

and in keeping with the intent of reducing the demand on the student, the pro of having most of the material nearly self-working is offset by the con of reducing some of the items to merely trivial experiments. Half a Die Away, for instance, opens the two-volume set, and as an effect, it feels lackluster, being a variation of the standard Miko, which is never hailed as a high classic in the first place. Here, after touching two cards in the deck that mark points where the magician turns over packets before spreading to the first face-down card, the spectator rolls a die and adds the top and bottom numbers, dividing the total by two. "What number did you get?" asks Aldo. "Three and a half," says the spectator. Aldo then shows he holds a Three. Close, but not quite it, until he reveals the half dollar beneath the card.

On the other hand, the lack of punch here also makes this the perfect effect with which to open the DVD. As you watch further into the collection, the material gets better and better, and while many of the items rely on the same principles, most of the routines explore them in different (and some fairly interesting) ways. Richard Vollmer's It's a Draw, as an example, is a somewhat surprising revelation. A nice thought about this effect is that you don't even have to use real dice; you can simply ask the spectator to imagine rolling the cubes to arrive at a number. After a small bit of dealing, the magician finds himself somehow arriving at the four Aces.

But switching back to the other hand again, while assorted effects on the DVDs rely on variations of "casting out sevens" or canceling out quantities by dealing back through cards, and even though these principles may be played out in different ways, there are only so many you can watch before they start to look the same. It doesn't matter if you roll the dice, turn them, stack them or add the four sides instead of the top and bottom, after a while the cubes reveal themselves for what they are, which is to say, thin reasons to execute some pretty lengthy — and sometimes hard to justify — dealing processes.

To be fair, though (and here we jump hands again), not all the effects are of this type. Never Say Die, for instance, is a nice routine where an Ace, Two and Three lie face down in a row, and three dice act as markers (with the one-, two- and three-spot sides uppermost). As you move the dice, so the cards follow, and the sequence closes with the revelation of a royal flush.

And then on the second volume is The Dark Side, a self-working prediction effect that's inimitably fair-looking and, with a little sell, strong. The roll of the die here is a convenience, and as Aldo points out, the die isn't even necessary to the effect. Bill Miesel's Cards and Dice is likewise entertaining, again using dice as markers to identify cards, and it ends with a nice surprise. The dice, which tracked an Ace, Two, Three and Four (that mysteriously followed the switching of the dice), are at one point suddenly all ones up, and therefore the cards are now the four Aces.

So all is not counting and dealing, but on the other hand, there are enough of these effects-based-on-procedure that it's easy to miss a good trick for being hypnotized into numbness by the other ones. And yet, even those hold good possibility, because in truth, the principles they employ are clever, versatile and intriguing.

On the other hand, intrigue may be as far as it goes. I find that I like what Aldo has done here, despite my initial reactions, but I also recognize that many of the effects are more captivating from the backside of the curtain, where we can look at how they work, appreciate the mechanics and mathematics and tinker with our own variations. It's certainly a collection of material worth studying with props in hand, working through the principles until you thoroughly understand them, because you can carry them far beyond tricks using cards and dice. On the other hand, it's not a collection of material that will turn your working repertoire on its ear, but it's still a nice gathering of ideas and routines.

At a combined two hours and 30 minutes, there's more than enough material on the two discs to keep you busy with your cards and dice for quite some time, and Aldo explains everything clearly and concisely.

TAKE IT FROM A PRO

A MODERN TRADE SHOW HANDBOOK

By Seth Kramer. 78-page spiral bound book, from www.trafficstoppers.com/ handbook \$50 postpaid U.S.; \$60 Global Priority.

REVIEW BY CHARLES GREENE III

Most people in the world of magic will not know the name Seth Kramer. However, when the top trade show magicians list the true professional workers in their field, Seth's name is always one of the first ones mentioned. He is a true trade show magician with authentic world-class credentials. The information that he lays out in his book, *Modern Trade Show Handbook*, comes from his real world experience and a career of over 20 years in the trade show industry.

