

IBM Ring 210

July 2026

IBM Ring 210

The Magic Messenger

**Lincoln Stone
Takes 1st in
Tannen's U14
Stage Competition**

IN THIS ISSUE

- PCAC Magic Camp
- Sound guidance
- Karrell Fox



Annual Calendar

Jul 08	July Meeting
Aug 12	August Meeting
Aug 15	AAMC Picnic
Sep 09	September Meeting
Sep 26	Flea Market
Oct 10	Parlor Show – Afternoon
Oct 10	Parlor Show – Evening
Oct 14	October Meeting – Parlor Competition
Nov 11	November Meeting
Dec 09	December Meeting – Holiday Party
Dec 09	AAMC Board Elections

Other Events

Jul 13	Magic of the Mind
Jul 15	Magic of the Mind
Jul 21	Ring 22 Monthly Meeting
Aug 05 - 08	Abbott's 88TH Get-together

Subscribe: [iCal](#) | [gCal](#) | [Outlook](#)

Coming Up



Jul 08 2026

JULY MEETING

Plymouth Community Arts Council
Club Events, Monthly Meetings
AAMC



Jul 15 2026

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

REPEATING EVENT

Zoom Meeting
Board Meetings, Club Events
AAMC



Aug 12 2026

AUGUST MEETING

Plymouth Community Arts Council
Club Events, Monthly Meetings
AAMC



Aug 15 2026

AAMC PICNIC

Kracken Acres
Social Event
AAMC



Sep 09 2026

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Plymouth Community Arts Council
Club Events, Monthly Meetings
AAMC



Sep 26 2026

FLEA MARKET

Plymouth Community Arts Council
Open House
AAMC

The Magic Messenger

The Magic Messenger is published monthly by the Ann Arbor Magic Club (AAMC). The AAMC the Hank Moorehouse Assembly 88 of the Society of American Magicians and Duke Stern Ring 210 of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

The AAMC (est. 1971) is a Michigan Domestic Non-Profit whose focus is to advance the magical arts by making available equipment, education, mentors and opportunities for magical enthusiasts of all ages to expand their craft.



I.B.M. Ring 210 & S.A.M. Assembly 88

Ann Arbor Magic Club Board of Directors

- President: Sean Howell
- Vice-President: Wendy Stone
- Treasurer: Rob Krozal
- Secretary: Karl Rabe
- Sgt at Arms: April Barrett

The Ann Arbor Magic Club meets the 2nd Wed of each month at 7p at the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

Plymouth Community Arts Council

774 N. Sheldon Road at Junction Street
Plymouth, MI 48170

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The President's Corner

By Sean Howell

My Fellow Compeers,

Summer is in full swing, but there is still plenty happening in the world of magic and here at the Ann Arbor Magic Club.

First and foremost, it is time to start building our **Fall Parlor Show**, coming up on **October 24, 2026**. We are putting out the casting call and looking for **three performers** to join the lineup. If you've been thinking about performing, this is your opportunity. Our parlor show continues to be one of the best ways we support the club while giving members a chance to perform in one of the friendliest and most supportive environments possible. If you're interested, let me know soon.

Don't forget our **Annual Club Picnic**, happening the **second Saturday in August** at the Cap'n's homestead in Parma — **Kracken Acres, the home of Mirf the Magnificent**. It's always a great time to relax, enjoy some good food, and spend time with your fellow magicians outside of our regular meetings. I hope to see many of you there.

Preparations for **Michigan Magic Day 2027** continue to move along right on schedule. There is still plenty to do, and we'll continue to need volunteers in all areas as we get closer. Thank you to everyone who has stepped up so far.

This month also brings two major magic gatherings. The IBM Convention 2026 will be held **July 22–25** in St. Louis, Missouri, followed closely by the legendary Abbott's Get Together 2026, celebrating its **88th year**, from **August 5–8**. If you have never attended either of these events, they are well worth the experience.

Until then, enjoy your summer, keep practicing, and keep the magic alive.

I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Sean Howell

President, Ann Arbor Magic Club



Ring Report

By Karl Rabe

We kicked off the evening, as always, with our Featured Performer, and this month we were treated to a wonderful performance by Cap'n Sean & Mirf the Magnificent.

For those not in the know, club President Sean Howell performs a pirate-themed magic show alongside his faithful Maine Coon cat, Mirf. Together they entertain audiences at Renaissance fairs and venues across the country, proving that a pirate and a cat can indeed have a successful working relationship.

