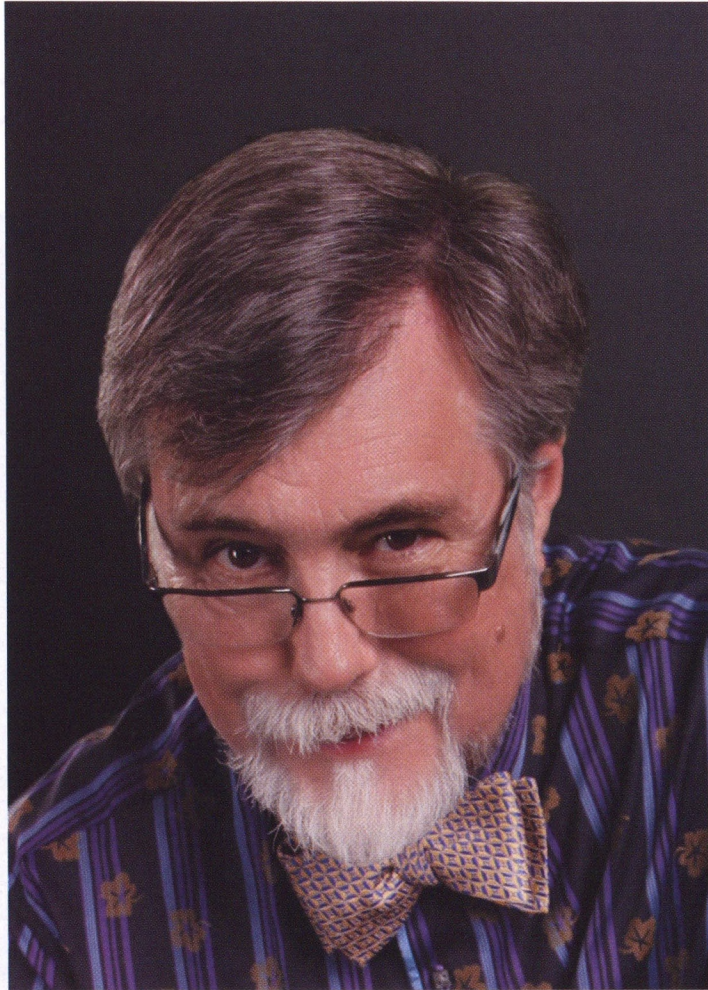




DOC EASON

CONNECTING WITH MAGIC

BY ALAN HOWARD

"At first I thought bar magic was all about the magic. And then I realized it was not so much about the magic as it was about selling whiskey. And then I realized it wasn't so much about selling whiskey, it was making memories, and then after that it kind of evolved into: it is really about connecting people. Making connections is really the most important part of what I do. The tricks are secondary; the trick is not the thing. For me, it's very personal."

Doc Eason's journey over the past 35 years has brought him to this realization. At 65, he has become well aware not only

of what he has done, but of how he is perceived and the affect he can have on his audiences.

He started in magic later than most who take up the craft professionally. Aside from a brief period at age fifteen when he acquired *How To Do Tricks With Cards* by Bill Turner — "An obscure little book, but I learned things about the glide and the pass," Doc says with exaggerated wonderment — he knew nothing about magic. At age thirty, he was managing a health food store and bar in Cupertino, California, just up the street from a fledgling computer company. "I served nature burgers and

smoothies to Steve Jobs before anyone knew who he was," Doc recalls. "Before anyone knew what Apple was, for that matter." It was at this job that William Eason gained the name "Doc," since he was able to recommend the right products for the various maladies of his customers and friends.

In the summer of 1977, Eason and a friend decided to vacation in the Colorado Rockies. They set out on their motorcycles on July 7, which Eason now recalls as a fateful day — 7/7/77. Their general destination was Snowmass, Colorado, where friends of theirs were co-

owners of the Tower Restaurant. Arriving five days later, they headed to the restaurant, but stopped in the adjoining bar for a beer before dinner.

