



SAMLETTER 181



Houdini, Thurston, Kellar, Blackstone, Henning and Copperfield have all used trick coins to aid in the performance of some of their miracles...so why shouldn't you?

The next Assembly 181 meeting & workshop is **Thursday, November 1, 2018**. The workshop topic is **Coin Gimmicks** presented by **Dave Zboray**.

Following the workshop, we will open the stage to others to perform in our "No Judgment Zone", so bring something to share.

S.A.M. Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets the first Thursday of every month, September thru June at the **First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520**. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM



1st United Methodist Church
187 Stockton Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520



Dr. Silly Reba (AKA Reba Strong) – Hospital Clown and Magician

February 22, 2008

Reba Strong is a professional magician (www.magicbyreba.com) and volunteer clown who goes by the name of Dr. Silly Reba. As a member of the Bumper T Caring Clowns, she makes regular visits to hospitals in the Philadelphia area to spread smiles and laughter. Dailyinterview recently had a chance to sit down and speak with Dr. Silly Reba.



How did you come up with your clown name?

Well, I started as a magician and my cards say Magic by Reba. And so, when I needed a clown name I decided I didn't want to lose my own name.

When I did parties kids would say, "You're silly" and I would say, "Thank you." Then they would say, "You're pretty" and I would say, "Thank you."

Then I would say, "Does that mean I am pretty silly?" I don't know anybody else named silly so for my hospital name I am Dr. Silly Reba and it works.

How long does it take to get into your clown costume?

Less than an hour to put the makeup on and get ready and out the door.

How long does it take you to get out of the costume?

About four minutes to take the makeup off

What type of makeup do you use?

It is grease paint. You get it at the conventions. There are different brands. Just like at the department stores that have different brands of makeup. You have to test them and find out what works for you.

How did you design your clown face?

The clown face – I took a class and went to a convention – what they do is they have you look in the mirror with no makeup on. They have you make faces and you see what parts of your face move.

Then, the instructor had us take a black eyebrow pencil and fill in every line on our face And then you look in the mirror and make faces again – happy, sad, surprised – all the different emotions.

You see what moves and what doesn't move. You find out from your eyeballs down not much of your face moves out. Then you find out what moves above your eyes – your eyebrows – how your mouth moves.

Everyone is different. So, even if I put the same makeup on you, it would look different. Even if I did the same design it would look different because of the shape of your face.

How did you design the rest of your outfit?

Well, I got (my glasses) from a magic dealer years ago, but I had black ones and my hair was dark so it didn't show up. So I got a pair of white ones. They were originally sunglasses so I had the lens part taken out.

I had gone to some clown conventions and I am not the frilly, frou-frou, petticoat clown with the Mary Jane shoes. I am more of a tomboy so I wore the bib overalls.

My original clown makeup was much bolder than what you are looking at now. I really started out with a very bold face and a wig and the whole bit.

Because of our organization the Bumper T caring clowns, we have toned down our makeup considerably. We have eliminated the wigs because we are up close and personal.

We want it to be more comfortable. Even when I do my birthday parties now I have gotten away from clowning when I am a magician. It is more kid-friendly.

How often do you come into the hospital and clown?

I am usually here on Thursdays. I was doing three hospitals a week, but now I am down to two because it really is exhausting.

Our organization the Bumper T caring clowns believes that humor is good medicine. Everybody thinks we are here for the kids.

But what we really are is a stress relief for the staff, the visitors, and then the patients, but not necessarily in that order.

What type of training does the hospital require?

First, we have to be accepted by the hospital. All of our clowns have to go through orientation with that hospital. We have to follow the hospital rules and the Bumper T rules which are very similar.

When we do check in and we go to a particular floor, we let the staff know that we are there, we check with them to see if there are any rooms we should not go in. Is there anyone who has not had a visitor recently that they think would appreciate it and enjoy it?

They will direct us one way or the other. When we get to the room we knock on the door and we ask, "Would you like a visitor" and we look for a response.

Sometimes they are just not in the mood for it and that's okay and we say "No problem, maybe another time."

How do you break the ice with a potentially very ill patient?

If they do want a visitor we come in, we introduce ourselves we tell them our name, we ask them theirs and ask them if we can visit for a few minutes.

I happen to be a "funny virologist" myself, so that is my lead into the room. I will say, "You know if you are not a specialist you are nothing. As a funny virologist, it is my job to listen to your funny bone."

I have a stethoscope on with a big ear at the end. And I say "you know where your funny bone is?"