In his handbook, Seth pays homage to Bud Dietrich, one of his tutors in the world of trade show magic. Bud co-authored with Dick Jarrow, *The Trade Show Handbook* in 1973. That booklet, although it has some dated information, is still essential reading for someone wanting to work trade shows. Seth's modern handbook builds on that information and adds some new facets to the business.

Seth's handbook, written to accompany a lecture given at the I.B.M. British Ring convention in September of 2006, breaks down the basic information about trade shows and places you on the trade show floor. As many magicians have never been to a large national trade show, Seth gives you a great sense of what is like and what to expect. He lays out the basic job description for taking on the role of a trade show performer and gives you some of the roots to fulfill the job. The handbook includes the secrets for being seen and heard. He even gives you his exact sound system components. This information alone will save someone hundreds of dollars spent on improper equipment choices.

Seth explains that the secret of being a successful trade show magician is dependent upon sound business practices rather than learning and perfecting dozens of the latest magic tricks. The "tricks of the trade show" that keep you employed include knowing how to dress, wearing the most comfortable shoes, and working well with the sales team. Working with the sales team is one of those facets that you can't instinctually know and may not learn until it is too late. Seth's coverage of this key area could increase a performer's worth to the client and lead to repeat bookings.

One key reason for a magician to be placed on the trade show floor is to communicate a client's product message. Knowing how and what information to ask for from the client is a core skill of being a trade show magi-



cian. Seth includes an example of his product questionnaire that shows how to ask for that information. The inclusion of this form will greatly aid someone starting out in the field.

Seth's book brings in the voices of experience from David Levitan and Paul Green. Paul's "A Day in the Life of a Trade Show Magician" is very insightful. It lays out the general structure from the initial call from a prospective client, onto the "vision" and details phase, through the days in the exhibit, and to the final point of true success — getting booked for the next show.

The one question that should have been more thoroughly addressed is, "How much should I charge?" Seth spends a page only to provide a long and very vague answer. There may be reasons why a definite dollar amount was not given, but past writings, from the *Success Books* put out by Magic, Inc. in the 1970s to Eddie Tullock's 1996 book, gave specific daily rates that provided some reference point. Being able to price your service competitively will go a long way to getting your first few bookings that will lead, if you have all of the other components ready, to more bookings and increased fees in the future.

So, will reading these notes guarantee that you will become the next successful trade show magician? The short answer is no. There is not one way to break into the field of trade show magic. Seth quotes Bud Dietrich: "The real work is not doing the show, it's getting the show." Getting the show takes lots and lots of hard work. This means time spent on the phone, in front of the computer, and time giving auditions to possible clients. Whatever way is chosen it may still take years to maintain a foothold, building a client base to make a comfortable living. No one can tell you how long that will take. In the end it all depends on a person's work skills and determination. Seth's *Modern Trade Show Handbook* provides a huge lift to anyone who wants to take the leap and become a trade show magician.

MULTIPLE ANGLES

METAL BENDING

DVD from *World's Greatest Magic by the World's Greatest Magicians Series*. L & L Publishing, PO Box 100, Tahoma, CA 96142 or www.llpub.com. \$19.95.

REVIEW BY ANDREW SCOTT

Ever since I first saw a picture of Uri Geller bending a spoon I have been fascinated by the idea of bending metal using the power of your mind.

Contemporary mentalists such as Alain Nu, Morgan Strebler, Patrick Kuffs, Guy Bavli, Banachek, and Richard Osterlind have built reputations with their handlings of this classic. The release of this compilation volume of Banachek and Osterlind handlings from the L&L archives is an excellent, low-cost introduction to this field.

Among the 11 handlings offered is Banachek's bag method, in which three forks bend in a bag being held by the spectator. Banachek teaches a technique that will convince the spectator that he or she can actually feel the metal bending in the bag. This is audience participation at its finest.

The viewer will also learn some very strong key-bending routines using keys borrowed from the audience. Some of these key bends happen in the performer's hand while others happen in the spectator's. Banachek also teaches a very strong spoon bend that takes place inches from a spectator's face but is equally strong for a room full of people. He also features nail bending, where a freely selected nail is then made to bend. Sleeving and other useful techniques are touched upon here.

