

The theme for our June meeting was “Sophisticated” Magic (as opposed to all our other meetings?!), and from the beginning the Ring members knew it was going to be an interesting night, given the various definitions of the word “sophisticated”.

Our host for the evening, Bruce Friedin, dressed, as always, to the nines, took the word to mean “elegant and cultured”, and used a very classy method, namely a mirror on the end of an extending antenna, to divine a card that a spectator was merely thinking of. Bruce peppered the night with some other classy magic, like Oscar the Card Trick, between other Ring member performances, as well.

First on the bill was Ring Secretary Nick Paul, who, like Bruce, defined sophisticated as elegant and classy. He very elegantly made the cap on a bottle of sparkling mineral water disappear. Lo and behold, after pouring the contents of the bottle into a champagne flute, the cap was revealed to be in the bottle.

Next up was Bob Lusthaus, whose definition of sophisticated, “utilizing great skill”, led to some very fancy card work. He performed B/Wave, My Card/Your Card, and Trilogy II in the most sophisticated manner and fashion.

Defining sophisticated as “refined, and of the highest possible quality”, President Bill White followed with Bill Malone’s version of Michael Skinner’s Monte, truly the most refined version of the effect there is, with incredible sophistication.

After Bill was Dan Miller, who, in order to get into the proper sophisticated attire, stripped off his shirt to reveal a tuxedo tee shirt beneath. He defined sophisticated as “knowledgeable of worldly ways”, and gave an interesting talk on the history of playing cards, which was just as entertaining and enjoyable as any trick we could have seen.

Wayne Haarhaus felt that sophisticated meant “requiring intense thought and imagination”, so he accordingly performed Docc Hilford’s Nightmare Coin, in which he predicted which of three coins, a Kennedy half, an English Penny, or a Chinese Coin, a spectator would choose, and Barry Richardson’s Dollar Divination, in which he read a randomly selected bill’s serial number through sightless vision.

Ring Sergeant-at-Arms Harry Mandel performed a complicated vanishing and reappearing effect using silk handkerchiefs and a very elaborate and sophisticated set of props.

Finally, Don Engstrand performed two mental effects in which he divined numbers that three different spectators were thinking of and a single quote from a book of quotes, living up to the definition of sophisticated as being “complex and intricate”.

The night, unfortunately, had to come to an end, as they all must, so we retired to the diner for tea and crumpets. Now I must be going; my chauffer just brought the car around, and I’m due at the country club any minute.