"When I first sat down at the Tower Bar," Doc says, "I saw a table tent that said 'Bar Magic by Bob Sheets.' I said, 'Bar magic? What are they talking about?'" He had no idea what that might be, and certainly had never heard of Sheets. "Pretty soon, Bob comes around the corner, his eyes spinning around in his head. He had hair down to his shoulders, a leather vest, and blue jeans, looking not at all what you might consider a magician looks like."

Sheets did not inspire confidence in his magical skill. As Doc puts it, "Bob has a disarming way of dealing with cards; he appears to be a complete klutz." As he started to shuffle, the cards spilled all over the mat in front of him. Bob apologized and commented, "I'm not as good as the other guys." Doc rolled his eyes and thought, *This guy's an idiot. He doesn't know what he's doing. Magic? He obviously didn't read How To Do Tricks With Cards, like I did.*

But then Sheets stunned Doc and his friend with one miracle after another. Within a few minutes, Doc says, "I was figuratively bleeding from the ears because he roundhoused me. I didn't see it coming; he just put me in the ditch. I realized that this guy isn't an idiot; he knows exactly what's going on, and he's an unbelievable student of psychology." Later that night, Sheets again "lit the place on fire — again, figuratively speaking" and Doc was totally enchanted.

What most profoundly affected Doc was that not only did Bob's tricks fool him, but that he was able to connect with his audience and also keep up the drink sales at the bar. He'd start a trick, then ask, "Hey, how about another beer? Can I fill up that wine glass for you?" Doc recalls that Bob probably sold about \$40 worth of drinks before getting back to that trick he had been talking about. "That's what really talked to my soul. It wasn't so much about magic, it was about selling cocktails. I knew how to sell, and relating to people was always easy for me. But now I saw a situation where you could capture someone's attention with magic,

and pretty much sell them whatever you wanted to. With the magic tool in the kit bag — wow, they don't stand a chance!"

Sheets was doing what Eason already did — selling stuff. While one was dealing in nature burgers and smoothies and the other in beer and whiskey sours, the pace of their respective bars was very much the same. With this realization, Doc understood that this was a job for which he'd been training for most of his life.

The next day, Doc and friends ventured out on a planned backpacking trip; and before the end of the day, John Denver caught up with them at their camp. The musician was one of the biggest stars in the

on his Suzuki 380 motorcycle — Doc decided to stick around.

Bob Sheets had also been on the backpacking trip. As he and Doc are both natural storytellers and joke tellers, they spent a lot of time "telling stories and swapping lies." Noting that being out in the wilderness provides a social interaction that's different from usual, their interaction led to bonding and friendship, and Doc took the opportunity to pick Bob's brain about magic. He told Bob that he'd like to learn, so when they got back to town, Sheets loaned him some books: Frank Garcia's *Super Subtle Card Miracles* and *Million Dollar Card Secrets* — "which are terrific

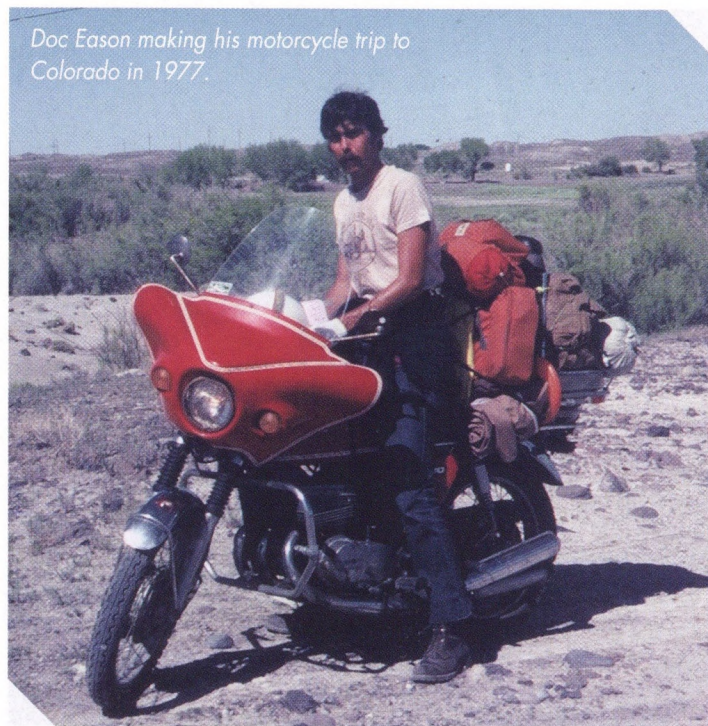
books" — a David Berglas book that wasn't very well known, and Bobo's *Modern Coin Magic*. Sheets told Doc to study and come back to him with questions in a couple weeks.

