



August 2021  
Volume 111 Number 3

The Society of American Magicians

MAGIC  
MUM  
UNITY  
MIGHT



Douglas  
**Lefty**  
Leferovich

# DOUGLAS "LEFTY" LEFEROVICH:

## Parent Assembly #1's Magician of the Year

By Herb Scher

*Douglas Leferovich has come a long way from the days when he and his brother Johnny would tag along to Parent Assembly meetings in Manhattan with their dad, John.*

*Doug, Johnny, and John formed a magic act — Magic by the 3Ls — and performed frequently for parties, company picnics, and other events. The experience of attending Assembly meetings and receiving feedback from more experienced magicians gave the budding conjurers an extra degree of knowledge, refinement, and depth.*

*It's remarkable to see the trajectory that has led Doug from those early days to touring the world, appearing on national television, and performing concurrently in two Las Vegas shows, not to mention consulting for some of the world's top entertainers.*

*Each year at its Salute to Magic show the Parent Assembly honors a Magician of the Year, someone who represents the ideals of the Assembly, is accomplished as a magician, and gives back to the community. This year the Assembly's selection committee determined that Doug Leferovich represents the epitome of those qualities.*

*In this conversation, Doug speaks at length about his path in magic. It illustrates the tenacity, creativity, and hard work that have led him to a successful career in magic and inspired Parent Assembly to honor him as Magician of the Year.*



PHOTO: SHANE O'NEIL

SCHER: What are your earliest memories of magic?

LEFTY: When I did my first show for my pre-kindergarten class with my brother and my father. I did a trick where there was a yellow and green silk tied together, and I had practiced for two weeks. I got up in front of the class and I passed the silks through my hand three times and the third time it turned into a red and blue silk, I bowed, I got no reaction, and then I ran over and started crying to my mom. So that was my first magic experience.

Magic came along when my mom said to my dad, "You really need to pick out an activity that's your thing with the boys. I'll help, but you need to do something that's your thing." My dad remembered when he went to a YMCA camp when he was younger there was a counselor who did magic as a hobby. My dad thought back and said, "You know what, that would be really interesting to do with the boys." My dad was General Counsel for the New York State Bankers Association, so he worked long hours during the week. I always joked that doing magic was just like being a lawyer — a lot of trickery, a lot of deceit.

When we started off it wasn't

something that was planned to be a career. We would do magic shows, my brother and father and I, for my grandmother's birthday. If we had relatives over, we would do a show. Then at one point my neighbors heard that we were doing magic shows and they approached my mom about doing a show for their son; my mom brokered the deal for a whopping \$35.

As we got older it was something my brother and I did to make money. I had friends in junior high and high school who would bag groceries or had a paper route, but my brother, father, and I did magic shows. We would do one to five shows a weekend. It was great for my brother and I because we would split the money. My dad didn't make any of the money, but he was the one buying the tricks! After the show we would usually find a restaurant and have sort of a get-together and talk about the show. What trick went over well; what could be better. That was something I've carried on till this day. When I work with other shows I

try to focus on the positive, but I also try to focus on things that could be better. When someone comes to see me perform and they say, "Oh, you were great," that doesn't help me get better. If someone gives me constructive criticism I look at it and think, *You know, maybe I could try that.* I feel like if you think you are perfect, then how do you grow? How do you keep evolving if you feel like you've gotten to the highest point?

SCHER: What kind of magic were you performing in those days?

LEFTY: One routine I did, I worked on with my dad and it was called Entertaining Harvey. My dad showed me the movie *Harvey*, with Jimmy Stewart, talking about how we all get lonely and he had an invisible friend named Harvey. And I talked about how sometimes I get lonely and I have a friend as well. So I would produce a stuffed rabbit out of a



Douglas Leferovich doing a guest act in Murray Sawchuck's show at the Tropicana in Las Vegas, 2012.



[Top] Young Doug and Johnny assist their father, John Leferovich, as Magic by the 3Ls at Larchmont Shore Club.

[Bottom] Cast photo of Manhattan Magic at the Sands Casino in Atlantic City.



[Left] Two shots of the early Entertaining Harvey act.

