

# Magic Messenger

The Official Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Magic Club / S.A.M 88 / I.B.M. 210

May 2015

## President's Corner

### Magic by the Book

Like many, my introduction to magic came in the form of a kit. Immediately after, I became aware of the magic number, 793.8 (Mr. Dewey's category of magic books). I was fortunate to live between two libraries, and would ride my bike to each, where I spent hours browsing both the adult and juvenile sections looking at magic books.

I didn't have a club to join, the nearest shop was downtown Detroit (Roy Kissel's "Fox Fun N Magic"), which seemed a world away. But I had books. Lots of books.

I was only allowed to check out 2 books on the same subject at a time, and I would renew 2 books over and over and over again.

In the juvenile section, Joseph Leeming's "Tricks Any Boy Can Do" was my favorite. It was old when I first saw it (first published in 1938). But it contained a wealth of information for any young magician. In the past couple years, I was able to find and purchase a library edition and add it to my personal collection.

In the adult section, Henry Hay's "The Amateur Magician's Handbook" (first published in 1950) was my introduction to real magic. Mr Hay led me down the path of routining and performing. I did as he suggested and made a 3x5 index card of each trick I owned, timed it repeatedly in front of a mirror, and could put together a show of any length requested. He had a lot of sleight of hand (which I've never been able to do), but his section on the Miser's Dream captivated me for the rest of my life, until just 2 years ago, when I was finally able to come up with a method and performed it for our club. My first exposure to the Ann Arbor Magic Club was at a flea market several years ago, and I was able to purchase a library edition from one of you for just a couple dollars.

Biographically, when I was in grade school, Scholastic Books offered “The Great Houdini”. I snapped it up and have read it many, many times. I also own a copy of that (and a bookshelf full of other magic books).

What books have had an impact on you? That’s the subject of this month’s club meeting. “Magic by the Book”. I’d like each of us to bring a book (or 2) that is important to you. Tell us about it, and perform something from it.

Someone has said that if you want to perform a new trick these days, look in an old book.

Also at our June meeting, I hope to have some major announcements regarding our Fall Flea Market and next year’s Michigan Magic Day. Let me just say, *you don’t want to miss this meeting!*

Invite someone to join you at our meetings. I’m continually amazed at the contacts we all have, and the number of magicians around metro Detroit. Yes, there are other clubs around town, but I think we’re the best! I hope you do too, and share my enthusiasm in promoting our club and our craft.

See you June 10<sup>th</sup> at Denny’s!

Magically yours,  
John Russell

## **Secretary’s Report**

May’s meeting featured our very popular mini swap meet and flea market. Before the action started, we were treated to a performance and explanation by member **Jim Placido**, of his featured effect, The Tabary Rope Mystery. As any good magician would do, Jim learned the effect per instructions and then modified it to suit his personality. His performance was outstanding and well received by an appreciative audience. Jim actively performs in the Detroit metro area as “Mr. Magico” and was recently featured in a The Livingston Daily Press and Argus article: “*Green Oak Township resident Jim Placido, a magician who goes by the name Mr. Magico, levitates a tax form. In his day job, Placido is a senior tax settlement officer*”.



**Jim Placido**

Our flea market brought out some serious collectors, including noted guest magi and historian **Dave Wirth**. 7 members brought magical wares for sale or trade; **Bill Brang, Jim Folkl, Paul Nielsen, Scott Kindschy, Ken Magee, John Russell and Dan Jones**. To punch up the in the fall. The “wheeling and dealing” went on unabated throughout the evening. When the (magical) dust settled, the sellers had a little more moolah in their pockets and the buyers had a treasure or two to work on for a future presentation. proceedings, each vendor demonstrated one of his items for sale. It became an impromptu magic show within the flea market! Everyone had a great time and the event served as a warm up for the “world famous” Ann Arbor Magic Club Flea Market, held annually