Doc says, "Most people you give those books to will get about two days into them and say, 'Well, I have to go get my hair cut now...' But I studied them. I was voracious, and I looked at magic as a craft." He made a list of questions, and Bob could tell that Doc really had been diligent, so he started giving him pointers. "Hold your hand this way, and move your finger over here." It was "the real work," Doc says, "the things you don't find in the books. If you really work at it, you often find there is a deeper level that

isn't included in the instructions."

Being fortunate enough to know the management and owners of the Tower, Doc became a waiter there, and he spent every spare moment watching Bob work in the bar. "It didn't matter that I had seen the trick the night before," he says, "because it was different. The crowd was different." Doc was absorbing everything, seeing how Sheets worked and related to the ever-changing clientele.

One of Doc's favorite quotes comes from Jamy Ian Swiss, who wrote, "Bar magic is not so much about the magic as it is about the people. It's just that the magic makes the people seem a little more interesting." Doc agrees, "That's really what's its all about. Bar magic is unlike any other kind of magic because it stands up to repeated viewing. You'll go back



world at that time, as well as co-owner of the Tower with Doc's friends. "Two cosmic things happened in that first 24 hours after I arrived, exhausted from the trip," Eason says. "I saw a magician who turned my life upside-down, and then I'm sitting on a log with John Denver. 'Rocky Mountain High' was already an anthem, and he was doing TV specials and was about to become a movie star in *Oh, God!* It was unreal. At this point I thought, *Maybe somebody is trying to tell me something here.* So I decided to stick around for a little bit."

Doc had fully intended to spend just a week in Colorado, backpacking and having fun, then get back on his motorcycle and return to California. But when his trip proved to be magical in more ways than one — and because he was not looking forward to another cross-country ride

and think, *Oh, he's going to do the rabbits again. Let's watch the girl this time!* Or, *Good, he's going to do the handkerchief trick*, or whatever, but because the emphasis is not on the tricks but on the people, and the people change every night, it's different all the time. Even though the tricks and the lines are all the same, how the people react is always going to be different."

The first trick Bob taught Doc was the Copper Silver Brass Transposition, from Johnson Products. Bob told Doc, "Get this coin trick; it will be perfect for you." Doc still refers to it as "the old three-coin trick," and he notes, "You don't have to be a coin guy, but it makes you *look* like a coin guy. That really appealed to me."

Not long after Doc arrived at the Tower, Sheets left to open his own magic bar, the Jolly Jester, in nearby Aspen. Magician John Lonergan continued at the Tower, and Doc worked with him as a barback. John taught him some tricks, including a card transposition that Doc still uses a version of today.

Doc acquired more tricks and books. He practiced. He studied. He began trying out his new skills on patrons in the bar. And he studied some more.

Another "seminal point of that whole introduction to magic" was a Christmas gift of *The Magic Book* by Harry Lorayne. "I still refer to that," says Doc. "There's things that I do in my act every night that come from that book. It's a terrific, unbelievably valuable book."

Some of the most important mentoring Doc received came from what he calls "the Magic College." When Sheets opened the Jolly Jester, he brought his friends in to help out — Steve Spill, J.C. Wagner, Eddie Goldstein, Johnny Fox, and others. At that point, Doc had no idea who these people were, but he took advantage of the opportunity to hang out with them almost every afternoon. Someone would teach him a trick, and he'd go to work in the evening and do the tricks four or five times a night.

A decade later, Doc would hire Eric Mead — "one of the most brilliant magicians on the planet" — to work at the Tower. That became "a mentor/mentee

relationship. Eric was definitely well versed, but not at bar magic. I mentored him in bar magic, but he mentored me in a lot of other areas, magical thinking and the like."