[Left] Card magic in 2005 in the Exotique show in RA nightclub inside Luxor, Las Vegas.

[Below] Douglas Leferovich and Seth Yudof performing a Sub Trunk during the intermission of Barnum in 1994, their senior year of college.

Square Circle and then I put the rabbit on the table and I did the performance for Harvey.

At the time I also started doing a Zombie. I was at an SAM convention in Stamford, Connecticut and there was a magician who had a two-fingered Zombie gimmick; he did a lecture and it was incredible. I was about thirteen and I said, "Dad, I've got to get that trick." So my dad got me the trick. I spent about two weeks working on it and I just couldn't get it. I said, "I'm over it." My dad said, "If you're going to give up that easily, then I'm going to stop buying you tricks." And I worked and I worked and some 35 years later it's still one of my favorite routines. It's something I've performed at The Magic Castle and I've had a lot of magicians say, "Wow, I haven't seen the Zombie ball in so

many years and the way you do it is so great," and it's just because I put the time in. I realized over time, the more time I put in, the better it got. For me, it's about repetition and rehearsal so that when I do the actual performance, I'm not thinking about what I'm doing, especially for something like Murray's show where I play this disgruntled stagehand. I don't speak. My character is very influenced by silent comedians like Chaplin and Keaton. It's all about my facial expressions. It's about the character. If after the show someone comes up to me and says, "I thought you were really funny," to me that's the biggest compliment. I've done magic all my life so I look at it as the magic should be good. One time I was approached by a clown troupe after the show asking if I wanted to do some shows with them.

They thought I had clown comedy training and that I learned magic later. To me that was a huge compliment.

SCHER: What was it about magic that grabbed you? If your father had said, "Let's do pottery," do you think you'd be a potter now or was there something about the magic itself that excited you?

LEFTY: I think I definitely enjoyed the applause, even though there was a period in my life when I was shy, and I feel like I'm still naturally a shy person. I felt like I could come out of my shell and almost be someone different when I did the magic. But it was really about the camaraderie with my brother and my father and having my mom there and the fact that we did it as a team. I've been very fortunate working with them and then working with Murray and then

Criss Angel back in the day. I got to meet Jeff McBride, James Brandon, Joe Devlin. These were professional magicians who were so generous with their time and knowledge. Before the Internet there were three ways you could learn magic. You could learn it by reading it in a book, going to a magic store, and then having an older, more experienced magician share the knowledge. That's something that I will always treasure about Parent Assembly. When I would go into the city with my brother — first of all, the city to a young kid, always felt magical — and then being able to go to this magic meeting. They really took a liking to my brother and I. There were times when they would say to my dad, "You know what, stay over there, we want to work with Doug and Johnny," and they would share with us their knowledge and their expertise. "How do you hold a deck of cards" and "how do you do the presentation" and "what's the patter with it?" At the time it was fun, but I realize now how much incredible experience I got. I look back and realize I got to see some of the greats: Frank Garcia, Derek Dingle, Slydini. Up close and personal. At the time I thought, *These are really cool magicians and they're doing cool magic*, but I realize looking back now that they were legends.

SCHER: Do you remember going to the *Salute to Magic*? Did you guys go every year?

LEFTY: Every year, yes. Absolutely. I remember seeing George Schindler and Cecil. I remember one specific *Salute to Magic* I went to at Hunter College. Jeff McBride opened the show, and he destroyed. Standing ovation. I had never seen someone dominate a stage the way he did. At the time he was doing way more with masks than he is now, but from the masks to combining dance and Kabuki theatre to pantomime — it was the first time I had really seen someone do magic that wasn't a trick bought in a store. Up to that time, I would buy a trick and then with my mom and dad and brother we would try to create a unique story, but we did the trick the way it was designed. What Jeff did was he took masks and he made something that wasn't a magic trick into a magic trick, which I had never seen before. Very inspiring.

SCHER: Did you start getting influenced by other magicians? Were there people you looked to as your heroes or role models?

LEFTY: Growing up I was lucky enough to go to Tannen's Magic Camp, so I got to meet some great magicians. Like every magician back then, I waited every year to see David Copperfield's TV special. But I got to meet some great magicians at Magic Camp. I got to meet

I saw Joe Devlin perform at a bunch of the *Salutes*. He's such an awesome guy. He was one of my dad's favorite acts, and he'd always say, "Joe's so classy; Joe's so sophisticated."

