



On the Cover
By [Karl Rabe](#)

Magic Messenger

February 2026

IBM 210

FEBRUARY 2026

SAM 88

The Magic Messenger



The Official Newsletter of
The Ann Arbor Magic Club



Eric Bedard *literally* makes headlines and wows the Ann Arbor Magic Club as the February Featured Performer.



President's Corner
By [Sean Howell](#)

Friendship, Fellowship and the brotherhood.

Our hearts go out to our dear friend and member Phil Mann. I want to thank everyone for coming together during a members time of need. It truly meant a lot to see the outpouring of care and concern for our fellow member. I'm proud to be a member of a club that comes together in such a way. The camaraderie is truly amazing to see.

As we move forward we are going to step back a moment. Mike Thornton, the silver tongued invigorator of the legerdemain is going to reset and deliver his talk on strolling magic. I am sad that I will miss it as I will be getting on the road for Dade City, FL for the Bay Area Renaissance Festival.



If any of you snowbirds want a free ticket or three to the Bay Area Renaissance Festival affectionately known as BARF reach out to me.

Mirf and I shall return for the April meeting, in the mean time, you're in good hands.

Well, this month is short and sweet, thank you for being you
and thank you for showing up.
Cheers my magical friends,
Cap'n Sean and Mirf...out



Secretary's Report
By [Karl Rabe](#)

January Meeting


January's meeting started on a positive note for the new year. As our featured performer Eric Bedard enthralled us with his well polished act. ...







Next Sean Howell and Karl Rabe distributed 2025 [Top Contributor](#) recognition pins to members that earned that honor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jones, Dan • Rabe, Karl • Stone, Lincoln • Mann, Phil • Reuter, Michael • Rabe, Bill • Howell, Sean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogdas, Mike • Barrett, April • Thornton, Mike • Goodwin, Robert • Stone, Wendy • Krozal, Rob 	
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Rob



Bob



Mike



April



Mike



Phil



Karl



Dan



Sean

As Mike Thornton began his learning session on Walk Around Magic, tragedy struck. Phil Mann received a phone call at the club from police in Wyoming Michigan performing a wellness check and learned Phil's daughter Tiffany Emmert and her husband were found dead in their home. Close friends did their best to comfort Phil as plans were quickly made for Sean to drive Phil's car to take Phil home. Don Oesterwind followed them and was then able to bring Sean back to the PCAC after seeing Phil safely home. The meeting was aborted with members shocked by the news. Friends of Phil quietly shared their shock and grief as the crowd slowly dissipated.



Around the Town
By [Karl Rabe](#)

Calendar of Events

You don't want to miss our next meeting February 11 at 7pm at the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

- Our featured performer will be **Lincoln Stone**. He just flew in from MagiFest and boy are his arms tired.
- We will be patting ourselves on the back for our 55th Anniversary as Ring 210.
- **Mike Thornton** will be rebooting his learning session on **"Top Five Tips for Strolling Magic"**
- There will be plenty of time for **member performances** so bring something to show.
- If you have tricks you like to perform in a Strolling Environment, bring one or two to share.


Next Show

OCT 10 Sat
all-day 2026 Parlor Magic Show

Next Meeting

FEB 11 Wed
7:00 pm AAMC Monthly Meeting @ Plymouth Community Arts Council

FEB 18 Wed
10:00 am AAMC Monthly Board Meeting

 Add ▾ [View Calendar →](#)

Other Events

FEB 17 Tue
7:00 pm Detroit Magic Club Monthly Meeting @ Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

MAR 17 Tue
7:00 pm Detroit Magic Club Monthly Meeting @ Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

APR 21 Tue
7:00 pm Detroit Magic Club Monthly Meeting @ Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

APR 25 Sat
all-day Michigan Magic Day 2026 @ Carman-Ainsworth Middle School

Club Events

FEB 23 Mon
all-day Club Birthday

APR 8 Wed
7:00 pm Close Up Competition

AUG 15 Sat
all-day AAMC Picnic

SEP 26 Sat
all-day Flea Market

OCT 14 Wed
7:00 pm Parlor Competition

DEC 9 Wed
7:00 pm AAMC Board Elections
7:00 pm Holiday Party

 Add ▾ [View Calendar →](#)

Other Calendars

- Check out John Luka's Magic page and his well maintained

[list of Michigan Events](#)

- All AAMC Events and details can be viewed on the [website calendar](#).

