

The brochure was originally printed in 1998 and was revised and edited in 2003 by Ron Bell of the TVP Nominations/Ring Counselor Committee with guidance and input from Roy Barnes, the Ring Reports Editor and Phil Willmarth, the Executive Editor of The Linking Ring.

INTRODUCTION

Communication about Ring members and Ring activities each month in *The Linking Ring* is very valuable. While many Rings submit excellent Ring Reports month after month, other Rings may never send any or perhaps only a few. Thus, they miss some real benefits of being part of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

The Scribe's report becomes an important part of a Ring's history. It is also a wonderful way of keeping people, in and outside the Ring, in touch with members' activities and lives.

The Reports are very useful to other Rings who use them for meeting ideas and ways to improve their own Ring events. Reports on visiting lecturers can help Rings decide whether to book them. One of the greatest benefits of the reports is that they give an opportunity to recognize those who are active in and support Ring events.

This brochure offers guidelines for Ring Scribes to make the writing of Ring Reports easier and the suggestions will help make the Reports more interesting and readable. Information on how to prepare and submit Event Reports, Photographs, Member Obituaries and Sick and Convalescent Members are also covered. By following the guidelines on format and contents Scribes will reduce the heavy burden of the Ring Reports Editor.

Those who have volunteered to be the Ring Scribe generally agree: the job can be personally very satisfying; and the writing and editing become easier with time. Many Ring members shy away from the position of Scribe, often because they do not know what is expected of them. The job is just passed on from one Scribe to the next with little advice on report format or content. Using the guidelines in this brochure will do much to overcome such problems.

A Scribe's responsibilities can cover all items sent to *The Linking Ring* such as the Ring Report, Ring Event articles and Obituaries. However, in some Rings, the responsibility for some of the special reports is shared with others.

THE RING REPORT

While obviously there is no single format, which guarantees a good Ring Report, there are some useful guidelines. The following are from Editors of *The Linking Ring* (see credits on inside cover).

First: some advice on Report format. By following the suggested guides not only will the desired information be present but also the editing of the report will be simplified. There follows a section on Report content, which will assure that information is presented in an interesting fashion.

The reports are sent to the Ring Report Editor. See a current issue of *The Linking Ring* for mailing address and electronic communication information.

Report Format Requirements and Suggestions

- All Ring Reports for mailing must be typed double-spaced on one side of plain white paper. Reports sent by email must be in 12-point type.
- Reports must not exceed 450 words. No more than two, double-spaced pages.
- Always include your Ring number, location, name of the Ring, if any, Ring meeting day and location and the name of the Ring Contact Person (usually the President or Secretary) and Tel number and/or email. See the Report example later in this brochure.
- **Do not right or full justify your copy!**
- **Do not use all capital letters.**
- Always capitalize Ring and the name of the Ring. Capitalize the names of tricks, as: Professor's Nightmare, ~~Z~~ombie, and Linking

Rings. Capitalize the suits of cards (Clubs, Hearts, Spades, Diamonds), the names of all court cards (Jack, Queen, King), the Joker and Ace.

- Capitalize the titles of Ring Officers and I.B.M. related items such as membership Certificates, Pins and Cards.
- Always use periods when abbreviating the name of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, as I.B.M.
- Use frequent paragraphs to separate subjects and to break up long stretches of type. Short paragraphs are easier to read, especially when the copy is broken up into narrow columns. See for yourself in any issue of *The Linking Ring*!
- Be brief! Two double-spaced pages are the maximum allowed. **Longer pieces will be cut.** A well-written one-page report is usually best!
- Write in the past tense about everything, except of course for a future event.
- There are no photographs used in the Ring Reports section of the Linking Ring.

Report Content

One of the first places to which many Ring members turn when they receive their copy of *The Linking Ring* is the Ring Reports section. They want to see what happened at their Ring meeting if they were not there, or their name in print if they were involved. Thus the “what” and “who” as well as the “when” are very important questions to be answered in Ring Reports. Now, here are some specifics:

- Include the month of the meeting in the first paragraph, for example, "...at our May meeting..." The specific date is not needed.
- Do not discuss conflicts between Ring members.

