

I.B.M
RING #29

MAGIC MUSINGS

International Brotherhood of Magicians, Ring #29

8912 Stagecoach Road, #7, Little Rock, Arkansas 72209 • (501) 455-6242

Meeting 1st Thursday of every month, CARTI, St. Vincent's Hospital

October 1995



No meeting Thursday; lecture Saturday.

NEXT MEETINGS:

- ✓ **Sat., October 7 and**
- ✓ **Sat., October 14**
7:30 pm, CARTI

● THIS & THAT ●

- **Ben Bradley** performed a one-hour magic show October 14 at Jefferson Square in Pine Bluff.
- **Don Baer** will perform as Patches the Clown at the annual Blues Festival Oct. 6-7 in Helena.
- **Joe Farrar** will perform October 14 at the West Little Rock Books-a-Million store. He goes on at 4 pm.
- **Paul Carlon** will perform a magic show October 31 -- Halloween -- at the Arkansas Children's Museum.
- **Mark Harwood** performed a magic show September 30 at the Pine Bluff auditorium.
- **Randall Eller** has perfected his new balloon levitation illusion. I bet if a bunch of you asked him to perform it for us that he would.
- Newsletter editor **Dennis Schick** visited the Magic Max magic store in the Mall of America in Minneapolis last week, as well as bought five magic books at two book stores in Stillwater, northwest of St. Paul.

Visiting magician to try out new magic show in our area.

Although magician **Damon Reinbold** is not a member of Ring 29, our members should be interested in him. Currently he is recovering from surgery at his sister's house in Cabot. He lectures on mentalism and does other weird stuff, according to Jim Henson. He's been on such television shows as 20-20 and Regis & Kathy Lee. He's an author of Perception Therapy tapes. He is putting together a new show and will be practicing it on Central Arkansas audiences. If you'd like him to perform and talk to our Ring, let Jim know.

Hold on, gang! We're about to give you an early Christmas present in October -- **TWO (2) great lectures!**

There will **NOT** be a regular meeting this coming Thursday! Instead mark your calendars and plan to attend these special programs:

- ✓ This coming **Saturday, Oct. 7**, we'll have a lecture by **Dick Barry**.
- ✓ Then, the following Saturday -- **October 14** -- we'll have another special lecture -- by **David Risley**, a specialist in children's entertainment. See the separate articles at the right on both these lectures.

Picnic was success

The annual Ring picnic September 17 was a solid success, with 22 people (a dozen magicians) enjoying good food, good weather and good magic. Thanks to all who came and help make it a success.

More this and that

- The second (and last) installment of an article on Harry Houdini, downloaded from the Internet, is on the back of this page.
- The Northeast Arkansas Magic Club in Newport meets the last Sunday of each month, at 2 pm, at attorney **Sam Boyce's** office. All magicians are welcome and invited.
- Also, the Searcy Magic Society -- Ring #308 -- meets the Second Monday every month, at 7 pm.
- Clown Alley, Conway, will conduct a free **Clown Workshop** Saturday, Oct. 21 in Russellville. To sign up for it and for more information about the 8-hour seminar contact **Don Baer at 794-1927**.
- Tentatively our Ring will have a new location to meet beginning in February -- Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock. Watch for more information.
- We're still looking for more magicians to perform two shows at **Boo at the Zoo, Oct. 25 and 26**. It's a good-will freebie but good publicity. Eight are signed up so far.
- **Paul Carlon** attended Bob Markwood's by-invitation-only workshop in California last month. He was one of 40 magicians from around the world to participate.

Be sure to tell fellow ring members and bring prospective members. Cost is only \$5 for ring members and their families, and \$8 for non-members.

Both lectures will begin at **7:30** at the **CARTI auditorium**, east side of St. Vincent Infirmary Medical Center.

Dick Barry lecture, Sat. Oct. 7

California magician **Dick Barry** will bring his popular lecture to our club at 7:30 pm, **this Saturday, October 7**.

From San Clemente, he has been nominated seven (7) times for the parlor award at the Magic Castle. He has a great resume, including:

- ✓ Performed for many years as in-house magician on several cruise ships
- ✓ Producer of large magic shows
- ✓ Consultant to Doug Henning
- ✓ Teacher and lecturer on magic
- ✓ Magic author. Latest book is "Magic with class."
- ✓ Magic inventor.
- ✓ Consultant to many celebrities

Don't miss this one!

David Risley to lecture to Ring Sat., October 14

Internationally-known magic lecturer, consultant and author in the field of children's entertainment, **David Risley** teaches physical comedy, puppetry, clowning, magic and storytelling.

He has produced 6 videos, 16 audio tapes and one book. He has been a full-time entertainer for over 10 years and has performed over 3300 shows in only 5 1/2 years.