In his early days as a student of the art, Doc says, "The biggest piece of advice that Bob Sheets gave me was to go get caught. Because that's how you find out where the weak point is." The bar setting was the perfect place for Doc to hone his material. Working in a resort community brought a steady flow of new audiences. Sometimes people would come back a couple of times in a few days, but generally it was a new clientele each week, and he could do the same trick

as explained in Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers* — Doc reckons that over the next 27 years he probably logged 25,000 hours in his time at the Tower, before the venue closed in April 2004.

"I figured out it wasn't hard to fool somebody," Doc says. "Fooling somebody is pretty easy — just ask those guys who put out those \$25 single-trick DVDs — but what's going to make the people want to stay there and see more, or buy another drink? You've got to have more to it than just the tricks."

Still, this was what he calls "magic in the trenches — doing hand-to-hand combat some nights." Sometimes bar magic isn't

pretty, because there's alcohol involved, and that's a big wild card for some people. But Doc was more than just a guy trying to fool the crowd with tricks. Charming, likeable, interested in people, and a loquacious teller of tales, his ability to relate to individuals as well as an audience engaged them with a whole personality package, rather than having to baffle them with a trick a minute.

Doc says it took him a while to learn to do the three-coin trick, but not really too long to perform it. After J.C. Wagner suggested he do the trick in the hands of his volunteer, Doc had people screaming at the bar. *I do this and I get screams? he marveled. And they throw money at me?! This is terrific! What's not to like?*

"You can read the instructions and rehearse your show, but it's a whole different thing when you are out there doing it," Eason explains. "You have to *get out and do it*. When I pick up a new trick or routine, I like to envision it as a cube. And every time I do it, I shave off just a little bit of those edges. Sometimes it takes years of developing a thing, but every time you do it, you shave off a little bit more. What you're aiming for is to just have a round ball — the routine with all the edges off. Once you get past the cube part and it starts to round out, that's when it really feels good."

Naturally, sanding out all the rough spots and polishing a routine until it rolls smoothly applies not only to the technical aspects, but also to the presentation — the timing, the lines, the interplay with the



A promotional photo, circa 1985.

four or five times every night. Accruing more performance hours all the time, Doc learned not to fear making mistakes in public, learned what worked and what needed to be fixed, and became accustomed to the fact that not every crowd was going to love everything he did.

A bar audience is quick to let a magician know what they like and don't like, and if they were actually fooled or not. Eason burned through a lot of tricks and made his share of mistakes. He recalls once doing Martin Lewis' Sidewalk Shuffle "holding it upside down, so I was exposing how it worked." He has never done that trick since, but he found plenty of others that were worth pursuing.

His magic grew steadily stronger. Pointing out the "10,000-hour rule" — the amount of time it takes to master a skill,



The Card on Ceiling was a popular trick at the Tower Bar. Doc behind the bar soon after he started at the Tower [upper right], and circa 1992, after he developed a different sense of style.

crowd. Sometimes Doc would come up with a new line; sometimes the audience would toss one in that got a laugh, and from the next night onward it would be Doc using those words. Still honing, show after show, night after night, until the routines eventually just flowed. "I don't think that anything I'm doing is revolutionary," Doc admits, "but everybody looks at it and goes, 'Wow.' You don't see the evolution, but if you do something for so long, you're going to get good at it."

At the Tower, Doc not only stepped up to become the main worker at the magic bar, but he grew into one of the premier magic bartenders anywhere. Much of what he still performs took shape five nights a week over that quarter of a century.

What Doc considers his "hardcore" act, his standard main show that runs about

eighty minutes, now generally starts with a color-changing knife routine — "something short to kind of warm the crowd up." He follows that with the old three-coin trick, then moves into his card set, which eventually climaxes with the Card Under Glass. "It's very modular," he says of the card act, "so I can move different sections in and out, depending on the attention span or how much time we have. But it is basically the card going under the glass three, four, five times." In the process, he is also setting the audience up for the routines that follow.