- List all Ring Officers **when they are first elected**.
- You should focus on the activities of Ring members, lecturers and performers.
- Do not include such things as treasurer's reports, motions and items related to the administration of the Ring. Ring Reports are not intended to be Minutes of Ring meetings but a report of activities.
- Describe tricks **briefly**, using well-known titles if possible.
- Inject some humor as long as it is not overdone and in good taste.
- Be encouraging rather than critical of members' efforts.
- Comment on the type and quality of a lecture. It can be of great help to other Rings thinking of booking the same lecturer. Again, report on the lecture but do not extensively review it.
- Recognize a generous host as well as others who significantly helped with meeting arrangements and organization but did not perform.
- Check to be sure the facts are right and the names are spelled correctly.
- Announce Ring events well in advance. Remember that it takes at least two months from time of receipt of your Ring Report before it is published in *The Linking Ring*. For example Reports received by the 15th of October will be in the December issue. Thus, you should publicize your Ring banquet, public show, picnic, etc., at least three months ahead. Visiting magicians may be able to join your Ring for these special events if they know about them well in advance.
- Include the writer's name below the report.

Reminder

- **Do not forget that information on submitting your Ring report is always contained in the Linking Ring. You should check from time to time to be sure of the Ring Reports Editor's current address and what electronic mail systems are available. At the present time email is the most effective and speediest way of sending reports and is the Editor's preferred method.**

Above all, you must submit your report as soon as possible after a meeting or function. It must arrive by the 15th of the month to be published in the issue two months ahead, for example, by January 15th for the March issue.

Finally, do not send the same material to both the Ring Reports Editor as a Ring Report and to the Executive Editor (with or without photos) to be run as a Ring Event! Both articles will not be run, except through error and it causes extra work and expense.

Sample Ring Report

The following Ring Report is a sample of a possible report. Note the approach to both format and content.

Sample Report

NO. 183 VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA-Victoria Magic

Circle-The Ernie Crockford Ring

Meets 1st Tue(except Jul. & Aug.), Langford Fire Hall

Contact Person. John Doe. Secretary. Tel 250-555-6666 email

doej@aol.com

The 32 members who attended the Johnny Bar lecture on restaurant magic at our March meeting enjoyed an outstanding presentation. Using a mixed bag of bills, coins, cards and cutlery, Johnny showed and explained clearly some great table-hopping tricks and attention getters. We particularly liked his amazing production of money from a bread roll. There really was something for all levels of ability. If Johnny Bar is coming your way, book him. You won't be disappointed.

Before the lecture, **Tony Eng** did a beautiful Cups & Balls routine finishing with three chickens--wow! **Eric Bedard**, our own restaurant magician, followed with some slick work with cards based on Vernon's "Twisting the Aces." **Shayne King** showed some nice moves producing many paper flowers that changed into a giant bouquet. **Ron Bell** managed to name cards at any position in a borrowed and well-shuffled pack held behind his back.

The evening finished with a fabulous spread provided by the President' s wife. Thanks to MaryHope.

Don' t forget our Ring's Mirth and Magic Show, Saturday, June 20. We have a great line-up of performers and will include the Wansborough Trophy Comedy Competition. Tickets are available at Tony' s Trick and Joke Shop or contact the Ring Secretary.

Ron Bell

SPECIAL EVENT REPORTS

A report on special events such as Ring banquets, public shows or picnics can be sent in addition to the Ring Reports and should follow the same guidelines. Look at the Ring Events section in recent copies of *The Linking Ring* to obtain ideas on the most effective and entertaining way to write your piece. All articles and photos should be submitted promptly.

Articles and photographs of Ring Events should be sent to the Executive Editor (see a current issue of *The Linking Ring* for mailing/email address). Be sure to title the report with the name of the event, for example, 'Ring 183 Mirth and Magic Show a Howling Success.'

Here are some specific suggestions on format and content:

- Emphasis should be placed on members' activities.
- Keep the sentences short. Use titles of tricks with limited descriptive narrative.

- Highlight special presentations and awards with proper titles and names. Illustrative photos can be used. See information on creating quality photos in the next section.

Photographs for The Linking Ring

Quality photos add much to a Ring Event article. They are an important method to bring recognition to performers and other contributors to an event. Taking photographs for publication is not easy. The following are some guidelines that will improve your picture taking and sending.

- * This seems obvious, but obviously isn't. Read, no, **STUDY**, the instruction manual that comes with your camera. There are many tips and suggestions, which will help you avoid mistakes and take good photos.
- * Take lots of photos and send only the best.
- * Many photos arrive out of focus. Focus, focus, focus!
- * Avoid automatic/self-developing cameras, as their photos are usually not sharp.
- * Avoid if at all possible sending photos with dates printed on them.
- * Check the background. Avoid cluttered, unattractive areas that detract from the subject. Don't shoot against a window or mirrored wall with a flash. Don't shoot toward the sun.
- * Get as close to your subjects as you can. Generally shoot above the waist. Normally if you get the whole person in your viewfinder

you are too far away. As a general rule, if the face on a 3" x 5" photo is not as large as the tip of your thumb, it is too small.

