

The Legacy

An Eighty-Year Overview of I.B.M. Ring 17



By Ariel Frailich

Many years ago, Toronto, Ontario, had the reputation of being one of the capitals of magic in North America. The greats of the time, including Thurston and Blackstone, played there. Equally important, they had magician friends in Toronto that they held in high esteem. Indeed, the Toronto I.B.M. Ring was highly regarded by the magic community.

Although other cities have become more famous among magicians, Toronto's Ring 17, in typical Canadian fashion, has quietly continued to produce outstanding figures without whose contributions the magic world would undoubtedly be poorer. As we celebrate eighty years as an I.B.M. Ring, here are some of our luminaries.

Act I: The Pioneers

It's no wonder that Ring 17 honours in its name the powerhouse that was Sid Lorraine. From about 1920 until his passing in 1989, Sid's contributions to the Toronto magic scene, Ring 17, the I.B.M., and the magic world at large were inestimable.

Sid was an accomplished magician who specialized in clever, verbal comedy. His shows were great fun to watch. His knowledge of magic and its history were encyclopedic. He invented dozens of tricks, among which the ever-popular "Slop Shuffle," a staple of card magic that continues to inspire notable card handlers such as Asi Wind, John Bannon, Benjamin Earl, Steve Beam, Bob Farmer, and many others. Other creations grace the pages of *Greater Magic*, *My*

Best, *Tarbell*, *The Jinx*, *The Phoenix*, *The Pallbearers Review*, *Magick*, *Apocalypse*, and more. He wrote a number of books, focusing primarily on comedy patter, gags, and tricks with comedic presentations. In addition, he penned columns for *The Linking Ring* and Abbott's *TOPS* magazine, and reviewed books for *The New Tops*.



Sid Lorraine.

MICHAEL CLAXTON COLLECTION

A gifted commercial artist by profession, Sid quickly became the official artist of *The Linking Ring* magazine, and soon, the illustrator for Abbott's catalogs and products. Many of his marketed tricks combine verbal humour and Sid's unique artwork. These include "Liquor Cards," "Snakes Alive" and "Thumb Fun," which was a favourite of Doug Henning – taught to him by Sid himself.

This highlights what made Sid so popular among magicians. Sid Lorraine was every magician's friend. Not because he did anything deliberately to be seen that way, but by his nature. He was unassuming, friendly, encouraging, and especially, helpful. Anybody who approached him for guidance or advice, whether rank beginner or seasoned professional, got help from Sid. This included Doug Henning, for whom Sid wrote the prospectus when Doug applied for a Canada Council grant to study magic, and as adviser on Doug's show, *Spellbound*.

Sid was an enthusiastic supporter of the I.B.M. since its very beginning. He urged magicians to join the organization and soon, the first Toronto I.B.M. Ring, Ring 46, was established in 1930. Probably due to the Great Depression, Ring 46 died out and was eventually replaced by a new one in 1941, Ring 17, with Sid as its president. Bob Weill of Ring 12, Buffalo, was instrumental in getting Ring 17 off the ground. In his column in *The Linking Ring* at the time, he wrote: "Here is a Ring to be watched, for I think there is more talent per square inch in Toronto than most other magic clubs."

Indeed. Although Sid was the major driving force of the Toronto magic scene, he wasn't alone. The irrepressible, mile-a-minute Johnny Giordmaine was a magic demonstrator as well as a gifted, much-loved children's entertainer and expert manipula-

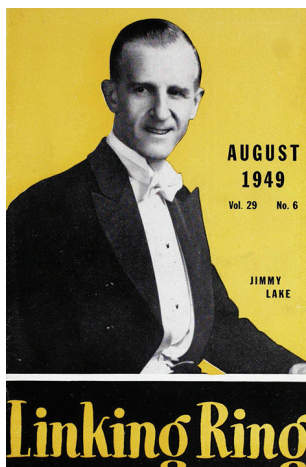
tor. Like Sid, Johnny was unassuming, approachable, and helpful to other performers. He travelled extensively, performed on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and countless conventions, and held several positions in the I.B.M. He was the first president of Ring 46 (with Sid as vice president) and served as president again for Ring 17.

After seeing Johnny Giordmaine perform in the magic shop, Jimmy Lake decided to take up magic. He became famous for his beautiful silk act, which he presented at conventions, and especially for the hilarious skits he performed with fellow Ring 17 members Chauncey Sheridan and Stayner Durocher.

