

1961 Birth of the Modern Get Together (by Recil Bordner)

1961

Feb 1961 - This year, the Magician's Get-Together will be held here in COLON for the first time in nine years. The dates are August 24th, 25th, and 26th, and it will be held in the new High School Auditorium. The visiting Magicians will be housed, for the most part, in the homes of the citizens of Colon. The rooms are to be made available through the colon Junior Chamber of Commerce. The reason for this early announcement is to make it possible for you to plan your vacation. Anyone wanting to rent a cottage for that week should write to me soon, as these cottages on the lake are reserved many months in advance.

Mar 1961 - Already 31 registrations have been sent in for the 1961 Get-Together to be held here in Colon on August 24th, 25th & 26th. This makes me feel that you really want to see the 'old meeting' held back in the MAGIC CAPITOL OF THE WORLD. It would help us, when you send in your registration, if you state what you want for rooming accommodations: a single room; double room; or motel reservations in a neighboring town. Next month we will publish the motel rates and their distances from Colon. If you have attended one of the Colon affairs in the past and would like to stay with a particular friend again, let us know who it is and we will do our best to try to accommodate you.

This year the Get Together should be more economical for you than other conventions. First; the registration fee is only \$15, which entitles you to all the Big Shows, Night - Before Party, Lectures, and other features. Second: the Junior Chamber of Commerce has informed me that the rooms here in Colon will rent for \$3 to \$4 single and from \$4 to \$5 double each night. Third: the meals are all reasonably priced and hair-cuts are only \$1.25!

May 1961 - We are in the midst of booking acts for the Magic Get Together to be held here in Colon between August 23rd and 26th. The variety of talent already booked promises that this will be the BIGGEST & BEST magical convention in the Mid-West. Registrations are coming in from all over the country and everything indicates the attendance for this year's Get Together will be the largest in its history! All seat reservations are being made in the order that the registrations are received. The big public shows will be held in the new Colon Senior High Auditorium.

We have received several lots of old magic to be exchanged for new. Many of our readers have suggested that instead of having the 'Sealed Package Bargain Sale' that we hold a fast Auction instead. This appeals to us as there are many rare pieces of apparatus along with the good 'old' magic, this would give everyone a better opportunity to get what they want.

How many of you are interested in Ventriloquism? Paul Stadleman says that he can make a Ventriloquist out of anyone who is willing to try in just one week! He would like to get a number of the magicians together for the week of the Get Together and prove it! So if you are interested write us and perhaps we can arrange for this program.

Before this column was squeezed out in the last issue of the New Tops (Editor's note, HMPHH!!) I promised to have some data on the motels in the surrounding towns, here it is: BRONSON MICHIGAN (12 miles from colon) Bronson Motel, White Swan Motel COLDWATER, MICHIGAN (18 miles east of colon) Chester Motel, Crescent Drive Cabins, Dar-Bee Motel, Little King Motel, Coldwater Motor Court, New Michigan Motel, Rest Well Motel, Strong's Motel, Swartz Motel, Town & Country Motel ...

June 1961 - Enthusiasm is running high all through the Magic Capitol for the success of this year's Get-together! We have received more registrations than ever before at this early date. More 'name' acts have agreed to work including HARRY BLACKSTONE! All magicians, young and old alike, will be able to see three of the best 'Convention' Magic Shows of the year right here in the little town of Colon. Besides this, we will have a Night-Before "Magicians Only" Show in the old Colon Opera House, with all its old theatrical atmosphere. We are printing tickets for the Night-Before because there are only 500 seats in the Opera House.

The Tops junior Magicians Contest is scheduled for Friday afternoon preceding the Close-Up performers. The New tops will award the following prizes:

First Prize \$25.00 in Merchandise. Winner will also present his act on the Saturday Night Show.

Second Prize \$15.00 in Merchandise

Three Third Prizes !!! \$5.00 in Merchandise to each winner.

Since 1952, when the last Get-Together was held here in Colon, the Church situation has changed considerably. therefore it should not be necessary for anyone to have to drive out of town to attend Church Service.

ATTENTION MAGIC MINISTERS

We are attempting to plan a special seminar on Magic for Ministers at Abbotts Get Together in August. If you are planning to attend this event and would be willing to contribute to the program by demonstrating your favorite Scripture Magic application, please drop me a line in the next week or ten days and I will be happy to work you into the presentation. I feel that a variety of applications and demonstrators would be of significant aid to those who attend. It is always a pleasure to hear from you ...Rev Donald E Bodley

Oct 1961 - John Braun has done such a good job of writing up the shows and activities of this year's Get-Together that I will skip all that and just say thanks to all the acts and all the rest who worked to make it such a success. I want to thank all of you good friends who came and contributed to the good fellowship and general atmosphere of an old fashioned reunion. There will definitely be another Get Together, however, it is too soon to set a date or make an announcement.

I have visions of what would be an ideal set-up here regarding the show room and sales room as well as some improvements in the auditorium. Then there is the dream of the perfect line up of acts and lectures, but all these dreams will have to be tempered in the light of reality. If you readers who were here have any constructive suggestions that you would like to see incorporated into the next gathering of magicians here in the Magic Capitol of the World, please send them in.

I want to thank Mr. Blackstone for appearing at the Get together. I also want to thank him for his patience in posing for the many photographers and his interviews with the press concerning his return to Colon. I hope that the stories and photos will appear in the Nationally known magazines that covered the gathering. John Kobler, feature writer for the Saturday Evening Post, seems quite certain of having his article published sometime this year. His photographer, Bill Bridges, surely must have some prize pictures as he used what seemed to be miles of film. Charles Reynolds, who is an Abbott customer of long standing, covered the Get Together for Show Business Illustrated, the new magazine which he is now associated.

Epilogue: The Get Together would never again leave Colon and the evening shows are still performed in the Colon High School. Harry Blackstone Sr. would pass away in 1965, but his son Harry Blackstone Jr. would appear at 22 different Get Togethers, usually multiple days and always to sold out audiences.

The 'Sealed Package Bargain Sale' did evolve into an auction and is currently done after the Friday and Saturday evening shows.

Paul Stadleman won his bet and eventually coined the term Vent-O-Rama for his 1 week ventriloquial school. Paul was succeeded by George Schindler and Geoge was succeeded by Scott Correll. Rev Don Bodley seminar is now called Magic Ministers and he was succeeded by Duane Laflin and Jerry Burgess to name a few.

The Colon Opera House did not survive the years, but the show that played there, known as the "Night-Before Magicians Only Show" was also moved to the Colon High School, opened to the public, and is now the Wednesday 8pm Evening Show.

The forum for these articles, New Tops Magazine, was in its first year and would continue until 1994 in a printed format. The Tops junior Magicians contest has evolved into the Talent Stage Contest with significant increase in prize money (over \$1,000 in prize money and it keeps going up).

The brash editor who "squeezed" Recil's article out of the April 1961 edition would go on to be the face of Abbott's for the next 25 years, Neil Foster.

Recil Bordner and the Bordner family would continue to be sole owners and operators of Abbott Magic for well over 60 years and still going strong.



Duke Stern

Karrell Fox

Recil Bordner

