote them too short.