

IBM 210

January 2026

SAM 88

The Magic Messenger



The Official Newsletter
The Ann Arbor Magic Club

Long time returning member George Honer displays his White Elephant present at the Club's annual Christmas party; A genuine Lincoln Stone Magic Kit. It is great to have you back George!



President's Corner

By Sean Howell

Happy New Year,

Can you believe it? 2026 is already here...I feel like I must have blinked.

2025 was a great year for the club. Meeting attendance is continually on the rise, and the content is continuously improving because of member participation in the meetings and the events. We work with the Arts Council hosting a magic theatre day camp where members are teaching the next generation of prospective compeers. We hosted two parlor shows and a pop up magic shop event. We should all be proud of the growth and outreach of 2025.

I Know, some of you are thinking the new year is starting on a sour note because, if you missed it, effective 1 January 2026 annual member dues increased to \$50 for an individual membership, \$60 for a couple and \$70 for a family. The last time dues were increased was 2017 and the dichotomy of the club was quite different that it is now. The club has so much more to offer, and of course life is not free so the board elected to bridge the funding gap with an increase in member fees. If you are on a fixed income, and have a problem with paying dues, please email me sean@naes.cc and we can figure it

out on a case by case basis. As I shared last month, a number of members feel our new dues are fair and comparable to other types of clubs and activities in the region. Thank you for having faith in your club's board to keep the club and it's members best interest in mind. Thank you for your attendance and participation at the meetings, 2026 is going to be even better.

Well, I have to cut this short and get back to some vital maintenance before Mirf and I get back on the road again to Dade City, Florida for the Bay Area Renaissance Festival. It will be here faster than I would like but, that's life on the road. I have an offer: If any of you find yourself in Florida between Valentines Day and March 29th, and you want to attend the festival, text me at (734) 634-2000 for free tickets.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting as I will miss February and March's meeting.

Cheers,
Sean

Editor's Note: Reminder that annual dues are due in January. Please bring payment to our January meeting or [pay online](#). Checks are accepted. Our Treasurer asks if you are paying in cash to have exact change if possible. You can also pay via US Mail by sending a check to

AAMC
P.O. Box 532244
Livonia, MI 48152.



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

December Meeting

This month's Secretary's Report (text and photos) is by our Roving Reporting and Photographer Mike Palko. You may know him better as "Charlie's Dad". Thank you Mike for filling in and taking notes and photos in Karl's absence. Fantastic job with all the great photos! Dan Jones also provided some details.



Great turnout for our December meeting

We had three guests this month, Robert Langerfeld who is a UM Biology PhD student. The other guest was Mario and a friend.

Mike Reuter was the featured performer and started by changing an empty Corona bottle into a full bottle of beer using an empty paper bag. Next Mike used his mentalist skills to predict a card chosen by one volunteer and the name of a city from a second volunteer who had written down a zip code on a piece of paper. For the reveal, the volunteer's queen of

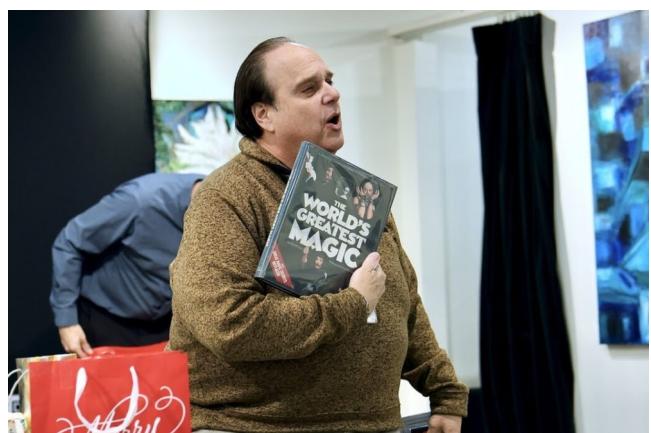
hearts card and a paper note card having the name of the city written on it were found stapled together and secured the entire time, undisturbed, inside a clear plexiglass box on top of the magician's table.

Then came the lively gift exchange where names were chosen from a hat. There were many laughs during the stealing of the sought-after items.

After the gift exchange, it was time for magic!

- The first performer was Alex who started by removing his overcoat to reveal that he was sharply dressed in a black tuxedo. He then used his new sound system setup and impressive vocal talent while performing magic. His choreographed performance featured a handkerchief appearance/disappearance and finished with his cup and balls routine all while singing a Merle Haggard song, karaoke style. The audience loved it!
- Next up, Mike Thornton did a very nice impromptu Gypsy restored thread trick using a newly acquired thread spool from the gift exchange.
- Lincoln introduced his new hand sock puppet he crocheted himself. He then did a card prediction using his magic insurance policy with volunteer Mike Thornton.
- Sean and Mirf did their card prediction assisted by one of our guests guest.
- Lastly, George Honer shared a few card tricks assisted by Robert L. and Lincoln.



