Jimmy was also a terrific organizer. In addition to helping Bob Weill establish Ring 17, he later helped to bring eleven Canadian Rings into existence and eventually became international president of the I.B.M. His sidekick, Chauncey Sheridan, also became international president.

Jimmy was the driving force behind the Canadian Hocus Pocus Parades in *The Linking Ring*. In later years, he founded The Silver Wand Club to mentor young magicians, several of whom went on to be successful professionals.

Another member of Ring 46, and later, of Ring 17, was the legendary sleight-of-hand master Ross Bertram. Ross started out as a saxophonist and learned magic from books.



Jimmy Lake.



Ross Bertram.

FROM DAVID BEN COLLECTION

He performed sleight-of-hand magic, stage magic, and even illusions. In the off-seasons, he worked as a demonstrator in a magic shop. He was one of the pioneers of trade-show magic, appeared often on national television, and performed at magic conventions.

Ross's thinking, unique sleight-of-hand techniques, and flawless execution impressed Dai Vernon so much that he introduced him to Faucett Ross, who became a lifelong friend and correspondent. Other famous friends included Dr. Jacob Daley, Francis Carlyle, Jean Hugard, and Charlie Miller.

Also thanks to Vernon, a section of the classic book *Stars of Magic* is devoted to Ross's creations. Some of his concepts were groundbreaking. They were later taken up by the likes of David Roth and Paul Gertner, and his coin assembly is, in effect, the first modern 'Matrix'. Suffice it to say that Vernon offered Ross twenty-five dollars to learn it! (Ross taught it to Vernon at no charge.)

In addition to *Stars of Magic*, Ross's creations can be found in *Buckley*, *Bobo*, several Vernon books, David Ben's *Tricks*, two of Ross's own books, as well as in *Hugard's*, *Pabular*, *The Looking Glass*, *Genii*, and other periodicals. Even by today's standards, much of his body of work is cutting edge.

While Ross was very visible to the public and to magicians, his close friend Norm Houghton – a member of both Rings 46 and 17 – was mostly active behind the scenes. Norm shared Ross's love of sleight-of-hand and sense of humour, and was a fine writer and editor. He ghostwrote the text for Ross's *Stars of Magic* contributions and helped him in countless other projects.

Although Norm wasn't all that well-known in the magic world, he earned the admiration and respect of the cognoscenti and was often consulted. Some of his friends included Stewart James, Rick Johnson, Phil Willmarth, Great Britain's Goodliffe, and the regulars of the early FFFF conventions. Writing under the names Lorne DeBlois and Blois Houghton (from his full name, Norman DeBlois Houghton) in the early days, Norm created dozens of interesting, offbeat effects, many with clever and humorous patter. These were published in *The Phoenix*, *The Jinx*, *IBIDEM*, and other periodicals on both sides of the pond, spanning close to seventy years. They were later compiled into a book.

A close friend of both Norm and Sid was Bruce Posgate, a successful children's entertainer originally from the UK. Known as "Uncle Bruce," he performed for children



Elizabeth Warlock • (group 1 to r): Monsignor Foy, Norm Houghton, Derek Dingle.

PHOTOS FROM DAVID BEN COLLECTION



*Front row, left to right: G. Molesworth, J. Devlin, Blackstone, J. Giordmaine, T. Bowyer, J. Lake, J. Bate-
man, and D. MacCallum. Second row, H. Smith, L. Chute, Blackstone's assistant, J. Aldwinckle, S. Sheri-
den, T. Stocks. Standing, F. Murray, F. Heaman, M. Sumner, A. MacLeod, Sid Lorraine, E. Siegman, G.
Laidlaw, C. Jeffs, C. Newman, H. Devitt, and R. Holden.*

and spent many years table-hopping in one of Toronto's finer restaurants. He wrote several books on both topics. Bruce also became international president of the I.B.M.

One of the earliest members of Ring 46 was Harry Smith. He, too, was a demonstrator at the magic shop, and later, its owner. But more than that, Harry had a deep knowledge of magic and was a world-class manipulator who caught the attention of the many greats who performed in Toronto. This included Blackstone Sr., who became a close friend. Whenever a famous magician was in town to perform or lecture, he would typically spend time with the local magicians, and then, after leaving them, spend an evening with Harry and perhaps one or two of Harry's protégés.

Harry became ill and stopped performing. For many years, his wife Sophie ran the shop. Many magicians first discovered magic thanks to her and spent much of their youth there. One of the more famous, younger ones is Brad Christian, of *Ellusionist* fame.