A routine themed around bar bets is next, and that routine culminates in Bob Read's Transpo Tumbler. In Doc's act, the piece is very autobiographical and lets the audience learn more about him. The effect involves a bar glass that is wrapped in newspaper, vanishes under the spectator's hand, and reappears under a hat. Doc tells various tales along the way, but when he has the volunteer's hand hovering over what appears to be the wrapped glass, he says, "Story time's over. It's magic time." At that, he pushes the hand down and the paper shell collapses. A muse alit on his



shoulder one night and gave him that line, and it fits his act perfectly.

Next up is Doc's acclaimed Bill in Lemon routine, which he says is "essentially Steve Spill's, with some of my touches on it." A memorable routine, but perhaps not as much as Eason's next, which has become one of his trademark numbers: a multiple selection of cards. He says that much of his success over the years has come from simply "paying attention and remembering names." In the routine, Doc has as many as 25 cards selected and returned to the deck. In due course, he manages to not only find all of the chosen pasteboards, but to also remember the names of all 25 participants. The calling out of names makes the show personal for as many people as possible, helping them to remember Doc, as well. And the feat often does not end with the performance that evening. There have been times — reputation-enhancing instances — when a helper from a show walks into the bar five years later, and Doc will still look up, call that person by name, and recall specific details about him or her.



The Card Through Ceiling Fan became a trademark effect. [Right] A younger Doc working with one of the classics.



After the multiple-selection segment, there is one final routine: passing the hat to do the Card on Ceiling. Passing the hat has always been the main way in which Doc gets paid for his shows in Snowmass. While he may get a fee from the management of the resorts in which he has worked, it is nothing compared to what the audiences give him directly. This allows the people to show their appreciation for his work, and for the resorts to see Doc as much more affordable than he would otherwise be. Plus, it is simply the way he was taught. Bob Sheets did the Card on Ceiling with a dollar bill, and so does Doc.

Except that Doc does not simply use a one-dollar bill. Having figured it would be better to get a dollar from a lot of people rather than just one, he started collecting cash from the audiences to use in the trick, eventually sticking one of the bills to the ceiling along with a signed card, but pocketing the remainder of the currency. A successful ploy, but it got even better after a challenge from a customer.

Having seen Doc throw a deck at the ceiling to leave a selected card attached

above, a man pointed to the ceiling fan in the middle of the room and stated that he had \$100 that said Doc could not repeat the trick underneath the whirling blades. Doc walked out from behind the bar and into the main part of the room to study the challenge. He figured the four blades all together only accounted for about thirty percent of the space above him, and the rest was open and clear. He knew they used to shoot machineguns through the propellers of World War I airplanes, so there had to be a way to get through there. Having gone through these mental calculations — and having established that it was not a bet, so Doc would not have to forfeit \$100 if he failed — he gave it a try.

The cards went right through to the ceiling, leaving one card stuck above the spinning fan, and the only person more surprised than the guy with the hundred-dollar bill was Doc himself. And Doc knew he had a new closer for his act, as well as a reason to pass the hat and be sure to make at least \$100. If the hat came back with less, it would get passed around again until it did, although reaching that amount was

not difficult in a resort that catered to a well-off clientele. With his Card Through Ceiling Fan, Doc became known as the guy who does the Hundred Dollar Card Trick. And it helped put his kids through college.

How often does the trick *not* work? “Well, it would be thirty percent of the time,” says Eason. “Very unscientifically, three times out of ten it wouldn’t go through.” Then he’d try again, after first finding the now-scattered hundred dollar bill and the card with the names on it, then the rest of the deck. Once these were all back together, he’d get the crowd psyched up to see it tried again. And sometimes again. “Generally speaking, it would go through on the second time. But there were those special nights when it didn’t go through then, or the third, or... There was one night when I couldn’t put it through if I turned the fan off, but luckily those nights are few and far between. The odds were in my favor, so I persevered.”

Like most working close-up performers, Doc has an “A” set and a “B” set, and more. His second act includes “some stuff from Mullica, some cards are selected,

there's a coin routine, and a version of Sam the Bellhop."

Doc admits, "I think I can safely say that very little of what I do is strictly original. I'm more of a song stylist — I don't write the songs, but I sing them differently from the way the other guy does." He admires the people who can create tricks, but he really is not that guy himself. Yet he can take a trick and put his fingerprints on it, and over time it evolves into something uniquely his own.