Around the Town
By [Karl Rabe](#)

Calendar of Events

You don't want to miss our next meeting January 14 at 7pm at the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

- Our featured performer will be none other than **Cap'n Sean and Mirf the Magnificent**
- Sean and Karl will be distributing the **AAMC Top Contributor Recognition Awards** for 2025
- **Mike Thornton** will lead a 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 Meeting

JAN

14

Wed

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

JAN

21

Wed

**10:00 am AAMC Board Meeting –
Annual F2F ... @ Plymouth District
Library**



Add ▾

[View Calendar →](#)

Club Events

FEB

23

Mon

all-day Club Birthday

Other Events

JAN

20

Tue

**7:00 pm Detroit Magic Club
Monthly Meeting @ Trinity
Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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

Lady Sarah shared the exciting news that [Steve Valentine](#) will be joining The Magic Soirée as a special guest performer for two shows on Saturday February 7 at 5:15 and 7:15 pm in Troy. Check out their [website](#) for details. I suspect this will sell out very fast so act now if you want to go!



Steve Valentine is now best known by the general public as an actor featured on many popular TV shows. Mostly magicians know that he is a very talented magician. He was one of the headliners at the last Abbott's Get Together and he also put on a great lecture.

If you read the Magic Messenger regularly you know that Steve Valentine is the favorite performer of all time of one of our newer members...

Past Events

On Sunday January 11, the Plymouth Library hosted a “Local Clubs and Activities Expo”. Over 25 clubs, including the Ann Arbor Magic Club were represented with a table at the event. Patrons roamed from table to table learning about the different clubs and activities in the area. We used this as an opportunity to market the club to prospective new members as well as to generate interest in our Parlor Shows.

Acting VP Wendy Stone provided these pictures and noted...

It was a great day at the Local Clubs and Activities Expo at the Plymouth Public Library. Lincoln and Karl Rabe manned our table and met lots of new people; while April Barrett, Dan Jones and I made balloon animals for the kids!

Karl notes that Lincoln did a great job representing the club and delivering an articulate and concise “Elevator Pitch” when people asked what the club was all about.

Not pictured – Robert Goodwin did some walk-around marketing, Charlie and Mike Palko showed up and provided moral support.





Ex Libris
By [Dr. Joaquin Ayala de Cedo](#)



Dr. Joaquin M.
Ayala, PhD

SWITCH: Unfolding the \$100 Bill Change by John Lovick

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

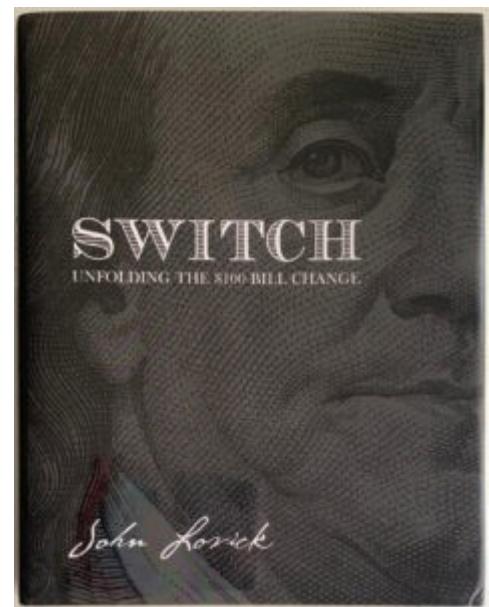
Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for January 2026 – Happy New Year to all! It sounds strange to be saying that, but I do hope that everyone had a fun, safe and magical ChristmaHannuKwanzikas!

As always in January, I try to pick a book that will take us “back to basics,” be it in concept, subject or just all-around beginner-esque in its quality. Many magicians are familiar with the old stand-by of magic in the effect that is ‘The \$100 Bill Switch’, and since it is considered a basic effect, albeit an extraordinarily strong one when presented well, I think the book for this month is quite appropriate. We will delve into “SWITCH: Unfolding the \$100 Bill Change” by John Lovick. This is a 346-page hardcover book originally published in 2006 by Murphy’s Magic Supplies, Inc.

[EDITOR’s NOTE: Per Josh, this book is in stock and available at [Underground Magic](#) for \$50. Stop by or give them a call at (248) 280-5925]

If for some reason you have been living under a rock and are unfamiliar with the basic effect, the idea is simple: A blank piece of paper or a piece of newsprint, sized similar to a banknote, is folded up into a small packet, and upon being unfolded again, it has changed into a \$100 bill!

