



On the Cover  
By [Karl Rabe](#)

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# Magic Messenger April 2023

IBM 210

SAM 88

# The Magic Messenger



On the Cover Mike Bogdas, Sergeant at Arms (Left) and Dan Jones President (Right) pose with our featured lecturer for

March, Erik Tait (Center).

## In This Issue



## The President's Corner



## Spotlight



## The Secretary's Report



## Mirf Tales: First Festival



## Around the Town



## Funny Business



President's Corner  
By **Dan Jones**

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Hello AAMC Members & Friends,

Our April meeting is coming up fast. It will be held next Wednesday, April 12th from 7-9pm at the Plymouth Community Arts Council. The theme of April's meeting is "History". That leaves it open to a wide interpretation. I can't wait to see what everyone comes up with.

The question of the month will be; "At what age and/or how did you get started in magic?"

For our educational portion of the meeting our V.P. Sean Naes will teach his version of The Professor's Nightmare. If you haven't seen it or learned it yet then you won't want to miss it.

The lecture that we had at our March meeting was awesome.

F.I.S.M. award winning magician Erik Tait from Columbus, Ohio delivered a great lecture on cards. There were some great tips and techniques on false shuffles, card handling and some great tricks. Our thanks to all those who attended from other magic club's. We are looking for another lecture for the fall.

The AAMC Parlor Magic Show is planned for Saturday, May 27th at the Plymouth Community Arts Council. There will be two shows that day. The first at 3pm and the 2nd at 7pm.

Another Magic Open House will be held on Saturday, May 13th from 2-4 pm at the Plymouth District Library. We will use this event to promote our May show as well as our presence in the community.

The last thing that I want to mention here is a Magic Close Up Contest for our members to be held at an upcoming meeting. So practice your cards, coins and other moves. More details to follow.

I look forward to seeing you all on April 12th.

Dan Jones

AAMC President

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Spotlight

By [Karl Rabe](#)

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As a reoccurring feature of the Magic Messenger we will highlight a member and ask them to answer a few questions about themselves. This month the “Spotlight” is on Kevin Peshick



Kevin Peshick performed Walk Around at our Parlor Show

**Where did you grow up / where have you lived?**

Saginaw/Houghton Lake/Kalamazoo/East Lansing/Ann Arbor

**How did you get started in magic?**

My father, who had been involved in magic before going to Korea, sat me down around the age of ten and decided his

number four son would be the magician in the family.

**What type of magic do you perform?**

Close-up, Parlor, Bizarre

**What is your favorite magic book?**

Strong Magic and Designing Miracles by Darwin Ortiz, The Experience of Magic by Eugene Burger, The Books of Wonder by Tommy Wonder, The Workers Series by Michael Close, and Magic in Theory by Lamont and Wiseman.



Kevin Peshick performs a Water Illusion with the assistance of Mike Bogdas and while Bill Rabe looks on.

**Who is your favorite Magician of all time?**

Hmmm, just one?

At the moment, Max Malini.

**Do you have any words of wisdom for newer magicians?**

Reading broadly, both within magic and outside of magic, will boost your creativity. Avoid the tyranny of the new; having to have every new effect that comes out will distract you from improving your magic. Help others and always remember: "It is better to be a first rate version of yourself than a second rate version of someone else."  
Lisa Minnelli



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

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In place of our normal meeting, in March we hosted a lecture by Erik Tait. A good number of members had dinner prior to the lecture with Eric at Stela's Black Dog Tavern in Plymouth. Then it was on to the lecture where we had a great turnout of members from both Ring 210 and Ring 22. Thank you Ring 22 members for supporting the club lecture! A special thanks to our Sergeant at Arms, Mike Bogdas for setting up the lecture.

Erik demonstrated and taught a number of card effects and slights as well as lectured on some theory on selecting the "best method" for a trick.