One of his better known pieces is the Anniversary Waltz, a trick that was brought to his attention by Phil Wilmarth, who published Christopher Carter's trick Cold Fusion in a *Linking Ring* "Parade" years ago. Phil called Doc and said it seemed like the perfect effect for him. "And it was just a knuckle-buster," Doc says, "plus it was four pages of instruction with no illustrations. How could it be any good?" Still, he took the time to learn it, and simplified all the sleights into merely two double turnovers, and was left with another signature routine.

But for Doc, it is still never about the tricks. It is always about the people. Another of his favorite quotes comes from Maya Angelou, who stated that people don't remember what you did, they remember how you made them feel. In a resort area, people come in predisposed to have a good time, and Doc sees it as his job to provide a good time for them and to facilitate their enjoyment. He again emphasizes, "Magic is a vehicle to connect the people. It's not the be all and end all. 'I can make a hole in the card appear and disappear!' Who gives a shit? It's a trick. It's the stuff that goes on *between* all the tricks that is really the important part."

When the Tower closed its doors for the final time in the spring of 2004, the realization that the bar would not be opening again later in the year was a big shake-up for Doc. He was used to the Tower closing during the off-seasons in Snowmass — the crowds just weren't there outside of winter and summer. At those times, he would look for work in Aspen, which is pretty much right next door but less seasonal than Snowmass, or he would go through a stack of business cards he'd collected during the year, start making calls, and put out a small newsletter. Organizations would hire him for spot dates, and it was not unusual for an oil company to send a plane to pick him up and take him to Texas for a private show. But without the

Tower to return to later on, Doc realized that if he had no regular place to work, there would be a lot of people with money in their pockets who would like to see him and have no way to do so.

Snowmass is not a big place, so in his mind he went up and down the main street and thought about who might be receptive to a pitch for a bar magician. The manager at the Artisan Restaurant & Bar at the Stonebridge Inn had seen Doc before, so he hired him for a night to see what he could do in the new venue. The result was such a success that he has been working there ever since.

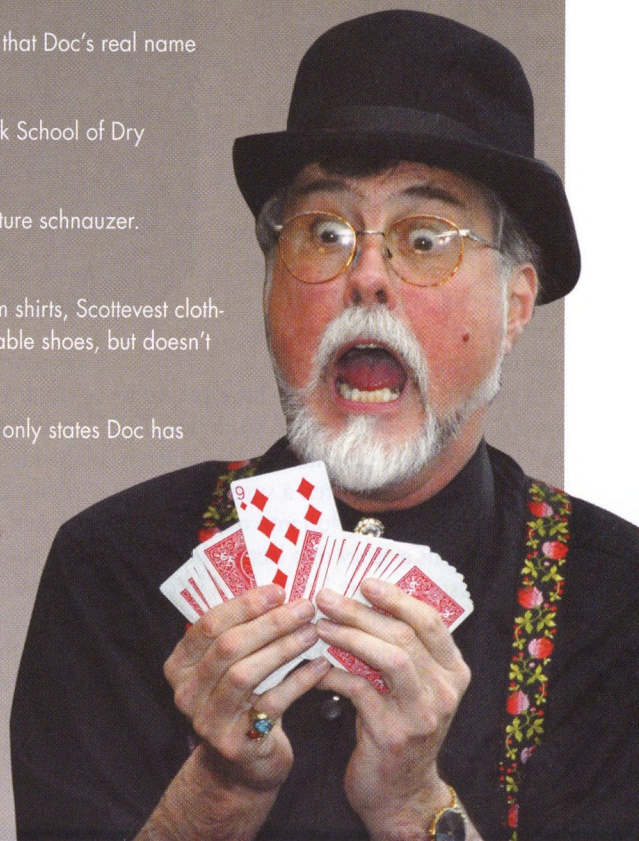
Doc doesn't sell drinks at the Artisan; he just does magic, working behind a twelve-foot "bar" created from two tables placed end-to-end. Ten or twelve people are seated at the bar, with about the same number sitting behind them, and more people craning their necks from the back. There is also a slanted mirror over the table, like at a cooking school, so even the people way in the back can see the action on the close-up

mat. "If you are not able to see or hear the guy at the bar," says Doc, "then you really don't care about the show at all, and you'd just as soon start talking." That's never conducive to the best of shows, so Doc makes sure as many people as possible can see and hear him.