I will kinda point to it so they don't have to think about it because you don't want to ask them questions that make them feel uncomfortable. So, I point to their elbow.

And then they say, "Oh yeah, my elbow."

Then I say it is called the funny bone because it is attached to the humerus and I run my finger down their arm. And I say, "that's the only thing I know for sure."

Then I say, "Do you have any questions?" You kinda look around the room to get a feel. If there are any pictures or flowers we comment on it.

We ask all non-threatening questions. I'll say, "Are you from the area?" If somebody laughs then I say "Oh, I forgot to ask you if it hurts when you laugh."

We have lots of things in our pocket that we call pocket potpourri that we have to fall back on, but we are really in the moment. We are not there to do a show. We are there for them.

So, it's more conversational?

It can be conversational. It can just be listening. Lots of times people don't know what we are going to do.

That's why I like waiting rooms. Because let's say you are reading a book and really don't want to be bothered, because you don't know if I am going to come over and be real loud and embarrass you.

So, I move onto the next group of people. Now if you want to put down your book and listen and get the peripheral interaction, fine. If not just keep reading.

Does hospital clowning differ from other types of clowning?

Hospital clowning is very different. In volume alone, circus clowning is a 10. "Whoa!" A birthday party clown volume is a 5 or 6. "Okay party time." A hospital caring clown is a 1 or 2.

It is very gentle and very non-intrusive and sometimes you will sit down with someone and after you are there for a minute or so they say, "Thank you so much for visiting."

That is a sign that they are finished, that they are ready for you to go.

The hardest part of this job is the fine line between me leaving and you wanting more and you wanting me to leave

How did you develop and hone your clown routine?

All my material is original, it's just not originally mine and I don't steal material, I just relocate it.

Jimmy Brown: Winner of the 2018 Milbourne Christopher Foundation Ambassador of Magic Award

The Milbourne Christopher Foundation was established by Maurine Christopher (1920-2013) in 1989, and was created to perpetuate the memory of her husband and his lifelong interest in encouraging excellence, originality, and leadership in the art of magic and to helping keep conjuring on a level with other popular entertainment forms including dance, drama, comedy, and music. It was Mrs. Christopher wish, and the purpose of the foundation, to sponsor annual awards that spotlight the best magic has to offer contemporaneously in performing, writing, publishing and invention. The categories reflect Milbourne Christopher's diversified career. This includes the areas of Author and/or publisher, Outstanding illusionist and/or illusion creator, Promising young magician, Mentalist, and Lifetime achievement.

2018 Winners: Master's Award: Bill Smith, Mentalist Award, James Mapes, Close-up Award: Jon Dorenbos, Illusionist: Peter Gossamer, Literary: Samuel Patrick Smith, Youth Award: Ryan Lally, Lifetime Award: James Rainho, and Ambassador of Magic Award: Jimmy Brown

Congratulations to Jimmy Brown!



From the President

We have all been through it. With some high expectations we purchase some seemingly amazing miracle and when it comes, it is a poorly contrived, over-inflated piece of junk. Worse yet, we receive nothing. The magic dealer, magic creator or lecturer takes our money promising to send us what we paid for and delivers absolutely zilch. We email, call and threaten but to no avail. I have fallen victim to this myself, not just once but a few times. Unfortunately, we cannot conceive that "one of our own" would do that to us, but they do. When we do get what we pay for we count ourselves lucky.



Imagine if we purchased something and you get not just what you pay for, but more. Unheard of you say, but yes, that has happened to me. Over the last couple of years, I became interested in John Bannon's work. Starting with his "Fractal" card magic, I started to collect his books such as "High Caliber", "Destination Zero", and "Mentalissimo" and prior publications if I can find them. Ultimately, "Destination Zero" was filmed and put on DVD's and is titled "Move Zero" volumes 1-4. I have always wanted the set but was reluctant to pay the asking price. Searching online I found a Bannon promotion by Big Blind Media, the company who is contracted out to produce John Bannon's video work. Unfortunately, the package did not include the "Move Zero" DVDs. In addition, I already have a couple of the pre-packaged items.

Out of curiosity, I contacted Owen Packard, the owner of BBM to see if he can modify the package to fit my needs. What happened after the initial inquiry I was not prepared for? Not only did Owen Packard respond immediately to my query but he was happy to accommodate me and my request. Offers, modifications and adjustments were volleyed back and forth until Owen "made me an offer I couldn't refuse". Everything I wanted plus all the "Move Zero" DVDs for a price I can afford with two day delivery from the UK. I was impressed.

