



# The Magicians of IBM RING 313

## The John Fedko Ring

Meet some of the magical characters who help make this magic club a special place for illusion makers.

**By Philip H. Henderson, ethical  
magician**

**January 2015**

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# **Introduction to Volume 1 of The Magicians of IBM Ring 313**

Ring 313 Secretary, Philip Henderson, interviewed founding members of Ring 313 to introduce them to newer members. This is volume 1 of the Magicians of IBM Ring 313. In addition to the founding members included are the biographies of some of members who have contributed to the success of the John Fedko Ring.

As you read these stories about the lives of our members, you will understand that the real magic in their lives are their relationships with family and friends, and their connection to humanity. Magicians want to place smiles on the faces of everyone they meet. We just have an unusual method to garner those smiles.

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# History of IBM Ring 313, The John Fedko Ring

The John Fedko Ring was chartered by the International Brotherhood of Magicians in 1995. The Charter Members included

John Fedko  
Catherine Fedko  
Tom Clifford  
Chuck Lubin  
Ken Clark  
Demetrius Edwards  
John Marasco  
Richard Leeds  
Jay Armendariz  
and Tricia Lewis



**Tom Clifford and John Fedko**

After our charter was granted by IBM, we held our first meeting at the Paine Webber building on February 22, 1995. Shortly after that, our rapid growth required that we move the meetings to our present location, the Irvine Ranch Water District.

The first Officers of IBM Ring 313 were elected in 1995. The founding officers were:

President . . . . . Tom Clifford  
Vice President . . . . . Chuck Lubin  
Secretary . . . . . Tricia Lewis  
Treasurer . . . . . Ken Clark  
Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . . Jay Armendariz

On August 26, 1997, Ring 313 was awarded the Ring Quality Award stating that, "*Ring 313 is recognized for having met the exacting standards of a Superior Quality Ring as established by the Board of Trustees of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. The Board of Trustees salutes the Ring upon this achievement which brings great credit to Ring 313 and its members not only for past achievements but also for their vision and plans for the future.*"

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# Presidents of The John Fedko Ring

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Tom Clifford	1995
Tom Clifford	1996
Tom Clifford	1997
Chris Smith	1998
Paul Ruben	1999
Dan McKinnon	2000
Kyle Merck	2001
Belinda Kaesler	2002
Belinda Kaesler	2003
Todd Reis	2004
Todd Reis	2005
Todd Reis	2006
Todd Reis	2007
Kevin Brown	2008
Kevin Brown	2009
Kevin Brown	2010
Jay Leslie	2011
Jay Leslie	2012

Chris Wynkoop	2013
Chris Wynkoop	2014
Chris Wynkoop	2015

The author of this book, Philip Henderson, joined Ring 313 in 1997. In 2002, he began writing the Member Spotlight occasional series. He interviewed each member spotlighted in the series and received their editorial approval for every word in each spotlight. The purpose of these spotlights is to give members of Ring 313 a multifaceted view of some of the members of Ring 313.

We enjoy each other's company at monthly Ring events. You might know some members for thirteen years but still know little about their lives outside of our gathering at the Ring. In 2015, we have more than 100 members. Since our establishment in 1995, more than three hundred magicians have been initiated as members.

The magicians selected for the Member Spotlight are long time members who have been active in the magic community and in our Ring. As you read these stories, you will discover why each person was selected for a spotlight.



We are a fun group of prestidigitators who meet on the final Tuesday of each month in the headquarters of the Irvine Ranch Water District on Sand Canyon Road in Irvine. Many of the founding members of the Ring were students of John Fedko. Our Ring attracts a diverse group of conjurers including:

- Professional performers
- Magic Dealers
- Inventors of Magic
- Youthful magicians in our Junior's Program
- Clowns and mimes
- Mentalists
- Collectors
- Deaf performers
- Amateurs of all descriptions

Every kind of magician is welcome to our Ring. Our youngest member is 8 years old; we have many members in their eighth decade. We have three meetings every month. On the second Tuesday of each month members, gather at a local restaurant, Knowlwood in Irvine, to try out new routines and to seek advice about performance of all kinds of magic.

Once a month our junior magicians meet at the home of the director of Junior's programs. The juniors learn magic sleights and performance skills that will help them master the art of magic. Annually, the Junior's

compete with each other for the Perpetual Trophy and bragging rights.

On the last Tuesday of each month, members come to the Irvine Ranch Water District for our Regular membership meeting. At this meeting, we often have visiting magicians who lecture and sell products to members and guests. Among the more than 100 magicians to lecture at Ring 313 are:

Michael Ammar	John Guastaferrero	John Gaughan
John Fedko	John Calvert	Richard Turner
Aldo Colombini	John Carney	Arthur Benjamin
Sylvester the Jester	Paul Green	Dale Salwak
Joycee Beck	Johnny Ace Palmer	Howard Hamburg
Jeff McBride	Charles Gauci	Daryl Easton (Daryl)
David Regal	Jay Leslie	Magic Smith
Banacek	Whit Haydn	SUDS aka Ted Sudbrack
Shoot Ogawa	John Kennedy	Jimmy Fingers
Joshua Jay	Doug Brewer	
Tom Ogden	Lee Earle	
Kenton Knepper	Dirk Losander	
Randy Pryor	Michael Close	
John Lovick	Max Maven	
Dick Barry		

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Our lecturer's are among the stars of magic touring the world today. We were fortunate to have Mr. John Calvert to lecture for us on 1999, at age 87, and again in 2009 at age 97, his skills as a magician still strong, his character as a human being is his strongest asset.

Several of our members have lectured for the Ring including, John Fedko, Jay Leslie, Doug Brewer, SUDS, and Dick Barry.

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## The Five Lives of John Fedko.

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This is an update on a story I wrote in November 2002 about the founder of IBM Ring 313, John Fedko. This was rewritten so that new members to our ring will learn more about the man whose name is part of our official name, The John Fedko Ring. To get the facts for this story, I interviewed John Fedko in his home in the fall of 2002. We spoke for several hours. I condensed our conversation to these summary statements. I call this story The Five Lives of John Fedko (musician, engineer, magician, leader, and family man).

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John Fedko is the namesake of our ring. Ring 313 is also known formally as *The John Fedko Ring*. John is our mentor, friend, teacher, Master Magician and this year an active member of the Board of Directors. John is a native of Northampton, Pennsylvania from Ukrainian extraction. He uses Ukrainian fluently and also speaks German and Italian. John earned his Bachelor's degree in Physics from Muhlenberg College; a Master

of Science in Aeronautical and Propulsion Engineering from the University of Texas, and a Master of Science in Systems Engineering from USC.



The purpose of the member spotlight is to introduce a prominent member of the Ring so you know the “back story” behind your fellow Ring members. One of my stock questions during the interview is “What can you tell me that our members might be

surprised to know?” Well for Mr. John Fedko I could write a book about his answer. I don’t have that much room here so you get his life in summary form—**The Five Lives of Mr. John Fedko.**

### ***John Fedko, Family Man***

I think John will want to be known first as a dedicated family man. He has been married to his devoted wife Catherine since 1953. They have four children, thirteen grandchildren. It is apparent when you visit his Santa Ana home that his life is full of good times with all his family members. His home is very comfortable and very lived in. You see magical references almost everywhere you look, awards, books, posters, and etc.

but mostly you see evidence of family. Portraits, snapshots, children's playthings, and other mementos of wonderful times past with his family along with Daisy, the dog, and two cats make this a comfortable family home for the Fedko's.