Sean opened with his take on Professor's Nightmare before seamlessly transitioning into a shot glass and egg bag routine. Not only did he produce a full shot glass of "tea," but under the watchful eye of a spectator, he proceeded to make the entire glass vanish inside the egg bag. As expected, the audience was left wondering whether the laws of physics had briefly taken the evening off.

Next it was Mirf's turn to demonstrate why he's more than just a furry assistant. A spectator freely selected and signed a card, which was then lost in the deck. Mirf calmly approached a spread fan of cards and, using only his mouth, removed a single card. Naturally, it was the signed selection. Some magicians spend decades developing a reliable card-finding technique. Mirf simply uses whiskers.



Sean closed with a flawless presentation of his audience-participation card tearing routine based on Woody Aragon's *Love Ritual*. The effect combined humor, interaction, and a memorable ending that brought the performance to a strong finish.

With the magic complete, we moved into our Learning Segment, where Mike Thornton shared his expertise on sound systems, equipment selection, speaker placement, the infamous "Dance Floor of Death," and numerous practical tips to help ensure audiences can both see and hear our performances. Mike wrapped up the session with his "Ten Rules of Magic Sight and Sound," providing plenty of valuable takeaways for performers of every experience level.

Then it was time for member performances.

Alex Heath took the stage first, delighting us with several Disney songs before presenting a unique musical card routine. Singing *Mona Lisa*, made famous by Nat King Cole, Alex performed with a deck of *Mona Lisa* playing cards acquired from the Louvre in Paris. The combination of music, storytelling, and magic created a charming and memorable presentation.

Next, Dan "Dusty" Jones appeared sporting a ten-gallon hat and neckerchief and introduced us to a routine supposedly passed down through generations of the Jones family, originating with his great-great-grand-pappy Jebediah Jones. In true Old West fashion, a rope was threaded through an old enameled coffee mug and covered with a kerchief. Charlie Palko held tightly to the rope while Dusty somehow removed the mug from the rope without releasing either object. Charlie was then invited to inspect the mug, confirming that no extra holes had been added by generations of inventive cowboys.

Closing out the performances was Mike Reuter, who delivered not one but several surprises.

Mike began by telling the story of his wife's favorite ATM, affectionately known as "Honey." When she asked Honey for some money, Mike produced a handful of one-dollar bills. The bills then transformed into hundred-dollar bills, much to his wife's delight—before unfortunately reverting back to ones. As Mike explained, that's usually when the argument starts.

Mike then combined multiple effects into a true fooler. First, he introduced a tiny iPad and handed it to a spectator. Another spectator merely thought of a number and wrote it down. Mike then handed his phone to Charlie Palko, who opened a list of famous celebrities stored in Mike's Notes app. At the selected number was Brad Pitt. Amazingly, the image displayed on the tiny iPad was also Brad Pitt. Just when everyone thought the routine was over, Mike revealed a final kicker: the same number on a list of favorite movies corresponded to *Jaws*, which had been written on the back of one of the bills used earlier in the routine. The layered revelations left more than a few members scratching their heads and trying to work backward through what they had just witnessed.

And with that, another enjoyable evening of learning, laughter, and magic came to a close.



Hocus Focus

By Various Contributors

Mike Palko shared these photos. Thanks Mike!



 **Around the Town**
By Karl Rabe

Next Meeting



July Meeting

The Ann Arbor Magic Club meets the second Wednesday of each month. Anyone with an interest in magic is welcome to show up to a meeting and see what it is all about.

- 08 JUL
- 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- Plymouth
Community Arts Council
774 N. Sheldon
Road,Plymouth, MI
48170
- AAMC

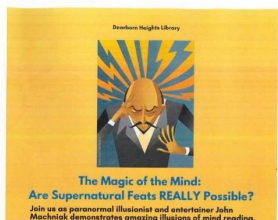
[VIEW DETAIL](#)

Volunteer's Needed

No event found!

Other Events

JULY 2026



Magic of the Mind

AAMC Member John Machniak will be lecturing on July 13 and 15.

- 13 JUL
- 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM



Monthly Board Meeting Repeating Event

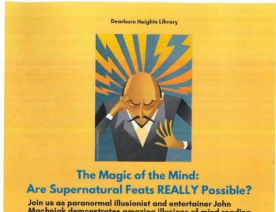
All members in good standing are welcome to join the AAMC Monthly Board Meetings which are generally held on the 3rd Wednesday of the Month from 10am to 11am via zoom.

15

JUL

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Zoom Meeting



Magic of the Mind

AAMC Member John Machniak will be lecturing on July 13 and 15.