The package arrived as promised, but when I opened it I wasn't expecting what was inside. Everything that was discussed was inside the box but not only that, an extra promotional DVD plus two free packet tricks were

included. My faith in the magic community was restored once more. It's been a long time since I have seen that level of service from a company, whether it was related to magic or not. I highly recommend that you patronize Big Blind Media or at least look into the items that they produce and help support a company that truly supports their customers. A big THANK YOU to Owen for his great service. Now back to what I was doing before... watching "Move Zero" V1.

Math & Mentalism



If one took a moment to think about how many magic and mentalism effects are mathematically based one would be astounded. Countless card tricks and mind reading effects utilize obscure mathematical principles cleverly hidden from the spectators to create what appears to be miracles. Woven within the framework of the presentation, and hidden behind the scenes like an invisible wizard, mathematical constructs are the framework on which many tricks are built.

The dichotomy of mathematically based tricks is that there is no middle ground when it comes to the presentation. Either the math is cleverly hidden and astounds the audience or it is blatantly obvious, as to the method, and fools no one. In the case of mentalism, there are dozens of effects that are based on binary coded methods, converting numbers to words, words to numbers and many memory feats. This month, Assembly 181 had the pleasure of having Koshek Swaminathan present a workshop on Math and Mentalism. Diverging from traditional presentations of a prediction, Koshek, a professional commercial writer, used the premise of a dream in presenting a gripping story of a recurring nightmare to foreshadow a tragic event. The end result was an H. P. Lovecraft type tale to reveal the "Gray Elephant from Denmark"



prediction. The "Grey Elephant" prediction, has been so overperformed it has been a topic of discussion in almost every psychology class, yet no one saw this prediction coming.

After this involved and challenging presentation, there was still a few minutes left for our open performance session. The first to perform was Rocco presenting Asia Wind's "Gypsy Queen". The "Gypsy Queen" is a mentalist in trouble effect. When it appears to be an error that the Queen is presented as the selected card, on closer observation, the Queen

is holding the selected card and all is made right.

Robert Francis, the Dork of Deception, presented a box with four poker chips. While his back was turned, a poker chip was selected and Robert was able to reveal the selected color. The effect was repeated once, and then again, and each time Rob's divination was correct. When Rob showed us the method, everyone agreed that they had never seen anything like it before.

Dave Zboray closed out the evening with "Powerball 60", a commercial effect that uses a subtle mathematical principle to achieve a great mentalism effect. A fine way to finish an evening of Math and Mentalism.



Psycho Path - Magic for the Mentalist

Til Death Do Us Part by Jim Critchlow

bə'zär/

strange, peculiar, odd, funny, curious, outlandish, outré, abnormal, eccentric, unconventional, unusual, unorthodox, queer, extraordinary



There is a segment of mentalism that is called "bizarre magic". Almost always it is story based. The stories themselves revolve around the arcane, strange, mystical and paranormal. The background story is the main focus and the magic is used to emphasize the story. Séances are a good example of bizarre magic. The props involved in bizarre magic are typically aged photos, boxes and antique looking

paraphernalia which help create the mood and ambiance. I personally have a keen interest in this type of magic because of its use of historical events as springboards for its presentation. The downside to this type of performance is the need for props that typically cost a bit of money because of the labor to produce the needed look. In addition, lots of room and time is needed to present the story.

There has been a movement over the last few years to make bizarre magic a more portable type of performance. Cleverly made and downsized props allow for portability. Coupled with interesting tales this venue has been taken from the heavily curtained, darkened parlors to the streets. Several "bizzarrists" such as Jamie Dawes, Jim Critchlow, Dan Baines, and others have been hard at work producing eerie pocket effects for the budding and professional bizzarrist.

One of the more popular effects by Jim Critchlow is called "Til Death Do Us Part". Using photos of married couples, the participant has to intuit which one of the couples there was a tragic event. As you weave the story and "subtly" guide the spectator in the decision making process, they ultimately get a sense of which of the couples were involved in a murder. There is an

unusual revelation at the end which heightens the effect. This isn't an effect for everyone. Storytelling skills as well as a command of various mentalism techniques are a must for this effect to present itself well. If you wanted to try your hand at this type of magic "Til Death Due Us Part" is a perfect starting point. It is low in cost, short in presentation and allows you to hone your mentalism and storytelling skills as well.