## *John Fedko, Engineer*

John told me he would best be remembered for the engineering work he has done. John has had a long and distinguished career in the US Army Air Defense and in private industry as a scientist and inventor. He has held top-level assignments at the Pentagon and has served in important roles in the US Army developing, designing, building, testing, and deploying offensive and defensive ballistic missiles for the US government. Colonel Fedko (retired after 20-years service) held significant posts during the Cold War era and helped bring peace to the world from his efforts. Much of what Colonel Fedko did is still classified as Top Secret.

When John left the military, he continued defense work as a private citizen working for Hughes Aircraft Company in missile development and deployment. John is an expert on design and deployment of ballistic missiles. He received the Meritorious Service Medal by the President of the United States for his work.

From 1972 until 1977, while operating the John Fedko Magic Company, John also served as Director of the Bureau of Systems Management for Environmental Sciences for the State of Pennsylvania. He directed and coordinated the technical efforts of the bureaus of: Water, Air, Land, Mines, Forestry, State Parks, and Radiological Health. Fedko reported directly to Pennsylvania Governor Shapp.



### *John Fedko, Musician*

John began trumpet lessons at age eight and by age 16 was first trumpet player for the Northampton Band and a soloist for the Allentown Symphony. He studied with Albertus Meyers and Harry Newhart who themselves were respectively first and second chair trumpet players for John Phillip Sousa. Graduating from high school at age 16, John formed his own band, the John Fedko Band. This eight-piece dance band worked seven nights a week from early evening until midnight or 2 am.

During the day John worked alongside his father and saved enough money the first two years that he could afford to attend college to study Physics. In his four years of college he continued to play six or 7 nights a week with his band. John

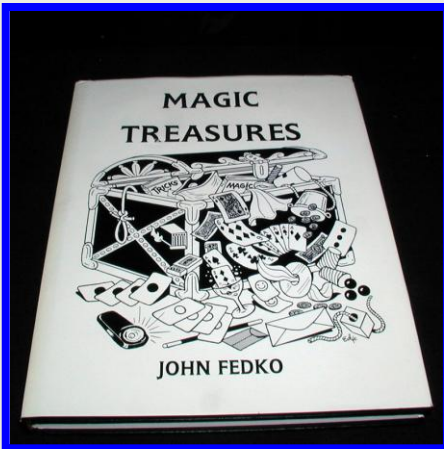
ended his career as a professional musician when he married Kathy in 1953.

## *John Fedko, Magician*

In 1972, John established the John Fedko Magic Company in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. The Magic Company had a wholesale and retail operation, a performing stage, and a lecture series. All of the most outstanding performers touring America came to the John Fedko Magic Company to teach magic, learn about magic, and enjoy magic.

The wholesale operation manufactured and sold magic effects invented by John Fedko that were designed for commercial use by professional magicians. Nearly every day dozens of adult students were taught the basics of magic by Fedko and several instructors he hired. Every weekend, Fedko

booked lectures, films, and magic performances. Fedko operated this company for five years until he sold it to move to California in 1977.





## *John Fedko, Author and Teacher*

John is well known as an inventor of magical effects and methods. He prepared ten instructional videos; has written four books; and prepared sixteen original and different manuscripts of lecture notes for magicians. The John Fedko Magic School teaches adults to become performers and he has taught magic to children (aged 8-16) for the last eight years at Saddleback College.

John still lectures at conventions and on request for magic clubs, but has spent more time with his family during the last few years. He counts among his friends some of the most successful magicians performing today. They are always happy to help him out when he needs their support for a project he is working on. In 1999, John was president of PCAM and chaired their annual convention. He is a friend to all of us at Ring 313.

## *Concluding Thoughts*

At the end of my interview with John Fedko, I asked him to comment on the State of Magic as he sees it now. John sees a great and prosperous future for magic in this country and the world. The recent television exposures (which he deplores) have only ended up generating more interest in magic. Those whose

misguided efforts caused temporary setbacks to some have ruined their own careers.

Magic will continue to flourish because there is honor among professional magicians. Those who have been privileged to make magic their career have always acted with respect and honor to those who paved the way for them. Secrets are inevitably a part of magic. That's part of what makes magic work. John has a couple of secrets that he only wants to pass on to his son or grandchild. The best magicians share their knowledge for future generations. They take on students or publish their work so that others will be amazed and entertained by the creative work they have wrought.

John sees a great future for someone who is willing to work hard to make magic a career. John didn't have a teacher. He used the **Tarbell Course in Magic, Book One** to get started. Most of what he does, he developed himself. He developed his own sleights, his own effects, and his own methods. There is plenty of room for young magicians to succeed in magic.

Thank you John Fedko for bringing magic into the lives of countless people: magicians, audiences, and students. You are a five-star leader in our community. I am personally grateful for your wisdom and commitment to serve humankind. I speak for many of the members of Ring 313 many of whom began their career as magicians with your instruction and guidance.

# M - U - M

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JOHN FEDKO  
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# Mr. Todd Reis

Todd Reis (*pronounced Rice*) returned to California in 1989 and immediately became involved in southern California magic clubs. Todd has been a member of the Orange County Magic Club since 1989. Todd served as President of OCMC in 1992, 1993, and 1998. Todd and Tom Clifford were friends when Tom began to form Ring 313, The John Fedko Ring. Todd was not on the original roster of members however, he officially joined Ring 313 in the second year. Todd served as President of Ring 313 in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Todd performs close up and stage magic. In 2004, he won first prize in the Ring 313 Stage Magic performance. He joined Los Magicos in Pasadena five years ago.



Todd began learning magic using a children's set (Sneaky Pete's Magic Show by Remco) his parents purchased for him when he was only seven or eight years old. Todd's father

was a salesman in a music store in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the 1950-60's. In addition to magic, it is not surprising to learn that

Todd is a musician. He played trumpet in the marching band, the concert band, and the pep band. Todd also plays guitar and piano.

The youngest of three siblings, his two older sisters played Flute, French horn, piano and accordion; Todd's childhood was filled with music. Growing up Todd and his sisters watched the Liberace television program not realizing that Liberace was a schoolmate of Todd's mother. Music and magic were an important part of Todd's upbringing in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Wauwatosa is located immediately west of [Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#), and is a part of the [Milwaukee metropolitan area](#). It is named after the [Potawatomi](#) word for [firefly](#).

In 1967, Todd's family moved to the San Fernando Valley in Todd's senior year of high school. Todd graduated from Grant High School and matriculated to Cal State University Northridge. He earned his bachelor's degree in Business from CSUN in 1973. After working in retail sales for several years, Todd returned to school. This time he earned a degree in accounting and computer science from DeVry University in 1984. At DeVry Todd met a fellow student who became a lifelong friend, Andrew Groger. Andrew is a magician and he reawakened Todd's early interest in performing magic. Before getting too far ahead in

the chronology let's take a detour to examine Todd's lifelong passion with comic books. This passion led to an avocation that has made Todd Reis an important person in the community of people who create comic books. Some of Todd's favorite comic book artists became his clients!



### 3-D Shadow Boxes

After graduating from Cal State Northridge, Todd turned his hand at constructing 3-D Shadow boxes featuring comic books. This became a huge project for Todd and an avocation for more than twenty-five years. Todd was a regular convention member and vendor at

Comic-Con. Comic-Con is an annual international gathering of comic book fans held in San Diego, California. Many visitors to the convention came specifically to obtain 3-D shadow boxes designed and built by Todd Reis. One single client has purchased more than eighty boxes created and hand made by Todd. Some of the 3-D shadow boxes were commissioned by the artists who drew the frames for popular comic books, including Batman. Maybe one day Todd will bring some of the boxes to the club for you to see the detail and passion built into each box.

