

Monthly Performances

What follows are recommendations from the Contest Committee.

Committee members include: Terry Elton, Julia Clark, Danny Mahar, Jason Dean and Stu Lewis and with additional input from Joe White and LC Collier.

A performer doesn't grow without challenge and feedback. A routine does not get polished in one performance. These axioms should challenge you to reflect on your performances and seek out areas in which you can improve. To be able to perform among friends and have the opportunity for constructive criticism from your peers is priceless. It should challenge members to use this venue at every opportunity to improve their skills.

The intent of the Contest Committee is neither to make the Monthly Contests more complicated nor to eliminate the spontaneity involved in the Open Performance segments of the meeting. The intent is to make the Magician of the Month contest more meaningful so that the quality and prestige of the Magician of the Year is improved. And, to improve the use of the open segment as a venue members can use to improve their performance skills or just to have fun with something they are working on, or just perform something they like to do.

Most people get better when they are challenged and if our members grow because of competing for Magician of the Month, that is a good thing.

If our members grow because they are challenging themselves and availing themselves of all the resources available to them through the club (feedback, help, knowledge etc) then that too is a good thing.

If our members have fun performing in front of their peers if for no other reason than just to perform in front of their peers, that too is a good thing.

The club wants members to bring guests, who hopefully will turn into new members, to the meetings. And, the club wants members to be proud of what is happening at the meeting, the camaraderie, the fellowship and quality performances. The club will grow if the guests enjoy themselves so much that they want to join.

To that end the Contest Committee is striving to improve the quality and formatting of the Contests and the Open Performance.

After the initial findings were presented to the board on 9/18/03 this is where I believe we stand:

- **How do we make the Magician of the Year award more meaningful for the winner?**
 - By making Magician of the Month a stronger competition.
 - By rewarding the Magician of the Year winner with free entry to all lectures for the following 12 months and paying his or her dues for the year.
 - Media coverage
 - ♣ Invite media to cover the MOTY Contests for evening or morning news slots on TV or Radio and develop a Press Release for print media and encourage them to provide an article.
 - A special insignia will be placed on the winners' annual membership badge to identify them as the winner for that year.

Monthly competitions will be held February through June and August through December, thus leaving January for Stand-up Magician of the Year and July for Close-up Magician of the Year. To fill the meeting time for January and July we might expand the "Open" segment, plan a mini show or lecture, or possibly bring in a lecture.

- **How do we improve the Magician of the Month competition?**
 - By using similar standards to those used to judge Magician of the Year:
 - ♣ *Presentation*
 - Opening
 - Did the performer grab your attention, establish and define a relationship with the audience and set the tone for the performance?
 - Presence
 - Did the performer use appropriate language/verbal skills, movement, music, etc to convey a professional presence?
 - Were volunteers treated with respect and not made to feel foolish or uneasy?
 - If the performer portrayed a character, did he/she maintain conduct (i.e. language, movement, music etc) consistent with the character throughout the act?
 - Costuming
 - Was the clothing/costume appropriate for the presentation?
 - Did the clothing/costume convey a degree of professionalism? Did it add to the act?
 - Closing
 - Did the routine climax in a manner that conveyed to everyone that the performance had come to an end?
 - Did the audience respond spontaneously?
 - ♣ *Magic Content*
 - Strength of effects
 - Were the effects strong and worth waiting for? Did the effects cause the audience to react (i.e. gasps, oohs or other sounds of delight, fear, awe etc.)

- Technical Skill
 - Was there an obvious degree of difficulty to what was accomplished? Were the sleights of hand invisible? Were the effects well done (i.e. without drops, fumbles or hesitation etc?)
- Originality
 - Did the effect and/or presentation seem to be something fresh that you had not seen before, or did it look like a copy of other magicians you have seen?

♣ *Entertainment*

- Interesting to watch
 - Consider all the factors (i.e. language, movement, music etc.) the performer used to make the performance entertaining.
 - Did you enjoy the presentation?
 - Did the audience respond to the performance?
 - Did the presentation touch you and the audience on an emotional level?
- Content/Theme
 - Did the content or theme fit the routine, or did it seem contrived?
 - Was the transition between effects done smoothly?
 - Was there a thread that tied the performance together from beginning to end?