In addition to Banachek's routines, the DVD has six reputation makers



from Richard Osterlind. Osterlind performs some of the most dramatic spoon bending routines I have ever witnessed, including a routine where the spoon curves upward on the performer's open hand. Cutlery Spray, where three forks seem literally to wilt in the performer's hand, is also included. This is a stunning bend, perfect for a parlor setting.

Osterlind also touches on some very useful key bends and even goes to the extreme with spike bending! That's right, a nine-inch long spike is bent in a truly remarkable routine. The entire Osterlind set is truly great, but what I use most from his session is a technique he developed for putting the initial bend in the spoon or fork, right in front of the spectator's face, with virtually no heat on either the utensil or the performer.

The DVD features material culled from the fourth volume of Banachek's *PSI* DVDs and several effects from Osterlind's *Mind Mysteries* DVDs. It does not include the original Banachek bends that are taught on his independently produced *Psychokinetic Silverware* discs. But at the low price, *Metal Bending* is an incredible value for someone beginning to explore these techniques. You will be able to perform high impact bends in literally minutes after purchasing this DVD.

WAYS TO MEANS

40+ No Cost/Low Cost Ways To Promote Your Act

By Tom Gaston. Available from *Wordmasters*, 2220 Bent Grass Pointe, Owensboro KY 42303 or www.wordmasters.us. \$24.95 plus \$4.00 shipping/handling.

REVIEW BY JIM KLEEFELD

Published marketing plans run the gamut in style and substance. They arrive as thick single or multiple notebooks, subscription courses, audio files, or thin idea-books. This is one of the latter.

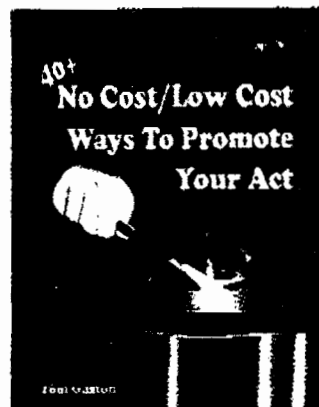
Gaston explains that many relocations in his life forced him constantly to find ways in which to market himself in new geographic areas.

He compiled his list of promotion and marketing ideas into this book. He begins by citing his perceived audience for the book - magicians and other performers with a solid marketable act and decent marketing materials (business card, flier, photos, press kit).

He then offers 50 or so ideas to put those materials into varying hands, and to present them to a variety of program decision-makers. These ideas are just that - ideas. They come in short paragraphs (sometimes several on one page) that will start you thinking along certain lines. The detail work of tracking down resources, finding the clients and preparing the material properly is up to you. A number of the ideas are familiar ones such as creating a newsletter, or posting your business card on shopping center bulletin boards. Others are a bit outside the box, such as creating an advertising banner to use as your car sun-screen. A few are simply examples of how Gaston himself took promotional advantage of some unique situations (such as a parent/child confrontation that he witnessed in a store once).

All of the ideas have some merit, and if you are struggling too, you will likely be able to find one or more things you can do to increase your business. Besides, it never hurts to have some incentive, and just reviewing the plethora of creative approaches here may induce you into some sort of marketing action.

On the downside, I wish the ideas had been expanded or more fully discussed. Often specific helpful details were missing. For example, he men-





Dave style of card magic. You can see a brief demo of some of the items in *Slightly Magical* at www.dananddave.com. This will give you a sense of what you are purchasing. Although the manuscript is copiously illustrated with photographs, I think that this style of card magic is more suited to video instruction. Words and pictures have a tough time

capturing exactly what is involved. Dan and Dave address this: "Writing these notes has been a challenge. Our material is getting to [sic] complex for words to describe."

You should know that the printed version of *Slightly Magical* is a limited release of 1000 copies. It is also available as a downloadable pdf file for \$15. Fans of Dan and Dave Buck will certainly be happy to have some new tricks and sleights with which to bust their knuckles.

Slightly Magical • Dan and Dave Buck • 8.5 x 11 softcover, stapled • 34 pages • \$25 • Available at www.dananddave.com

[The next four items make my job as a reviewer very easy. They are all excellent, and if the subject matter interests you, you will not go wrong purchasing them. For this reason, the following reviews will be brief.]

