

Maryland

MAJOR LEAGUE MAGICIAN

BY CARYN SAGAL

DRESSED IN A TUXEDO with an orange tie and cummerbund with the Orioles logo, magician Dick Steiner heads off to entertain corporate clients in the sky boxes of Camden Yards.

Combining his love for America's national pastime with his own skills, this Millersville resident has transformed himself from a 21-year Army Signal Corps officer into a magical entertainer with a following around the major leagues. "Orioles Magic" is frequently a key part of his act.

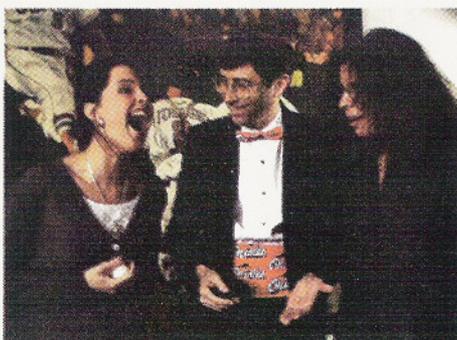
"I love doing close-up magic and never get tired of people's expressions when the magic happens right in their hands," says Steiner, who markets himself with his own baseball card.

Steiner, often demonstrating sleight-of-hand tricks against a pad mocked up like a baseball diamond, has performed his magic at three Oriole Opening Days and two All-Star games, and has been asked to appear at All-Star celebrations for the next three years.

At a suite party on the night Cal Ripken tied Lou Gehrig's record, Steiner converted cards with Ripken's and Gehrig's photos into cards with numbers "2-1-3-0."

"Dick has performed at a lot of our events," says Julie Wagner, community relations director for the Orioles. "He works crowds well and people really enjoy his act."

But Steiner's magical act goes beyond the world of baseball to include international circles. Already, the 49-year-old has entertained



"I LOVE DOING CLOSE-UP MAGIC," SAYS STEINER (TOP, AT THE CAMDEN CLUB AND, BELOW, WITH ALL-STAR BARRY BONDS).

twice at the White House and at the Australian embassy, and at events attended by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, members of Congress and such celebrities as Shirley MacLaine, Tom Selleck and Hugh Downs.

Despite his growing list of impressive clientele, Steiner especially likes to entertain ballplayers. After Steiner worked his magic for the Minnesota Twins, first baseman Kent Hrbek later wrote Steiner that the Twins "all agreed that your magic was the best we'd ever seen close up."

Three to four times per week, Steiner demonstrates his magic and mentalism (acts involving mental skills such as mind reading) at banquets, conferences, executive retreats, private parties and sales meetings.

According to Barbara Marder, president of the Baltimore-based Entertainment Consultants, "Steiner's baseball niche is very clever, but I think his mentalist act really astounds people."

In one of his mentalism feats, he sends a letter to an event organizer a week or two before performing at the event. The letter remains unopened until the performance, when the organizer discovers that Steiner accurately predicted the day's headlines.

Steiner, a West Point graduate and student of Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, says he developed his stage presence in the Army.

After meeting two magicians who rekindled his childhood love of magic, Steiner learned as much as he could. Upon retirement as a lieutenant colonel in 1989, he decided to make his next career out of performing magic.

Aside from his shows, Steiner regularly practices another trick: playing "Mr. Mom" to daughters, Carlie, 5, and Lindy, 2, while his wife, Suzanne, works as a Navy Commander.

Steiner actually proposed to Suzanne with a card trick in which she had to guess the suit. She guessed diamond and a diamond ring emerged.

Caryn Sagal is a contributing writer for MARYLAND MAGAZINE.