Dinner before the lecture

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Mirf Tales  
By [Sean Naes](#)

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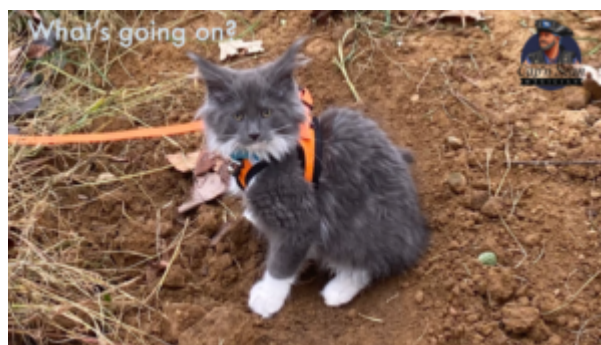
Mirf's training can be divided into 3 main categories: health, performance and environment. Veterinary appointments, diet, attire and safety are health considerations while training with the props and the presentation of it are performance. One might imagine that performance would be the most difficult and time-consuming part of Mirf's training, it's not. Environmental training is, in my opinion, by far the most difficult.

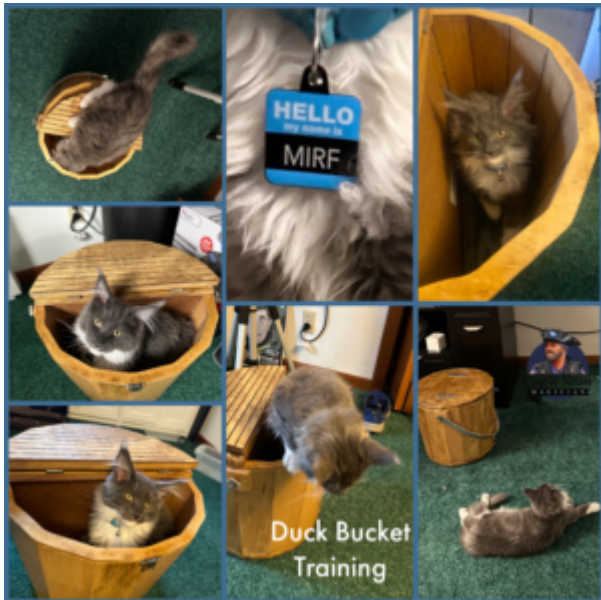


Festival life is not for everyone. Life is cramped, the pay sucks, it's hot, dusty, loud, rain or shine you perform. The bonus is that it's loaded with pranksters, drunks, a couple idiots and the occasional ne'er-do-wells. If you're in it for the money, Yoda would say "Elsewhere, you should look". If you can get past all of the above, be situationally aware to not become a victim, it's great fun while getting to meet a lot of really good people. The problem I face is how to socialize Mirf to that kind of chaos besides trial by fire. Trial by fire makes or breaks the trainee and is my least favorite form of training but sometimes that's all you can do because eventually you have to face the fire. I figured out a way to forge on, The Michigan Nordic Fire Festival.



On the book of faces I was seeing advertisements for the Michigan Nordic Fire Festival in Charlotte, MI and a number of people I know from another festival indicating they were attending. This got me to thinking it would be a great way to introduce Mirf to crowds in a controlled way, so I checked out the website to buy a ticket for the weekend. No pets allowed. No exceptions. The rules indicated a strict no pets policy, licensed service





animals only. Mirf is not a service animal or emotional support pet; he is my friend, road companion and asset. It was time to phone a friend but who? I really needed to find a lawful exception to their rules. The fire festival would be an awesome training ground to work with Mirf and see his initial reactions to crowds.

Up until this point, Mirf had been on the sidewalks of downtown Battle Creek, MI and animal friendly stores like Lowes, Home Depot, Blain's Farm & Fleet, Tractor Supply, PetCo, etc. it was time to up our game. I posted on the book of faces that I was looking for a friend that could put me in touch with the board. My good friend Will who books me into the Canterbury Village festival each year stepped up and put me in touch with the festival founder; Olaf Thorsen.

