

IBM.
RING #29

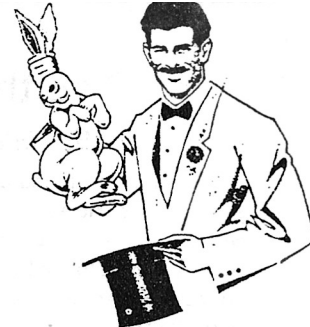
MAGIC MUSINGS

International Brotherhood of Magicians, Ring #29

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

Meeting 1st Thursday of every month, Baptist Medical Center

DECEMBER 2001



No December meeting; Xmas party Jan. 19th.

Since so many Ring 29 members are busy performing in December (thank goodness), the club traditionally has not had a December ring meeting. So if you show up the first Thursday of the month (Dec. 6) you will be there with others who forgot. (Go ahead and perform some tricks for each other. It could

NEXT MEETING:

- **Saturday, January 19**
Annual Christmas Party
Otter Creek Racquet Club

BITS & PIECES

● **LAST MONTH** was a great get-together of Holiday Magic. There were more American flags in that room at one time than perhaps any place in history. If you missed being one of the 35 people there, you sure missed lots of fun and magic. Try not to miss the next meeting.

● **THE NEXT REGULAR** meeting will be **February 7**. Right now it is tentatively set to be our annual **Magic Auction Night**. It usually is one of the biggest-attended meetings of the year -- of both buyers and sellers. Don't miss this one! Get a box and mark it "**AUCTION**." Then start putting tricks in it you never use anymore. Turn them into some cash.

● **THE CREATIVE KID SHOW** held Nov. 10 (rescheduled from September) was a big success and if you missed it you missed a rare opportunity to learn some practical and useful magic. Get filled in by talking with someone who was there.

● **DID YOU SEE** Ring member **Kyle Hamsher's** photo in the November issue of *The Linking Ring*? He was a Strolling Olympic winner (funniest) at the IBM Orlando Convention in July, and was shown in a great action picture. Check out page 55.

● **BRENDA HENSON** is recovering nicely from her burst appendix episode and sends her gratitude to all Ring members who called, sent cards, stopped by for a visit and prayed for her. Jim and Christy cooked for her at Thanksgiving and she even felt like going out for dinner one recent evening.

be a fun mini-meeting, with lots of personal attention.)

But while you're thinking of meetings, go ahead and mark on your new calendars the date for the annual **Ring Christmas Party**. It is set for **January 19** (NOT the 12th, as previously announced.)

The location will be the same as the last five years -- the **Otter Creek Racquet Club**, and will be at 6:30. Watch for more details in the January newsletter.

Maxwell offers Magic Shows during the Holidays

Maxwell Blade, the magician who has been performing at the Malco Theater in Hot Springs for five years, is performing on a limited basis during the holidays.

The Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving Blade gave complete shows to good crowds. Dennis Schick attended the Friday show with his grandson, and his report is on this page.

Maxwell is scheduled to perform again December 1 at 8 pm in "Rhythms of the Night II" at the Malco Theatre. It is a benefit to raise funds for the Garland County AIDS Resource Center. Also performing will be magician Scott Davis and several musicians.

Maxwell also will have shows later in December. For more information call the theater at (501) 623-6200 (or Mr. Magic).

She may be able to return to work by Christmas. Lots of hugs, Brenda.

● **A BIG THANKS** to **Christy Henson** for keeping Ring members informed by E-mail. Thanks, too, to others who have sent E-mails to members when they see or hear something magical. If you haven't been receiving E-mails from club members, then you are not on the Ring E-mail list. Call Mr. Magic and tell them your E-mail addresses.

● **THE WORLD CLOWN** Association met Sunday, Nov. 18 and had the largest attendance yet. Member Marty Boone and Aaron Knight from Conway taught everyone how to make a Razorback out of a single balloon. A tape called "The Art of Clown Make-up" was shown. If you are interested in becoming a member of "Laff Master Clowns," call Jim or Don Baer.

Magic in Arkansas papers

The following are articles recently clipped from Arkansas newspapers:

• In the Oct. 17 *Times-Herald* in Forrest City: Jack Austin ("Magic Morris"), a magician and ventriloquist from Nashville, TN performed at the Crestpark Retirement Inn.

• In the Oct. 18 *Log Cabin Democrat* in Conway: **Mary Ann Campbell** spoke to about 600 students at the University of Central Arkansas, as part of a financial planning program which UCA offers. Mary Ann is a certified financial planner and uses magic in her presentations.

• In the Nov. 7 *Rogers Hometown News*: In celebration of National Children's Book Week, magician Kelvin Richardson performed twice at the Rogers Children's Library, Nov. 13 and 15.

Blade's first show after layoff was a little rusty

In Hot Springs for Thanksgiving week, I noted in the local newspaper that Maxwell Blade was to perform two shows, Friday and Saturday. So I went with my 8-year-old grandson. Overall the show was good, although there were a few problems, from a long wait in the ticket line to a late start and a too-long intermission.

It appears that those and some other problems of timing, lighting, etc. were due to the rustiness which come from a long layoff. It was his first show since closing Labor Day weekend.

Maxwell appears from a seemingly empty shadow box, and an assistant disappears the same way. He went right into a series of close-up tricks, using scarves, sand, cubes, a double box, ropes, cards, silver balls and a cane-to-scarves trick. After producing a series of cards from nowhere, he escaped from chains and exchanged places with an assistant in what a man behind me called "The Shower Curtain Trick." The kicker to the illusion was the locks he threw into a paper sack disappeared and were replaced by a huge snake, causing the audience to gasp. Good reaction.