SCHER: Then your dad produced one of the *Salutes*, right?

LEFTY: In 1985 he was vice-president and along with Jerry Oppenheimer and Bill Andrews they produced the *Salute to Magic*. They convinced Cesareo Pelaez and Le Grand David to bring their entire 65-person troupe from Beverly, Massachusetts to New York for one night to do the full evening show. My dad, Jerry, and Bill worked and they hustled and they had a write-up in *The New York Times* and that *Salute* sold more tickets than any other *Salute to Magic* in history up to that point. One of their trucks had three live ducks in it; the night before the show the truck was parked in our driveway, and the three ducks were in an inflatable pool in our garage. That is something I will never forget. But going up to Beverly and getting to see the family and culture they had developed and seeing that show was just incredible.

SCHER: What did your friends in high school think of your magic? Did you do magic for them?

LEFTY: A little bit. I went to a very small high school. I think there were 43 kids in my graduating class. For me, it was a way to break out of my shell. Because when I went to a party or did magic, I looked at it as I was playing a character, not necessarily being myself, so I could say things and do things that I normally wouldn't get away with as myself.

SCHER: You must have done well in school because you went off to Penn. Were you doing magic when you were in college?

LEFTY: Yes, I did some magic in college. I met Seth Yudof, who played guitar, and we always joked that I wished that after college I could be like David Copperfield and he wished he could be like Eddie Van Halen. We formed a bond because we had an interest in the arts outside of school. But I did get to Penn and realized, *Wow, there's a lot of people that are smarter than me*. I got there, and I realized college was a lot about learning



PHOTO: RICHARD FAVERY / BECKETT STUDIOS

[From top] Seth and Doug as *The Gamesters* in 1999, as guest act in Franz Harary's show at Resorts in Atlantic City. Lefty doing street magic for the TV show *Don't Blink* and presenting card manipulations in *Late Night Magic*.

about living on my own and interacting with people. As I got older and lived off campus I always joked if you go to the refrigerator at 8 o'clock and there's not a chocolate cake in there and you go back later at midnight, if you didn't go buy a chocolate cake, one's not going to magically appear.

But I did magic a little bit there. In my senior year my housemate and I consulted on a production of *Barnum*. They wanted a series of magic tricks. There's a song about taking a flame out of a hat and doing the old classic tablecloth pull, where you pull and everything stays on the table. And then they were nice enough to let us do a magic routine at the end of intermission leading into the second act. It was manipulation and it was a lot of Tannen's catalogue magic but at the time it sort of reinvigorated Seth's love of magic. Then after college we moved to Los Angeles, and that's where we put together our act called *The Gamesters*.

SCHER: What was *The Gamesters* exactly?

LEFTY: *The Gamesters* was straight guy/funny guy. At the time, the movie *The Mask* came out with Jim Carey, and we were trying to think of different characters, personas to be. We knew we wanted to end with a Sub Trunk and our senior year of college we went for fun with a bunch of friends on a cruise ship. We were in the theatre and it had a really low ceiling

and I thought, *If we do an act with a Sub Trunk on a cruise ship, there's no way one of us could stand on top of it without hitting our head on the ceiling.* So, we talked about doing a western act where maybe the Sub Trunk had something to do with a barrel. We had talked about doing maybe a vampire act where the Sub Trunk was a coffin. Then when *The Mask* came out, we really liked Jim Carey's persona

with the zoot suits and we stumbled on the idea of using a phone booth, because we could stand in the phone booth and instead of standing on top

we figured out a way of doing a Sub Trunk sideways without a cloth.

Our goal was to come up with an eight- to twelve-minute act to travel the world. The whole act was designed to do a TV show in South America, Europe, or Asia, and we didn't speak the language, people would still respond to what we were doing. That's when I started doing research on Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Fatty Arbuckle, and the Keystone Cops. I thought their material is still funny now; years later, where it's not topical humor, it's just funny. So our magic wasn't based on dialogue humor. It was all based on visuals.

