

THE SILENT MESSENGER

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We've had many lectures, particular effects and valuable stuff of course but actual performance of recall the John Calvert quote people like to be fooled but entertained." Well, our May who can help us enhance the magic. Over a long and septuagenarian has been an



and most have focused on associated techniques -- really secondary to the entertaining magic. Do you from April's video: "Most everyone likes to be lecturer, Bob Fitch, is a guy entertainment value of our varied career, this energetic actor, director, magician, and has received many awards for both direction and portrayal. Mr. Fitch knows show business, and he's willing to share some precious commodities with us: theatrical experience and the tools to employ it. Tools that will raise our awareness, bolster our confidence, help us relax, and make us look and sound better. These tools apply to stage, close-up, banquet and walk-around. They're the real "tricks of the trade," and can serve to spark our creativity and make us more believable! This is a lecture that has enormous payback potential, and it's all available at Ray's on May 26th so come on out and experience Bob Fitch's wisdom. In the interim, you can learn more at www.fitchmagic.com. Our business meeting is at 7:30 followed by a most interesting couple of hours.

May Notes

*This month we have Bob Fitch with theatrical techniques to make our magic, and us, more entertaining. The meeting will be **CLOSED** with attendance **RESTRICTED** to members in good standing and guest magicians. **A \$5.00 fee will be collected from members; \$20.00 for legitimate magical guests.** We'll also open nominations for our June elections.*

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Watertown, MA

Ring 122 Officers, 2008-2009

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**DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES AND INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN JUNE'S
SILENT MESSENGER IS JUNE 17, 2009.**

From the Editor

Sadly, there was a lot of disappointment at our last meeting when we discovered that our featured guest, John Calvert, had been hospitalized from the after-effects of an afternoon fall. It wasn't clear as to the cause but at meeting time he was reported to be alert and talking. Our best wishes to this marvelous nonagenarian; here's hoping we can reschedule our visit, perhaps in celebration of his turning the century mark in 2011. Fortunately, **Ray** is amply stocked with John Calvert material so we turned to the recorded media for, as **Rob** termed it, a "virtual" visit with this magic legend as we viewed *A Tribute to Houdini*, a ~ ninety minute collection of some classic Calvert. It didn't match the enjoyment of a live visit, but it was pretty good. Most of us invested the balance of the evening and came away more than satisfied.

I promise; this will absolutely be the last time I mention this but I spoke directly with **Marty Sasaki** at the last meeting to encourage him to give us a tutorial on using our ring website (www.ibmring122.org or www.ibmring122.com). I hope we can incorporate it this month. And that's all I'll ever say about it.

Our May lecture is a bit of a departure for us. Bob Fitch will be our lecturer, and his strong suit is the theatrical side of magic. He has worked with many seasoned magical pros and turned strong magical technical talent into exceptional presentational entertainment. I've read about his "boot-camp" workshops for serious pros (www.fitchmagic.com) and they sound extreme and intense. He leaves a lot of satisfied customers in the wake though so he must be doling out valuable advice and technique. I'm sure we can each take away something to help our performances, and I'm eagerly awaiting his discussion.

I was roaming the internet the other day in search of Bob Fitch information when I happened to see a few advertisement links strewn along the edges of the electronic page. I'm sure you've also seen them – the seemingly independent "reports" on various products or services that in reality are nothing more than sponsored pleas for your attention ... and your money. The one that caught my attention cautioned not to invest in any colon cleansing product until you've clicked on the link that'll convince you there's only one product that'll completely satisfy your colon cleansing needs – a miracle for under \$50. It didn't get me to gulp down this colon Drano[®], but it did start me thinking ...

Magic is often marketed similarly with seemingly independent testimonials to the reputation-building potential in the latest "hot" magical item. Peruse the pages of any magic periodical and you're overwhelmed by the variety of potential miracles you can acquire for some of your cash. Let your mouse take you through the internet and you'll quickly become a carpal tunnel candidate as you work out your wrist and fingers clicking around the sites. Yet with all of these miracles soaring through the ether, why do we rarely see them developed into a full-up presentation or included in a working routine? I'm only guessing here, but I think that they may be slightly overhyped.