Another version of this is a different effect that most magicians are familiar with, but shares the method, and that is the “Inside-Out Bill” or “Mis-made Bill” where a \$1 bill is turned “inside-out” with



the four outside corners of the bill moving to the center part of the banknote.

It is a stunning piece of magic, simple though it seems. There have seemingly been as many versions and methods as there are grains of sand on a beach. This book contains many ideas, some of them using a thumb tip and others using nothing but the two pieces of paper. The book begins with a section on the history of the Bill Change, followed by fourteen pages of philosophical and practical questions and solutions to the 'what and why' parts of the effect. This is followed by a short treatise on the origins, uses and techniques of/with a thumb tip, and a hot tip (see what I did there?) – some of this information is readily applied to other effects with this gaff.

The meat of the book begins with the original as first reportedly seen in 1975, the creation of Vladimir Vladimirov (Владимир Владимиров), known as "Vlado". Two standard variations follow from Mike Kozlowski and Roger Klause, the former of which really made some waves with his handling back in the late 1990s, mostly due to its clean handling and deceptive appearance. Since then, many other notable magicians have become known for their work on this plot, such as Jay Sankey, Gregory Wilson, and Michael Ammar.

I would be remiss not to mention some of what I consider a few stand-out effects in this book. One of the personal favourites includes Around the World in 80 Dollars by David Acer, as well as Foreign Affair by the aforementioned Gregory Wilson. Both effects are ones that I have used for years, and both feature a borrowed bill that changes multiple times. There are lots of great presentation possibilities with these two!

There is a stunning Bill to Pen effect that I have used extensively in the past, which uses the methods of the \$100 Bill Change, but is only possible with Euro banknotes. If you ever find yourself travelling to Europe and planning to perform magic for anyone, let **this** be the thing you study

and practice for – trust me, well worth it! In short: The magician borrows a Euro note and hands the participant a pen with which to write down the serial number. The note disappears in a flash, and later reappears in the very pen used to write down the serial number...and which NEVER leaves the hand from the time BEFORE the note vanishes!

Three of my favourite uses for the technique using the Mis-made Bill effect are included here, notably (I did it again!) Picasso's Bill by Marc DeSouza, where you draw a stick figure on a borrowed note and then transfigure both the bill and the stick figure, before restoring it, signing it, and handing it out as a souvenir. The other two are identical in effect and method, but still different, and those are Autograph Collection by Andrew J. Pinard and Signature Piece by Gregory Wilson (this name just keeps popping up, eh?). In both cases, a signature/autograph, and in the latter case, date/time/etc. written on the borrowed bill transfigure into the mis-made note and back again. These three effects are different overall from the standard effect, and the nuances serve to make it even stronger still. Just imagine if you possessed a \$1 bill signed by your favourite magician/celebrity, and then you transform it right in front of the eyes of your audience, twice...Now imagine, if you will, being able to do the exact same thing with the signature of your audience participant and a borrowed note... ...*THAT* is NOT included in this book, but it will be discussed in the February 2026 article!

This book also includes some other fun and clever uses for the technique to affect the effect, as it were. You will find discussion on bill origami (and some of you will be familiar with the Dr. Robert "Bob" Neale Bunny Bill, which can be used to significant effect with a change, as well as borrowing a \$1 bill and changing it into an origami ring, etc. There are hundreds of origami figures in existence which would work very well with the bill switch techniques herein.

There is even a section with additional ideas that use the

technique for a different effect altogether – changing an aspect of the paper or note as opposed to the paper/note itself, if that makes sense. For example: Jay Sankey describes Unholy, using a page torn from a small spiral notepad. At the end, when the page is unfolded, the holes along the edge are no longer torn. Another favourite of mine from Jay is his Travelling Expenses, which is a Hole Matrix effect using a banknote.

One of the features I liked in this tome is that each effect opens with a short bio of its creator (where applicable), the effect description, the necessary implements and whether it is a thumb tip or ‘tipless’ switch. It covers even more with some bill vanishes, productions and non-banknote effects using the aforementioned techniques. In reading this book, I would strongly suggest you do as Jamy Ian Swiss did in his foreword: read this book in order, rather than skipping around; this will prevent the “flipbook” effect of seeing hundreds of (seemingly or not) similar drawings (many by the King of Magic Book illustration himself, Tony Dunn) over and over.

Well, that wraps up the article for this month – if you have ever had and interest in the \$100 Bill Switch, PLEASE check this book out as it contains a veritable lifetimes’ worth of information and, dare I say, technology, as to the effect. Take care and I look forward to “seeing you” next month!

