



STEPHEN CANTRELL/Staff photographer

Clare Cummings, now 71, continues to study magic and add new tricks to his repertoire. Occasionally, he will perform shows, but he's selective about his audiences.

Milky remembers

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Brotherhood of Magicians, to which he still belongs, and once served as Detroit area president.

As Cummings became more accomplished, he appeared on radio programs (his tricks were described step-by-step) and gave live performances with two entertainment groups, Chuck Stanley's (Happy Hour Club) (which included Danny Thomas) and The Pine Center Gang.

In 1949, when television was new, Cummings teamed up with a friend to form Peter, Clare and Oscar, a take off on Kukla, Fran and Ollie.

CUMMINGS was Clare, a clown who performed magic tricks; his friend was Oscar, a marionette puppeteer, and Peter was a live rabbit.

The show lasted 13 weeks. The station's salesman didn't believe in children's programming and wouldn't find a sponsor for it, Cummings said.

Shortly afterward, though, when Twin Pines was looking for a clown and magician to promote its milk, the company discovered Cummings through the old Peter, Clare and Oscar clips.

Cummings portrayed Milky the Clown, with a rabbit puppet named Creamy, for 14 years. He appeared on all three major Detroit stations, entertaining an estimated two million children during that decade and a half. "I raised a lot of kids," Cummings said proudly.

The show wound up being the longest-running in the Detroit area with the same sponsor. At one time, Milky had higher ratings than Arthur Godfrey, Cummings said, and Twin Pines's home delivery routes increased from 200 to 500.

In 1964, when Cummings paid off his house, he quit the show — it was too hard to juggle with his full-time career

as a sales representative for DuPont. Twin Pines found a replacement for Cummings and the show continued for three years.

Cummings, however, continued until 1981 to make personal appearances as Milky at banquets and birthday parties. His picture still appears on Twin Pines products, now available through Detroit Pure Milk.

CUMMINGS believes "Milky's Party Time" was a quality children's show. He tried not to repeat the same magic trick within one year and "never talked down to the kids."

It was a soft way to sell a product, he said, compared to many of today's commercials which treat youngsters "as though they're dumb."

While alcohol was a part of his life for 40 years, it became a problem for Cummings during the last 10 years, particularly after retirement, he said. Cummings is also retired now from DuPont.

When he couldn't control his actions any longer, Cummings said he asked his wife, Peg, to take him to William Beaumont Hospital, which referred him to an alcoholic treatment program in Howell, Mich. He completed the program 1½ years ago.

In addition to performing magic during his retirement, Cummings continues to be interested in its history and preservation.

He collects old magic books (one set dates back to 1774) and has donated many of his Milky memorabilia to a magic museum in Marshall, Mich.

Magic, which is "as old as the apple," has always been popular, Cummings said. "It makes you laugh because you're fooled. People like to be fooled — it's the shock element. Something happens that can't be done. It's a fun deal," he said.

Would oppose former boss

Nichols eyes country sheriff's job

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

John Nichols, Farmington Hills police chief, is being urged by Oakland County Republicans to make a run for sheriff in 1984.

"I'm giving it serious consideration," Nichols said at a West Bloomfield Republican Club gathering last week. Often called a "cop's cop," Nichols came up the ranks as a Detroit patrolman to become that city's police commissioner in 1970.

Nichols drew a larger audience at last week's meeting than Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy or gubernatorial candidate Richard Headlee had when they spoke to the same GOP group.

IT CALLS REPUBLICANS that the sheriff post is the only high-county office not held by the party. In fact, current sheriff John Sprenkle's name never passed the membership's lips. Club president Dennis Votis asked Nichols if he would run against "what's his name?"

Nichols only would say he would consider running if he had the financial and political support to challenge his old boss.

Sprenkle hired Nichols as undersheriff after Nichols lost in a race for mayor of Detroit 10 years ago. Nichols has been police chief in Farmington Hills for the past five years.

Nichols talked about victims of crime at the club's meeting. "Every year we 'point with pride or view with alarm' the crime statistics reports," Nichols said. "Rarely are the police the victims. It's always a civilian, not a cop."

"We talk about the financial impact, seldom about the individual. We've failed to look at the personal impact that to many, is a disaster. Crimes against property have economic impact. Personal crimes leave a lot of hurt, a lot of physical and emotional pain."

"Several lives are touched. You can't put a dollar value on that," he said. "You (victims) pay your own doctors' bills if you get your brains kicked out."

John Nichols
sheriff candidate?

SOCIETY IS MORE attuned to the rights of the accused than to the victim's rights, he said. Noting that the

state compensates an average of just \$1,500 to each victim, Nichols said even those funds are being cut.

"If government can't protect its people, who should?" he asked.

You have a 1-in-7 chance of being a victim in Michigan, said Nichols. He also pointed out the secondary impact to victims and witnesses.

"They begin by telling their story to an officer, then repeating it to a detective, the prosecutor, and then facing court delays."

You begin to wonder who is on trial when you're challenged on everything except your name."

Nichols said, however, police attitudes are changing on sexual assaults. "There used to be a Victorian attitude that women should put up a fight. The humiliation and embarrassment left a permanent mark on the (female) victim."

Nichols had harsh words for the so-called "victimless crime" — the corporate crime.

"It costs billions of dollars. There is no way to measure the losses."

PEOPLE MUST recognize that statistics are something other than numbers and represent the problems of people who have been hurt, he said.

Nichols's speech ended with many questions focused on the possibility of his running for sheriff.

"I've had many overtures," he admitted. He said if he were sheriff, then he would seek "a climate of cooperation among police and put personal aggrandizement aside."

Health management taught

Health care managers face challenging problems in 1983 with staffs often operating short-handed, employee morale at new lows, and state and federal cutbacks slicing budgets to the bone.

Mercy College of Detroit offers managers practical solutions to these and other supervisory problems in their Continuing Education workshop, "Survival Skills for Managers in Health Care Settings: Practical Approaches," 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, March 21.

Supervisors of hospitals, nursing and convalescent homes, home health agencies and mental health facilities will learn how to handle conflicts between patient/client care goals and management objectives; what leadership style is best responded to; how to engage co-workers in establishing common work goals; and how stress-related problems disrupt efficient management and reduce productivity.

This individualized seminar will be taught by three experts in the field affiliated with the Northwest Guidance Center, a private mental health center in Detroit. Jonathan L. York, Ph.D., executive director; Norman P. Dwalish, Ph.D., psychologist and administrator; and Sylvester Hackney, program director of Adult Services. All three have

worked in a wide variety of public and private health care agencies, businesses and industries.

The workshop has been approved for 7 Continuing Education Units. The \$85 fee includes registration, workshop materials and lunch. The limited registration deadline is March 1.

The workshop will be held at the Mercy College of Detroit Conference Center, 3200 W. Outer Drive at the Southfield Freeway south of Seven Mile in Detroit.

For further information or to register, call 592-6191.

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