Other Events

Happy Emerald Anniversary to Us!



Receiving its International Brotherhood of Magicians charter on February 23, 1971, the Ann Arbor Magic Club proudly represents two great organizations of the art: the Society of American Magicians as Assembly No. 088 (Hank Moorehouse) and the International Brotherhood of Magicians as Ring 210 (Duke Stern).

Here's to 55 years of fellowship, mystery, and magical moments—and many more to come!



Ex Libris

By [Dr. Joaquin Ayala de Cedoz](#)



Dr. Joaquin M.
Ayala, PhD

Theseus – A Magical Journey by Nathan Colwell

A book review by Dr. Joaquin M. Ayala, PhD

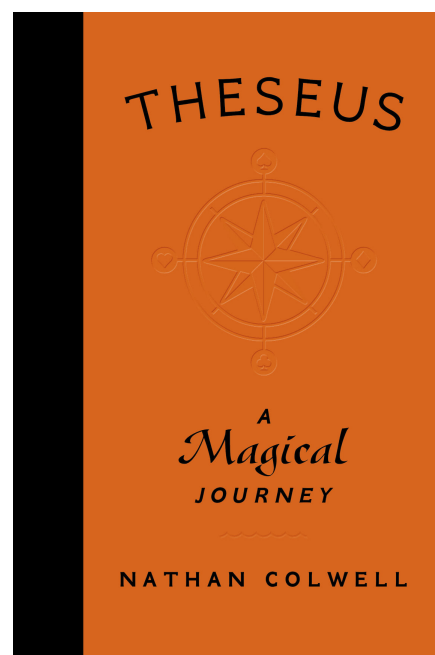
Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for February

2026! This year is certainly chugging along and I hope the article last month inspired you to delve into the effect of the Bill Change – I will implore you to do so if not because it is such a strong piece that you can carry on your person at all times, and for that matter, you can even carry more than one version without taking up hardly any space at all.

the article last month whilst discussing a trio of effects using drawings/signatures on the banknotes, I mentioned that two of the effects could be done with a borrowed note that was signed by the spectator, as opposed to you. There is more work involved for that to happen, but it is a sneaky, devilish and very powerful tool to possess. That is where we look to the book for this article: 'Theseus – A Magical Journey' by Nathan Colwell*. This is a 108-page, small format hardcover book, originally published in 2021 by Magic, Inc. in Chicago.

Now this book is all about one effect and its various handlings and methods. It is a card plot, and a very intriguing one at that! Some of you readers will be familiar with the classic thought problem called The Ship of Theseus. If not, to sum it up: The thirty-oared ship of Theseus was preserved for a long time, but over time as pieces started to rot away, the curators would replace them with new and identical pieces until, eventually, every piece of the ship was replaced, and no original pieces of the ship existed. The puzzle: With every piece of the ship having been replaced, is it still the Ship of Theseus?

As an example of this plot, you have an audience member select and sign a blue-backed card in such a way that the writing touches all four quarters of the card. You then rip it into quarters, placing them face-down on the table. One by one, you



replace the torn pieces with pieces of a quartered red-backed card. Upon turning the pieces face up, the signature of the spectator is still on the front of the pieces! Just think of how impossible this sounds as you read it, then think about how impossible it is from the view of the layperson...

In Part I: The Logbook, the author describes the plot, the history behind it and the philosophical parts of both the effect itself and of each of the methods. There was a total of 10 solutions (read: methods) developed, four of them appear in Part II: Open Sea. The numbers of these solutions, Nos. 3, 5, 6 and 10 are the order in which the author devised them; these are the ones the author felt were, "...fit for public consumption..." The missing solutions are discussed throughout, but details as methods are not given.

In Part III: Adrift, Solution Nos. 7 and 8 are given because they were deemed necessary for the sake of complete explanations of the plot and help to give the full context of the thinking behind the concept. In this same section, the very first prototype of the plot is explained, again to help provide the full backstory, but it is noted that the author considers it practically unperformable. In Part IV: Fellow Travelers, you will find two amazing solutions by none other than Harapan Ong and Simon Aronson, the latter of which my readers will very well be familiar with.