A Modern Trade Show Handbook

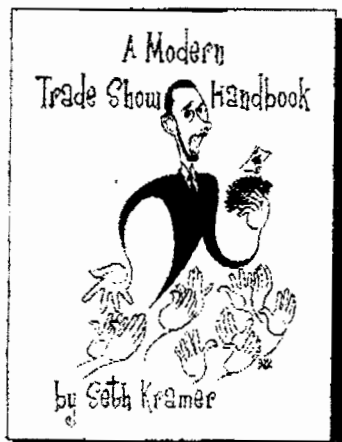
Seth Kramer

\$50

FOR CLOSE-UP AND STAND-UP magicians making the jump to trade show performer is the Holy Grail of magic. The money is very good, the performing conditions are spacious and smoke-free, and nobody asks you to make a balloon dog for his daughter. How do you make the jump? How do you get the work? How do you keep the clients happy? There are excellent books on the subject, including *The Trade Show Handbook* by Rüd Dietrich and Dick Jarrow, *The Phantom Founder of Trade Show Magic* by Eddie Tullock, *Dick Ryan's Confidential Booking Reports*, and *The Magic Business* by Michael Bailey. The problem is that these books are somewhat dated. (The most recent of the previously mentioned was published in 1998.) More up-to-date information is needed, and, fortunately for all of us, Seth Kramer has stepped up to provide it in an excellent little book titled *A Modern Trade Show Handbook*.

Mr. Kramer has been making his living as a trade show magician for more than 20 years. He was fortunate to have learned from three of the best: Bud Dietrich, Dick Ryan, and Mike Rogers. He knows the business, and in *A Modern Trade Show Handbook* he tips the work in an easy-to-understand, straightforward way.

Among the subjects covered are: getting that first client, performance situations, effective audio equipment, customizing props, working with the sales team, trade show giveaways, promotional material, scripting, buzzwords, how much to charge, and trade show do's and don'ts. In addi-



tion, Mr. Kramer includes an article titled "The Art of a Trade Show Performer" by Paul Green and some very useful advice from one of America's greatest pitchman.

All the information offered is rock solid, and will save you untold hours of having to figure it out for yourself. If you want to be a trade show magician, *A Modern Trade Show Handbook* should be in your library.

[In the interest of full disclosure, I should mention that I edited Mr. Kramer's manuscript, but I have no financial interest in the product.]

A Modern Trade Show Handbook • Seth Kramer • 8.5 x 11 softcover, spiral bound • 75 pages. \$50 postpaid in US. (\$60 international) • Available at www.trafficstoppers.com/handbook

How to Handle Hecklers

Keith Fields

\$14.95

IN NOVEMBER OF 2006 actor/comedian Michael Richards managed to damage what little of any career he had left by completely losing his cool during a set at the Laugh Factory in West Hollywood. Richards was being heckled and he lashed back with a string of racial epithets that left the audience stunned and/or heading for the exits. Had he owned a copy of Keith Fields's book *How to Handle Hecklers* he might have coped with the situation in a different way, thereby avoiding a lot of negative press.

If you perform in front of an audience of strangers, it is likely that, at some point in your career, you will be heckled. How you handle this situation will, in some degree, determine your success as a performer. Conventional wisdom says to fire back with your best heckler stopper. The brilliance of Mr. Fields's book is that this is not his suggested course of action. In fact, he offers several strategies, the first of which is: Ignore it and carry on.

Not every heckler situation is the same and Mr. Fields analyzes many different ones. Studying these scenarios will provide a performer with many more tools for their audience-interaction toolbox. Remember: If your only tool is a hammer (the heckler stopper), then you will see every problem as a nail. And there are many times that bringing down that big hammer is simply not the judicious thing to do.

On the cover of *How to Handle Hecklers* is a big red box with the words "With Over 200 Put-Downs!" in it. Forget about that. Put-downs are not the reason to buy this book. (Although if you are very inexperienced you may want to read these over just to get a feel for the type of jibe that others have used.) Instead, you should buy this book because it contains some the best advice ever offered on audience control and management.

And if anyone wants to send a copy to Michael Richards, be sure to circle