Yours in the Secret Art,
J.M.A.



The Inventor's Notebook #29

A Case for Wine

Karl Rabe

Bill and I perform the multiplying bottles in a routine I call "The Bottle and Glass Trick?". Anyone that performs a traditional multiplying bottle routine knows that one of the challenges is the stage management of the bottles before and especially after you perform the effect.

One commercial product available to solve this problem is the "Multiplying Bottle Tray" by Joe Lefler. As illustrated the tray has a layer with holes that can be lifted up to encase the bottles and keep them from tipping. In this way the bottles can be lifted away or moved without fear of them tipping over. This is a clever solution, but I didn't like the idea of having to work around the holes during the performance. Instead I wanted to create an "organic" holder that looked like a wine crate.



Lefler Tray



For Transport

My first attempt was simply made with a trip to Total Wines to sort through their empty wine boxes available at the store. I found one of suitable size and then with some wood grain contact paper and some gaffer's tape, made a folding crate. This worked but had a few shortcomings.

- The crate folded flat but was very long when folded.
- The crate did not have sides tall enough to completely cover the bottles.
- There was no tray, so the entire table had to be moved about on stage.
- The bottles were still exposed to prying eyes backstage.

If you want to build one of these, it is very easy. The box is bottomless. Notice the dividers are free floating and only are fastened to the outside box at one point. This ensure it can freely fold with minimal fuss.

To use, the props are all in starting position with the box keeping everything in its place. I use a small cloth to cover the protruding bottles. To perform the box is simply lifted over everything and set aside. Once the performance is complete a few minor adjustments are made to the bottles on the table and then the box is carefully placed over the standing bottles and the entire table can be moved without fear of the bottles tipping.



Rev 1



Top view



Detail of Hinge



Partially Folded



Fully Folded

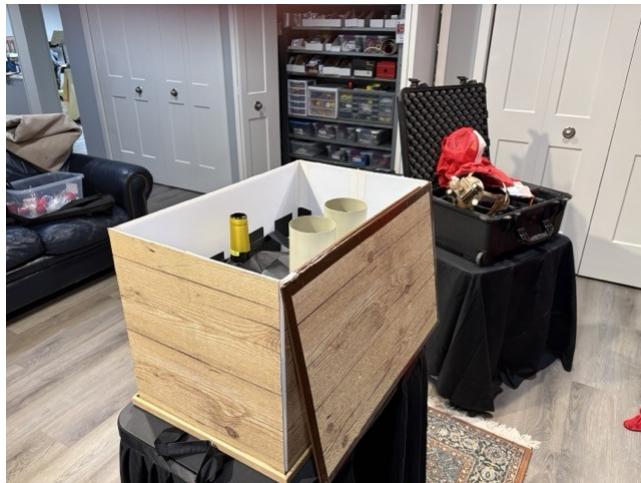
Building on lessons learned, Rev 2 was significantly improved.

- The box is built out of corrugated plastic and contact paper with Gaffers's tape for assembly.
- Lightweight nylon trim tape forms the netting inside for dividers and doesn't get in the way of folding.
- Dimensions are key. The box is as deep as it is tall. This way the lid can fold back and when collapsed it occupies the exact same space as the tray.
- I built a light weight tray for the bottles to sit on out of 1/8 in plywood and outside corner molding. The tray is marked with my bottle placement for the routine. I also have visual cues for Bill to know what bottle to lift when. I move a small ring to prompt him for the next step in the routine.
- The tray has two small brass keepers on the ends to keep the box unfolded fully when on the tray. It also has two nylon tape handles for lifting.
- The sides of the box fold in, so it doesn't get any longer when folded.
- The box has a lid and is tall enough to completely encase the bottles. This keeps the props hidden before and after performing.
- Handles on the side let you lift the tray and box together and move it around back stage.

- A small bungee locks everything together when folded for transport.