**Bill Brang**

*Where's Fraidy Cat Rabbit?*

**Jim Folkl**

*World's Worst Zombie Gimmick*



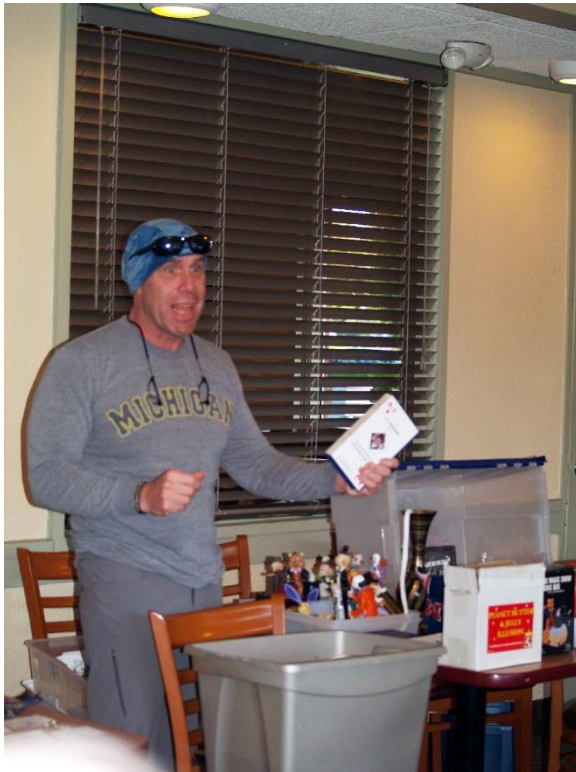
**Paul Nielsen**

*Owner, Wunderground Magic Shop*



**Scott Kindschy**

*Anyone Need a Chop Cup?*



**Ken Magee**

*Owner, Ann Arbor Magic and Sports Memorabilia Shop*



**John Russell**

*El Presidente*



**Dan Jones**

*Buy My Stuff!*

**Mark O'Brien** has accepted the position of club historian. **George Honer** is in the process of transitioning our historical documents to Mark. If any member has information pertaining to development of the AAMC please contact Mark.

Next month's meeting promises to be very interesting with the theme of "Magic by the Book". Members will bring in a favorite magic book, provide a review and present an effect from it. As always, our meetings focus on magical fun and fraternity.

### **Around the town highlights:**

**Dan Jones** and **Jim Folkl** performed a magic show for the Guardian Angels Animal Rescue Center Pet Fair in Clawson City Park, 16 May. The show was well received, and the highlight of the fair's entertainment was Dan's balloon artistry. Children and adults were lined up at Dan's table all day to receive one of his outstanding balloon sculptures. Dan delighted the crowd with his creations and helped generate additional donations to the rescue center.

For a complete listing of magic events in Michigan, visit John Luka's site:  
<http://www.johnlukamagic.com/mi/events.html>

### **Funny Business:**

"Had a job with 5,000 people under me...Cemetery watchman"

"All seating was bad ... All faced the stage ....."

"Had to quit working as a knife sharpener ... couldn't stand the grind ....."

"He plays a fair game of golf ... if you watch him..."

There was an old fellow named Green,  
Who grew so abnormally lean,  
And flat, and compressed,  
That his back touched his chest,  
And sideways he couldn't be seen.

### A Vintage Magic Quiz!



This outfit is finely made and decorated, it includes the three tables, cylinders, mallet, balls, and accessories. A very visual three way transposition effect.

Shown on stage are three custom tables, each with a thin tube resting on top. Near the tables is a basket containing several croquet balls. The performer enters with a mallet at hand, picks up a ball from the basket and gives it a whack to show that everything is solid.

The performer then removes the mallet head and places it in one of the tubes. The other tubes are then shown to be empty and the mallet head is the removed and placed on the center table. The other two tubes are then shown empty. Then three

balls are placed into another tube. The tube is then carried towards the audience carefully and then thrown in the air and the balls have vanished.

The tube that previously housed the mallet head now contains the balls. And the tube that was just shown empty is now lifted and the mallet tumbles onto the floor.

Extremely rare.  
What is it / Who Made It

?