SCHER: How did you get from doing tricks out of the Tannen's catalogue to a Sub Trunk illusion with a phone booth? That seems like a pretty big leap.

LEFTY: In college, I definitely dabbled with trying to come up with more creative stuff on my own. And Seth, who I was doing *The Gamesters* with, had an engineering degree, so he looked at magic in a different light. I would look at magic and say, "It has to be a base or it has to be black art or it has to be a certain principle" that I had learned. And he looked at it as, "Why can't it be like this? This would still work." So it was nice to have a fresh, outside opinion.

When we lived in Los Angeles we went to *The Magic Castle* a lot. We watched a lot of acts and realized to stand out you really have to be original. It took us about a good year and a half, two years to put that act together while we had regular jobs. It's not something that happened overnight.

SCHER: The scale of it is much larger than what you'd been doing. How did you put that together? Did you find an illusion builder?

LEFTY: No, the first version of the phone booth we built ourselves in the kitchen of our two-bedroom apartment. After we did that version, we met an illusion builder who was nice enough to let us use his shop, and we built eighty percent of it ourselves, then he did some of the welding. But then we had a second version of the phone booth that could break down. It was made of aluminum and could go in cases so it could fly in a plane. It was definitely an evolution.

SCHER: And then you started getting bookings for that show?

LEFTY: Yeah, little by little. When we first had our thirteen-minute act, we enlisted three of our friends in Los Angeles and did a show called *Quadrified*. No one would come to see a fifteen-minute show so we had to put together an hour. We booked other friends of ours so we could do it and then little by little we got out there. We sent out press kits, we did a TV show in South America, we did a TV show in Europe. We wound up touring with Franz Harary's show for four years, so it's something that was a gradual process.

SCHER: How long did things continue with *The Gamesters*?

LEFTY: We had our big show at the Sands in Atlantic City and we opened, ironically, three days after 9/11 — which was brutal because the show was called *Manhattan Mayhem*. The president of the casino heard newscasters say there has been mayhem in Manhattan that morning, so he forced us to change the name of the show to *Manhattan Magic*, even though we didn't want to say it was a magic show. They had to take down all the advertising and marketing, and they only put a third of it back up because they had already spent the money they had to promote the show.

We had a big show, with Broadway scenery; we had a full-sized taxicab that drove onstage. We had nine dancers. It was a full production. After that we came to Vegas and, through a series of events, we met the president of New York, New York casino hotel. Because our show was New York themed, we pitched it to him. We had a handshake deal to become the afternoon show at the New York, New York theater. Then, after we had that deal in place, a week later *Cirque du Soleil* said they would come in and spend \$34 million and blow out the theatre and put in *Zumanity* — their first topless, adult-themed show — so our deal went away.

SCHER: What happened after things didn't work out at New York, New York?

LEFTY: We bounced around town trying to find work, but ironically, at that point, the town was changing from buying shows to four-walling. So the whole market and the whole business model

changed. We did some small shows here and there, but no one wanted to pay for a big budget show. Shows were coming in and offering to pay and we didn't have the capital to back the show. We still did some shows internationally and we did some smaller versions of the show.

Celine Dion broke the mold; someone who was selling out touring said, "I'm going to stay in one place for my family." That really changed the business model in Vegas. Up until that point if you were a headliner performing in Vegas it was kind of like your career was over. Now it's career defining if you get a residency in Vegas.

SCHER: Besides performing in Murray's show and *Late Night Magic*, I gather you contribute to a number of other projects in the entertainment world.

LEFTY: Absolutely. I love doing production work behind the scenes. I started getting into graphic design work and video editing, realizing that because I understood the business, I could accomplish the goal of what people wanted better. I've been lucky enough to do lighting design for *Boyz II Men* at the Mirage. I did casting for Meatloaf's show. I did illusion design for the Jackson Brothers. There's a topless show out here, *Sexy* — I've worked on that show for five years doing video content, graphics, helping props get built. I love entertainment, and even if I can't be onstage, if I can come up with a line, help with a prop — it's different, but I still get that thrill working on another show.

SCHER: I understand that you also were involved with running a restaurant.