15 JUL

6:30 PM - 7:30 PM



Ring 22 Monthly Meeting

Repeating Event

Our friends at The Detroit Magic Club (Ring 22) generally meet the 3rd Tuesday of every month. Please check their Calendar to confirm

21 JUL

7:15 PM - 9:30 PM

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
749 W. 14 Mile Rd., Clawson, MI 48017

AUGUST 2026



Abbott's 88TH Get-together

Get Together Website

05 - 08 AUG

ALL DAY

Past Events

The AAMC once again supported the Plymouth Community Arts Council Magic and Performing Arts camp this month. AAMC Instructors were Lincoln and Wendy Stone, Karl Rabe, Rob Krozal, Dan Jones and Charlie Palko. PCAC Instructors were Katelyn and Elena.

Nine students learned magic for a half-day Mon through Thursday and then on Friday parents came in for a one-hour show put on by the students.



Performer	Coach	Act
Madam Winnie	Lincoln	Crystal Ball Card Prediction
Ms. Magic	Wendy	Balloon Animal Challenge
Starflight the Wise	Katelyn	Coin Scarf Penetration and Vanish
Micah	Rob	Cups and Balls
Tripple Top Hats	Karl	A three person comedy act
Nico		Coin Vanish
Ryan		Comedy Chain Escape
Jerimya		Coin Production
Mis-Matched Magician	Charlie	Four Aces Trick
Optomistic Olson	Dan	Mis-Made Flag

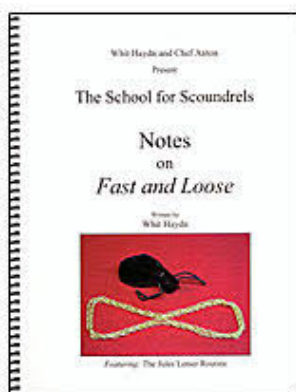


Ex Libris

By Dr. Joaquin M. Ayala, PhD

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for July 2026! I hope everyone had a fun and safe celebration of the American Independence Day in honoring 250 years of America!

At the end of the last newsletter, I gave a hint of sorts to the content/theme of our topic for this article, "...one might say you could *bet* on it..." This month we are looking at **Notes on Fast and Loose by School for Scoundrels/Whit "Pop" Haydn & Chef Anton**. This is a 44-page, spiral-bound softcover in 11.5"x8" format, originally published in 2000 and illustrated with very clear B&W photographs. You can still find the physical books on the secondhand market, but it is also available from the [School for Scoundrels website](#) as a PDF or PDF/Video instruction combo, for a VERY reasonable \$10-\$15/USD.



Many if not most of you will be familiar with Pop Haydn, who is one of the greatest magicians of our time. He and Chef Anton founded the School for Scoundrels and hosted eight-hour long courses at the famous Hollywood Magic Castle for many years. The whole point of the school was to teach anything and everything related to cons, scams, swindles, and hustling, especially the Three Shell Game, Three Card Monte, and in the case of our focus here, Fast & Loose.

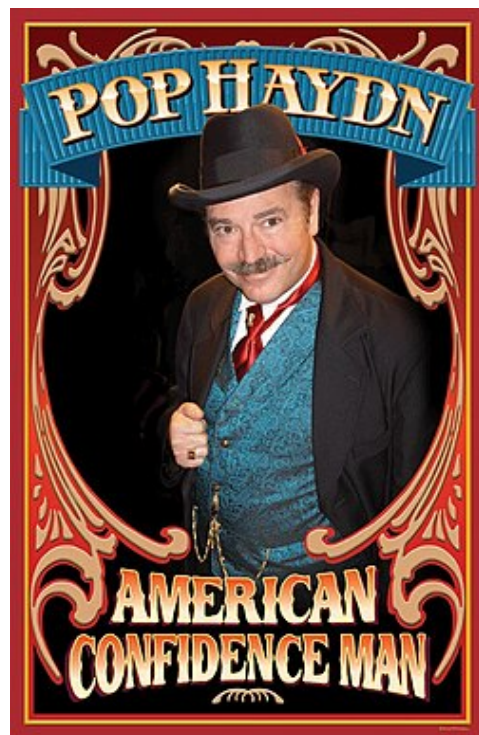
IF you are not familiar with this actual con game, it is incredibly old. It involves the use of a loop of chain (and in times historic, loops of leather, rolled up belts, etc.) and it is lain down in such a way that it forms a figure 8. The victim places one finger in one of the two "holes" in the 8 and the operator pulls the loop away.

