

tricky stocking, and then grabbed chocolate chip cookies from the air, and shared a bagful of the cookies as a finale. Bill McElvenney and his grandson Xander did a comedy act with a balloon posing as the Cheshire Cat. Marc De Souza showed a troublesome small ball that appeared and disappeared inside a metal cup. As audience members tried to guess where the red ball went, it finally transformed into a large blue ball, and then another large ball appeared under the cup.

Jimmy McMagic (McGinty) poured ingredients into a large pan to make magic cookies. But instead of cookies, he produced “Dominic the Donkey” from the pan, accompanied by the song of that name. He recovered the pan, and finally the delicious cookies appeared.

A great night of food, friendship, and magic to get everyone into a holiday spirit. January and February will be via Zoom meetings. See you in the new year!
Dave Kelly

Ring 17 (Toronto, Canada) Hosts Lecture by Steve Valentine

The October lecture of the Sid Lorraine Hat & Rabbit Club began with Phil Pivnick (WonderPhil) demonstrating a trick that he created which stemmed from his desire of wanting to use a Muscle Pass as a production. Phil produced a coin from the middle of an elastic band and then showed how he could make the coin vanish by tossing it through the elastic band. The idea of having things turn visible or invisible when passing through the band was used to frame another trick involving a selected card. The card vanished from the deck and then Phil reached through the rubber band and produced the folded up selected card.

you to move concealed objects from one hand to the other. A small metal or plastic ring could also be substituted for the elastic and used the same way. I foresee many variations being developed around this clever idea. Thank you, Phil.

Last month, I mentioned Herb Morrissey’s advice to serious students of the art. Namely, to focus on learning only a couple of tricks in the course of a year and to study them in depth.

Enter Steve Valentine.



Phil Pivnick.



The Ring 17 crowd.

He pointed out other benefits of using the elastic as it can act the same way a wand does; holding the elastic gives the hand a natural appearance while palming an object. Moving the band around from hand to hand also allows for acquitments, which enable

Steve doesn’t just know about the most current and easily accessible version of an effect. He tracks down its creator, researches its history – including the ebbs and flows of the trick’s popularity – and endeavours to discover all of the people who may have insights on that particular trick. All of this information is gleaned from poring over old magazines and classic texts – *The Gen*, *The Jinx*, *The Sphinx*, *Modern Magic*.

Not only does Steve find the variations, but he actually takes the time to learn each

of them! And, as if that weren't enough, he then shares all of this knowledge and his performances of the tricks via his website Magic on the Go.

Want to learn the Egg Bag, Cards to Pocket, the Rice Jar Suspension, or, my new personal favourite, The Byford Aces? Steve's got a mountain of videos for each of those. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Again he's not just sharing the methods, he's actually performing and teaching each and every version that he has unearthed.

I could go on at length about the plethora of surprises that await you on Magic on the Go, but I will refrain and tell you about a few of the highlights from the site that he was gracious enough to share with our lucky members.

Steve opened his lecture with a challenge production of a glass of wine, inspired by a Jardine Ellis method. Two audience members stood on either side of him as he unfolded a handkerchief on the palm of his hand to show that inside was a wineglass marker (a ring with a gem that attaches to the stem; used to differentiate glasses at parties). As two people held each of his wrists, Steve made a glass of wine appear. He then showed two clever ways of making the glass of wine vanish.

Next was Steve's version of the Colour-Changing Handkerchief. He has modified the gimmick and altered the steals to make his routine ultra smooth. A key piece of ad-

vice was to look at the audience when making the steals.

"Three" is Steve's take on Three Card Monte. A very entertaining routine wherein the money card ends up appearing in the audience member's pocket repeatedly.

For me, one of the highlights was a simple coin vanish. Steve stood on a chair and pinned a coin to his knee with his finger. He then folded the cloth of his pants over the coin and when he released the material the coin had vanished. So good!

Steve has been on two tours of *The Illusionists*, and a trick he always performed on that show involved a full shot glass. The glass was covered momentarily with a handkerchief and then vanished! This looked amazing and got a great reaction.

Two decks of cards were shown, one with the number one written on the box and the other with the number two. Three cards were selected from deck one and from deck two, Steve was somehow able to remove the same three cards.

I enjoyed seeing his stand-up version of Matching the Cards, which was very effective. Street performer Dick Turpin was Steve's mentor. Dick taught him a "hands off" version of Cards Across which was excellent.

Steve ended his lecture with a multiple selection routine called Five Card Finger Bang. Six people stood in a line, five selections were made and then the deck was placed in



(l to r): Steve Valentine. • Steve Valentine and Ari Soroka. • Steve Valentine, Rob Fishbaum, and Ari Soroka during a performance of an appearing glass effect.



(l to r): Steve Valentine speaks to Ring 17. • Steve Valentine and the Ring 17 board.

the pocket of the sixth person. One by one, Steve reached into this person's pocket and removed four of the chosen cards. For the finale, the spectator with the deck in their pocket reached in and miraculously came out with the last selection!