Dave has opened for many of the best-known comedians in the country, including TV personalities Jay Leno, Norm Crosby, JJ Waker, Howie Mandell, Diane Ford, Ellen Degeneress and Sinbad, among others.

He makes over 700 appearances annually, speaking and performing for corporations, conventions and similar meetings.

The presentation of this mystery resulted from a challenge issue to me, more in jest than earnest, by one of the employees of a large linen factory which I visited while in that city. It happened that during my visit, one of the men, engaged in packing a case of linens to send to America, recognized me, and knowing I had just escaped from the local jail, laughingly said, "If we nail you in this packing case like we do linens you never would be able to get out." Jokingly I replied, "Oh! that would be easy," and proceeded on my way, thinking the incident was closed.

Next day, on reading the morning newspaper, to my astonishment I found that the packers had publicly challenged me to escape from one of their packing cases, into which they purposed to nail and rope me. My thoughts flew back to the year long gone by when I secured firewood to heat my room, and I determined to accept their challenge, meaning to escape by using as a basis the method I had employed in securing my firewood years ago.

It was a sensation, and has been the means of putting a few solid stones in the foundation of my reputation.

In 1895 I was engaged by the Welsh Brothers' Circus, a circus which traveled almost exclusively through the State of Pennsylvania, and for the services of Mrs. Houdini and myself I received the sum of L4 weekly, railroad fares and board.

The amount was small, but I still look back with pleasure upon that season's work as being one in which we had an abundance of clothes to wear and good food to eat, for the Welsh Brothers certainly fed their artists extra well.

For this L4 weekly Mrs. Houdini and myself first of all had to give a free performance in front of the side show to attract the crowds. Inside, I then lectured upon the curiosities, gave a magic show, worked the Punch and Judy show, and with the assistance of Mrs. Houdini finally presented a second sight act. In the main concert Mrs. Houdini acted as a singing clown, while later on we presented our specialty, which consisted of the trunk trick in connection with the braid trick. With this same ~~performance~~ we created a big sensation at the Alhambra Music Hall in London in July, 1900, as many of the readers will undoubtedly recall.

I offered my handcuff act to the Welsh Brothers for L1 extra per week, and it was rejected. Eventually I offered to clown the bars, collect lithographs, and do my handcuff show for 12s. extra per week, and it was also refused. In fact, several managers later on refused to allow me to do handcuffs, and it was only after persistently presenting it every once in a while like a trick in several museums that I eventually was allowed to do the act steadily, and only after I had become known to the managers.

In 1897 I appeared with a medicine show in the Indian Territory with Drs. Hill and Pratt, the former from San Francisco, and the latter from Denver, Colorado.

I had to sell medicine on the streets from the carriage, and exhibited my prowess to the gaping public, free of charge. We received as salary L5 weekly, board and traveling expenses, and from this engagement we managed to save our first \$100 (L20). As I dwell on thoughts of the past I can realise how important an item the board must have been, as I always was blessed with a good appetite. In fact, it is now no longer a puzzle to me why my parents remained in adverse circumstances, feeding a family of six boys and one girl, who ate as much as a small army. The only wonder still is how did we grow up at all?

In 1898 things became so bad that I contemplated quitting the show business, and retired to private life, meaning to work by day at one of my trades (being really proficient in several) and open a school of magic, which with entertainments would occupy my evenings. I therefore started to play one more tour of the Dime Museums to fulfill my expiring contracts, and it was this trip which made Houdini, The Handcuff King, famous.

When working at a small hall in St. Paul, a party of managers, while sight-seeing, happened to come in. They saw my ~~performance~~, became impressed with the manner in which I presented it, and one of them, Mr. Martin Beck, perhaps more in a joke than sincerity, challenged me to escape from one of his handcuffs. He had none with him, but next day purchased a few pairs and sent them on the stage. I escaped! He then booked me for one week, and it was the first chance I ever had had, and my act in a first-class theatre created a sensation. My salary for this week's engagement was \$60 (L12). In those days I opened my performance with fifteen minutes of magic, but gradually dropped it out until handcuffs were exclusively presented in connection with the trunk trick. We have never looked back since, but have kept on going forward, hoping in a few years to retire to private life and enjoy the harvests of my successes.

My largest income derived from a season's work was from the summer season in Russia in 1903. America ranks second as the payer of salaries, and, although strange as it may seem to the readers, in Great Britain I receive my smallest salaries. However, having made so many friends in this country I like to be among them. Of course, I also must have made a few enemies, but that is part of life.

After working contracts which I have signed for Great Britain I expect to accept no more, as two performances a night of the work I do is too trying for my physique.

When I retire, perhaps I shall reside half the year in Great Britain and the other half of the year in America.

Writing my latest book, "The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin," I consider my greatest and most gratifying achievement.