If it 'holds fast,' that is, catches on the finger of the victim, the victim wins. If it 'pulls loose,' that is, the finger fails to trap the chain, the operator wins. That is the basic gist of the swindle, and it is exactly that – *a swindle!* The operator can lay the chain to force the outcome in any way they choose, in favor of themselves or the victim, no matter which loop is chosen.

This booklet discusses the history of the game, its variations and other contributors/magicians who have published their ideas for it. It also discusses the ideal type of chain(s) (more on that later), the various patterns that can be thrown (the term used for laying the chain down), the how, the why and why-nots, three different routines, one each by **Jules Lenier**, **Pop**, and **Chef Anton**.

This booklet covers everything you need to know for the rank beginner, taking you all the way through the advanced work on the con, including advanced moves and displays, hooks and come-ons. That all being said, this is literally an education on how to use this as an actual con game to be played in the streets at your own perilous discretion, but as an honest person and a magician, you would never do something so underhanded and dishonest...*right?! That all being said, this is an excellent addition to the repertoire of any magician, and you can have a lot of fun with your spectators using this as a game, or a genuine demonstration.*

As for the proper chain(s) mentioned above, there are countless things that can be used, but some things will be better than others for many reasons. A lot of people use a loop of ball chain (like the pull chain on your ceiling fans) and that works okay, but part of this con/game is to mislead your audience visually – to prevent them from using their eyes to follow the pattern to discern the outcome, something that can actually be done. Pop Haydn sells a very nice chain that is woven and meant to confuse the eye, which prevents this from happening at all. As a bonus, it is quite weighty and will stay put once it is laid upon the table.



At the time of this writing, the handmade chains are still being sold on the School for Scoundrels website, and the two color options are nickel or brass. Now, these chains are not cheap, but they are absolutely worth every single penny and more. They range from \$95-\$125/USD, and let me tell you, I would willingly pay more for them. You can also opt for the magical "twist" ending of producing a knot, made of the same chain, for an extra \$20-\$25 dollars, completely optional and not related to the swindle itself.

I would wrap this article up now, but I just must wax nostalgic for a moment here because this game means so much to me for one reason. Long story short, I used to visit family in the U.S. back when the Toledo Ring 68 was hosting the Glass City Conjuror's Conclave (what a GLORIOUS time those were!) and I was allowed to attend them as a young man, all on my own but under the watchful eye of a friend I had made in the area. His name was **Manny Hall** (who sadly passed away on Thanksgiving Day 2025).

One year, Manny showed up on the first day wearing a bunch of Mardi Gras beads around his neck, and one night after we got back to the hotel from dinner, I asked him what the heck he was doing with them. Well, he conned me. My 12-year old self. He removed a necklace, and we played Fast & Loose right outside the dealer room, it was about 21h00 (9 p.m.). I was hooked (literally and



figuratively!) at once, and he graciously taught me the basics of it two days later. Manny Hall was one of the most amazing humans you would ever have met, and I miss him dearly. Thank you, Manny.

Well, thank you for staying with me on this everyone – join me again next month where I will continue the theme of gambling/scam/con related content. Stay cool!

J.M.A.



The Vanishing Archives

By Mike Bogdas

Pocket Full of Wonders – December 2013 MUM Magazine

Poof! Ladies and gentlemen, step right up as we dive back into the archives and make time disappear! Today we're pulling a classic from the December 2013 issue of *MUM* magazine—because nothing says “holiday magic” like rummaging through magicians' pockets for their favorite emergency tricks. (And yes, we promise this article won't vanish before you finish reading... unless you blink.)

Here's the rewritten and faithfully quoted essence from that festive page:

88 TRICKS YOU CARRY

ANN ARBOR/YPSILANTI, MI —

Every magician I've known has always been prepared to do at least one trick, either that they would have in a pocket or even improvised from the area that they are in. Some of the members always have on them two or three different close-up tricks, because when people want to see the trick again—which isn't always a good idea unless it resets itself—you will have a back-up trick. So this month we went through our members' pockets to see what their favorite close-up tricks are!

President Dan Jones says he always has a few card tricks up his sleeve, his favorite being Thanks Pal! You display five picture cards with food such as pizza, chicken, and burgers, going through the cards until only one is left. Then you let your “victim” go through the cards in the same manner; he ends up with a card with the check! Jim Placido showed us an easy to do trick, Two Card Monte. Marvin Mathena brought with him a Wayne Dobson trick called Pocket Money, in which he brings out five coins—an English penny, a Chinese coin, an American quarter, and a couple other foreign coins. He then has the spectator put them all in his (empty) pocket. Marvin then asked him to bring out any two in his fist, saying that neither is the quarter, which they were not. He then brought out two more, neither being the quarter again, because the quarter had vanished! A very good pocket trick!