In addition to sharing his excellent material, Steve also doled out some pearls of wisdom that he has gleaned during his magical career. He talked about adding "juicy moments" to our routines. These moments are not ones for the audience, but rather for the performer. It is the moment during a routine where you know you're getting away with something while the audience watches closely. An example would be palming a card and resting the dirty hand on a spectator's shoulder. Consider your own act and think about where those moments lie and enjoy them the next time you perform.

Steve recommended that if you really want to learn a routine, try teaching it to someone else. With over a thousand hours of instructional videos on Magic on the Go, he is definitely speaking from experience!

Be prepared for inclement conditions. What if a prop or gimmick breaks or gets lost? What if it's forgotten at home? What will you do if the room is too noisy? What if the audience only consists of a handful of people? Steve mentioned a time he was performing a trick and someone was simultaneously Googling the trick to see how it was done. What would you do in this situation? In this instance, Steve chose to perform the Wayne Fox version of Crazyman's Handcuffs which has a different method than the

original. Knowing multiple handlings enables you to be ready for contingencies. However, you must practice the contingency in advance so you are prepared in the moment.

Steve also talked about hacking creativity. Many people think they aren't creative, yet if your knowledge of magic is deep enough it is possible that while you are researching particular tricks you will, invariably, come across and absorb additional information or presentations or ideas.

With all of these rolling around in your mind, you may just come up with your own way of handling or presenting a particular trick.

Always be better. Tricks are never finished. Even if you've performed them for years in a certain fashion, there are always ways to make a trick better. This could mean learning a different handling, changing the script, or altering how it's staged. It could also be something as simple as cutting a line or pausing to let the effect register. Steve's mantra is "black art makes everything better." He then demonstrated a few effects where that was certainly the case.

I think another of Steve's mantras, although he didn't say this explicitly, is "more is more." Yes, the great David Devant famously told a neophyte magician that he only knew eight tricks and we understand that he meant that he knew them well, but one of Steve's speaking points was that Devant was wrong. Of course, you should know how to do eight tricks well, but with all the variety that magic has to offer, why

would you ever stop working on new magic?! When I saw his one-man show “Mr. Valentine Blows Your Mind” at Jokers in 2022, my mind was blown not only by his excellent magic, wonderful original presentations, and unflagging energy, but by the sheer volume of tricks he packed into two hours. His two standing ovations were well deserved! (Another thing that blew my

mind, but that I didn’t find out until later was that his show took four hours to set up!!)

Steve Valentine is passionate about magic and magic is better for it. You’ll see what I mean when you check out www.magicianthego.com.

Also visit www.stevevalentine.com and listen to his fantastic podcast, Magician’s Only. *David Sutherland*

Ring 50 (Washington, DC) Holiday Show Entertains Families, Supports City of Alexandria Holiday Sharing Fund

About three dozen children and their assorted grownups filled the assembly hall of the Lyceum in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, on December 3, for the annual Ring 50 Holiday Magic Show. Two large tables on the side of the room were filled with unwrapped toys and some grocery gift cards donated by attendees to benefit the City of Alexandria Holiday Sharing Fund.

Although the show began at 7 p.m., the doors opened at 6:30 p.m. and three members of Ring 50’s youth group, the Capital Conjurors – Kareena Schiller, Hugh Presler, and Rapha Beraha – did strolling magic for the early attendees.

Ring 50 member Richie Klein, who is mistaken for Santa regardless of the season, dressed in his full Santa regalia and posed for pictures with the eager children attending the show.



Laurie Curry, whose years of performing as a clown and a magician – as well as being a preschool teacher – handled the emcee du-

ties and kept the children engaged and well behaved between the acts.

Noland Montgomery – also known as Noland the Magician – opened the show with numerous failed attempts to pull a rabbit out of his hat. He produced a large (fake) fish instead. Noland urged the kids not to laugh at his ridiculous blue and yellow striped socks. Then, with the help of a child volunteer, Noland performed a version of 20th Century Silks only to find that the desired silk between the blue silks was actually one of his striped socks. Noland then produced a small Rocky – he called it Bibi – who proceeded to eat all of the peanuts out of a can. But Noland said he couldn’t be angry at Bibi – in fact he wanted to kiss it – but ended up kissing its butt instead of the nose. Noland concluded his act by producing a large Happy Holidays silk out of his “empty” hat.

Ekasha Shah, a member of the Capital Conjurors, asked a volunteer to pick a card and mix it into the deck. Then, amazingly, the back of the card selected by her volunteer was a different color than the rest of the deck.

Larry Lipman (aka Lorenzo) informed the children that he was going to do a serious magic trick and there was to be absolutely no laughing or smiling. Of course, the children immediately began laughing and smiling despite Lorenzo’s best efforts. Lorenzo then called three young children to the stage and handed each a silk printed with a portion of a snowman: a head, arms, and body. The