



# Society of Memphis Magicians



International Brotherhood of Magicians Ring 16  
March 2016 [www.ring16.org](http://www.ring16.org)

## Presidential Ponderings

*Bill Canaday - President*

Fellow Ring 16 Members: First, a special congratulations to our Vice-President, Jeff Day. As you may know, in addition to being a great magician, Jeff is also an accomplished singer. True. Jeff was chosen as one of Barry Manilow’s backup singers for the last part of his recent sold-out show at the FedEx Forum. My wife and I were at this show, and Jeff and his fellow singers did a great job. Again, congratulations, Jeff! Onward to our Ring 16 business. We have said many times how lucky we are to have a great meeting place that is convenient, nice, and a great and accommodating staff, as we have with the Botanic Gardens. A special thanks to Grayson Smith for helping us keep this for years now. Each year they just request that we help them with entertainment for one of their biggest events of the year, their Annual Easter Egg Hunt. It’s hard to believe, however, that time of the year is upon us. Our members have always helped with this in anyway they can, be it with Balloons, Magic or Mentalism. So, if you can help this year, please let Grayson know; we will appreciate it a lot! Looking forward to seeing you next week for more on this, and our usual meeting business and Magic and Mentalism.



## From Our Treasurer

*Martin Seiler*

We are continuing to take up dues which are only \$15.00. Those who cannot attend the meeting can mail their checks to me at: Martin Seiler, 4635 Park Ave., Memphis, TN. 38117. Checks should be made out to the “Society of Memphis Magicians”.



## IBM Ring 16 March Meeting

**Tuesday March 1st - 7pm  
Memphis Botanic Garden**

### Annual Initiation

**Theme:**  
**St. Patrick’s Magic**  
**Table Hopping Magic and  
Mentalism**



## From Vice-President

*Jeff Day*

I have always been interested in old books, especially ones relating to magic. I have a few books that once belonged to the late Charles “Chuck” Stanfield, a Chicago magician who kept company with Eugene Burger, Jay Marshall, & Phil Goldstein. Chuck passed away in 1991, and a Broken Wand ceremony was given by the local Chicago magic group. Below is a newspaper article from the Chicago Tribune that tells a little more about that ceremony, as well as who Charles Stanfield was.

“Breaking the Wand” article follows.

## **BREAKING THE WAND**

Conjurers And Card Tricksters Bid Farewell To One Of Their Own In A Memorial Tribute Filled With Magic, Both Illusory And Real

June 12, 1991 / by Ron Grossman (CHICAGO TRIBUNE)

“For the evening perhaps, we’ve made believers of you. But there really isn’t any magic to these illusions of ours,” ‘Higa said.

‘ “Audiences see only the finished routine, not the hundreds of hours of practice it takes. In the hospital, Chuck Stanfield showed me another kind of magic. He’d smile and tell one of those bad jokes he loved, which you who know his act recall. He never let anyone see what was going on backstage—the pain, the fears he had to be feeling.”

### **Keeping a sense of wonder**

Long after being stricken with AIDS, Sanfield’s friend recall, he continued to attend the regular meetings of Chicago’s professional magicians. Saturdays, they gather around the counter tops at Magic Inc., to swap new ways of doing old tricks, flanked by the shop’s paying customers: young boys and quarter their age, spending allowance money on simple gimmicks tailored for novice hands.

“A magician is someone who never let go of the sense of wonder all kids have,” ‘Higa said at the service, seeming to rewrite physics texts by bending a mirror in two. ‘ “So come, step into the special world that Chuck knew.’ “

After the show, Jay Marshall observed that in magic circles ‘ “professional” ‘ means a state of mind as well as a way of earning a living. The dean of Chicago’s magicians and proprietor of Magic Inc., Marshall has been performing since 1936. During TV’s golden age, he appeared on “The Ed Sullivan Show” 14 times.

With vaudeville’s demise, he noted, the opportunities today are slimmer. Few members of the Mazda Mystic Ring, the magicians fraternity that sponsored the memorial show, can make ends meet through wizardry alone. So they take whatever bookings are to be found, performing at kids’ birthday parties and entertaining conventioners at industrial trade shows. But to pay the mortgage, most magicians find they need a day job, too.

### **Trial by fire**

After college, his colleagues recalled, Stanfield performed at Opryland, the Nashville theme park. Then he joined the Clyde Beatty circus, replacing a magician who had to leave the show.

“It was a fire-eating act, which Chuck had never done before, and that kind of magic leaves you with terrible heartburn, if you don’t know what you’re doing.” Marshall recalled, “The fellow gave him 20 minutes of instruction and Chuck went out into that circus ring to do his first show.”

But after coming to Chicago in 1976, Stanfield hedged his bets and started doubling as a computer programmer. Similarly, Mark Holstein, who took part in Stanfield's memorial, is a lawyer. In seasons when bookings are good, he somehow manages to squeeze in three or four magic shows a week after workdays devoted to courtroom performances.