I talked with Olaf on the phone for about an hour. At first, he didn't really understand what I wanted to do and the thought of a 7-month-old kitten coming to a fire festival was a bit alien to him. I explained that I am training Mirf to be a performer with me at festivals and that I would like to bring Mirf in to expose him to the crowds for socialization purposes to begin



to acclimate him to festival life. The price of admission for the event was \$25 for the weekend, I offered \$250, sign a release of liability and use Will's booth as a "safe spot" in the event things went sideways in exchange for the opportunity

to train Mirf. I understand there are rules, and often times good reasons for those rules. I wasn't trying to buy or weasel my way around the rules, I was negotiating for a real-life legitimate training environment, not finding a way around the rules to take my pet to festival. Olaf said the board was meeting in a couple days and he would take it to the board and see what they say. After their board meeting Olaf called me with a counteroffer. If I was willing to sign a performance contract, I could bring Mirf in all weekend and setup near Will's sales booth inside one of the big tents. They will pay me \$0 to perform 0 shows and I provide them with a valid health certificate and release of liability if things went sideways...worked for me. Mirf would be attending his first festival.



Mirf and the Cap'n

The training plan was to take Mirf to the Festival, see how long he could tolerate the environment before melting down. When I checked in it was a bit humorous, I was referred to as the "Cat Man" even though I was dressed as Cap'n Sean, and they were quite surprised that my seven-month-old "kitten" was bigger than their dogs at home. Maine Coons are big cats, not like tiger or lion big but they are sizable and can be quite formidable. I had a wagon, table, chair, backpack, water, coffee, kibble and Mirf. I set up a prop table I in the big tent Will and a dozen other vendors were set up in. It was

25F outside, but the tents were big and heated maintaining an average indoor temp around 45F. The backpack is a decent size and has mesh panels. I wear it to carry Mirf in while the rest of the things we would need were in the wagon. Once the table was set up, the back panel of the backpack had a zip that doubled its size. I put the backpack in the wagon with a blanket so Mirf could take breaks in there away from people. I got a bunch of postcards from Will advertising the Canterbury Village festival in June that Mirf and I will be performing at, in fact it'll be Mirf Festival debut. I keep him harnessed and always attached to me; I never know what to expect. We were ready and the doors were about to open to the public. This was so much better than coming as a participant. This was Mirf's meet and greet, and he exceeded all expectations. My realistic expectation was that Mirf would get squirrely on Friday after an hour or two, maybe last half the day Saturday and maybe come back Sunday; probably not.



Friday was incredible. The cadence I created was meet and greet people at the table and go on walkabout after an hour. Mirf enjoyed the attention and being out with me. When people would come to the table I would tell them the following:  
"Hello. I'm Cap'n Sean the Pirate Magician and this is my assistant in training Mirf the magnificent mouser. He's a

seven-month-old Maine Coon kitten. He will appear at the beginning of my show in an empty cage and vanish in a treasure chest at the end. His first appearance will be at the Canterbury Village Medieval Faire.” I would then hand them a postcard that is also a discount coupon. It was an interesting exercise in communication and the realization of how many people listen to you while your speaking as opposed to waiting for you to stop talking so they can ask the question that has popped into their mind. Numerous times the conversation would go like this: I would say my spiel, their first statement would be “That’s a kitten!” immediately followed by “is that a Maine Coon?” or “if that’s a *REAL* Maine Coon, it has to be a kitten.” almost everyone asked, “may I pet him?”

Saturday turned out to be a full day. When I was getting ready to leave for the festival, Mirf was at the door waiting. He stood there and didn’t fight me when I put on his harness. He sits in the passenger seat when we are on the road. When we arrived at the festival, after setup I went to see my friend Neal. Neal owns Natural Viking, a beard product vendor at a lot of festivals. I heard that Neal was sponsoring a Whisker Wars on the stage Saturday, so I took Mirf to introduce him and tell Neal that Mirf wanted in the whisker wars because nobody has better whiskers than Mirf. Another friend Ashleigh, well her husband is a Joustier, and since there was no winter jousting, I asked her if she would be Mirf’s handler in the “Whiskerina” category. That’s the category for women who hold things in front of their face as their “beard”. Ashleigh held Mirf, and he should have one except that Neal cheated. He disqualified Mirf from winning even though the audience was



yelling “Put the cat up there!!!”.