Tricks are for Kids - Magic for the children's performer

Lucky Seven by Tim Sonefelt



I don't do Kid's magic but I do like to support our members. Member Dennis Thomas spearheaded the revival of a kid's magic group entitled A.C.E., the Association of Children's Entertainers. Attending the first meeting of the year, I silently watched the child-like antics presented by some of the attendees. At one point I was coerced to come up and participate in one of the presentations. I begrudgingly stood there and was handed an envelope.

As I watched the presentation, I lightly held the prop which I was given to make sure I would not soil or bend it. It was after a couple of minutes it dawned on me that this "cheap" kids magic prop was an incredibly sturdy, well-made vinyl envelope. Able to withstand the grubbiest and dirtiest hands, this prop was impressively stout. It is designed to be a multi-use envelope which can be tailored to work with any presentation that required this sort of prop.

The envelope has a clear front pocket in which you can insert a front piece as part of the trick, a manufacturers or business owner's logo. The vinyl which is used to make the envelope is thick and washable. Of course, there is the secret part of the envelope which allows the magic to happen and that is so well disguised that it took a little bit of scrutiny to actually see how it worked. To say the least, I was very impressed.

The envelopes are made by Tim Sonfelt and they can be purchased at wonderimagery.com. They are sold under the title of "Lucky Seven". "Lucky Seven" is available as a set of four heavy vinyl envelopes with a choice of 3 CDs. Each of the CDs has PDF files to print out images for seven different effects to use with the envelopes. Of course, you can create your own routines with your own images if you choose to. The selling price of the set is \$49. I don't know if the envelopes are sold alone. If not, that still only comes to \$12.50 per envelope. It does not seem out of range if you ask me. This prop looks like it will withstand years of use. If you have any use for an envelope and authenticity is not needed, you should definitely check out this product.

By the way, if you do any kids magic at all, try and make some of the A.C.E. meetings. It will be a great way to pick up some tips or polish up a routine you are trying to put together.

Do you believe in magic? - Magic for the general magician



"Impression Vanish" by Peter Boie is a trick where you borrow a penny, clearly place it under a square of a paper and make a pencil rubbing of President Lincoln. You wet your finger and wash away the image, in doing so you also reveal the penny disappeared as well. It looks exactly as described. The penny can be shown clearly and frequently before it is covered up. There is no real slight of hand and the penny is gone from under the paper.

When you buy this you are supplied with everything you need, a pencil, a penny, paper and a special something that makes you look like Harry Potter. Every now and then when I buy a trick I have buyer's remorse because the gimmick is so simple I could have made it as good if not better. However, in this case, the gimmick is clever and not worth the effort to reproduce. The penny can be borrowed to make it look impromptu but you do need to use

all that is supplied. When I purchased this, I also purchased "Misled" by Timothy Wenk.



"Misled" by Timothy Wenk is a re-release of a trick from many years ago. It was performed by David Copperfield on his TV show. First released in 1981, it has been unavailable for years. The effect is that you borrow a bill and pass a pencil through it. It can be done a few times and in different ways.

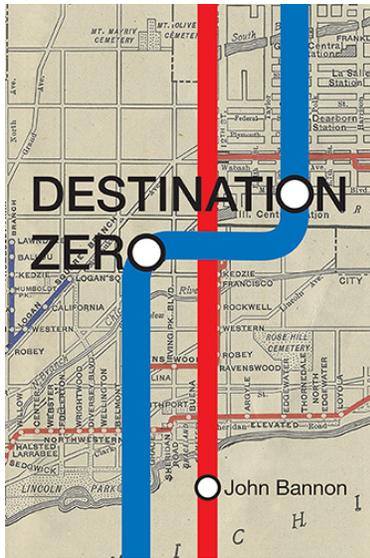
I wanted to create a multi-effect routine using the same object to minimize what I have to carry. I am happy to say that you are able to use the "Misled" gimmick on the pencil that comes with "Impression Vanish". The "Misled" gimmick can be hidden in plain sight but not so for the "Impression Vanish" gimmick. So if you wanted to do one trick after the next, you would have to vanish the penny first and then borrow a bill to work with. Both items are well made and cleverly thought out. I definitely would recommend this if you wanted something lightweight and organic to perform with.