Bill Brang showed a few tricks; one was the Mini Pom-Pom Stick, a kids favorite! We also had visitors Jack Markely and his wife Shirley stop in to show and sell some of the newest magic that he has been working on, my favorite being the No Holey in the Crayoly, in which you put a crayon in a brass

tube and stick a toothpick through it. Of course, there was no hole in the crayoly! We had a lot of fun doing what we like best, magic! —Randy A. Smith



Dan Jones with Pocket Magic

And now for the grand finale... *Abracadabra, hocus pocus—our archival journey is over, folks!*

Thanks for joining this trip down memory lane. Remember: always carry a few tricks in your pocket... and a sense of humor. Because if your magic ever fails, you can always say, "It's not gone—it's just... in another dimension!" (Or, you know, your other pocket.) And next time someone asks why your jacket looks suspiciously bulky, just smile mysteriously and reply, "Oh, that? I'm just carrying a Square Circle—for emergencies. You never know when you'll need to produce something round out of a square situation!"

Until next vanishing act—keep practicing, keep performing, and may your pockets stay mysteriously full (but not *too* full... we've all seen what happens when you try to pocket a levitating table).

(Rewritten with love from the December 2013 MUM News section, page 16 of 72. Original reporting captured the warm, community spirit of the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti magic scene.)

Vox Pop

By Mike Thornton

Vox Pop is an occasional feature of the Magic Messenger. Vox Pop! From the Latin phrase Vox populi that literally means "voice of the people", Vox Pop is a place for random member submissions. If you have something you would like to share, submit it in the form of an email to annarbormagicclub@gmail.com.

This month is a submission from member **Mike Thornton**. Mike presented an educational section on Sound Systems and these are notes from Mike.



Mike Thornton lectures on sound for magicians.

How to Sound Like a Pro and Be Seen Like a Headliner

Why Sound Matters More Than Tricks

"The audience can't enjoy what they can't hear or see."

- People remember moments, not methods.
- A great trick with poor sound feels amateur.
- An average trick with excellent presentation feels professional.

My Portable PA Setup

Speaker

- Electro-Voice EVERSE 8
- Battery operation
- Built-in mixer
- Bluetooth 3 Channels
- Weather resistance
- Quick setup
- Advantages:
 - Sound quality
 - Battery life
 - Reliability

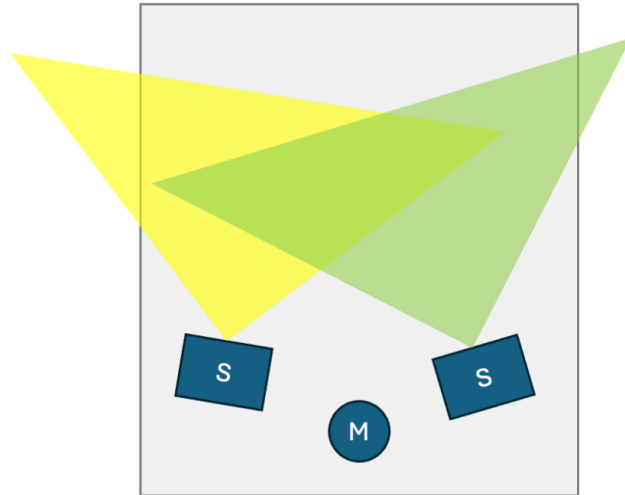
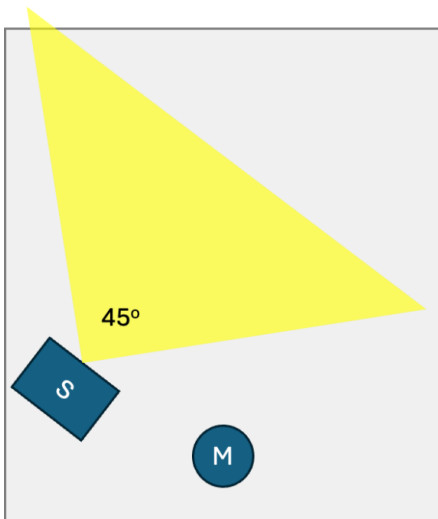
Wireless Microphone:

- Shure SLX-D
- Headset
- Handheld
- Advantages:
 - Reliability
 - Range
 - Rechargeable batteries
 - Reduced interference