Fair warning: This book may read a little dry for some at first reading, and I think the author realized this would make it a bit more tedious to re-read the description as you attempt to follow each solution with props-in-hand. I could be wrong, but the part that I really appreciate here is that for each solution, across the board, what follows is the Fundamentals section; in this section the steps of the actions and the method are laid out in summary form, with numbered steps for each of the four pieces. This makes it so very easy to follow along once you are familiar with each method.

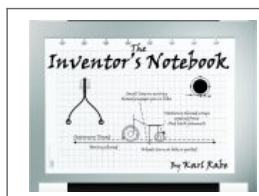
NOW, remember when I referenced that sneaky, underhanded bit

of something earlier? What follows is that something. In this book you will learn ways to obtain, openly and without sleight of hand, genuine duplicate signatures of a spectator. Imagine the insane things you can do outside of this effect if you can obtain duplicates of the same signature! These techniques are not inherently complicated. Of course, once you get the idea, you can even go for a sleight of hand method on the fly (think 'swami gimmick'). Now apply this to the signature-based effects in the Mis-made Bill section of the Lovick book from the January article...

Well, that is all for this month! Join me again in March when we will be switching things up, (quite literally) just in time for the switch to Spring! Until then, keep the magic alive!

– J. M. A.

*Nathan Colwell is the name you will use and find when searching for this book; Nathan is now known by the name Nancy Colwell.



By [Karl Rabe](#)

The Inventor's Notebook #30

Automata

Karl Rabe

This edition of The Inventor's Notebook takes a diversion from the usual topic of magic... sort of... it is about an Automaton I built for my Sister Joan as a Christmas Present.

An automaton is a mechanical devices that imitates human

actions.