♣ *Time*

- (Kept by Sergeant at Arms)
 - Any act will be stopped by the Sergeant at Arms when it reaches ten minutes.
 - Any performance exceeding the ten minute limit will be disqualified.
 - A visual warning will be issued when the time reaches nine minutes, thus giving the performer an opportunity to finish on time.
 - Performer cannot opt to go on beyond time limit in an effort to complete the routine.

♣ *Sign up*

- For Magician of the Month contest a contestant should sign up prior to the evening of the competition or at the very latest, before the beginning of the contest.
 - Note – The sign up sheet will be held confidential until such time that the performance is to be held. Contestants may not be informed about who else is competing that evening. The intent here is to encourage the contestants to give their best performance in hopes of winning Magician of the Month.

• **Should “None of the Above” still be included on the judging sheet?**

- “None of the Above” is still considered to be a valuable tool for use in judging the competitions.
- NOTE – We need to do a better job of explaining the need for, the logic behind its use and the benefits of the NOTA category of voting. Many people still don’t realize that they are not helping the performers by being less critical of the quality of the performance.

- **What is the best use of the “Open Performance” segment?**

- This time is exactly what the name implies “Open Performance”. Open performance would be broken into two categories: Close-up and Stand-up and be open to all club members.
- The “Open” segment of the meeting is for those people who wish to perform but do not wish to compete in the Magician of the Month contest.
- “Open Performance” is a good place for first time performers to meet their performance obligation or for established performers to show off a favorite trick or routine.
- It is a good place to try out new effects and gain a better understanding of responses to the material or to perform with hopes of getting feedback from other members after the meeting. (The Performance Workshop is the venue for group critique.)
- There will be a 10-minute limit for each performer. Any performer going beyond the 12-minute limit will be asked to stop by the Sergeant at Arms.
- Any presentation wishing more than 10 minutes would request the time from the Sgt. At Arms and if time permits would be allowed that night. If time does not permit, the presentation will be scheduled for the next meeting or at the mutual convenience of the person requesting and the club.
- Sign-up for the Open Session is available from just prior to the meeting through the break. Once performances have begun, no other performers will be allowed to add their names to the list. Also, like the Magician of the Month competition, the list of performers will not be revealed until the performances begin.
- NOTE – This time should not be confused with Performance Workshop time. The open performance time is not for a critiques session.

What constitutes Close-up and what constitutes Stand-up?

Close-up will generally be any effect that requires the audience to be able to see the top of a performance table in order to be able to understand the effect being presented. Further, typically the effect would be presented “Below the Waist” or in a sitting position.

Stand-up will generally be any effect that is typically presented “Above the Waist” and requires no ability for the audience to see a tabletop in order to understand the effect being presented.

Magician of the Month

Beginning in February of 2004 the Magician of the Month competition will be judged on similar standards to those used for Magician of the Year: (See pages 2 & 3 for details)

- Presentation
- Magic Content
- Entertainment

In addition to the above guidelines a ‘Constructive Critique’ sheet has been developed to help performers better understand what people like and don’t like about their performance. Any Member competing in the Magician of the Month or open competition may request that anywhere from 3 of these sheets would be available so that the performer can ask people of their choosing to fill them out so that the performer might gain a better understanding of how people view their performance. The responsibility for having these filled out and collecting them lies with the performer and not the leadership of the club.

At the completion of the competition the performer would collect the ‘Critique Sheets’. The performer could then use the information on the sheets to better understand what area of their presentation needs more attention.

Critique Sheets are not for public viewing and become the property of the performer requesting them.

New voting ballot for Magician of the Month (There will be up to six columns for names)

Competitors Name								
Mark an ‘X’ under the yes/no boxes for each question	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Presentation (Appropriate attire)								
Magic Content (Technical skill, Originality)								
Was it entertaining?								
Indicate winner with an ‘X’ or NOTA								

Note – If you marked no in any of the columns for any performer that person is not eligible to win.

The names of the performers will be announced at the beginning of the performance session so that they can be written on the ballot. From there on out it is just a matter of putting ‘X’s’ in the right boxes.