

New Resource

From my perspective, one of the good guys in magic was / is Brad Burt. I assume Brad's shop was one of the casualties of the Internet onslaught. His teaching tapes were known for their usefulness and quality.

Anyway, Brad's been sending out a periodic news letter and recently has been dealing with subjects such as practice and fear in performing. They're not long, but the advice is excellent. The newsletter is a way of hawking his DVDs, which, I believe, are reissues of his tapes. Probably a good investment.

Brad hasn't quite grasped this Internet stuff and his web designer should be whipped, but he's not alone there. I couldn't find a way to sign up for his newsletter, but his email address is bradburtmagic@yahoo.com and I would assume a brief note would put you on the list.

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

Two New Destinations

I see two of our most active bloggers have hopped into the forum operation business.

Glenn Bishop has started Experts At The Card Table and Steve Pellegrino has opened The Mentalist Sanctum. I wish them both the best.

I think they've both made mistakes that will hurt them, especially in the beginning. Number one, and I've seen this over and over - too damn many categories. When you don't have a lot of members, spreading the few among 20 categories, or so, is a great way to dilute the discussions into total atrophy. I think Glenn, for instance, would be better off starting with 2 categories - routines and sleights, for example. As the forum gained momentum, categories could be added, as needed. I know Haydn has a bajillion topics at his forum, but his name

is a draw and I think even there posts are declining.

Steve, also, has too many categories, but he has made a much more serious mistake, in my opinion. The Mentalist Sanctum has 2 levels of membership - basically, the blessed and the unwashed. Those in category one are by invitation only, as I understand it. The rest of us will be standing in line, behind the ropes, hoping to get a glimpse of the chosen few. One thing the Round Mound of Pomposity did right at the Cafe was creating a second level of membership after 50 posts. After the 50th post you could go behind the curtain and see all the super secret shit that was going on. Never mind that it was worthless, it creates a stir and a desire to participate. The only way to get on the inside at The Mentalist Sanctum is to sit on the bar stool and hope Steve notices our legs..... Not me!

Anyway, Glenn and Steve - I wish you the best and remember how many successful forums I've started when reading my suggestions.

Short Stops

I've been reading a lot about Maven's *Protocols of the Elders* and the furor around the exposition of the secret - **I don't care.**

The Gazzo / Penguin alliance is rather surprising. Then again - **them that has the gold.....**

Losander's Thumb Tie - **Decent, but overpriced**

School for Scoundrels Golden Shells - **Top notch product**

The new *Card Through Window* dvd - **Grotesquely overpriced**

If I have to sit through one more - **take an average trick and add an interesting story and presentation** - lecture I'm gonna scream. These are nothing more than excuses for crappy magicians to give lectures. Try this - go home and practice. Develop some abilities that others want to see. If you want to

continue with this actor bull shit, join an improv group and get the hell away from magic.

Take care.....



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 sleezy 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 *Escamoteur* 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.

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^x

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

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:

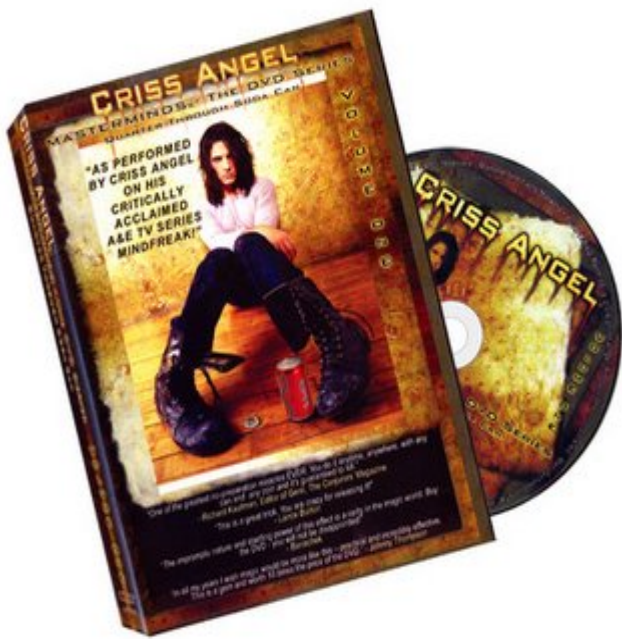
The first is Tom Dobrowolski's *In The Hand Wild Card*.

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!

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.