"I love the drama involved in doing magic and being a trial lawyer."

Holstein explained, "Both depend on the art of persuasion. With a jury or an audience, the whole secret is getting people to focus on what you want them to."

The third Tuesday of every month, Mazda members practice that same trick on one another. Upstairs of Magic Inc., they have a clubhouse whose walls are lined with hundreds of photographs of magicians, each celebrated for a unique contribution to the craft. One end of the room is rigged with stage lights, under which a guest artist is invited to stand up and test his illusions in front of a jury of his peers.

## **The vow of silence**

A recent meeting opened with a moment of silence for Chuck Stanfield, who had just died at age 38. Then Randy Wakeman, a visiting performer from Joliet, presented a series of card tricks. First, he did his act at normal performing speed. Afterward, he doubled back in slow motion, annotating his sleight-of-hand maneuvers while demonstrating which of his routines depend upon an "Elmsley Count" or "Ed Marlo's Bluff Ace Assembly."

"For this trick, I've adapted an old Harry Riser idea," Wakeman said, as audience members nodded in admiration.

Each generation of magicians builds on its predecessors' innovations, a member of the group explained, asking a visitor to help keep the evening's secrets (needlessly, through; even at half speed the cards were still moving too fast for a layman's eyes to follow). Professional ethics requires that magicians safeguard a fellow performer's gimmicks, as Stanfield's mother recalled at her son's memorial.

Making small talk while visiting him in the hospital, she remarked that she'd seen David Copperfield doing his magic act on a television show.

"I said: 'Chuck, how the dickens does he do some of those tricks?'"

"Joann Stanfield recalled.

"He said: 'Mom, I can't tell you that. I'm a magician.'"

That code of secrecy is not really burdensome, most magicians note. Once in a while, they come up against a wise guy, determined to unmask their illusions. But most audiences want to be stumped, said Holstein, the lawyer-magician, adding that he and his fellow performers are not exempt from that psychology.

## **A longing to believe**

# February Business Meeting

*John Sorrell*

\* Lectures:

- Eric Anderson - Voted not to book lecture.

- Mark Strivings - Lecture, Friday, May 6,  
\$250 + room

Possible workshop, Saturday, May 7 - \$40  
each up to 12

Voted to book lecture. Bill checking on  
workshop minimum

\* 2016 Dues - Martin Seiler is collecting \$15 Ring  
16 dues

\* Checking Account - Martin has signature access  
to checking account

\* Jimmy Dixon - Sale of magic items - Saturday,  
Feb 6

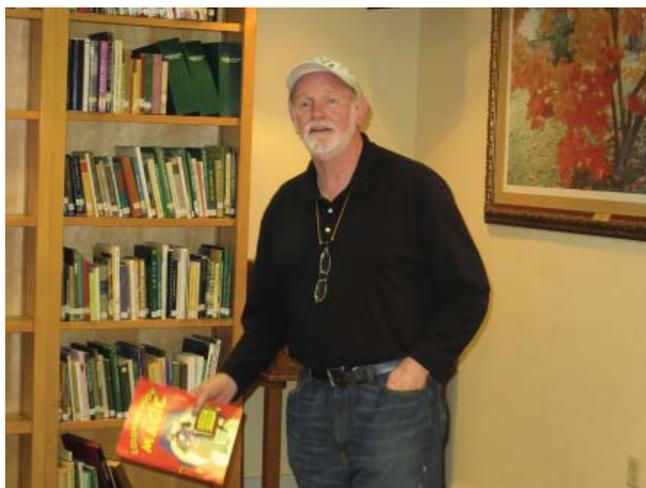
\* Mike Speros reported on MagiFest - Columbus,  
Ohio

\* Upcoming conventions - Winter Carnival of  
Magic, IBM, SAM

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# February Open Magic

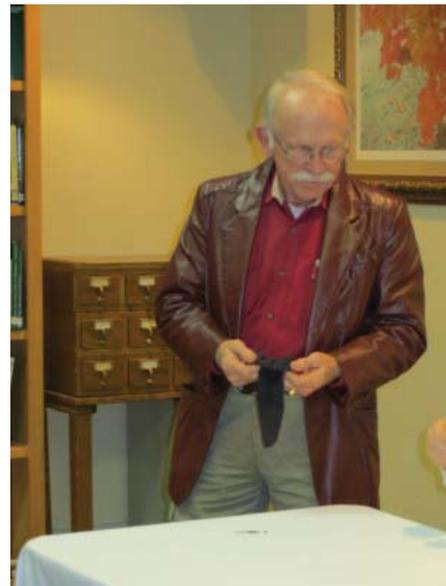
*Photos by John Sorrell*



**Allen Underwood**



**Tim Grant**



**Rocky Yarbrough**



**Johnny Williams**

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