LEFTY: As the four-wall deals became more popular and casinos were no longer buying shows, Seth and I looked at various other ways to bring in income until we could get a deal to perform again. We had a previous relationship with the new president of Luxor, who approached us about creating a live show for their nightclub, RA. That experience led to us eventually creating a restaurant/nightclub called *CatHouse*, themed around a vintage European style bordello. We had investors and people who were experts with food and beverage, including celebrity chef Kerry Simon, but our main focus was

the entertainment, design, theme, and decor in the venue. I learned that having many partners sometimes can make it difficult to get things approved, and that in the future I wanted to work more on entertainment projects, as the restaurant/nightclub business is very tough and competitive.

**SCHER:** You mentioned in your bio that you performed for Michael Jackson at his Ranch. What was the situation there?

**LEFTY:** At the time, we had worked with Franz Harary for a couple of years and Franz had pitched Michael Jackson about doing something for the Victory Tour, back in the day, with the Jackson Brothers. Michael was always a big fan of magic and Franz had performed numerous times at Michael Jackson's house. Franz reached out to Seth and me and said, "Hey I have the opportunity to do a show at Michael Jackson's house at Easter. Do you guys want to come and do your act?" I was like "ab-so-lutely!" Growing up two of my biggest inspirations were Michael Jackson and Michael Jordan, just because I was inspired by greatness.

It was such a thrill to go to the Neverland Ranch to perform for someone who I idolized, and I feel lucky that I got to meet him in such a normal setting as his house. Just hearing him talk with the cast and interacting with Franz, I really felt like, *Wow, I could be friends with Michael Jackson*, because we were at his house. I didn't meet him at a press junket, I didn't meet him after a concert where there's a hundred VIPs wanting to get a photo and a picture. I got to meet him in his most comfortable environment. It's definitely something I cherish forever.

**SCHER:** Did you spend time with him after the show?

**LEFTY:** After the show he hung out about fifteen or twenty minutes and talked with us and shared some stories. He had known Franz for years, so they had talked. So many times we idolize celebrities and we look at them not as people, but it was cool to meet the biggest star on the planet and see him just as a regular person. Clearly he was Michael Jackson, but Franz did a trick where he produced a giant snake and Michael

was talking about how his sister Janet loved snakes. In my head I'm thinking, *Oh my God, Janet Jackson*, but to him it's his sister. He didn't look at it as "oh, my super-famous" uber-talented sister Janet Jackson," he looked at it as "my sister Janet."

**SCHER:** When did you become Lefty?

**LEFTY:** The character developed when I was in *The Gamesters*. We were wearing zoot suits and we thought Lefty was a sort of cool gangster/mobster throw back. But Lefty came about when I was growing up. My last name is Leferovich and most people couldn't pronounce it. That's how my nickname, Lefty, came about. But my Lefty character developed in *The Gamesters*.

When Murray moved to Vegas in 2002, a couple months separate from when I had moved out here, he had a show at the Frontier. I was hanging out with him and watching the show and helping with the show, and at one

point his stagehand had a death in the family and had to go out of town for a week. Murray said, "I don't have time to train someone else. I know you don't want to be a stagehand, but if you played a stagehand in my act and helped with stuff, I'd also let you do your card manipulation act." So we went out to Home Depot and bought some overalls, and I wore a Home Depot hat and that incarnation of Lefty developed there, out of necessity for what he needed in the show. Over time we developed more and more bits together, where I became sort of a disgruntled stagehand character, and when Murray leaves the stage twice I get to do two of my acts, so it's something that's developed over time.

**SCHER:** How did you get to know Murray?

**LEFTY:** When we were in Atlantic City building our big *Gamesters* show, we were harassed by a producer on the East Coast to do a magic convention in



Promotional shots at the Neon Museum in Las Vegas.



New Jersey at a Ukrainian center and Murray was booked at the convention. At the Saturday night gala show, he opened the show and we closed the show and in the middle there were more local magicians. So we sort of bonded over the fact that he had done a bunch of professional gigs and we had done a bunch of professional gigs.