## **Mile High Magician's Society (MHMS)**

After completing his education at DeVry, Todd landed a job in Denver, Colorado working for Mountain Bell as a mainframe computer programmer. Andrew Groger and several other DeVry graduates joined Todd at this location. Soon Todd was invited to join the Mile High Magician's Society. MHMS is a combination SAM and IBM magician's organization (SAM Assembly 37 and IBM Ring 131). At Mile High Todd was reintroduced to magic in a big way. There he started friendships with a who's who in magic including: David Neighbors, Joe Givan (Dream Masterz), Eric Mead, Lamont Ream, Steve Aldridge, Gene Gordon, Orville Meyer, and Ken Simmons. David Neighbors took particular interest in Todd and taught him a wide range of magical skills.

After a couple of years in Denver, Todd moved back to California to work for Northrop in Pico Rivera. Soon after returning to California, he made his way back to the Magic Castle in Hollywood finally ready to audition for membership. Performing "Dave Neighbors' Easy over Aces" and the "Danny Korem Book Test," Todd was initiated into the Academy of Magical Arts as a magician member in 1987. Todd says that the Danny Korem Book Test was the most important illusion that

brought him back to magic. Done properly this effect convinces spectators that you must have special abilities. Todd was so pleased with the effect the illusion had on audiences that his passion for magic was permanently rekindled.

At the Magic Castle Todd met Larry Jennings and was introduced to Dai Vernon. Friends encouraged Todd to show the Professor Todd's version of Neighbor's Easy Over Aces. The Professor seemed to enjoy the performance, which was a huge relief to Todd. Even the most skilled performers were nervous performing for Vernon. Todd has made good use of his membership in the Magic Castle. It was at a party at the Castle in 1998 when Todd met a guest name Marti. Marti is now married to Todd and his life has blossomed in a thousand ways since their chance meeting at the Magic Castle.

Marti has influenced Todd in myriad ways. The most obvious influence is Marti's passionate interest in puzzles. If you have visited the Reis home you know what I mean. Nearly every corner and every wall has a puzzle lying in wait for your inspection. Many of the puzzles are one of a kind. They are made of wood, metal, plastic, paper, and other exotic materials. Some of the puzzles are quickly resolved others are not for novices. It would be well to bring your Mensa Card before attempting some of these puzzles. Marti is a long time Mensa

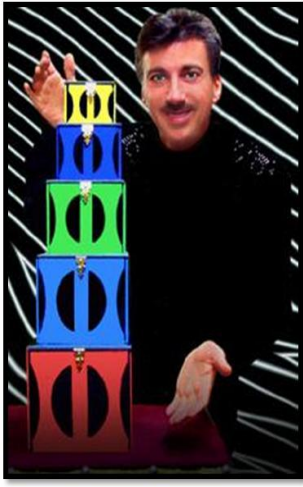




member, often hosting gatherings of these brainiacs at her home. Marti also introduced Todd to the private International Puzzle Party group.

The IPP is the brainchild of Jerry Slocum and participation is by invitation only. Mr. Slocum owns the largest collection of puzzles and books about puzzles in the world. Todd and Marti have met with the group at their annual gathering starting in 1999 in London; 2000 in Los Angeles; 2001 Tokyo; 2002 Antwerp/Paris (with side trips to Brussels and Amsterdam. In 2003 they met in Chicago; 2004 Tokyo (and side trips to Hong-Kong, Ulan Bator in Mongolia, the Gobi desert, and Beijing); 2005 Helsinki (including side trips to Copenhagen, Talen, and St. Petersburg); 2006 Boston; 2007 Sydney (with side trips to Gold coast, Cairn); 2008 Prague (also side trips to Vienna and Budapest). This year the IPP meets in San Francisco, in 2010 Osaka, and in 2011 in Berlin. Are you dizzy yet? What a wild ride this has been for a young man from Wisconsin. Todd considers the travel and the wonderful people he has met in the IPP to be some of the best times in his life. IPP is a non-profit corporation with about 150 members. Todd has attended four of these events.

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## Is Jay Leslie a Magician? This writer says NO!

Most of you know our long-term member Jay Leslie. You have seen him perform a variety of effects and routines. He has served countless times as Master of Ceremonies. He has won

Magician of the Year, the President's Award and first place for Stage Performance. *Abacadabra*, Leslie manufactures magical effects used by headline performers worldwide. With all these awards and accolades, how can this writer conclude that Jay Leslie is not a magician? This must be just a weird joke. No says the author, "if you continue reading, you will see the mounting evidence that leads me to this inevitable conclusion. Jay Leslie is not a magician!"

Jay's father was a song and dance man. Therefore being on the stage just came naturally to Leslie. In addition to inventing magical illusions, performing regularly for businesses and private parties, Jay is also a musician. He writes lyrics and melodies to accompany his routines. His favorite composition is "I'm the Wizard." If you ask nicely, Jay might sing it for you.

Leslie also wrote and arranged the music for an hour-long magic show, which featured him as the headline performer that he performed more than 5,400 audiences on stage. Jay does not sing or play music as often as he used to, however his years of experience as a musician, molded a good part of Jay Leslie's current performance style.

Jay grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in a show business atmosphere. Visitors to his home included vaudeville performers, singers, magicians, and dancers. These performers had honed their art on the boards in front of live audiences. As a young entertainer, Jay regularly performed on a television program with Bozo the Clown. Leslie's character was "*Aladdin the Wonder Boy*," he was Bozo's sidekick. This duo frequently entertained as headliner performers at grand openings of malls and shopping centers on the east coast. Jay performed magical illusions on stage for an hour, while Bozo the Clown signed autographs and distributed door prizes to children. Despite working with him hundreds of events and television shows, Jay never saw Bozo without his characteristic makeup.

In addition to his father, several other entertainers mentored Leslie, gently guiding him into the world of magic. Magician Del Ray (*Delbert Raymond Petrosky 1925-2003*) was a frequent visitor to the Leslie household. As a boy, Jay observed and learned secrets of this master performer as Del Ray prepared

for his next new performance. Watching this master artist prepare for performing taught Leslie timing, tempo, and pacing. Leslie picked up the essentials that allow an artist to make a living as a live performer. Del Ray was clear about what he was doing; no tricks—he was an artist on the stage. He was an entertainer first. Del Ray amazed and pleased his audiences



using magical illusions, but also with his timing, pacing, and ability to engage the audience.

Magician James (“Jim”)

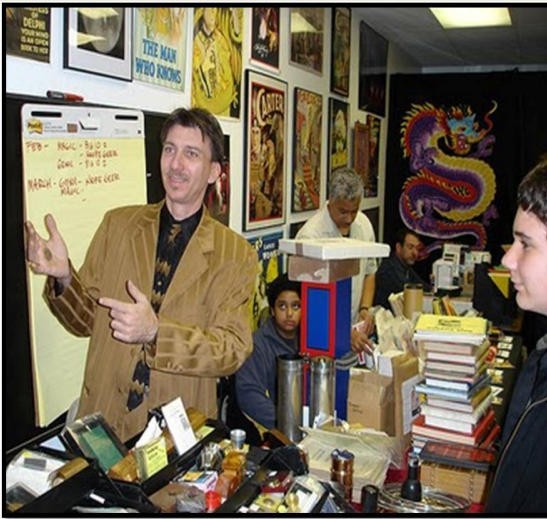
Swoger (1918-2006) had the most significant influence on the show business career of Jay Leslie. Swoger had a way about him that captivated his audiences. This

writer met Jim Swoger on several occasions over the last fifteen years. He always greeted me warmly with a free and happy smile. Without invitation, Swoger would perform impromptu magic for me, always with a smile. Swoger was always ready to perform. He habitually carried gimmicks with him all day long, waiting for just the right opportunity to show you a miracle of magic. Just as often, Swoger would take advantage of an ordinary object, which he would magically transform for my entertainment. I see a lot of Jim Swoger in the style of performance of Jay Leslie.