Speaker Placement

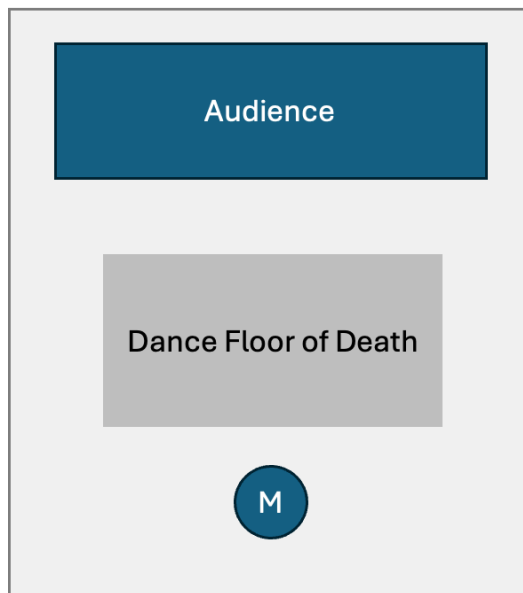
- **Biggest Mistake** - Speaker behind you.
- **Second Biggest Mistake** - Speaker sitting on the floor.
- One Speaker Setup
 - Speaker elevated
 - Aimed at audience
 - A simple approximation is that speakers disperse sound over a 45 degree angle.
- **Two Speaker Setup**

- Crossover coverage.
- Better consistency
- Lower volume needed
- Better coverage



The "Dancefloor of Death"

The huge empty space between performer and audience.



Dance Floor of Death

Also called:

- Sea of Linoleum
- Bermuda Triangle of Entertainment

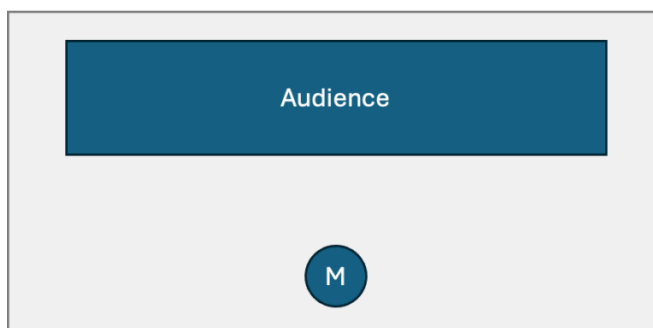
Why It Hurts

- Reduces energy
- Kills interaction
- Makes laughter weaker
- Makes volunteers hesitant

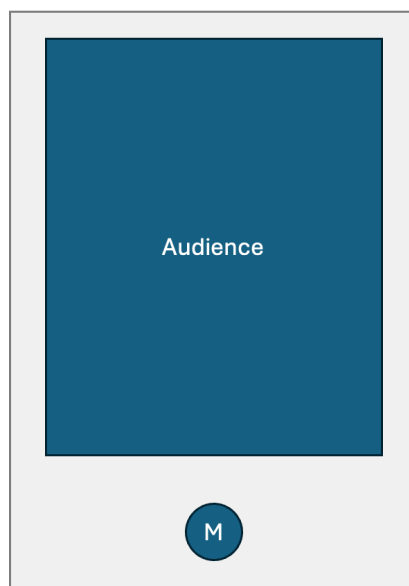
Solutions

- Move chairs forward
- Reduce empty space
- Put audience on dance floor
- Use staging

Room Layout Secrets



Long Wall



Short Wall

- **Long Wall vs Short Wall**
- **Short Wall**
 - Audience extends deep into room.
 - Problems

- People farther away
- Poor sightlines
- More audio issues
- **Long Wall**
 - Audience spreads wider.
 - Closer audience
 - Better sightlines
 - More intimacy
- **Why Risers Matter**
 - Better visibility
 - Better authority
 - Better photos
 - Better audience focus
 - Even a 12-inch riser makes a dramatic different

Mike Thornton's Ten Rules of Magic Sight and Sound

1. People must hear you.
2. People must see you.
3. Avoid the Moat of Death.
4. Work the long wall whenever possible.
5. Get on a riser.
6. Elevate your speakers.
7. Two speakers beat one.
8. Analyze the room before setup.
9. Closer audiences laugh harder.
10. Better sound equals higher perceived value.