Act II: The Second Generation

One of the Rings that Jimmy Lake helped form was Ring 99, The Silver Wand, established in 1949 in Leaside, now part of Toronto (unrelated to Jimmy's own Silver Wand Club, which came much later). Since the more notable magicians of Ring 99 were some twenty years younger than their predecessors, it's fair to say that they constituted a kind of second generation of Toronto magicians.

Belonging to a separate club did not prevent them from mixing with the older magicians. Their intelligence, knowledge, and passion for magic made the age differences disappear, and several became life-long friends of their elders. When Ring 99 folded years later, many of its members joined Ring 17.

Ring 99's first president and a charter member was Randall James Zwinge. He performed magic and was mentored by Harry Smith. Later, he became famous world-wide as an escapologist before becoming a debunker and founder of an organization to investigate psychic claims.

He was better known as James Randi – The Amazing Randi.

Another charter member of Ring 99 and its second president was Howard Lyons, originally from Winnipeg. Although Howard performed in the early years, much of his contributions to the magic world happened behind the scenes. He is best known as the publisher of *IBIDEM*, the first “underground” magic magazine. *IBIDEM* was unique in that Howard gave free rein to its contributors, which reads like a who’s who of magic luminaries of the day: Ed Marlo, Stewart James, Norm Houghton, Peter Warlock, Neal Elias, Martin Gardner, Fawcett Ross, Elmer Biddle, Alex Elmsley, Roy Walton, and others. *IBIDEM* inspired Jon Racherbaumer to publish *The Hierophant*, Karl Fulves to publish *The Pallbearers Review*, and countless other publishers to start their periodicals. *IBIDEM* was later reprinted in three hardcover volumes.

In later years, Howard and Bob Weill created and ran The *IBIDEM* Events (later renamed The Oban Events and then The Inn Events), small, invitation-only gatherings of mostly close-up workers. With Toronto’s Allan Slaight, a contributor to *The Pallbearers Review* and other publications, Howard edited the first volume of the Stewart James trilogy (after Howard’s passing, Allan edited the two remaining volumes on his own).

Howard’s friends included Norm Houghton, Ross Bertram, and many others from Toronto, as well as Stewart James, Mel Stover, Martin Gardner, and younger performers such as David Ben, Bob Farmer, Max Maven, Michael Weber, and Daryl. At his passing, some three hundred magicians from all corners of North America and the UK attended the tribute to his memory.

Whereas Howard was a boisterous, larger-than-life character, his friend Tom Ransom, also a charter member of Ring 99, is modest, unassuming, and very helpful. Tom is known internationally as a puzzle expert and collector, had one of the largest magic libraries in North America, and edited numerous magic publications. Tom possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of magic;

less well-known is that he’s a superb exponent of sleight-of-hand. His contributions can be found in *IBIDEM* and other periodicals. He is notably the inventor of the ungimicked “Needle Through Balloon” trick.

It’s worth mentioning that there were only three people who regularly attended the early FFFF conventions who were exempted from performing, a requirement for all other attendees. They were Sid Lorraine, Howard Lyons, and Bruce Posgate.

Act III: The Modern Era

In the 1960s and 70s, Ring 17 saw an influx of members of all ages and backgrounds. One of them was a young magician who went on to redefine magic for a new generation. He studied magic under Dai Vernon and Slydini, created a theatrical show that played in Toronto before moving to Broadway, had several television specials, and eventually became the most famous magician in the world at the time. His name was Doug Henning.



Doug Henning.

Another was a young magician from Britain who, after seeing Ross Bertram perform, developed a keen interest in sleight-of-hand magic. He was particularly helped in this endeavour by Jean Menard, another charter member of Ring 99. He later moved to New York City, became a world-renowned sleight-of-hand performer, created dozens of techniques and effects that are still cutting-edge to this day, and appeared frequently on American television. *Time* magazine named him “the greatest card

manipulator existent.” His name was Derek Dingle.

David Drake was a professional writer and magician. He wrote for national television. In magic, he had a column in *The Levitator* (the magazine of the now-defunct Society of Canadian Magicians) and wrote the biographies of Ross Bertram and Norm Houghton for their respective books. David was also a clever creator. He contributed to *Linking Ring* Parades (including a One-Man Parade), and to *Tops*, *Genii*, and *Pentagram* magazines, and wrote two books of original close-up material. His most famous invention no doubt is “Squeeze Rise,” a novel method for the Rising Card. It was later refined by Derek Dingle, Jeff Busby, and John Carney. David also taught a community college course on magic for many years.