Preparation was absolute to Jim Swoger—he was always prepared; and so is Jay Leslie. James Swoger was Jay Leslie’s mentor. However, later in their relationship, Jim Swoger became Jay’s friend and business partner. I met Jim Swoger, in the later stages of their relationship. Jay Leslie always showed Swoger the utmost of respect, introducing him to guests as an honored mentor.

I made an appointment to interview Leslie for this story at his place of work. I have visited this workshop many times before. I knew that being in this magical place would inspire Jay to speak freely about his life in magic. Sitting with Jay in his sorcessor’s workshop, *The House of Enchantment* in Huntington Beach, we are surrounded with gadgets, gimmicks, and magical props designed and manufactured by the late James

Swoger (and some by Jay Leslie). Jay Leslie not only inherited the magical legacy of James Swoger, he now owns the shop established by Swoger more than seventy years ago.



Jim, always ready to tell a funny story, named his magic emporium, ***“Regows Magic Studio”***. Regows is his surname (Swoger) spelled in reverse.

Regows has become ***Jay Leslie’s House of Enchantment***, known worldwide as a source for magicians when they want quality handcrafted magic equipment. Jay makes props for several famous magicians. Jay Leslie was chosen to make Mark Wilson’s 50th anniversary Square Circle Hat, which is sold as a collectable. One of Jay’s own inventions, Coin-Through-Coin, has sold more than 8,000 units. Jay Leslie manufactures props out of wood, metal, and plastics. Often he takes an old prop and remanufactures the mechanism to take advantage of modern tool making to improve the magical device for contemporary performers.

***Yet, with all this history, this writer insists that Jay Leslie is no magician!***

As we delve deeper, we will learn more about the mystery surrounding Jay. Jay Leslie attended the University of Pittsburgh, earning his Bachelor’s and Master’s in Fine Arts (MFA) degrees in the theater department. He learned how to act, direct, block, stage, and produce live theater. Leslie moved to Virginia, where he worked three years at Busch Gardens. He was

the headline magician performing six days a week, six shows daily—that's called earning your chops! Do the math, just at Busch Gardens Jay has more than 5,000 stage performances. Jay also dabbled at several other careers before moving to Southern California in the 1980's, rejoining Jim Swoger who had moved west from Pittsburg, PA. The next twelve years Leslie focused on fund-raising events for schools and performing at trade shows. Leslie produced and toured with three different illusion shows, each show appropriate for different venues. Jay's equipment included a large truck, a large van, and a trailer that held costumes, magical apparatus, public address systems, lighting, curtains, and other equipment required for a touring road show.

Many magicians think of Jay Leslie as an escape artist.

Jay has escaped from jail cells, straitjackets, handcuffs, chains, and even from the famous "Houdini Milk Can." Jay began his mastery of escapes with the help of James Swoger. Fewer than twenty men have successfully met the Challenge Jail Escape, made famous by Erich Weiss (aka Houdini). Jay Leslie is only one of about five



men still living who succeeded. Swoger pointed the way for Jay to make escapology one of Jay's specialties. In addition to IBM Ring 313, Jay was a member of IBM Ring 13, the TAMPA Ring, in Pittsburgh, PA. At age 14, Jay was the youngest person to join that ring and probably started the admission of younger members worldwide. Jay is a member of the IBM Order of Merlin. Jay is also a member of the Society of American Magicians (S.A.M.), and while not affiliated with a specific SAM Assembly, his membership in SAM has been in effect more than 20-years.

I asked Jay Leslie to name a few of his favorite performers. Jay has many performers he admires, all seemingly for the same reason—they are hard workers who leave nothing to chance in their work. These performers do “theater,” they rehearse, they work hard at their art, they keep their props in great condition, they perform with first rate magical assistants, and they honor the craft of magic by thoroughly entertaining their audiences whether small groups or large. Among the names Jay rattled off, I remember these familiar names, not in any order, Harry Blackstone, Jr., Daryl, Jim Swoger, Michael Ammar, David Copperfield, and Martin Nash. Leslie mentioned many other performers; these were among those he praised most highly.



***Nonetheless, this writer insists that Jay Leslie is no magician, not by a long shot!***

Every good magician has secrets that he keeps. Among Jay's secrets are a few varied careers he pursued before making magic his full time business more than thirty years ago. Even though I don't consider Jay a magician, he thinks of himself as one of the clan. Leslie says the best part about being a magician is *"When I show up to perform, everyone is waiting for a magic show. I help people enjoy themselves by getting the audience completely absorbed in my performance. For the moment I am on stage, the audience is able to forget every care."*

Jay Leslie resides with two canaries (*Gregory and Peck*); *Fido* the rabbit; and an itinerant feline who sometimes answers to the name *Inspector Princess*. Jay's workshop in Huntington Beach is covered floor to ceiling with magical apparatus. Some of the props are more than one-hundred-fifty years old! Many items are labeled to permit Leslie easy retrieval. Leslie feels comfortable in this workshop. It is as if there was real magic in the props that seek a way out to entertain audiences. Leslie is likely to be found here long after midnight making equipment for magicians who need an express mail delivery to replace a broken prop or a special device that only few know how to manufacture. This workshop is more like home than his residence. Leslie is devoted to the art.

Many of his customers require complete secrecy including what the prop is and how it works. He also manufactures mechanical prototypes for inventors and shoots/edits video for



other performers. Leslie continues to perform at businesses, schools and other venues taking a parlor size show, stage illusions, or strolling magic to suit the event. Jay seems to have his mitts in every aspect of the art of magic. He creates effects used by others, manufactures magic supplies and performs; he even makes

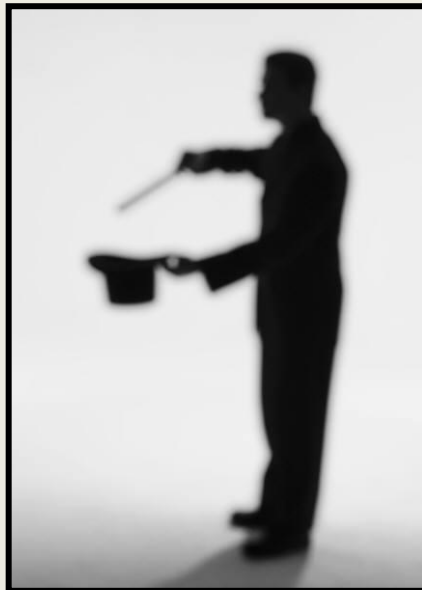
instructional DVD's sold to other magicians. Leslie told me he is particularly proud of his instructional DVD's because people regularly tell him how useful they are.