au·tom·a·ton

noun

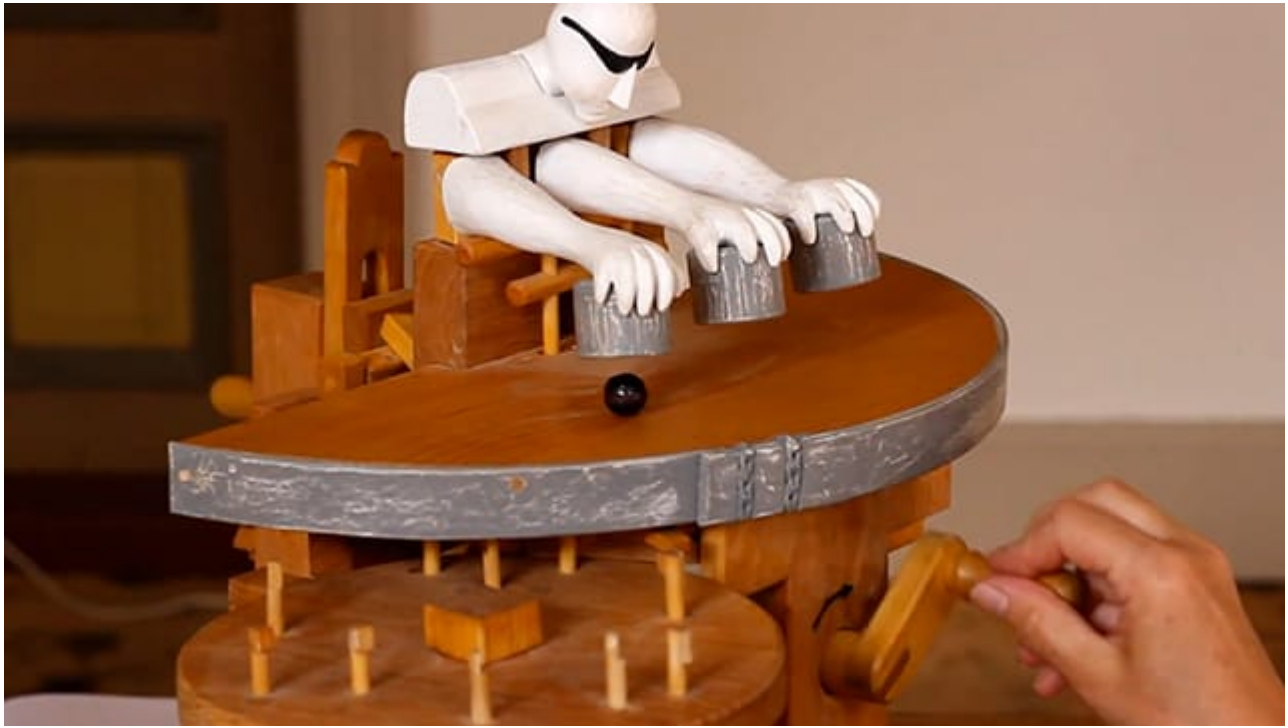
*plural noun: **automata***

1. a moving mechanical device made in imitation of a human being.

First watch the video of the Automaton in action...

The performing of magic is a topic that has always been popular in Automata going back as far as Ancient Greece and Egypt. Here are some examples of Magicians that all perform a magic trick when activated.









More recently “Contemporary” automata has become popular. One of the more prolific creators is [Paul Spooner](#). These whimsical works of art combine humor, art and mechanics to entertain and bemuse. Below are some examples and you can see more at the [Cabaret Mechanical Theatre](#) – The Home of Contemporary Automat, Hastings, East Sussex, UK.

Cabaret Mechanical Theatre is a collection of contemporary automata founded in 1979. We have been entertaining and inspiring visitors & makers since 1981. Now based in Hastings, UK we have exhibitions all over the world.