**Answer at the end of the Messenger**

Jim Folkl

## AAMC ~ ARCANUM – May 2015

ar•ca•num - (ar'keɪ nəm) *n.*, *pl.* -na (-nə). - [1590–1600; < Latin, neuter (used as n.) of *arcānus* [arcane](#)]

**1. a secret accessible only to the few; mystery. 2. a powerful remedy; elixir.**

**Welcome Theurgists!**

Please note that this is the inaugural column dedicated to:

**Retrieving – Retaining – Reveling**

...in the History of the AAMC!

Your humble scribe is honored at being asked to pick up this particular wand.

**A Starting Point – From the AAMC Web Site**

### [History](#)

Hank Moorehouse provided this reminiscence about the founding of the Ann Arbor Magic Club in an email in 2005 to member George Honer.



Hank Moorehouse

*I believe it was in late 1969 or early 1970 that a few magicians got together in the home of Hank Moorehouse in Ypsilanti to talk about magic and starting a magic*



*club. Besides Hank, I recall Dennis Loomis, Charles Rulfs, Marcello Truzzi, a young Jeff Wawrzaszek and maybe one or two more.*

*Over the next couple of years magicians from Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Jackson, Downriver, suburban Detroit and a few students from the U of M and Eastern grew this number to 27 including a few wives. It's interesting to note that in that original group Dennis Loomis is a professional magician who is now putting out magic DVD's. Charles Rulfs, deceased, was a world class collector, Marcello Truzzi, a professor at EMU was a world authority on the para-normal, witches, and other things related to the supernatural. Jeff Wawrzaszek has been a professional magician since graduating from College and Hank Moorehouse has been a full time magician and dealer for 35 years. Notable in the second group is Graham Putnam who's the owner of Fun Inc. in Chicago. One of the largest magic manufacturers and distributors in the world. Daryl Hurst, who had a magic shop in Ann Arbor for a number of years and was a very busy professional magician.*

*Duke Stern, who worked for Abbott's for a number of years and a friend to all was asked to give his name to our ring. A couple of events of note was when we received our charter in January of 1972 we had a party and show at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Ypsilanti. Performing in that show was Doug Henning who had just graduated from college and had a grant from the Canadian Government to study magic for a year. He was a good friend of Dennis Loomis. A couple of young kids too young to join named Jeff Boyer and Jim Fitzsimmons hung around when they could get a ride.*

*In 1972 we started another club, A SAM assembly; the membership of the club was smaller and included magicians from a greater distance. The stated reason for starting the club was that it was to be more performance orientated. Joining at this time were Jim Ruth and Jack Hartley. In reality it was just an excuse to have another meeting a month. In 1973 we sponsored the 3rd MMD at Cleary College in Ypsilanti. When Hank started a magic shop on Williams St. on Campus in the mid 70's the club grew again with people like Bob West, Bob Hodder and Harry Coletock and others.*

### **Present**

With regards to history in general and magic in particular the following phrase comes to mind, "Almost as much has been forgotten as has been learned!" Since the time of the founding of the AAMC, the club has benefited greatly from the contributions of its members both past and present as well as the stewardship of its officers. The future is dependent on the past. Preserving past contributions and the legacy of the dedicated magicians of the AAMC is a task that requires all of our efforts. Your humble scribe is prepared to be the bucket to collect and preserve the acquired wisdom of the club.

## **Back To the Future**

So, cards on the table...

At the beginning of this column you read – “**Retrieving – Retaining – Reveling**”.  
What does this mean and what is being asked?

### **Retrieving**

The current AAMC membership is likely to have in their possession; paper documents or electronic media from past and current magical contributors. The goal is to collect as much of this information as possible. That information then goes in the bucket! Ego sum situla!

### **Retaining**

As this information is collected, it will then be scanned into PDF document format (for paper documents). Other media will be reviewed and standardized in a current e-format. The goal at this stage is to have this information organized by Year, Style and Contributor. The information will then be uploaded to the Member Area of the AAMC Website.