I asked Jay if he had a *protégé* who might carry on the tradition in magic nurtured in him by Jim Swoger. Pondering that question, Jay had no ready answer. However, he appeared to consider that part of his obligation, as a performer of this art form, is to provide a living legacy. Perhaps someday soon, Jay Leslie may find his own *protégé* while continuing to make secret devices in the House of Enchantment, famously known in the past as Regrows Magic Studio!

***No, Jay Leslie is no magician. Definitely not!***

Looking at everything Leslie does, I believe it is inaccurate and misleading to call Jay Leslie a magician. More accurately, Jay Leslie is an entertainer. He is a professional entertainer whose skills with acting, staging, directing, and performing magical illusions, elevates the magical arts from being merely tricks to being live theater! Leslie brings peace and lightness to audiences. While on stage, his audiences forget their troubles. Instead, they enjoy the theater created by ***Jay Leslie, Master Thespian!*** Jay Leslie is an entertainer on live stage, playing the role of a magician.

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## Mr. Steven Longacre

Steven began his love for magic at the tender age of eight. He continued to study magic until his college studies began to take priority. Steven came back to magic in 1986 when his career allowed him more flexibility to study magic. In 1989 Steven began his studies at the Chavez School of Magic. Dale Salwak was his mentor and handed him his graduation papers. Steven is not a full-time magician. His full time gig is Principal of the Santa Ana School District's Taft School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Steven himself is functionally deaf though his hearing apparatus allows him to have voice communication in most cases.

Steven's college friend, Greg Koppel, is also his partner in a stage act (Longacre and Koppel performing "**DEAFinitely Magic!**") that has won a great deal of acclaim in the magic world. On April 14th 2002, Steven and Greg will compete in the Ninth World Deaf Magician's Festival in Moscow, Russia. Steven will also compete alone in the Close-up contest. In April 2001

Steven won first place in the United States close-up contest and thereby won the right to compete for the United States in the upcoming World Competition. The World competition is held every other year and the United States holds its competition in the off years. Steven is hopeful to come back with awards of prize money! However, he has promised to bring his show to Ring 313 regardless of the outcome in Moscow.

Steven is Southern Californian born and raised in Alhambra, California. He lives in Tustin with his wife, Marisela, and young son, David, who at 11 is also thinking about learning magic. Steven's oldest child, Larissa, was married in 2001 after graduating from college. Steven joined Ring 313 in our charter year of operation and has also studied with John Fedko, Aldo Colombini, Matthew "Magic" Morgan\*, Dr. Simon Carmel\*, and Sammy Ruiz\*<sup>1</sup>. In addition to membership in Ring 313 he is also a member of the United States and World Deaf Magician's Society.

### UPDATE on the Magic of Steve Longacre

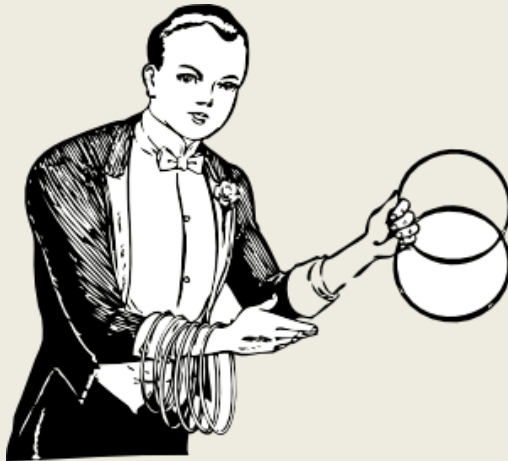
In 2002, Longacre traveled to Moscow, Russia and won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for Close-up magic and 1<sup>st</sup> prize for Comedy magic. In 2004, Longacre traveled to Leipzig, Germany and won three

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<sup>1</sup> Magicians with \* after their names denotes that they are also deaf or hearing impaired.

prizes at the 10<sup>th</sup> competition winning 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for Stage magic; 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for Close up magic; and 1<sup>st</sup> prize again for Comedy magic. In 2008, the World Deaf Magician's Society, held its semi-annual convention in Riverside, California. Longacre, and Sammy Ruiz, also a long time member of IBM Ring 313 were the local hosts for the convention and competition. In that competition, Longacre earned 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in Comedy magic. Altogether, Longacre has won six International awards. In each of the Comedy and Stage awards, Longacre performed with his lifelong friend, Mr. Greg Koppel.

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# Mr. Dick Barry



As I pulled up to Dick Barry's home, I knew I was in the right location when I spotted a 1918 Model "T" Ford parked in front. The vintage truck, a 1918 Ford Depot Hack, bore a sign identifying the vehicle as the property of magician Dick Barry. When I completed interviewing Dick for this story, he gave me a ride around the neighborhood in this wonderful truck. This was my first ride in a Model "T." I was pleasantly surprised at how smoothly the vehicle moved around the hills of San Clemente.

The 1918 Model "T" is a recent acquisition for Dick; however, this is not his first experience owning a vintage Ford.

As a teenager in Ohio, Dick purchased a 1928 Model “A” Ford for \$50.00, against his mother’s orders. He had a lot of fun driving that car in Ohio. Now, sixty years later, he obtained this Model “T” that he found on an EBay auction. Dick has named the car “Jennie”, after the vanishing elephant in the trick performed by Harry Houdini in his grand illusion show in 1918.

Dick was born and raised in Medina, Ohio, about 30 miles south of Cleveland. If you have heard about Medina, it is because of its “sweetness.” Medina is famous throughout the world for manufacturing beekeepers supplies and honey products. Dick’s grandfather was a world renown beekeeper. Dick did not inherit his grandfather’s love for bees; instead, Dick began performing simple magic tricks when he was about 8-years old. He continued with magic until high school. Then, as a teenager, he





turned to sports, motorcycles, and other interests. After high school, Dick worked in Ohio as a bus driver. When a friend told him about a trip his family was planning to California, Dick joined them, never expecting to spend the rest of his life in sunny California.

On arriving in California in 1956, Dick found work in Santa Monica as a bus driver. When he noticed that some police officers in California rode motorcycles, Dick thought that would be the job for him. Dick had owned a Whizzer ® motor bike as a 14-year old and later rode several different motorcycles in Ohio. After driving a bus for just about a year, Dick joined the Santa Monica Police Department where he worked for 30-years until he retired in 1987.

Dick held many positions with the police department including working in the jail, on patrol, as a juvenile detective, and of course as a motorcycle officer for 8 years. In his assignment as a motorcycle officer, Dick often presented safety programs for young people. In 1970, an opportunity arose that was just perfect for Dick. He became the SMPD's "Officer Bill", which today is known as a School Resource Officer. This really was Dick's first step to becoming a semi-professional magician.

"Officer Bill" is a nickname used by some police departments who had officers who worked as community service

ambassadors in elementary schools. As Officer Bill, Dick would teach safety rules to elementary children. The first year as Officer Bill, Dick used materials passed on to him by the previous officer. However, it did not take long before he began to devise his own materials, emphasizing interactive elements in the program. In 1972, while on a vacation trip in San Francisco, Dick passed by a magic shop. Thinking there might be some tricks in the magic shop that he could employ as Officer Bill, Dick made several purchases. When he returned to work, everything was different.

The magic bug bit Dick! He started using the magical tricks he found in the magic shop, and then sought out local magic shops. Dick discovered kindred spirits hanging out at Hollywood Magic and Joe Berg's Magic Shop. Some of the magicians he admired and observed included Dai Vernon, Tony Syldini and Charlie Miller. Before long, Dick auditioned at the Magic Castle to become a paid performer. Dick has performed at the Magic Castle annually since 1976. Fellow magicians have nominated him as Best Parlor Magician of the Year seven times.