Funny Business

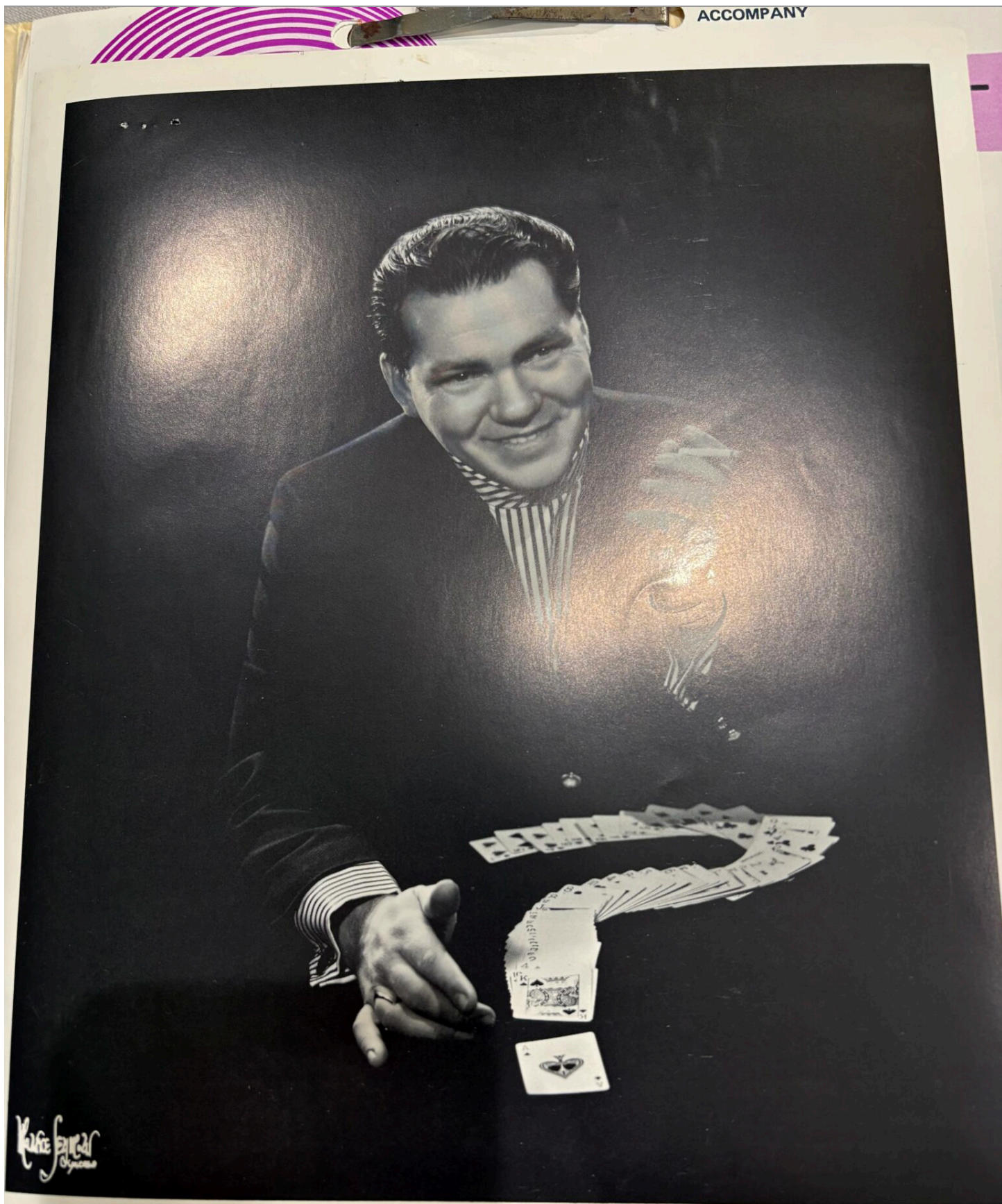
By Karl Rabe and various contributors



This month we dig deep into the archives of W. T. Rabe to unearth a bit of magic memorabilia. As many of you know my Dad was the PR Man for The University of Detroit, Lake Superior State College and Mackinac Island / Grand Hotel. I had the opportunity to see Karrell Fox perform both at U of D (as a very young lad) and later when I had developed an interest in magic at the Grand Hotel as a teen. I first saw the Brainwave

Deck and the Chop Cup performed by Karrell at Grand Hotel. When my Dad died, I took possession of his "files" which filled four four-drawer filing cabinets. These were just the files he kept at home. Another volume of Mackinac Island related files went to Grand Hotel for their archives.