After we met in 2000, for the next two years we kept in touch and we kind of traded gigs. We had a gig in Austria and then we got another gig in Thailand, so we ended up taking the gig in Thailand and passing the gig in Austria to Murray and vice-versa. So it was sort of a mutual admiration and respect for the art form. I feel like we were kind of at similar places in our careers at the time, and we really bonded.

**SCHER:** How long have you been working with him as Lefty?

**LEFTY:** We've been working on the Strip — we started at the Trop, then we went to Planet Hollywood, and now we're back at the Trop — and we've been doing it for about ten years now.

**SCHER:** Sometime during the course of that Murray ended up on *America's Got Talent* and you were part of his team. You were helping him along the way, right?

**LEFTY:** *AGT* had previously presented magic on the show, but magic is unique in the way you film it. If I'm holding this pen, you can cut to different camera angles, but once I start the motion of putting the pen in my hand and closing my hand and open the hand and the pen's gone, it has to be one camera. Because then you know it's not a camera trick. So the camera can push in or push back. For *America's Got Talent*, not only did I help him with coming up with routining and staging and music, but it was really sitting with the director and the production team and explaining to them, "This is the way we need to shoot it." Sometimes you have to shoot something low; it can't be high. Or if there's black art it's got to be lit a certain way and it's got to be shot a certain way. I was the eyes in the audience. Even though he had done television, Murray was very used to performing for a live audience. There were times where we would do a take and I would say to him, "Just

so you know, when you do this part, the camera is pushing in close.” If a camera is twenty feet away, you can’t tell if it’s zoomed in on your hand or not. So a lot of times I would sit in the video village and after a take I would say, “Hey, we did a camera blocking and I just wanted to let you know, when you do this motion you’re super tight, so keep an eye on it.”

SCHER: Just a little bit about *America’s Got Talent* and how all that works — I’m curious over what sort of time frame the whole thing takes place. For example, that last thing with the train was a pretty big illusion. It didn’t just happen overnight, I assume. How are these things coming together and how much time is there to work on them and prepare what you’re doing?

LEFTY: There’s never enough time, I’ll tell you that right now. I applaud Murray because I couldn’t do it. Everything he did on *America’s Got Talent* he had never done before. The first time he did it was live on TV.

Murray understood the business side of it and sort of worked with them. I don’t know if other contestants do it — I like to think he pioneered it — but he not only worked on what he was going to do that week but also told them down the road what he was going to do. So when he pitched them the idea of producing the tiger, he said, “Just so you know, if you bring me back the next week, I’m going to vanish a train.” To this day Murray’s train illusion was and is the largest illusion they’ve ever had on the show. And ironically he tried to pitch smaller, intimate magic, but the producers at the time really wanted big magic. Murray is proficient in close-up magic and when Mat Franco won, Murray was like, “Oh, I wish I could have showed up with just a deck of cards.”

SCHER: What was the whole span of time in which Murray was involved?

LEFTY: It’s about nine months, but there’s a break. You film the first segment and then you get to the second round, which is the judge’s cut, where he made the car appear, and then there’s a break of about three or four months before the live shows. When they’re airing the first set of rounds that they filmed,

you’re then off. Also at the time it was at the tail end of when they had bad acts on the show. When buzzing acts was a big thing. Now I feel like the culture is much more sensitive and they focus on heart-warming stories and focus on good acts.

I tell people probably sixty percent is what you do and then forty percent is the story. The reason Murray did the train is because after he did the tiger trick they interviewed him and asked, “What did you have to give up to be on the show?” And we had talked about it at lunch. His mom was in town, and he said, “Well, I had to give up other gigs.” I said, “That doesn’t sound good. That’s not compelling for TV. If you had a scholarship to go to college and you gave that up to perform on *America’s Got Talent*, that’s giving something up.” So he said, “I had a job in the railway.” Murray’s dad worked in Canadian railway for thirty-plus years. His grandfather worked on it, his uncle worked on it. Everyone in his family came from the railway, so I said, “That’s something you gave up. When you were younger you could have gotten a job on the railway, but instead you pursued your love of magic.” That’s how the train vanish came up. If Murray’s dad was a firefighter, he would have tried to vanish a fire truck. The train was because Murray’s family was in the railway business.

SCHER: So how did that whole train illusion come together? That train was pretty intricate.