Dick's daytime employment as a police officer gave him a regular audience of schoolchildren. He "performed" daily before one of the most difficult audiences in the world, children. He learned the art of magic by observing what was working with his audiences and modifying his work to meet their level of

understanding. His audiences were small groups of 20 to 30-children ranging in age from five to 11-years old. Every year Dick learned and integrated new magical items into his presentations to the schoolchildren. He also bought and trained two exotic birds to perform magic. (When he retired, he gave his best-trained bird to the SMPD, where it resides today.)

Off duty, Dick performed many magic shows and eventually negotiated contracts to perform for six different cruise lines. Working on cruise ships was fun. This experience gave Dick an education on how real show business performances prepare and perform. He was able to use his vacation time from SMPD to work on the cruise ships from 1979 to 1992. If Dick was not working as a police officer, he was on a cruise ship in the South Pacific, the Caribbean, Alaska, or Mexico. By day, he was your local police officer, and by night a magician—a perfect mix for Dick Barry!

In the seventies, Doug Henning was the top magician on Television and Broadway. Through some clever advertising of his “Champagne Goldfish Miracle” Dick sold the idea to Henning. Doug Henning performed the Champagne Goldfish Miracle on national television. The “Miracle” became one of Dick’s best selling effects and is still selling today.

Dick Barry, the magician, is never satisfied with his performance. He welcomes comments from audience members

(and magicians) to improve his magic. Whenever Dick learns a trick, he searches for ways to adapt the trick to fit his personality. Instead of trying to copy someone, the path Dick prefers is find a way to make each illusion special for his own personality. When I asked Dick to describe his favorite tricks to perform, his answer illustrates this point perfectly.

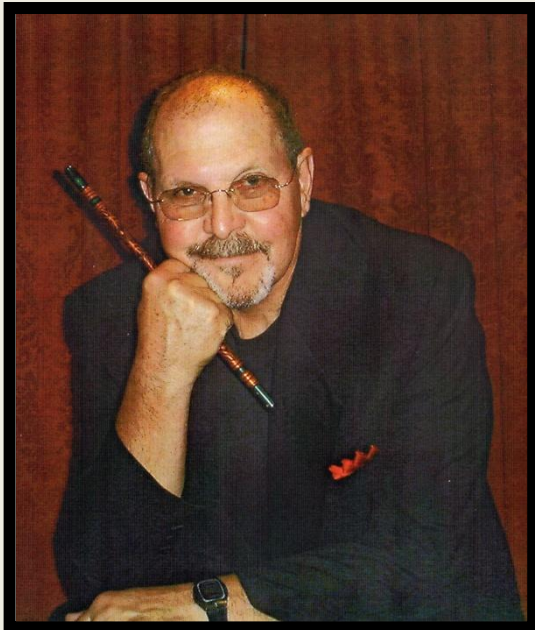
Dick's three favorite tricks are classics that he has adapted to work with his personal performing style. One of Dick's signature effects is his version of Syldini's Knotted Silks, that he calls the trick "Left Handed Handkerchiefs." Another favorite trick is "Dick accidentally putting a knife through a spectator's coat. He obtained the right to "Lookin' Sharp", and then rewrote the routine. Eventually he designed and manufactured his own knives, which he sells commercially. Dick's third favorite trick is his "52-ON-1 Card Miracle." This is one of Dick's own creations. It is one of his best selling commercial magic items. Magicians throughout the world use this in their performances. The Internet's Magic Café has given rave reviews to this piece.

When I asked Dick who are some of his favorite performers, he gave me a long list of outstanding performers. A few of his favorites are, in no order of importance: Lance Burton, Shimada, Johnny Thompson, Dai Vernon, Bruce Cervon, both Blackstone Jr. and Blackstone Sr., Johnny Ace Palmer, John

Carney, and David Williamson. Dick told me that there are three performers that all magicians owe a debt to: Doug Henning, Mark Wilson, and Siegfried and Roy. These performers raised the awareness of the fun of watching magicians perform. Their successes commercials have paved the way for all magicians.

Dick believes that the future of magic looks very bright. The young magicians of today are impressive. They take the art of magic seriously. They are not merely good magicians; they also study acting, staging, scenery, lighting and work hard to be creative and original.

Dick Barry taught magic classes at Santa Monica City College for eight years. One of his students, J.C. Dunn, became a very close friend. They have enjoyed many adventures together. One time they parachuted from an airplane while Dick performed a card trick in free fall. The selected card appeared on Dick's helmet. On another occasion, they jumped from a hot air balloon while being attached to a bungee cord. While in free-fall, Dick caught a previously selected card in his teeth on the way down. J.C. and Dick have been hang gliding and flew a Para Plane (a powered parachute). Their goal was to do "one crazy thing" every year. The last crazy stunt was about 10 years ago—however I am betting that Dick may still have at least one more crazy stunt left to perform.



Dick has created more than 100 commercial magical effects used by magicians around the world. Creating new magical effects is Dick's principal interest in magic these days. He rarely chooses to perform. He particularly enjoys pitching his magic at

conventions and lectures. He performs in the Parlor of Prestidigitation at the Magic Castle once or twice a year. The food, wine and meeting longtime magic friends at the Magic Castle make a week at the Castle a complete pleasure; despite the long drive from San Clemente.

Dick brings two essential elements to his magical world: passion and creativity. His passion causes him to pursue new methods to perfect his performances and his commercial magic. When I say that Dick is a "student of magic", it is a great compliment to his practice as a performer. Dick learns from his audiences at every performance. He looks for their response to see if he has brought happiness to those who choose to watch

him perform. Your audience will let you know if your magic makes them happy. In this crazy world, creating a little happiness is a special gift we magicians can give.

In 1997, Dick participated in the **Four Corners of the United States Race**. Participants in this event travel to the four corners of the United States on a motorcycle, verifying each corner with a photograph and a telephone call. The trip must be completed in 21-days. He is one of only a few who accomplished it on a one-cylinder motor scooter. His wife Gwen traveled behind him in a separate vehicle. She carried spare parts for the motor scooter and consistently offered him moral support. The four official checkpoints for the race are: 1. San Ysidro, California; 2. Blaine, Washington; 3. Madawaska, Maine; and 4. Key West, Florida. The four points can be visited in any order. Dick and Gwen had a blast. They saw many wonderful sights along the racecourse; sights, sounds, and odors that you cannot experience in an automobile. They traveled 10,760 miles on this trip and even attended a scooter convention in Arkansas after completing the Four Corners Race. The event is sponsored by The Southern California Motorcycle Association. Check their website for information [www.usa4corners.org](http://www.usa4corners.org).

Dick will celebrate his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday in April of 2010. He has been married to Gwen for more than 50 years. They have a daughter, Dawn, who is in real estate in Portland, Oregon and a

son, Mike, who owns two Southern California dry cleaning establishments. Dick served eight years in the National Guard, splitting his time between service in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and California. Dick Barry was awarded a Medal of Courage in 1985 for risking his life to save a citizen as a member of the SMPD. One of Dick's favorite movies is *Electra Glide in Blue*, a cult classic. The motion picture is about a motorcycle cop who rode a Harley-Davidson Electra-Glide. (Dick also rode an Electra-Glide as a SMPD motor officer.) Dick's home is graced with several original posters from that movie.