Elizabeth Warlock, daughter of renowned English magician, creator, and author Peter Warlock, relocated to Toronto. She wrote “Toronto Tricks,” a regular column for *The Linking Ring*. Upon moving back to Britain some twenty years later, she spent the next twenty or so years writing another *Linking Ring* column, “Our Side of the Pond,” which her father had started decades earlier.

Richard Lyn was already a top children’s entertainer in his native Jamaica when he moved to Toronto. Known professionally as Tricky Ricky, he is frequently stopped in the street by people who remember him for having performed at their birthday party when they were little, and went on to hire him for their children’s birthday parties. He contributes tips on performing for children on The Magic Café website and is currently writing a book on his magic. In addition, Richard is an accomplished mentalist. His contributions can be found in Bascom Jones’s *Magick*.

Tom Baxter was mentored by Harry Smith and often worked in the magic shop. He performed all over the world – first as a magician, then as a mentalist – consulted on film and television projects, and wrote several books. He served as President of Ring 17 before moving to Vancouver. His many friends included Derren Brown and Ben Blau.

If the author of this article may be permitted to toot his own horn, Ariel Frailich, who specializes in cards and close-up magic, is associated with Jean Menard, Tom Ransom, Howard Lyons, Mark Lewis, Tom Baxter, and long-time Ring 17 member and past president Bob Taylor. Ariel is a teacher, lecturer, author, and publisher of magic books.

In 1975, former New Yorker Len Cooper moved to Toronto and opened The Browser’s Den of Magic shop. Len encouraged magicians to join the I.B.M. and Ring 17, of which he was a member. There was always a table in the Den, as the locals call it, which helped foster magic and friendships. Two young magicians who attended regularly went on to become famous in the magic world: Jay Sankey and Gary Kurtz.

Jay, who is not only a magician but also a stand-up comedian, was greatly influenced by Len Cooper’s comedy magic. He also took lessons from Reg Holden, an early Ring 17 member and huge magic enthusiast. Jay’s creativity and output are legendary. He continues to produce magic and teaches magic through his website.

David Merry is an expert sleight-of-hand performer, popular stand-up comic, and inventor of original magic tricks and apparatus. He started out at Jimmy Lake’s Silver Wand Club, was influenced by Howie Schwarzman, Derek Dingle, and Ariel Frailich, from whom he took lessons. David’s friends include Jay Sankey and Gary Kurtz. When he saw legendary British performer Terry Seabrooke perform, he decided to turn to comedy. He was helped in this by Toronto-area performer Mike Carbone and long-time Ring 17 member and popular stand-up comic Glenn Ottaway.

Mike Segal is another alumnus from the Silver Wand Club and also took lessons from Ariel Frailich. He was later mentored by Sid Lorraine and became a very busy professional performer. Like Doug Henning and David Ben, Mike got a Canada Council grant for the art of magic.

Mike made it his life’s goal to legitimize and elevate magic in the public eye. He appeared over a hundred times on breakfast



(l to r): Richard Lyn. David Merry. Magic Mike Segal.

television, introduced magic into the school curriculum as an Artist in Residence, and got magic to be accepted and performed in several major venues in Toronto.

Mike is probably best-known for having founded the popular Sorcerers Safari Magic Camp, whose guest list reads like a who's who in magic and helped form many young magicians. Several of them went on to have a career in magic, including Jonah Babins, Mahdi Gilbert, Rosemary Reid, Alex Zander and Billy Hsueh, past and current international presidents of the I.B.M., respectively, and Megan Swann, the first female (and current) president of the UK's Magic Circle. The Disney movie *Magic Camp* was loosely based on Sorcerers Safari.

Magic dealer and manufacturer Herb Morrissey left Montreal in 1978 and continued to operate in Toronto. He encouraged magicians to join the I.B.M. and Ring 17, for which he served as president. The shop closed down a number of years ago.

Originally from Brockville, Ontario, Bob Farmer studied law in Great Britain, where he became friends with Roy Walton and Alex Elmsley. In Toronto, he became friends

with Howard Lyons, Norm Houghton, David Drake, and Allan Slaight, and was an early mentor of David Ben. Bob had a regular column in *Magic* and *Genii* magazines. He continues to produce marketed effects and numerous books.