Barecats

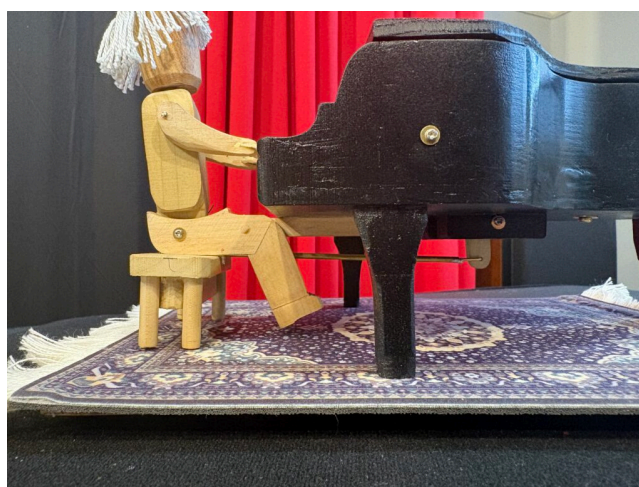


Spaghetti Eater in Bath

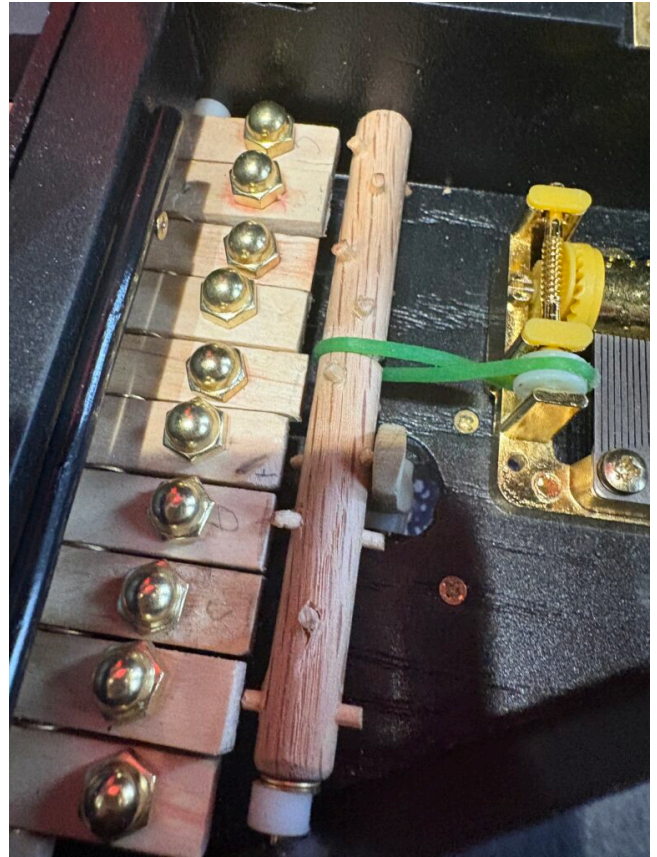
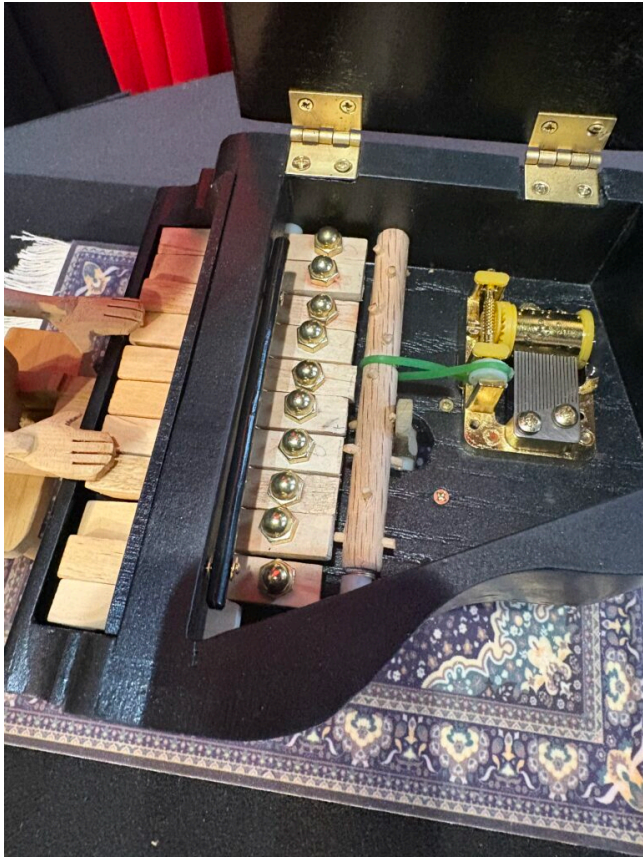


Being a woodworker, tinkerer, inventor and builder it is no surprise that I became enamored with automat. It was about 9 years ago that I got hooked on the idea of making a piano player automaton of my sister Joan. I liked the idea of a piano player automaton and my Sister has a baby grand piano in her living room which she frequently plays. Drawing her name

for Christmas 2025 was the impetus I needed to complete the project after only 9 years of procrastination.







Automaton Joan was constructed from scratch by Karl Rabe from wood, brass, a modified music box movement and miscellaneous hardware. It was inspired by Timberkits "Pianist" automaton.

The piano itself is constructed of poplar, pine and oak using glue and small dowels. Piano keys are wooden clothes pins which are weighted with brass acorn nuts. A shaft with wooden pins rotates to actuate the keys at different intervals. A pin on the shaft also actuates a lever to operate the pianist movement.

The music box movement is a modified hand crank movement with the addition of a belt drive wheel. The drum and comb were replaced with Johann Sebastian Bach – French Suite No. 5 BWV 816 IV. Gavotte.

The oriental rug is a mouse pad and Joan's hair is gray embroidery floss.

Amazingly, this was built mostly with things I had laying around the workshop. Granted the things I have laying around are not exactly that usual.