Dick might have gone full-time as a professional magician but opted to remain with the SMPD to finish a thirty-year career. He believes in the old saying, "Don't give up your day job!" The S.M.P.D. provided for his family and magic was just a wonderful way to have fun and make some extra money. Dick retired twenty-three years ago. He has been fortunate to continue with his passion by creating magic. He is proud and happy to know that part of his legacy is that his magic creations are entertaining audiences around the world.

Dick and Gwen live in a lovely home in San Clemente. Their home is filled with historic magic posters, magic books, and antique magic props. He possesses an outstanding collection of vintage Snake baskets. This collection is one of his treasures. Dick says he is living a very happy life. He called his success in



magic is a combination of good luck, hard work, and a passion for doing his best. Perhaps Dick's best choice in life was convincing Gwen to agree to marry him. Their marriage is the best part of Dick's happy life. Gwen was a public health nurse before retiring. She is an avid reader and volunteers at several local libraries. Gwen also helps Dick when they are working a lecture or convention! Dick says everyone loves her. They are a beautiful couple. Their marriage is the best magic in Dick Barry's life.

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# Mr. John Marasco

John Marasco is a giver. He gives love to his family. He gives loyalty and creativity to his work. He gives excitement and laughter with his magic. John Marasco brings many gifts to the world of magic. Often you will see him perform magic for children and disadvantaged people. He does this so their lives will be enriched if only for a moment.

John began his career as a performer in Detroit more than 50 years ago—but not as a magician. John was the founder and nucleus of *Music Unlimited*, a musical band. John was the lead singer and bass player. His group performed in Detroit and its surroundings at weddings, bar mitzvahs, anniversaries, and other special occasions. John also was often called to serve as Master of Ceremonies and kept the crowd entertained between acts.

John Marasco retired October 2001 after more than 40 years as a Construction Superintendent. While I was interviewing him he received an urgent telephone call from his former employer asking advice on how to proceed on a project he had last worked on now 8 months ago. If you are ever in Detroit and stay at the *Renaissance Hotel* (One 70-story

central hall surrounded by 4-40 story structures.) you now know that John Marasco was the Construction Superintendent on that project, as he was on Detroit's Children's Hospital. If you are a football fan, the ***Detroit Lions football stadium*** also grew under the director of Marasco.

Closer to us, the delightful ***Tower 17*** office building in Irvine was built under the guidance of Marasco. As were numerous other commercial structures in Orange County and Long Beach. John has always been good with his hands. Relatives and friends taught him carpentry, plumbing, and concrete work. All of this work was great preparation for his career in magic.

John is a charter member of Ring 313. He holds member number 008A. He was invited to participate in our ring by his first magician mentor, Mr. John Fedko. Marasco took his first magic lessons from Fedko more than ten years ago. After completing his first course at the college, Marasco was bitten by the magic bug. He soon followed up by taking personal lessons from Fedko. A quick learner with very good hand-eye coordination Marasco was soon teaching others how to perform simple magic tricks. He has taught children how to do magic at a local YMCA and open a path to magic for many young boys and girls.

John has maintained an amateur status though he was once offered an 8-month paid assignment on a Princess Cruise ship. John declined the offer because he enjoys his beautiful home and family in Mission Viejo with his lovely wife, Mary. Once while vacationing in Italy he was asked by the tour operator to perform and ended up performing for the people on the tour every night for 14 days. John has three children. His son Chris is an internal medicine physician in Sherman Oaks. Daughter Victoria owns a computer graphics company in Austin Texas. Daughter Darla is Vice President of Post Production at SSI in Hollywood. He has two loving grandchildren, Kailee and Camden. Oh, did I mention John paints in oils too!

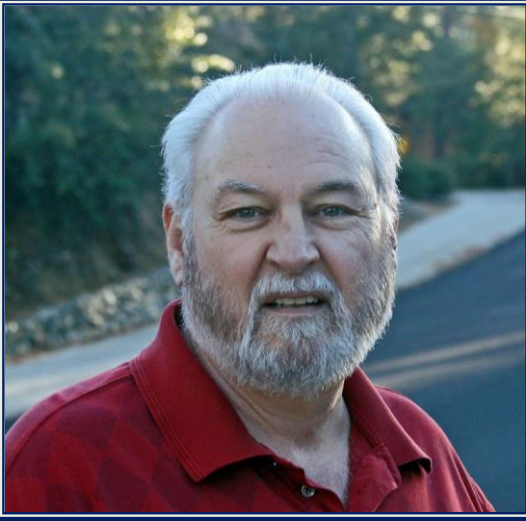
John often performs magic at homes for abused children, in hospitals, in Senior Centers, and for other charitable causes. At age 75 John plans to learn new magic effects every month; attend Ring 313 Light meetings; and participate in other activities with magicians. He didn't say it when I interviewed him, but I'm betting he will be competing in the upcoming magic competitions at Ring 313. John does close-up, walk around, and stage magic and I wouldn't be surprised to see him taking home trophies and prize money.

John would love it if you would come up, introduce yourself, and show him something you are working on. I'm certain he would return the favor. John Marasco is a true

gentleman. Get to know him and you will have a good friend in magic!

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## Mr. Jerry Fohrman

Jerry Fohrman proudly owns Ring 313 member number 14A. This makes him a charter member of Ring 313. He is also Magician of the Year for 2001. Jerry started his

career in magic in 1988. His wife, Janet Fohrman, gave him a surprise gift of a magic class at Saddleback College. Janet knew before Jerry that he was destined to become an outstanding performer in this art.

Jerry's first magic teacher was Barry Price. After the second session, Jerry asked if he could take private lessons from Price. Barry said he didn't do private lessons for beginners. Jerry was persistent in his request and finally, after the class was nearly over; Barry agreed to take Jerry as a private student. That relationship continued for two-years on a regular basis. Barry Price also introduced Jerry to magician, Larry Jennings. Jerry became an unofficial student of Larry's for several years and learned to perfect some of Jennings favorite magical

illusions: Oil and Water; Open Travelers; Ambidextrous Travelers; and Single Cup and Balls Routines.

Jerry often performs at trade shows, in hospitality suites, for parties, and other walk-around venues. He is developing a special Cups and Balls routine using FOUR cups that may become part of an act he would perform at the Magic Castle. Jerry has also become a Dealer (not cards, magical apparatus) in magic. Two years ago he debuted a high-end set of cups for professional magicians to use in their Cups and Balls routines. Selling from \$330 to \$495 a set only professionals are attracted to these beauties. They have a lifetime guarantee (When Jerry dies the guarantee is over.) and are beautiful in bronze or silver. Very soon he expects to add a new metal Chop Cup to his inventory.

Jerry likes his effects to be direct and very magical. Jerry is a proficient card man and is a conjuror and card mechanic. He prefers to use sleight of hand to using gimmicked cards—but respects the place of all magical effects however created. Jerry also does magic with coins, cups and balls, and rubber bands. Someday Jerry may put aside his day job and become a full-time magician but that will be after his children complete their education.

Jerry is very much a family man. Janet and he have enjoyed 22 years of marriage and have three children. Josh is a 20-year old Computer Sciences major at Sonoma State

University. Kimberly and Katie are 17 years old and still in El Toro High school. Kimberly is considering becoming an equine trainer and Katie is pursuing fine arts.

Jerry is the former owner of automobile repair business called Auto ACES (ACES had nothing to do with magic it meant Air Conditioning Electrical Specialists). He got into this business after he quit his career as a Professional Drag Car Driver. Jerry drove top drag racing cars in match races all over the United States for 4 years. He spent 48 weeks a year on the road. An injury forced him to stop racing for a few weeks and while he was healing Janet scooped him up and married him. It's been all uphill since then. For the last 2 years he's worked as a manufacturer's representative for Resin Technologies, a manufacturer of roofing materials.