### **Reveling**

Moving forward – This column may serve as a guide and shining light to showcase past Marvel’s. It may also serve as an entry point to archive the magic, methods and contributions of our current Marvel’s!

### **Parting Thoughts**

**52 Card Symbolism:** Encoded in a deck of cards: There are two colors (red and black) symbolizing day and night; four suits— spades, hearts, clubs, and diamonds— one for each season. The twelve court cards correspond to the months of the Gregorian calendar. Each suit contains thirteen cards, for the thirteen lunar cycles. There are fifty-two cards in a deck, those being the fifty-two weeks in a year. And if you add up the values of every pip on all 52 cards, including the joker, you get exactly 365. Every day is MAGIC!

So...No need to wait for the next meeting! Reach out today!

### **About the Author**

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**PH4CR:** Is the nom de voyage of your typical middle age magic hack. The monthly statements claim him to be Mark P. O’Brien. Husband and father of two wonderful children and two miserable and vengeful Yorkies.

Oh, and enough card decks to stock a modest casino!

### **Contact the Author**

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## Ex Libris

Hello fellow Magi and welcome to the Ex Libris article for the month of May, 2015!

This month being our first foray into this article, I thought it most appropriate to start with what many consider to be a foundational book, among one of the first comprehensive books written on conjuring, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* by Reginald Scot.

*The Discoverie of Witchcraft* was written in 1584 and is considered to be the first practical treatise on conjuring written in the English language. Its purpose was not to serve as a text of magical secrets, rather it was somewhat akin to Houdini and his debunking of psychics and exposing their trickery secrets – it was meant to serve as a skeptical look into the practices of magic and supposed witchcraft, or, black magic, to counter the witch hunting craze during the Inquisition and ridicule the “standard” texts on the subject and their implications. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* was a book, according to Scot, “*wherein the Lewde dealing of Witches and Witchmongers is notablie detected, in sixteen books ... whereunto is added a Treatise upon the Nature and Substance of Spirits and Devils, 1584.*”

Reginald Scot believed that it was irrational and un-Christian to accuse people of practicing witchcraft and to prosecute them of such. He believed, and held firmly in the belief, that the Roman Church was responsible for this unjust way of thinking. It was a popular belief for many years that all copies of this manuscript were burned upon the accession of James I, the son of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Scot had done research and gathered his information from studying the works of various authors, which he numbered over 200, the superstitions of witchcraft, especially in the legal courts where the prosecution of witches saw no end, as well as in villages where it was all but too easy to accuse another person of witchcraft as the belief of black magic and its progenitors came from every imaginable thing. If your cow died of old age, surely, it was not old age but was rather the cause of it having been touched by a witch...

The people in a village who tended to be accused, tried, prosecuted and executed as witches were those who were poor, elder, less-social and newcomers to a village. Scot was attempting to prove that witchcraft was rejected by logic and religion, that

any sort of manifestation was nothing more than the result of a person willing themselves to believe it and that the resulting illusions, perceived as works of a witch or warlock, were figments of a strong or overactive imagination. By disproving the common belief, Scot was hoping to spare innocent lives of those accused of witchcraft.

The author himself was indeed superstitious, at least in a contemporary sense. He believed that unicorns held medicinal value; he believed that the existence of precious stones was directly influenced by heavenly bodies and that to a certain degree that the Devil had the ability to absorb souls. These were related in the book as references to medicine and astrology. He also wrote stories in the book about magicians with supernatural powers performing for various courts of royalty.