David Ben, a past president of Ring 17, is the only magician who was mentored by Ross Bertram. In addition to performing numerous theatrical shows, he's well-known in the magic community as a lecturer, author, publisher, consultant, producer, historian, collector, and one of the founders of *Magicana*, a charitable organization dedicated to the advancement of magic. As its Artistic Director, David and *Magicana* produce public shows, exhibitions, community programs, conferences, workshops, conventions, and publications, and provide scholarships and grants, including the well-known Allan Slaight Awards.

David owns the collections of Sid Lorraine, Stewart James, legendary card handler Willis Kenny (who fooled Dai Vernon), David Drake, Bruce Posgate, and some items belonging to Vernon. David is also Vernon's official biographer and representative of his estate.



(l to r): Herb Morrissey. David Ben. Julie Eng.

DAVID BEN PHOTO BY PAUL ALEXANDER JULIE ENG PHOTO BY MAY TRUONG

Julie Eng, the executive director of Magicana, is the daughter of Tony Eng, magician and owner of Tony's Trick and Joke Shop in Victoria, BC. Thanks to her background and extensive performing experience, Julie has become a model for young women in magic. In addition, Julie has been the face of magic in several museum and television projects about our art.

In 1995, Jeff Pinsky took over the Browser's Den, which is now one of the very few bricks-and-mortar magic shops still left in North America. Jeff continues to encourage magicians to join Ring 17 and the I.B.M., installed a bigger table in the shop, formed an informal magic club, hosts countless lectures, and organizes the Browser's Bash one-day conventions. Most of today's younger magicians listed in Act IV, below, got to know each other at the Den.



Jeff Pinsky.

David Peck, the current President of Ring 17, is a fine sleight-of-hand performer who was informally mentored by Herb Morrissey and strongly influenced by David Ben, Jay Sankey, and Gary Kurtz. David famously uses magic in the service of social change – and even philosophy (in his master's the-

sis). He was the first magician in Toronto to participate in David Copperfield's Project Magic, teaching sleight-of-hand magic to physically challenged patients in hospitals. David co-created, with Jay Sankey, the internationally acclaimed, award-winning television magic show for children, *Spellz*, created the magic and comedy Mosquitoes Suck tour with the help of Ring 17 member, magician, and stand-up comic Matt Disero, to help raise awareness of malaria and, in partnership with UNICEF, to raise funds for mosquito netting for several African countries. With magician and mentalist Anthony Lindan, he created the Laughing Matters weekend convention to support autism. David has produced a two-DVD set, lectures, including one with Brian Robert, and a One-Man Parade for *The Linking Ring*.

Gerry Frenette also served as president of Ring 17. He is a comedy magician and world-famous builder of illusions. Gerry authored a video course on illusion-building.

Mark Lewis, originally from the UK, is a full-time children's entertainer, stand-up sleight-of-hand performer, pitchman, hypnotist, trade show performer, psychic reader, author of several books, and well-known personality on the internet. Before moving to Toronto, he was friends with David Berglas, Corinda, John Tremaine, Harry Baron, Ali Bongo, Paul Daniels, Harry Stanley, Maurice Fogel, Ron MacMillan, David Britland, and other well-known magicians and mentalists from Britain. Mark is passionate about magic and has a deep knowledge of its history. He is very approachable and always ready to help anybody seeking his advice.



(l to r): David Peck. Gerry Frenette. Mark Lewis.

DAVID PECK PHOTO BY DAVID LEYES

Anthony Lindan is a lecturer, mentalist, and kid show performer. In addition to his marketed effects, he contributed to *Apocalypse*, *Minotaur*, *Trapdoor*, *Genii* and other publications.

Ron Guttman is a mentalist, kid show performer and Bizarrist. He founded the M5 mentalists group and wrote several booklets on mentalism, Bizarre magic and presentation.

A relatively recent transplant from the US and member of Ring 17 is the legendary Michael Close. Mike is known around the world as an author, publisher, creator, lecturer, performer, consultant, coach, teacher, and of course, sleight-of-hand expert. He's one of the main people behind the scenes of *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*.

Act IV: The New Torch-Bearers

James Alan was influenced by David Ben and Julie Eng. He has authored several books and written for *Vanish*, *Elixir*, *M.U.M.*, *Genii*, and *Magicol* periodicals. He is a busy professional performer and a sought-after editor and consultant. James was President of Ring 17 for five terms – a record, no doubt.