Long ago, I eschewed (boy, I've been waiting a long time to use that word) reading magic catalogs. Now I've included dealer websites (sorry Hank). If you're searching for a killer effect – the one that'll be "strong enough to close with" or "leave your audience with a keepsake they'll take home and rant over," research the literature, talk with working magicians, fire up your imagination and devise your own. Your best investment will be your time and talent, not your treasure. A good start would be this month's lecture. Bob Fitch might just be the inspiration to generate some perspiration. We can't buy miracles, but we can create them.

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Meeting Report

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 by our president, **Rob Kinslow**. Abbreviated secretary's and treasurer's reports were given by **Rob**, and accepted by the members.

Ray Goulet reported that John Calvert had suffered a fall during the day and was hospitalized and unavailable as our featured performer. We elected to substitute a John Calvert video in his place and sent our best wishes to Mr. Calvert for a full and speedy recovery.

We held a first reading for Paul Kearney and welcomed him as a provisional member. It was noted that nominations for the 2009 – 10 slate of Ring officers will be solicited at the May meeting.

We were reminded that our children's show will be held at Camp Evergreen on May 16. Flyers have been distributed. It was moved, seconded and approved to donate a portion of the proceeds from this event to the Make-A-Wish foundation.

Upcoming events were also announced: A SAM 16 auction on May 17th in Northboro (www.SAM.com for details) and A New England Magic Collectors Association barbecue on June 28th in Westboro (contact **Ray Goulet**).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49.

Al Ferraris for Debbie O'Carroll

Don't forget that nominations will be open in May for our slate of officers: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Sergeant-at-arms and one of the Board of Governors slots.

Names in the News

- Don't miss **Jim Canaday's**, Magic Portal website at <http://mysite.verizon.net/jhcanaday> -- there's always something interesting for you.
- And don't forget our good friends who can use a pick-me-up: **Marcelo Contento** at **P. O. Box 396, Watertown, MA 02471-0396** and **Anthony Murphy** at **11 Angel Road, North Reading, MA 01864**. Drop them a card to say hello and perk up their spirits.

In keeping with our Standing Rules and Guidelines, May's meeting will be CLOSED with attendance RESTRICTED to members in good standing and guest magicians. There will be a charge of \$5.00 for members whose dues have been paid and \$20.00 for guest magicians.

Celluloid Substitution

We gathered on an unseasonably hot April evening to find that our scheduled guest, the legendary John Calvert, had suffered a fall during the day and had been hospitalized. **Ray** told us that he and Mr. Calvert had enthralled the denizens of a local coffee shop that morning with a string of extemporaneous magic and banter, with John getting as much or more enjoyment from the encounter as anyone. Later, as they prepared for the evening, Mr. Calvert took a bit of a tumble, injuring his head.

Our initial disappointment yielded to relief when we heard that he was doing well, and although John Calvert couldn't be with us "in the flesh," we managed to partake of the Calvert "magnetic" charm via the "magnetic" medium as **Ray** plopped *A Tribute to Houdini* into the VCR and we sat back to enjoy ninety minutes of a magical potpourri spanning several decades of Mr. Calvert's contributions to our ancient and noble art. Even on the small screen, John Calvert's talent and personality dominated the room.

The video was ostensibly Mr. Calvert's tip of the top hat to Harry Houdini, a man who personified entertainment. It was a virtual collection of some of John's signature effects. We began by watching some quick, simple yet effective audience-pleasing escapes using chains, locks and ropes. What better way to kick-off a Houdini hurrah?

Following the escape work, we moved into the surreal with a hypnotic spell that allowed a 200 lb chunk of concrete to be pulverized via sledge hammer on the belly of a slumbering volunteer. This led us into the blindfold antics John Calvert has made famous as he completely masked his eyes with all sorts of baffles and barriers, then took to the wheel, the sea and the air to navigate his way through various stunts. He even took on a sighted opponent in a water race! (The boat and airplane excursions were impressive but most local area commuters have witnessed plenty of blindfold drivers traversing the roadways.) This video interlude was capped by the reprisal of a Houdini favorite: metamorphosis submerged.