All sorts of Music Box parts for automation



Pulleys, gears, bearings and belts



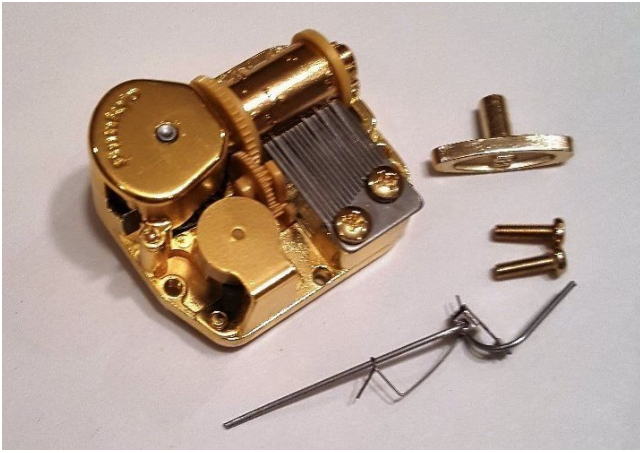
Tiny screws and spacers

All sorts of brass stock

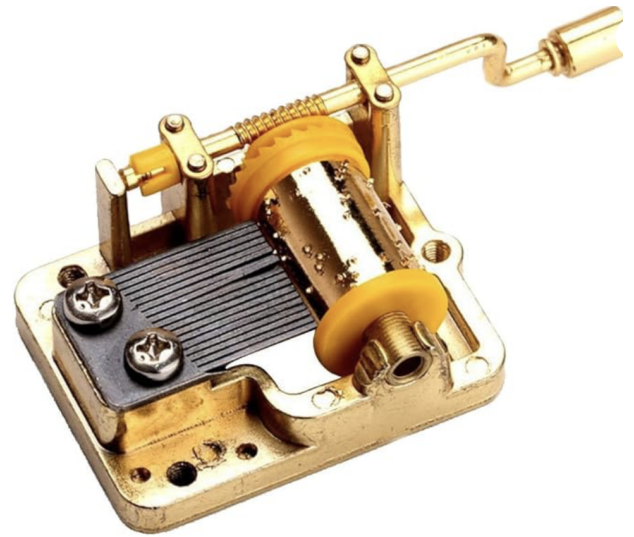


The sides of the keyboard were cut from this piece of scrap moulding salvaged from my wife's mother's china cabinet

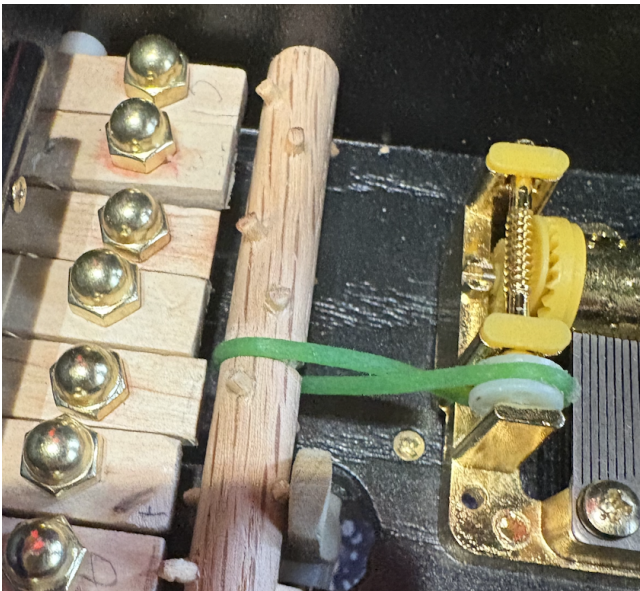
I bought this Sankyo 18 Note Music Box Movement in 2017. It is the only movement with a Bach tune I have ever seen. My Brother-in-law is a huge Bach fan so the piano had to play Bach. I thought I could drive the piano with the wind up movement but it wasn't nearly strong enough. I ended up adding a hand crank to the piano and moving the drum and comb from the windup movement to the hand crank movement. I then cut off the handle on the hand crank movement and added a pulley. Changing the drum out was kind of dicey. I had to resort to some JB Weld to repair a broken ear.