This tome became *the* reference for all things concerning and related to witchcraft, spirits, spirituality, alchemy, magic, legerdemain and of course, skepticism, especially his, and especially as related to witchcraft. It was such an influential text that William Shakespeare studied this book and used it to draw specifics when created the witches in his play, *Macbeth*, and Thomas Middleton used it in the same way for his play called *The Witch*. The sections detailing the accomplishment of “magic tricks” served as a basis for later and equally influential books, *The Art of Juggling* written by S. R. in 1612 and of course, *Hocus Pocus Junior*, written in 1634, whose author is still unknown today. The early writings of Scot constituted the majority (in some cases, nearly all) of the text that existed in the English language on the subject of conjuring in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Of course, this book did not come without its detractors and those who sought to discredit Scot and his work. Among the many who spoke out against him were George Gifford (in his works of 1587 and 1593), Gabriel Harvey in the 1593 book *Pierce's Supererogation*, Henry Holland in his *Treatise of Witchcraft* from 1590, James VI of Scotland in his 1597 book, *Dæmonologie* in which he labeled the opinions of Reginald Scot and one of his greatest influences, Johann Weyer (the author of *De Præstigiis Demonum*, 1566), as “damnable”. There were many others, but one that was probably more well-known than others was Thomas Ady, author of *Candle in the Dark: Or, A Treatise Concerning the Nature of Witches & Witchcraft*, which was written in 1656.

Now to the part which I am sure some of you were eagerly awaiting, at which you may be somewhat disappointed, or perhaps (hopefully), fascinated: the chosen effect from this book.

It may surprise many readers to read how many of our rather “standard” magic effects, or at least some of their origins, appeared in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. The effect that I am going to detail here might sound familiar to many of you. It comes from Chapter XXXII (32): To burne a thred, and to make it whole again with the ashes thereof. Sounds a bit like the modern ‘Gypsy Thread’, and indeed it is. In short, and transliterated for your ease of interpretation, the secret is thus: Take two threads or small laces, each one foot in length, roll one of them into a ball about the size of a pea; hide it between your left forefinger and thumb.

Take the other thread and hold it in front of you between the thumb and forefinger of each hand, holding all other fingers openly, relaxed. Have a person cut, with a knife, the thread in the middle. Place the ends together, re-grip between the thumbs and forefingers as before and being sure to keep the whole thread hidden, and repeat. Once or twice more, this is repeated until the pieces are very small in length, and then roll all of the loose pieces together the same as the whole thread, using your right fingers. The left hand takes the knife and rests the rolled-up cut pieces on the tip and thrusts it into the flame of a candle until the threads are burnt to ashes.

Pull the knife out and dump the cooled ashes into the left thumb and forefinger, and after you rub the ashes for a while, use the right thumb and forefinger to draw out the hidden thread to show it restored.

I think that this effect has stood the test of time, though it has undergone many presentational and methodical transformations, because it is inherently simple and straightforward. It is also easy to do. Whether you use this particular handling or a more modern approach, using it to tell a story about the loss of a great love or the triumph over personal trials and tribulations, this sort of thing connects your audiences with one another and with you. That connection happens on a rather deeper level and will affect each person in a different way, all of which are very powerful. I urge you to explore the ‘Gypsy Thread’ effect for this very reason, if you do not already perform it yourself. To get you started, here are a few resources of some excellent versions: The World’s Greatest Magic DVD library: Gypsy Thread, the Dragon Thread DVD by Mike Wong, The Eternal String by Max Londono and The Gypsy Balloon by Tony Clark.

If you have not read this book, I would highly recommend it because it is rather enlightening with regards to the history of the art of magic – not only the for the methods but the thinking that was ultimately behind (read: responsible for) them.

The book is written in Early Modern English (EMnE) and may be indecipherable to some readers without knowledge of that period language, or even a working knowledge of Middle English. If you do tackle the book and need help transliterating it, please let me know and I would be more than happy to help!

I hope you have enjoyed this first article and found it to be of value, whether to the satisfaction of your own fascination with magical history or, perhaps, to tell you about the existence of potentially interesting and informational books on our humble art form, which you may have been unaware of. Happy reading folks and I will see you next month!

Joaquin Ayala, PhD.  
Club Librarian

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Check out our Facebook Page “Ann Arbor Magic Club”  
Have a question / suggestion / comment / contribution? Contact us!

## **? Owen's Croquet Ball Illusion ?**

Meetings are held the second Wed. of the month at  
Denny's Restaurant, 39550 Ann Arbor Rd., Plymouth MI  
48170, 7pm

Bring a guest! Perform! Join a Committee!