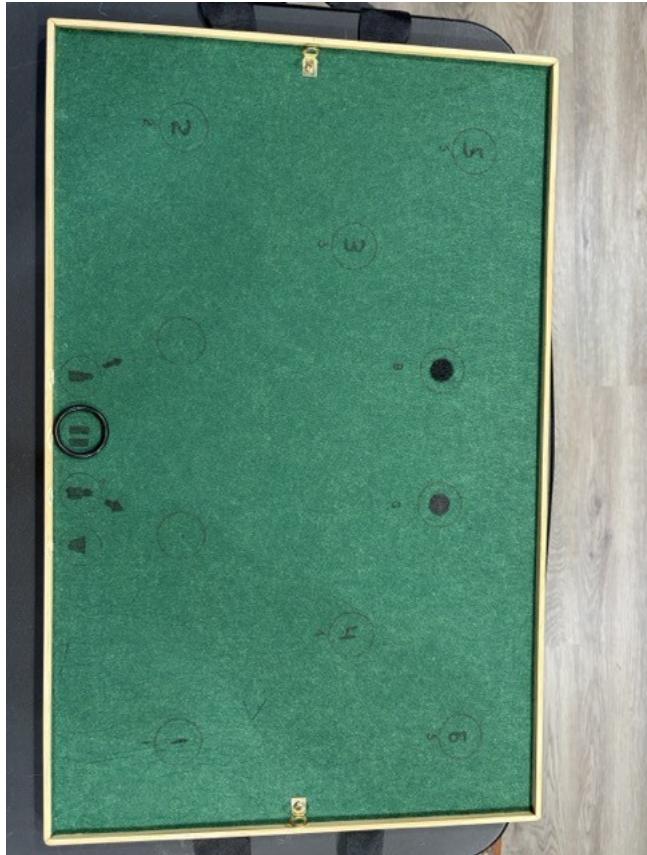
Rev 2



Ready to perform



Netting Contains Props



Cues Closeup



After Performing



Sides Fold In



Fully Folded for Transport

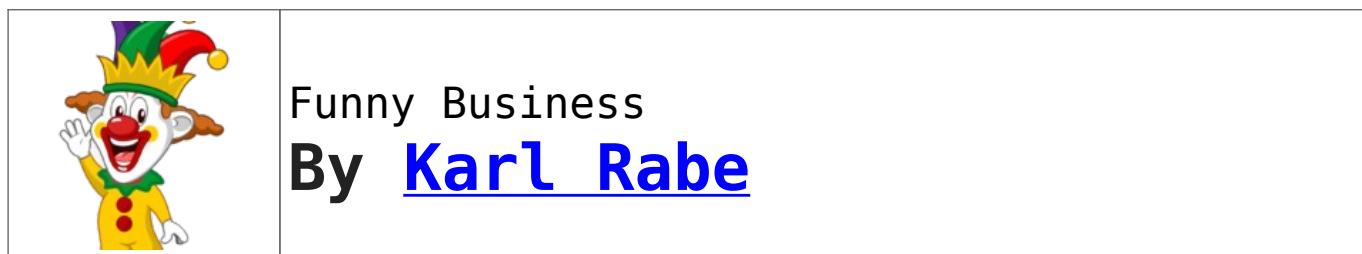


Lightweight Tray

We used this case when we performed in Abbott's Competition and took Second Place.



What props do you have that are difficult to manage?





Who remembers Robert Orben?

He was a prolific comedy writer and magician whose one-liners and gag books became must-have material for comedians, speakers, and performers alike.

Over his career he published more than 40 books on humor, including many collections of jokes and patter.

Early in his career he even wrote books specifically for magicians—like *The Encyclopedia of Patter* and *Magicdotes*—that blended humor with the art of performance, the kind of material perfect for filling pauses, covering moves, and getting laughs before a big reveal.

I was surprised to learn he only passed away in 2023. You could subscribe to his newsletter/joke sheet called “Orben’s Current Comedy”. They provided a regular feed of topical one liners. They were used by magicians, Radio Broadcasters and other performers everywhere.

Later in his career he became a speech writer for President Ford.

Some of Robert Orben’s Lines

“I knew I was getting old when the candles cost more than the

cake."

"My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance."

"I don't mind going nowhere as long as it's somewhere warm."

"A committee is a group that keeps minutes and wastes hours."

"I started with nothing—and I still have most of it."

"If you can't convince them, confuse them."

"A budget is a method for going broke methodically."

"I've reached the age where my train of thought often leaves the station without me."

"I have a simple philosophy: Fill what's empty. Empty what's full. Scratch where it itches."

"The trouble with being punctual is that nobody's there to appreciate it."

"Some people are so busy being clever they don't have time to be wise."

"The problem with experience is that by the time you get it, you're too old to use it."

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



Hat



Tee



Polo



Hoodie



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



Join our [Private Facebook Group](#) to connect and exchange ideas and information with other members.

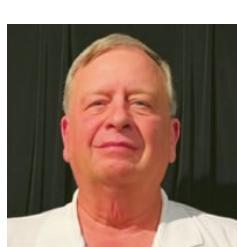


Like our [Public Facebook Page](#) and share it with Friends and Family.

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

- sean@howell.cc
- rkrozal@yahoo.com
- krabe@comcast.net