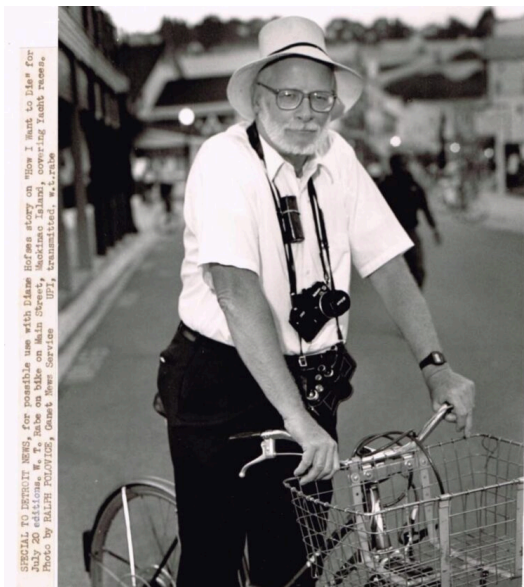
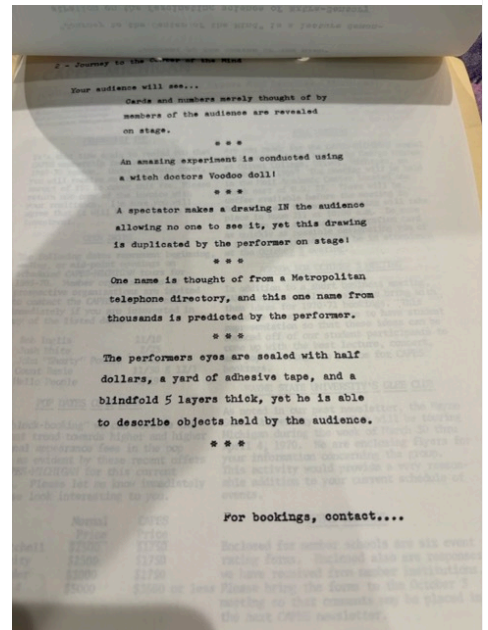
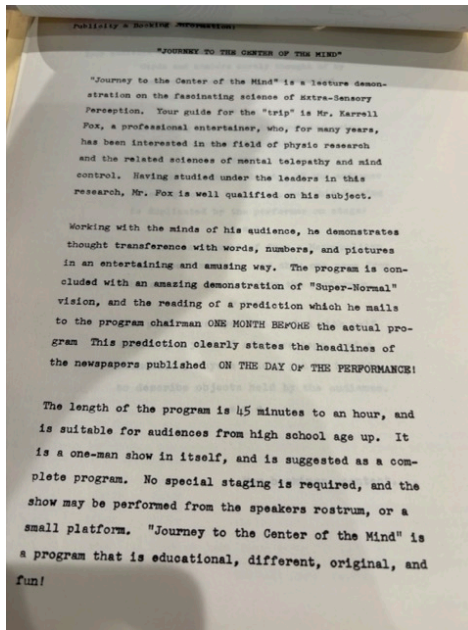
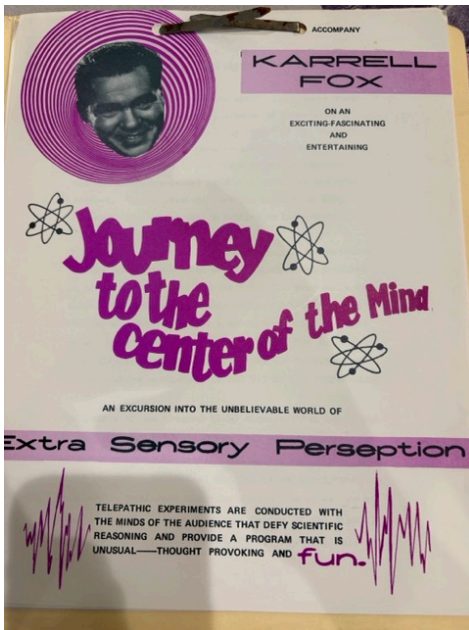
ACCOMPANY



Karrell Fox
Magician

KARRELL FOX

I unearthed a musty folder containing a head shot of Karrell and what must have been marketing material for a lecture he called Journey to the Center of the Mind. It sounds like a mentalism routine.



W. T. Rabe on his bike on Mackinac Island.

CAPTION READS: SPECIAL TO DETROIT NEWS, for possible use with Diane Hofses story on "How I Want to Die" for July 20 editions. W. T. Rabe on bike on Main Street, Mackinac Island covering Yacht races •

Photo by RALPH POLOVICE, Ganet News Service
UPI, transmitted, w.t.rabe