LEFTY: Absolutely. We had to get the body of a train and had to modify it so the stage could hold the weight. Murray and I worked on it as much as we could and then Murray brought in the late Don Wayne to help consult on it, and it was massive. Different teams of builders were working on it up until the actual day of the trick and because of the size and the scale of it, the first time he performed the trick in full was onstage in front of the audience.

SCHER: Where were you guys able to rehearse it?

LEFTY: Ironically, because it was so large we had to do some of the blocking in the parking lot. But to actually do the full rehearsal with the rigging, because it lifted up in the air and he had to pull the

cloth, we did it once before the taping, and when we did it for the live show it was the second time ever that he ran through it.

SCHER: Tell me about *Late Night Magic*, how you got involved and what you’re doing with that.

LEFTY: Michael Mayfield out here, who focuses on close-up magic — he also has a real job — had an idea a couple of years ago to do a late night magic show and he reached out to me about being the host. We had done the show four times in different venues and we were doing it once a month for locals and it was fun, but it really wasn’t making any money, and it wasn’t getting any traction because it was happening so sporadically. So, Michael got a promotion in his job and he said, “Hey, I’m going to be really busy, I’m going to need you to take this over.” I thought, *Wow, I don’t know if I’m ready to take over.* And then a producer I had worked with in town named Pete Housley had a bunch of shows that were happening during the pandemic. He was smart enough to realize, because conventions aren’t going to come to town, he could take over two ballrooms at this hotel and then, with social distancing, they can space out the seating and do shows. So he said, “Hey, I’m looking for a late night show.” He had come out to the first show I hosted to support me and said, “What about doing your late night magic show?”

Because I had the artwork and the acts and everything ready to go, we put the deal together in two days. Two weeks later we were up and running. It’s been great. So many times magicians are out on tour or performing in variety shows and they’re on their own. One thing that I’ve really enjoyed about *Late Night Magic* is the camaraderie. We’re about a team and making the show as good as possible. If Mondre has an idea for me and he’s like, “Hey man, have you thought of this?” If I have an idea for John Shaw or we have an idea for AnnaRose, it’s not about “I want my set to be the best;” it’s about how can we make everyone’s set better so that the show as a whole is great.

I think we fill a void. Right now, late night in Vegas if you don’t want to see a

topless show or you don’t want to go to a comedy show, we’re the only option. And I think there are people who don’t want to go to a nightclub, as a couple, and get a bottle for \$350 or \$500. When you look at our cast — from John Shaw, who does freak show stuff; Bizzaro, who does all original visual magic; AnnaRose, who combines mentalism and hypnosis; and then Mondre, who does a cool, hip dove act — it’s stuff that you can’t really see elsewhere in Vegas. And the fact that we are not trying to be a family friendly show — we can be a little bit edgier. We can push the envelope, which I think people like.

SCHER: At this stage of your life and your career, how do you feel about what you’re doing? Do you feel engaged with it? Do you feel passionate about it?

LEFTY: Absolutely. I tell people all the time I have a lot of friends who went to Penn who wound up being investment bankers and they make a lot of money. I’ve had friends from college visit me over the years and say, “If I had a passion, if I had a love, I’d give it all up to

do that.” At the end of the day you want to do something you’re happy about. A lot of people go to work and they’re miserable. I’m not a millionaire by any means, but I’m one of the few people you will talk to who truly loves to go to work. I love to put on my costume and perform for people. I love to have people who have a regular job, who have problems in their personal lives, and for an hour they get to forget about that. They get to come and watch and go to a different place and see something that they’ve never seen before. And if I can provide that, then I feel like I’m doing something good. ♣

*Herb Scher is president of Parent Assembly #1, now entering his third term in the role. As a journalist and photographer his work has been published in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Daily News, and many other publications. He is sometimes confused with the little-known magician Myron the Magnificent, but would like to clarify that there is no connection. See for yourself at myronthemagnificent.com.*



PHOTO: RICHARD FAVERY / BECKETT STUDIOS

“Stagehand” Lefty assisting Murray with the Milk in Light Bulb on the 2021 Salute to Magic.



PHOTO: SHANE O'NEIL