Wind up movement with Bach
tune

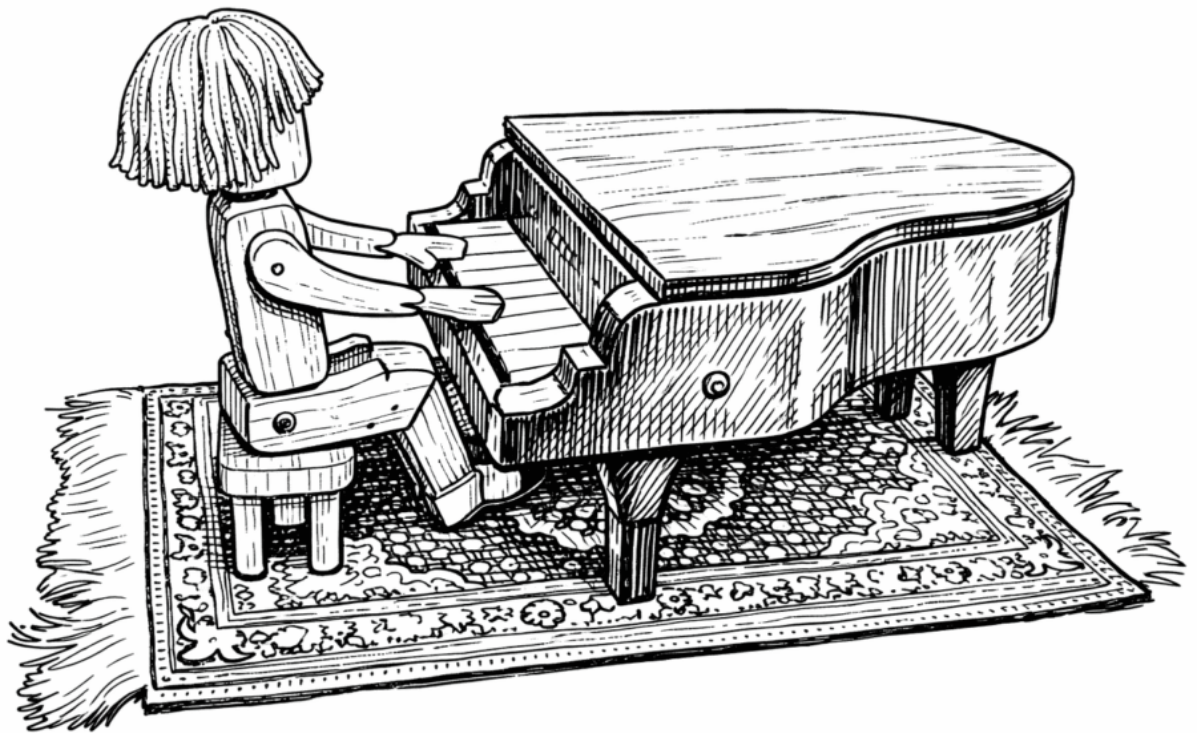


Hand crank movement



Movement converted to
pulley drive. The belt was
replaced with a more
flexible o-ring after this
photo was taken.

I'm pleased with the results. Welcome to the world of
Automata.



Read more about music box movements and their use in magic in [“The Inventor’s Notebook #20 – Tiny Dancer”](#).



Funny Business
By [Karl Rabe](#)



EXPOSURE

Magician Elia Portala performs the Snowstorm Illusion but inadvertently exposes Kevin James' new Toro Snow Animator



From Frank Machniak



Asher

"Using only the power of my mind, I am able to transform any insignificant problem into a full blown catastrophe."

Frank again...



Bob Goodwin's Clock?



Worlds largest penny or
worlds smallest toolbox?
You decide.

The Joy of Painting with Karl Ross...



Let's just start right here on
this nice, clean little piece of
paper.

No pressure—this paper's your friend. We'll dip our pencil
into a touch of imagination and just let it wander.

Now, right in the middle, we'll make a happy little circle.
That's not a mistake—that's a head. Every stick figure needs a

good, positive head to think happy thoughts in.

From there, we'll gently pull a line straight down. Nice and easy. Don't rush it. That's the body, just standing there, enjoying the day. Maybe it's listening to the birds.

Now let's give our little fellow some arms—just two soft lines reaching out. Maybe he's waving hello. Maybe he's asking for a hug. You decide.

Down at the bottom, we'll add a couple of legs. Let them go wherever they want. If they're a little uneven, that's okay—nature's like that. There are no mistakes here, just happy little stick figures living their best lives on your paper.

And just like that... you've created a tiny world.

Swag is now in stock and for sale. Contact Treasurer Rob Krozal to get your's today!



Hat






Tee



Polo



Hoodie

	 <p>Visit the club website for past issues, calendar of upcoming events, and other features and articles.</p>		 <p>Join our Private Facebook Group to connect and exchange ideas and information with other members.</p>		 <p>Like our Public Facebook Page and share it with Friends and Family.</p>	
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The 2025 Ann Arbor Magic Club Board



President – Sean Howell



Treasurer – Rob Krozal



Secretary – Karl Rabe



VP – TBD



Sgt at Arms – TBD

Contact the board using these email

addresses

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- krabe@comcast.net