My favorite segment followed as Mr. Calvert took on Red Skelton in a vintage TV skit that featured the classic sawing-in-half routine that was so popular in the 1950's. Although the methodology seems so blatantly obvious today with the large crate and the momentary hidden positioning, it was hilarious as John battled Red to a verbal draw of quips, asides and sight gags. The classic ball-from-the-mouth routine was introduced and Mr. Skelton used this as a recurring laugh generator, periodically spitting out another ball at various moments. What a treat to see two entertainment geniuses at work using the simplest props and methods, relying on talent rather than technology to enthrall the audience. Great stuff!

As the tape wound down, highlights from *Magicarama* flashed across the screen including the Calvert lit cigarette routine, the entire span of his watch work including steals, restorations and Tammy's comedic fake destruction, and the dancing hank.

As the final turns of the cassette spooled on, we saw a variety of stage illusions from the classic to the comically macabre. Even Lash LaRue made a brief appearance. So, this truly was a magical tribute from one master of entertainment to what many consider to be THE master of entertainment. Was it as good as a live encounter? Not in the least, but it was still a class act and a most worthwhile evening. We send our collective best wishes to our absent guest and hope to see him on display very soon. Ninety seven years of John Calvert is just enough to whet our appetites for another ninety seven. Stop by and visit with us anytime your path winds through Boston, and keep on spreading your magic.

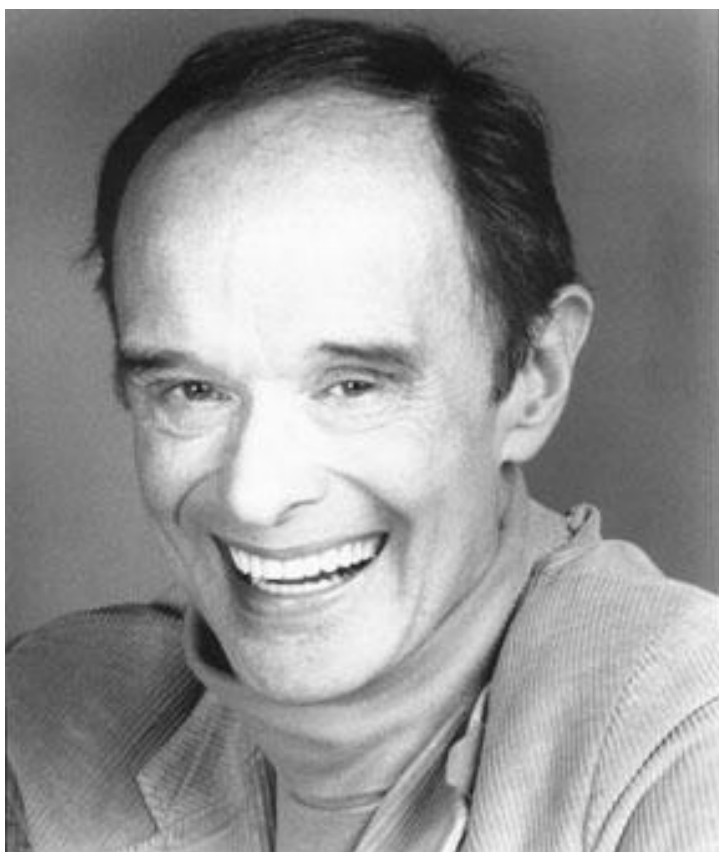
*Thanks to all of you who stayed with us to partake of the virtual tour. What a compendium of magic, comedy and enjoyment. If you missed it, the tape is A Tribute to Houdini, and if you can locate it, you're sure to have a most entertaining hour and a half. And special thanks to **John Cuddy** and **Al Ferraris** for feeding us. Who'll bring the taste treats in May? Why not you?*

Coming Events

June 30

The Ring 122 magic year closes with a return of the rowdiness associated with T. H. E. GAME.

Remember our February pre-meeting workshop on the Chinese Sticks hosted by Rob Kinslow? At the time, Rob mentioned that very little was available in print or video on this classic piece of apparatus. Well, on one of my internet searches I came across an ad for a John Fedko DVD on, what else, the Chinese Sticks. It's advertised as a twenty-minute how-to on these gems and even includes a pair of sticks (but don't expect anything like the Kovari set). Please don't consider this a solicitation but it looks as though someone has finally put something out on this one.



*Bob Fitch loves
Magic! He loves
Magicians and their
Imaginations!*

*Bob Fitch Makes
Magicians Magical*