He used to work on a four-inch platform at the Tower, putting him just a little bit higher, so he could address those people who would otherwise be lost. A lavalier microphone and the mirror made it much more friendly, and everybody knows what's going on. The Tower had people at the bar, then an area where people could stand, but then the room went up about eight inches, so more people could stand, and then there was another platform behind that, and finally a bench that could be stood on. This allowed the magicians there to play to sixty or seventy people at once. "Obviously, at that point you are not doing micro-magic anymore; you cross the line to parlor magic, where the props are up and everybody can see them."

SEVEN THINGS YOU MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN ABOUT DOC EASON

- 1 Few people outside the IRS know that Doc's real name is William.
- 2 Doc graduated from the New York School of Dry Cleaning in 1966.
- 3 Doc's best friend is Lila, his miniature schnauzer.
- 4 Doc is addicted to Robert Graham shirts, Scottevest clothing, dental hygiene, and comfortable shoes, but doesn't tolerate cabbage.
- 5 North Dakota and Maine are the only states Doc has never been in.
- 6 Doc has lived in a ski resort for 35 years — and hasn't skied in 30 years.
- 7 While he would really like to own a 1965 Corvette Stingray, Doc will probably settle for hearing aids.



Doc also points out other logistics, such as not wanting to do the lemon trick early on in the night, when there are only four people watching. "You have to have a lot of people involved in it. 'We'll do that later, when the crowd gets here. But let me show you this thing...'" Doing a more intimate trick gets things started, helps to build a crowd, which in turn brings in more and more. By the time Doc gets to his multiple card selections, he can involve most of the audience. "That's not a card trick anymore," he enthuses. "It's an event."

In the Tower's heyday, Doc would work five nights a week, starting at six and going until one o'clock in the morning. "I'd walk out of the place and realize I hadn't even stopped to take a piss. We were just going constantly." But now, even though he doesn't feel his age, he realizes that at 65 he does not have the stamina or endurance of his younger days, and a much more relaxed schedule is fine. "I love doing it, but working 6 to 10 is fine," and appearing just two days a week. He tells the audiences, "I'd love to stick around and party like we used to, but why don't we just come back on Thursday for some more?"

His work and experiences doing magic in Colorado are still as fresh to Doc now as they were when he first stumbled upon the scene all those years ago. But the emotions and the feelings go a lot deeper these days. "Every single night that I work now," he reflects, "there are kids coming in, and at one point the dad will come over and say, 'I was his age when I first saw you.' A real warm feeling washes over me. Not everyone has the opportunity to do that."

Connections with people have played a special role in Doc's life and work, and he has been open to experiencing and actively exploring them. It's often a surprise what these encounters develop into over the years. He tells a story of a lecture he once did in Tucson, having been talked into stopping there while *en route* to work in Los Angeles. "Little did I know, I was like the fifth guy in ten weeks there. They'd been magic'd out and had spent all their money on the other guys." Only one attendee

bought anything after the lecture, a single small prop. Doc left town cursing his decision to drive out of his way to make that stop for one small sale.

Much later, in January 2011, Doc received a phone call at home in Snowmass. The raspy voice on the other end of the line identified himself as Jim Tucker. "I know that name, said Doc. 'You're the one guy who bought something from me in Tucson. You're practically in my will for that!'" Tucker mentioned the shooting of US Con-

Doc recalls, "I had to sit down. I was completely blown away." You never know what small action or event will result in something far more significant later on.

"*Ichigo; ichi-e*" is a Japanese phrase meaning "one meeting, one moment in time." That was the phrase told to Doc by a Japanese magician when he was giving a lecture overseas. He was telling Doc that one seemingly random meeting long ago may affect future encounters. If Doc had not happened to step outside the Magic

Castle one night ten years earlier, he would not have run into Shigeo Futagawa, who booked him for the lecture tour all those years later, resulting in this man telling him, "*Ichigo; ichi-e*."