RABBITS AGAINST MAGIC



The Magic Library - A Book Review

Destination Zero by John Bannon

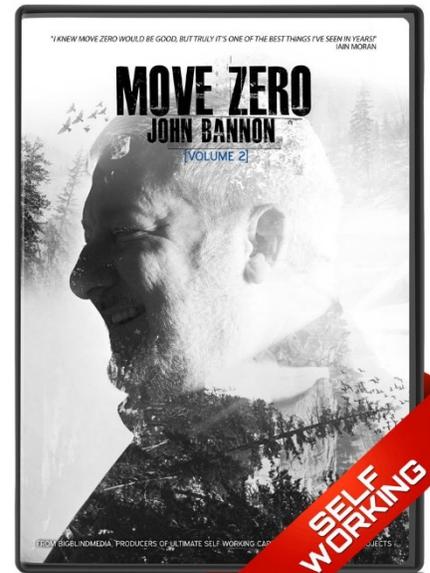


So many books, so little time. There is no argument that you get more from a magic book than you can get from a DVD. There is a wealth of information in one book compared to a similar DVD. Case in point, *Destination Zero* by John Bannon is a recent release and has been made into DVDs for the non-reader

If you do not know John Bannon's work and you do card magic, you are missing out. John Bannon has developed some of the most deceptive and easy to do sleights in card magic. His "Fractal" magic has revolutionized the packet trick genre and has been the forerunner in the revitalization of packet trick

magic never seen since its heyday in the seventies. As much as he has done for the packet trick enthusiasts, he turned his attention to an ever blossoming genre which is self-working card tricks. These are not you father's self-working card tricks though. No more boring counting or shifting rows of cards, *Destination Zero* has hard-hitting self-working card tricks which have their foundations based on obscure mathematical principles and good old layering techniques which are impossible to see through. Did I mention sleight free as well? These tricks can be done with an ordinary deck of cards someone pulls out of their drawer.

Whether you buy the book or buy the DVDs, John Bannon makes card magic look easy. The book has 25 tricks as well as a couple of essays on magic. The four DVDs has everything the book has and more. If you are looking for easy but hard hitting card magic that is deceptive but easy to do, check out *Destination Zero* by John Bannon, you will not be disappointed.



To see the trailers click here:

<https://www.vanishinginmagic.com/magic/card-magic/destination-zero/>

<http://www.penguinmagic.com/p/S21092>



SAM 181 President

Stephan Sloan

stephansloan10@gmail.com

SAM 181 Vice President

David Zboray

dzboray@aol.com

SAM 181 Treasurer

Dennis Thomas

DennisG514@aol.com

SAM 181 Secretary

Mitch Geier

mg@cecg.com



MAGIC CALENDAR

	THU OCT 4	S.A.M. Assembly 181 meeting is Thursday, October 4, 2018, with a workshop lead by Reba Strong on “Easy Pocket Magic” at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00. Workshop at 7:30 PM. http://magicsam181.com
	MON OCT 8	I.B.M. Ring 6 , The Delaware Valley Conjurers Club regularly meets every 2nd Monday, with a meeting on Monday, October 8, 2018, at the Hancock United Methodist Church, 542 Wesley Road, Springfield, PA.
	MON OCT 8	S.A.M. Assembly 161 meets on the second Monday of each month at the Stoney Brook Grille, 1285 Easton Turnpike in Branchburg, NJ 08876. https://www.facebook.com/groups/SAM161CALENDAR/about/
	TUES OCT 16	I.B.M. Ring 200 meets on Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 7:00 PM at the Stelton Community Center, 328 Plainfield Ave, Edison, NJ 08817.
	THU OCT 18	S.A.M. Assembly 4 will be meeting on Thursday, October 18, 2018, at the Polish Home, 9150 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114, doors open at 6:30 PM.
	WED OCT 24	I.B.M. Ring 123 will be meeting on Wednesday, October 24, 2018, at the King of Kings Lutheran Church, 250 Harmony Road, Middleton, NJ 07748 starting at 7 PM
	WED OCT 25	The Association of Children's Entertainers is meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month, October 25, at the United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM
	THUR NOV 1	S.A.M. Assembly 181 meeting is Thursday, November 1, 2018, with a workshop lead by Dave Zboray on “Coin Gimmicks” at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00. Workshop at 7:30 PM. http://magicsam181.com
	SAT NOV 10	Kutztown Magic Convention Kutztown Middle School, 10 Deisher Ln, Kutztown, PA 19530 on Saturday November 10, 2018 Tickets Prices: Adult (All Day) \$80.00, Child (12 & Under) \$50.00, Show & Dinner \$50.00 https://www.facebook.com/Kutztown.Magic.Convention/
	SUN NOV 18	Bob Little's Super Sunday “The Best One Day Magic Convention in the World” No Registration Required. Sunday, November 18, 2018, 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM All for a Low-Low Fee of \$40.00 http://www.boblittlessupersunday.com/

Visit the Magic Calendar on our SAM 181 website at http://magicsam181.com/?page_id=95