

MAGIC SPELLS – ROUND TWO

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In February's "Magic Spells" article an ostensibly new spelling magic effect was offered. At the 9th Gather for Gardner in Atlanta last March magician Mark Setteducati recalled a Bob Hummer trick that was similar. Mark wrote:

Effect: The magician writes a prediction on a piece of paper. The spectator takes the 10 cards and holds them face down. He then deals 3 cards, one by one, from the top of the packet to the bottom (keeping them face down). The next card (the fourth card) he turns face up. He then deals this face up card to the bottom and continues to deal another 2 cards to the bottom (3 cards total), then the next card he turns face up. He repeats this procedure 9 times, and as he is dealing the cards more and more cards are becoming face up. After 9 times of dealing 3 cards to the bottom and turning the next card face up, there will be only 1 card remaining face down. The magician shows the audience the prediction he wrote on the paper. When the final face down card is turned over, it is exactly the card the magician predicted!

Secret: The top card will always be the final card. Before you start the trick, have the spectator shuffle the cards. Then take the cards back and explain what you want him to do, demonstrating dealing 3 cards to the bottom and turning the next card face up. Make sure all the cards are now face down, give the cards a quick mix and secretly read the marked top card of the packet. Hand the packet of cards (face down) to the spectator and tell him to hold the cards while you write down a prediction. Write down the number of the top card that you just secretly looked. Now you are already to have the spectator start dealing and the trick will automatically work!

We agree with Mark that Hummer deserves priority but at least we have adapted an effect of a great master. In 1980 Karl Fulves published Bob Hummer's Collected Secrets with a masterful introduction by Martin Gardner. This book is out of print, but can possibly be found on the Internet. We have just obtained a copy and highly recommend it.

Word Ways is fortunate to have among its readers some of the ablest historians of magic. In addition to Setteducati of New York City, we have Max Maven of Hollywood, William Kalush, also of New York City, and Martin Gardner himself in Oklahoma. Perhaps these notables can find earlier instances of the following spelling effect which undaunted, we brazenly offer.

Arrange letter cards to spell in a stack the word ASTEROID. Say "ONE" and place the A on the bottom of the deck and continue "I really want to spell the numbers instead to see what will happen."

- (1) Spell "ONE" on S-T-E placing them on the bottom of the stack and remove the R and place it face down on the table.

- (2) Spell "TWO" on O-I-D, place them on the bottom and put the A face down at the right of the R.
- (3) Spell "THREE" placing S-T-E-O-I on the bottom and remove D face down to the right of the other two.
- (4) Spell "FOUR" on S-T-E-O and remove I to place it face down next in order.
- (5) Spell "FIVE" on S-T-E-O but this time place the O face down on the table. (We don't expect anyone to notice this slight deviation.)
- (6) Spell "SIX" on S-T-E cyclically and remove the S to the table.
- (7) Spell "SEVEN" alternately on T-E and place the E on the table.
- (8) Spell "EIGHT" on the T repeatedly and place the T on the table.

Now turn the eight letters up left to right and they magically spell RADIO SET.

Magicians will be able to vastly improve our delivery of this effect. We ask logophiles to find other examples of these "ASTEROID Words". The rules are simple, find a word that transposes into another word(s) using some spelling algorithm. It doesn't have to be "one, two . . .". It could be a constant for instance. Would "Word Ways" work for some word?

There are two other somewhat magical effects using ASTEROID cards.

ONE: Stack the cards in ASTEROID, order and cut the cards as often as you like. Now deal two hands of four cards each. It will be the case that at least one hand can be transposed into a word.

TWO: Stack the cards in alphabetical order ADEIORST. Spell the headline "Orbiting Space Object A Threat to Our Planet".

Spell the cards as usual to the bottom of the stack and after each word has been spelled, place the very next card face up on the table. After the headline is finished, you will have spelled ASTEROID. I.e. the headline defines the word!