Mirf was a hit. He absolutely ate up all the attention. He knew that he was the center of attention, and he was a champion through and through. The days cadence was 30 minutes on the table, 30 minutes on walkabout and 10 minutes rest in his wagon away from everyone. Food and water were available during his breaks. At the halfway point we took an hour break in the truck

where Mirf ate a little, drank a little and napped a little. After he used his litter box and I cleaned it up, we headed back in for the second half of the day. On the way back in I could hear Pictus playing in the big bar tent. I decided this would be a good time to expose Mirf to Pictus. Pictus is a Celtic rock band with pipes and heavy drums, very loud. It scared Mirf. The music was so loud in the tent, and I took him to the furthest spot to expose him to the environment.

While I was doing this, some people would see that I was in there with Mirf and started to come towards me to visit. I would waive them off and mouth the words “in training” so they would understand I was not trying to be rude but was very focused on Mirf alone at the moment. After half a song I headed out of the tent and Mirf agreed it wasn’t a moment too



soon. When I saw the people that approached me earlier, I explained I work may of the same venues as Pictus, so I wanted to expose Mirf to their noise. I will search for some kitty

ear protection if I'm ever working in proximity to any band or DJ with Mirf.

Sunday was short, it was only a half day with the same cadence: table, walkabout and rest. I would estimate about 500 people pet Mirf at his first festival and took pictures. I'm guessing this is a fairly accurate count, I had a box of 500 postcards that I handed out over 3 days while introducing



Mirf to the world. More people pet Mirf than cards I handed out. It was interesting, I have never had so many people want to show me pictures of their cat. About 30 people asked about his breeder when they found out he was a pure breed, one person asked me how I was certain he was a pure-bred Maine Coon with a rather snotty tone. I simply replied: DNA test. When you

invest what I did, you verify your purchase. I had one lady offer me \$1,000 to breed my cat with hers, I declined as I have a no breed contract with my breeder. I would have declined anyway.

Mirf was so laid back, one lady asked me what he was on because he was so calm. I was a bit offended at that one, and my face must have belied it because she quickly apologized for suggesting it. I told her rather unintentionally indignantly that he is at his normal state, he's not on anything, I've been working with him every day since he was eight weeks old, thank you very much. I am lucky, Mirf is really laid back and handles circus life like a natural born for it.



Short story in closing: Ashleigh was so thankful and appreciative that I trusted her to handle Mirf in the Whisker War's she texted me Saturday night asking if it was okay to give Mirf a present on Sunday. I texted Mirf would be honored to receive a gift from her. When I would go on walkabout, it was cold out and people would stop me to see Mirf and ask questions...while we were freezing. I would eventually say "Mirf is only a 7-month-old kitten and doesn't have a winter coat yet and for that matter neither do I so we need to move on to the next tent" make our goodbyes and move along. Ashleigh gifted Mirf a Viking Cloak made from the skin of his enemies (rabbit fur) with a deer horn toggle to keep Mirf warm. Brandon told me she was up all night making it. I appreciated the heart felt gift. These are the great kinds of people I get to work with, which makes all the hard work and long hours' worth it.



Next month, I'll tell you about the lead up to Mirf's first official show and how it went.

Thank you for reading,

Sean

P.S. Speaking of the book of faces and the house of twits, if you don't follow @capnsean you should.



Around the Town  
By [Karl Rabe](#)