Like many magicians Jerry Forhman is also a musician. He plays the Banjo and Dobro guitar. While I conducted this interview Jerry's cell phone rang. The caller was a woman who is purchasing Jerry's Banjo on E-Bay. It turns out that Jerry's Banjo, an OME from Boulder Colorado, is a rare find. The purchaser is obtaining this Banjo as a surprise gift for her husband a professional musician. Jerry still loves music but magic has taken top priority on his artistic side so the Banjo is going to a good home.



Jerry's love for magic is evident upon meeting him. He has an engaging personality and his magic comes from his heart. He loves giving an audience its money's worth. Jerry often performs for charity events and especially enjoys volunteer work for the City of Hope. Jerry's paternal grandparents helped to found the City of Hope. Jerry is a native Californian. He was born in Sacramento but has lived most of his life in Orange County; since 1967 his home base has been Mission Viejo.

Jerry's advice to beginning magicians. Learn the craft well. Practice, practice, practice, and do honor to the art of magic. Keep the secrets of magic away from the general public but teach other magicians to do the work. Perfect your craft and protect the art of magic. Come to the Ring 313 Lite meetings!

Jerry told me the best part of membership in Ring 313 is the camaraderie among the magicians. The best time to get to know other magicians in the Ring is to show up at the Lite meetings. Mark your calendars for the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00pm at Knowlwood Restaurant on Sand Canyon next to the 5 Freeway. If you show up you almost certainly will meet Jerry there. When I tried to catch up with him for the interview that is where I found him.

Finally, as I gaze into my own crystal ball, I can hear the dulcet tones of a Harley Hog in Jerry's future . . . for details ask him yourself.





## Mr. Ron Porter, four-decades of Magic

Ron Porter is a southern California man all the way. Raised in Orange County he began his life in magic when he was only five years old. An older cousin built him a “square-circle” and he was off and running. At age seven, Porter introduced himself to illusionist, *Chuck Jones*, telling him, “I’m a magician too!” Jones must have seen how serious the boy was and treated him as though he was a fellow magician. This support and encouragement at an early age was a clear signal that Porter could become a real magician.

In the fourth grade, Porter performed a magic show for his classmates, and shortly thereafter produced a magic show for his sister’s birthday party. By the time he entered high school, performing magic was just a part of life. He had a part-time job at the Knott’s Berry Farm magic shop showing close up magic to guests at Knott’s. *Jeff Martin, Steve Mattan, Ricki Dunn, Paul David, and Armando Lucero* were among the magicians who helped him learn to perform. He also began performing at local Orange County restaurants. One of the most important lessons he learned from his mentor, *Barryn Vaughn*, is the admonition to “*treat your audience as if they are guests in your home.*” Porter enjoys entertaining his audience. Instead of feeling superior or attempting to make fools of the audience, his

performance is designed to put smiles on their faces and laughter to their hearts.

Despite performing magic for hundreds of audiences over the last forty years, Ron Porter describes himself as a shy person unless he is performing. He prefers to observe and watch others. This is perfect for his daytime work. Ron earned his doctorate degree in clinical psychology and for more than twenty years has tended to the residents at a local state developmental center as a clinical psychologist.



Most members of Ring 313 have met Ron's sons *Ryan and Jason Porter*. They are active members of the Ring's Junior magician's program. The boys are merely following the footsteps of their older sister

Courtney. She is also a student of the entertainment industry, currently studying in New York City. The performing arts were well accepted in Ron Porter's family. In fact, his mother toured with the *June Taylor Dancers*, and his aunts were professional singers. This encouragement by family and the performers he met gave Porter the confidence to study and perform. Working at the Knott's Berry Farm store gave him the hours of practice required to hone his skills, and his years of performing in restaurants provided the much needed time in front of live audiences.



Ron Porter's favorite performers include close-up magicians *Barryn Vaugh*, *Martin Nash*, *Paul David*, and *Al Goshman*. Ron participated in *Jeff McBride's Magic and Mystery School* as a guest speaker teaching those in the healing arts how to use magic to help their patients. Porter recommended McBride's course and especially, **The Mystery School Book** © 2003 by *Jeff McBride and Eugene Burger*. This is a textbook for those interested in the development of an act and a career in magic. Porter also recommends **Sleights of Mind** © 2010 by *Stephan L. Macknik and Susana Martinez-Conde* (the writers are members of the Academy of Magical Arts, the Magic Circle, and IBM) for those interested in learning the neuroscience of magic.

Ron Porter formed a performing arts company in 1989 called *Magical Events*. This company provides musicians, dancers, songwriters, variety artists, and magicians for public events and private parties throughout southern California. *Magical Events* will provide all the creative, logistical, technical, and artistic talent to realize the vision of its clients. Porter is the sole owner of this company that has entertained at both indoor and outdoor

events with audiences of more than 5,000 people. Entertainers in every genre provide his clients with a range of opportunities. All events are custom designed to meet the needs and budgets of his clients. Take a visit to his website to get an idea of the range of activities and clients Magical Events has served.

<http://www.amagicalevent.com/>. Magical Events' client list is a who's who in business and government in southern California and the western United States.

Porter told me that his role as a Founding Director in the development of Project Magic is the activity he is most proud of in his magic career. Project Magic is a program conceived by David Copperfield that utilizes magic as a therapeutic tool for patients in hospitals, group homes and rehabilitation centers around the world. Porter worked with Copperfield and a team of therapists and magicians bringing his experience as a psychologist and as a professional magician to develop the guidelines for the operation of this international program.

Since its beginnings in 1982, more than 1,000 hospitals worldwide now use magic as therapy, particularly helping to build patients' self-esteem, dexterity and cognitive skills. Project Magic magicians work alongside the medical staff to teach children (and adults) how to perform simple magic tricks to entertain themselves, their family, and friends. When individuals enduring traumatic injuries or chronic illness are able to show magic tricks to their nurses, doctors, and friends, it gives these patients a sense of accomplishment, just what they need to help them overcome their medical challenges. Patients are shown magic tricks that are specifically chosen based on the therapeutic goals for the patient, not just as a means to entertain.



Porter enjoys performing close up magic. His original “Locked Ring Routine,” is Porter’s signature effect. Porter had several opportunities to become a full-time performer, once at the formation of the Magic Island when Larry Jennings invited him to become one of the original house magicians. However, he opted to complete his education first. After earning his doctorate degree in psychology, Porter began the practical work to earn his license, working at a state hospital. Shortly after he earned his license, he was married and planning to start a family. Focusing on his family was more important than magic; and travelling to perform was kept to a minimum. His work at the hospital provided a steady income (with health insurance and benefits) and regular hours, allowing him plenty of time to be home with his children.

Ron Porter has many ideas of where magic may lead him, including the possibility of opening a “magic themed” Bed and Breakfast some day. I asked him how he wants to

be viewed by audiences as he performs his favorite close up effects. His answer simply was “*I want them to see me as a nice guy they want to have fun with.*” He went on to say, “*and, I love the **SCREAM.***” When an audience member is so astonished by what he or she has just experienced that all he or she can do is scream; that is evidence that Porter’s magic has hit his high standard. This shy psychologist has many connections with some of the royalty of American magic. His children, Courtney, Jason and Ryan may follow him in his love for entertaining those in need of a lift in spirits and doing so in a respectful and caring fashion.

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