* Although most Event photos are printed in black and white, shooting in color is easier and quite effective. However, remember that red will reproduce as black or, at best, grey, so a black tuxedo will disappear against a red curtain and a red jacket fades into a black curtain.

* A head-on flash photo will cause eyes to turn red in a photo and without adequate back lighting can cause a heavy black shadow around the subject. Avoid this if at all possible.

* When shooting a show whether stage or close-up, shoot from both sides so that all of the photos do not show the performers facing in the same direction. A few from the middle won' t hurt, either.

* Action photos are the most interesting as they tell a story. However, magic is difficult to photograph. Levitations and some apparatus magic (Zig-Zag, sawings, Snowstorm, penetrations) can show the magic. Use your knowledge of the sequence and climaxes of tricks and your imagination to take photos at the right time.

* As a safety measure, get your performers into small groups at the end of the show, ideally while still "in costume." This will result in planned photos in which the individuals are recognizable. Tell them before the show that this will happen!

* When taking award photos, avoid taking several with the same person handing out awards to different people. Instead, line up the award winners facing toward the giver and shoot them all at once.

- * Try to get the names of every person in a photograph, especially magicians and I.B.M. members. How would you like your photo printed in our journal with no identification? We avoid printing photos with unidentified persons in them.
- * For group shots, if possible, limit the number in the photo to ten. More than two rows of people almost always cause focus problems. Take careful notes of all names and get the spelling right by checking with each person.
- * When taking group shots avoid more than three rows deep and then focus on the middle row. Have your subjects stand close together, angle their shoulders diagonally to take up less side-to-side space, and shoot them above the waist.
- * Develop photos immediately after the event. Do not hold up the Event Report awaiting photos. With today' s rapid photo services, there is no excuse for tardy photos.
- * Do NOT write on the back of photos. Modern scanners are so sensitive they can pick up writing on the back of photos. Writing in ink often smears off on the next photo in a stack. Write or type on self-adhesive stickers or paper which you can cellophane tape on the back of the photos. Do not paperclip notes onto photos.
- * Actual photos may be sent or they may be emailed. They may be sent separately from the Event shown as long as the Event, its sponsors, and the people in the photos are identified.
- * If emailed, do NOT embed photos in the email. Send them as individual or zipped attachments. Ideally, send them in jpeg or as pdf files, 300 dpi, actual size. Identify clearly, in the email subject if possible, what they are (as: "Ring 2 Event Photos," or "Ring 129

Event Report & Photos").

* Send all photos to the Executive Editor, address and email on page 4 of each issue. If photos and reports are received by the 15th of the month, we will do our best to get them in the second following month's issue (that is, reports received on or before July 15 should appear in the issue September issue).

OBITUARIES AND NOTICES OF DEATHS

It is the responsibility of the Ring Secretary to notify Headquarters' Office of a member's death. Often the deaths of Ring members go unreported and for those members not belonging to a Ring this is even more likely to happen. Ring Secretaries should enlist all members to pass on the names of any magician who has died, whether he/she is a current I.B.M. member or not.

Equally important, on the occasion of any member's death, is to send the Executive Editor a short note. Include any published obituary notice as well as an obituary written specifically for *The Linking Ring*.

It should always be decided quickly who within the Ring shall take the responsibility for this obituary for it should be submitted promptly. The writer could be the Scribe, Secretary or a friend of the deceased. If writing an obituary, look at those printed in *The Linking Ring* each month for ideas of what to say and how best to say it. The best obituaries are often short and not elaborate. Again, obituaries are sent to the Executive Editor of *The Linking Ring* and a separate note on the person's death must be sent to the Headquarters' Office so that information can be placed in the membership files. Mail or preferably email may be used.

SICK AND CONVALESCENT MEMBERS

The Chair of the I.B.M. Sick & Convalescent Committee should be given information on members who are sick and convalescing. Include the member's I.B.M. number, if possible, complete address, the nature of their illness, and how long the member may be expected to be incapacitated. When they have recovered do not forget to let the Committee know so their name can be removed from the list in *The Linking Ring*. The current chair of this committee and contact information is listed in each issue of *The Linking Ring*.