## Upcoming Events

## Next Meeting

APR

12

Wed

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

## Next Show

MAY

27

Sat

4:00 pm Parlor Magic Show – Afternoon @  
Plymouth Community Arts Council

7:00 pm Parlor Magic Show – Evening @  
Plymouth Community Arts Council

## Other Upcoming Events

MAY

13

Sat

1:00 pm AAMC Open House @ Plymouth  
District Library

JUN

19

Mon

all-day Magic & Performing Arts Camp @  
Plymouth Community Arts Council

AUG

12

Sat

all-day AAMC Annual Picnic

SEP

24

Sun

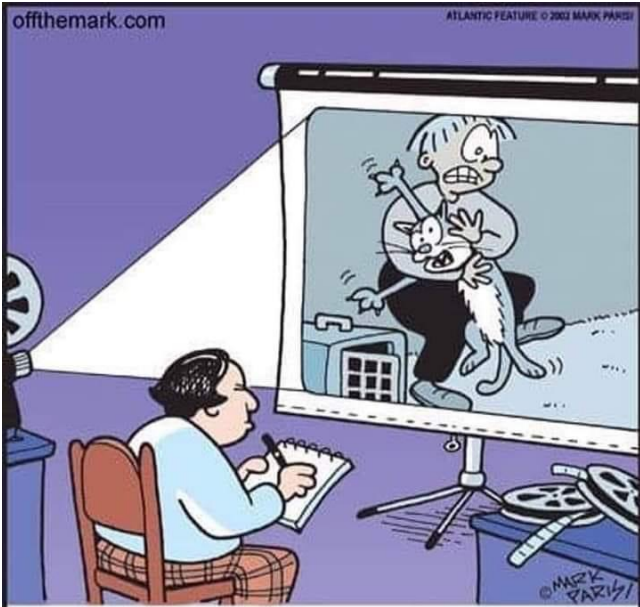
all-day AAMC Annual Flea Market

Check out John Luka's Magic page and his well maintained [list of Michigan Events](#)

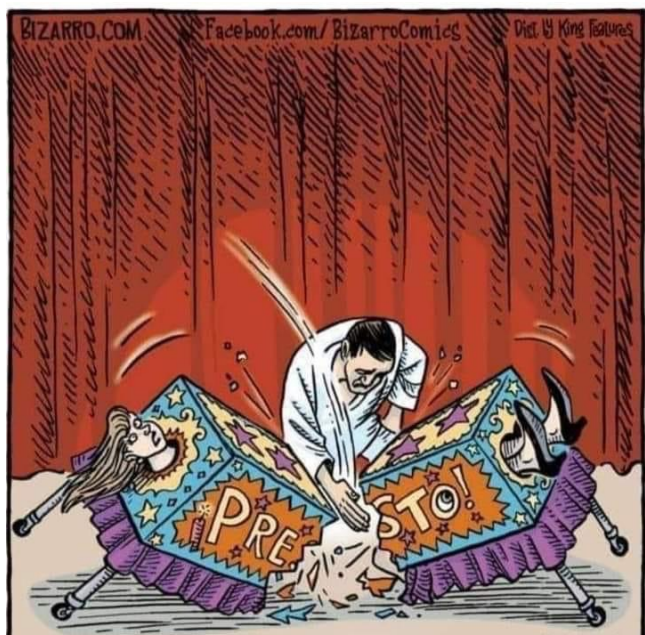
All AAMC Events and details can be viewed on the [website calendar](#).



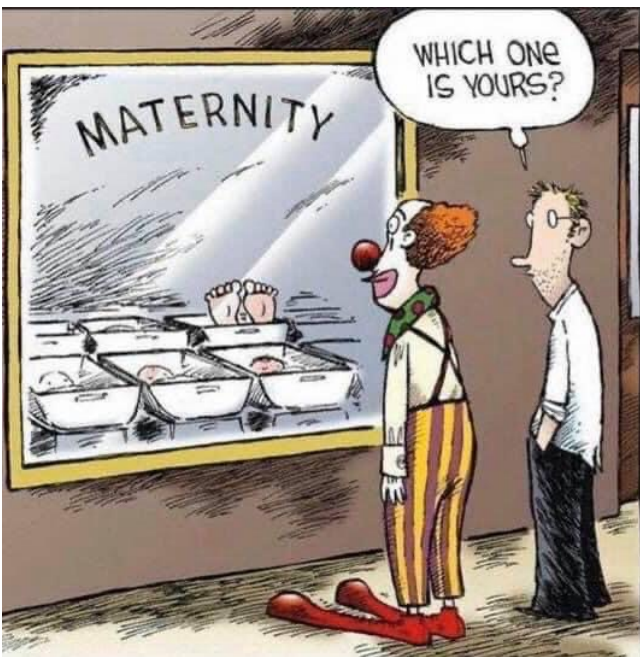
Funny Business  
By [Karl Rabe](#)



BEFORE PERFECTING HIS ESCAPE ACT, HARRY HOUDINI STUDIED FILMS OF CATS ABOUT TO GO TO THE VET



MIXED MAGICAL ARTS





Visit the [club website](#) for past issues, calendar of upcoming events, and other features and articles.



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## The Ann Arbor Magic Club Board



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