Now residing in Atlanta, Brian Robert was influenced by David Peck, David Ben, James Alan, and long-time member of Ring 17, John McLachlan. Brian has contributions in *The Linking Ring* and *Genii*, was a featured performer and lecturer for The Japan Cup in Tokyo, and co-lectured with David Peck for Penguin Magic.

Originally from Calgary, Tyler Wilson was influenced by the *IBIDEM* crowd – through their writings in the magazine! Tyler is famous for his comedy, his superb sleight-

of-hand, his creativity, and especially, his incomparable style. He performs and lectures extensively, wrote numerous lecture notes and two books, contributed to *Magic* magazine, *Genii*, *Antinomy*, and other periodicals and books, and did a Penguin Live Lecture. Tyler now lives in Reno.

James, Brian, and Tyler may well be the last performers whose magical lineage can be traced to earlier generations of Ring 17 members. Perhaps due to the explosion of interest in magic in recent years – and therefore, of many more young people turning to magic – coupled with the great ease of communication afforded by the internet, younger magicians today are far more likely to learn magic with, and from, their peers. Especially if they hang out at the Den!

Nevertheless, many of these younger people appreciate and respect older magicians, learn from them, befriend them, and sometimes join established magic clubs. All of them work very hard on helping to improve and popularize our art. Their skill and creativity, and the quality and quantity of their output, is staggering.

Shane Cobalt, whose early influences include Tom Baxter and Ariel Frailich, is a highly acclaimed sleight-of-hand artist known around the world through his blog, books, lectures, and workshops. He has consulted for David Blaine, curated part of David Copperfield's private museum, and competed in FISM 2022 in Québec.

Jeff Hinchliffe, the “other Jeff” and demonstrator at the Browser's Den, is a superb sleight-of-hand performer, gives



(l to r): Anthony Lindan. James Alan. Brian Robert.

JAMES ALAN PHOTO BY DAVID FULDE



(l to r): Jeff Hinchliffe. Jonah Babins, Ben Train. Chris Mayhew.

magic lessons through the shop, and published several booklets of very original, cutting-edge close-up magic.

Chris Westfall was inspired by well-known local performer and Ring 17 member Orion (Ryan Neary) and was influenced by Jeff Hinchliffe, Jay Sankey, and Jeff Pinsky. Chris has authored books, contributed to *Genii*, and continues to lecture and produce marketed effects.

Glenn West admits to being influenced by more magicians, both young and old, than anyone else. He's a gifted creator who produced a DVD, a vlog, and continues to produce marketed effects.

Ben Train lectures, wrote several books, contributed to *Genii*, *Magic* magazine, *M.U.M.*, *The Linking Ring* and other publications, and produced DVDs. With Jonah Babins, he co-founded the Toronto Magic Company that produces hundreds of live magic shows around town and online conventions. Jonah hosts the *Discourse in Magic* podcast and runs a business coaching group for professional magicians.

Originally from Calgary, Chris Mayhew is another clever young creator. He authored multiple booklets, contributed to *Genii* and

Magic magazine, lectures, did two Penguin Live Lectures, and produces digital downloads and marketed effects.

Clearly, the future of magic – and of Ring 17 – is in good hands!

Act V: Curtain

Throughout its history, Ring 17 has helped, and continues to help foster countless excellent performers who not only entertain their audiences but uphold the image of magic in the public eye and even inspire people to take up magic themselves. Many have, or have had, impressive careers, are known internationally, won prizes and performed for celebrities and VIPs on several continents.

Such is the legacy of Ring 17. For the last one hundred years, Toronto has been a dynamic, yet mostly unnoticed, hotbed of magic activity that has benefited the magic world at large, and the I.B.M. in particular. In typical understated fashion, its most ubiquitous legacy can be seen every time you visit the I.B.M. website, read *The Linking Ring*, or look at your I.B.M. membership card. That logo was drawn by our very own Sid Lorraine!

Ariel Frailich is the founder of I Saw That publishing and the author of Card Stories, Reading Writing, and Sub Rosa. On a trip to Brussels in 1973 at age seventeen, Ariel met an American magician, Frank Garcia, who showed him a few card tricks that transformed his view of magic. A year later he moved to Toronto and became a regular at the Saturday Round Table, a group of high-level close-up enthusiasts that included Derek Dingle, Elizabeth Warlock, Norm Houghton, Tom Ransom, Reg Holden, Mike O'Dowd, and David Drake.