Doc explains, "One moment in time; one chance in a lifetime. Every encounter we have is precious. It's Zen Buddhism." With that insight, he suddenly realized in a flash of clarity why, years before, he had done that seemingly worthless lecture in Tucson. "I had to get this piece of apparatus into that man's hand so that eventually he could use it as therapy."

Doc Eason has been lauded by his colleagues over the years. He was named Close-up Magician of the Year at the Magic Castle two years in a row (2008, 2009), as well as Lecturer of the Year in 2009, and the first Magic Bartender of the Year in 2004. He says the accolades leave him humbled. "I just don't think I'm that good. But the fact that my peers thought so — that absolutely surprised me. The other guys in the running were much better than I am." Yet his humanness, the care he takes with the audience, and the feel-

ing he projects from behind the bar are what did that for him. "I'm truly honored. People tell me I'm legendary. I don't think so; I still take a piss over two shoes and worry about the rent next month. I don't consider myself legendary. If people do, it's flattering, but uncomfortable for me."

Eason has always had a different perspective from most conjurers, having not been drawn to the profession until age thirty, rather than in childhood as most magicians were. He did not learn classically so much as by the seat of his pants, but Doc feels that



gresswoman Gabby Giffords, which had occurred in Tucson a few days earlier and was the biggest news story of the day. Tucker had not only been there, he had taken two bullets and was calling from the hospital. Taken aback, Doc asked why Tucker would be phoning him at a time like this, and he was told, "Remember in Tucson, you sold me that piece of apparatus? For rehabilitation, the doctor wants me to do something with repetitive motion, and the only thing I can do is that coin trick. And every time I do that trick, I think of you."



Audiences packed the bar, and children as well as adults filled the floor space in front of the bar, at the Tower. Recent photos of Doc working for tourists in Aspen, and telling the story of Kate & Edith.

this let him stay more focused on his actual goals in magic. "I understood why I was there, and that was to make the cash register ring," he says. I understood the whole GTFM [get the f---ing money] part of it. A lot of guys get a job in the bar and think their job is to do magic. And it's not. It's to make the cash register ring, and to make the people feel good so they want to come back in the next time, and bring their friends with them, and to spend *their* money, too. I don't really have tricks that are magician-foolers; I don't fry the boys that much, because the boys aren't paying my rent."

Impressing magicians and winning awards is not why Doc started working the Tower, and it's not why he has remained in magic all these years.

He says he is still wrestling with the idea of *ichi-go; ichi-e*. "It is a hard concept for

Westerners to wrap their minds around. But where I am with magic these days is this profound connection with people, and how it affects people." That's actually where he always has been with his magic; he is just more conscious of it nowadays.

One of Doc's current projects, along with a book about his life and work that he has been amassing material and stories for over the past ten years, is a show called *Secret Destinations*. He took the title from German philosopher Martin Buber, who said, "All journeys have secret destinations, of which the traveler is not always aware." On one level, the show is the story of magic in Snowmass; on another level, the show is about discovering where you were intended to be. The Tower bar was one of the secret destinations Doc was meant to encounter on what he intended to be a brief motorcycling and backpacking vacation. "It became a kind of crucible of events and people, and it was a very special time and place. The show comes down to touching people and understanding what it is that we do."

Doc is currently working with a coach on rounding off some of the edges from his



Secret Destinations cube. The show works fine in Colorado, where it plays to people who know the area or can look out the window and see what Doc is referring to. "Let me tell you some stories of this town from forty years ago," Doc announces to his audiences, and his tales add some depth and dimension to their ski vacation. But he is working to give the show a more universal message, and to tune it into something he can present to corporate audiences everywhere.

Looking back at his journeys, planned and otherwise, Doc marvels at the way things have come together. "This is what I do, this is who I am, and this is what I was put here for. I'm one of the lucky people who has been shown why I'm here on this earth. I'm here to lighten people's burdens, have some fun along the way, make them laugh, fool them a little bit, just have some fun. And I like to share what I've learned along the way.

"If I could do this for 35 years, and then talk about it for another fifteen, that'd be just about ideal." **M**

To see Doc Eason in action behind the bar, visit [MAGIC Plus at MAGICmagazine.com](http://MAGICPlus.atMAGICmagazine.com).