Scott Davis performed twice, doing a funny routine and an especially nice torn-and-restored newspaper bit. "Stonehedge" (**Sean Westbrook**) escaped upside down from a straight jacket, transposed a rabbit to a bucket and did an impressive and moving three-ring routine to music.

Other Maxwell tricks included a spikes routine, the dry sands trick, a girl passing through his body, and a little girl (his daughter) appearance

(Continued on page 2)

The theology of Potter

He ain't heavy, he's just the devil

He and his girlfriend decided to go to a movie. He wanted to see the new version of *Apocalypse Now*, and she wanted to see *Harry Potter*. So they compromised and went to *Harry Potter*.

Immediately after the movie he felt a devilish surge. He tried to make all the cars in the parking lot levitate. It didn't work. Kind of like the first time he saw Hoosiers and got inspired to shoot some hoops, only to discover that he still threw bricks.

Which got him to thinking. Maybe the Southern Baptists, bless their hearts, have it all wrong. During their recent state convention, the Arkansas Baptists passed a resolution denouncing All Things Potter as satanic, unchristian and generally bad bad bad.

But he's not so sure any more. That whole parking lot levitation failure shook his confidence. Maybe *Harry Potter* isn't a call to devil worship after all. Maybe cinematic fantasies filled with magic and wonder, are, well, just cinematic fantasies filled with magic and wonder. Shoot, maybe Robert Redford wasn't really *The Natural*. Maybe R2D2 was just a midget made up to look like a wise-cracking robot.

He remembered reading *The Hobbit* when he was a kid and being blown away. As soon as he put the book down, he went out looking for dragons to fight. Which was a little more difficult than he thought it would be. Dragons were pretty scarce in Georgia when he was a kid. (This was post-Talmadge Georgia.) So he made one up in his mind and fought it with a wooden stick in his backyard.

After a few hours of mighty battle (he killed six of the scaly suckers), he got a little chilly, then hungry, and then bored. So he went back inside where it was warm and had supper. Then he begged his mom to take him to the library, where he checked out *The Lord of the Rings*. J.R.R. Tolkien's sequel to *The Hobbit*.

There were plenty of wizards, witches and dwarves, trolls, goblins and elves. Your basic Good versus Evil, white-hat/black-hat brawl for world dominion kind of thing. He spent the next year reading and re-reading the trilogy, but he resisted any voodoo urges. Rather than descending into an After School Spe-

cial life of drug abuse and satanic ritual, he began something much more magical -- a long love affair with books.

Unaware of the Satanic and Christian dimensions of fantasy, and caring only about a great adventure, he moved right into C.S. Lewis' classic tales of magic and wonder: *The Chronicles of Narnia*. He went on to Robert Louis Stevenson and Alexandre Dumas, dreaming of peg-legged pirates and fearless musketeers. As he grew older, his tastes began to change, and he found himself reading Hemingway and Woolf, Salinger and Faulkner, DeLillo and O'Brien. He would one day even try to read Updike. (Try, anyway, but he usually fell asleep mid-sentence. Maybe when he was older, or younger....)

If the Southern Baptists are really worried about evil, about the devil-try we all face these days, they might want to just look around the streets

of Little Rock or the dusty roads of little-known Arkansas towns scattered in the corners of the state. Where kids don't know what to do with themselves during the long hot summers and figure doing drugs is as good as anything. Or getting pregnant. The kind of fantasy that leads to sordid reality.

Yes, there is a certain kind of sorcery to children's books, but not the kind the Southern Baptists seem worried about. It's the kind that grabs hold of a kid's imagination and makes the brain work in ways it never worked before. Like magic, it can turn the most desolate, sun-seared field into *The House That Ruth Built* or *King Arthur's Camelot*. It can turn a back yard with a scattering of naked trees into the thick jungles of Africa. It can turn a stagnant pond into the mighty waters of the Atlantic. Yes, there's a certain magic involved, all right. But we could all use a little magic in our lives every now and then. Especially if it makes our minds come alive.

From the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 24.

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

It seems like only a few days ago we were hearing the concern about the Y2K bug and yet here we are at the threshold of 2002. Amazingly enough, we all survived without our grocery shelves being depleted, our utilities going crazy and all the nuclear weapons causing havoc throughout the world. It seems that there is always someone out there ready to try and sell us gloom and doom and, for some unexplainable reason, there is a never-ending supply of people ready to believe the worst about humanity.

One of the great pleasures of magic is that it brings smiles to peoples' faces. Even if they are ready to believe the gloom-and-doomers, people can forget their troubles for the moments they spend with a magician. We can do something to change the gloom and doom picture. I would strongly urge all Ring 29 magicians to work very subtle positive messages into their routines. Whether you realize it or not, you as a performer, you as a person, can have a great influence on those you come in contact with every day. If every one of us would just gently encourage the

positive side of people, we could have a very profound effect on the whole of humanity.

The analogy I like to use is that of palm trees on a beach. Every day the gentle wind blows in off of the ocean and seems soft and subtle. But over time the trees begin to bend in the same direction as the wind. Your comments, your kindness, your positive outlook are the same as the gentle ocean wind. You do influence people whether you have ever thought about it or not. It is not enough to move through life and do no harm. It is the task of everyone to leave something positive in their wake.

Again, I challenge every Ring 29 member to do more than just entertain people. Leave them with a positive outlook on life that they can take with them when they go home. True magic is the positive feelings that people take with them and carry with them all day long.

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season and may the magic of the season bless you all.

Dan Hecke

Report from Margaret

by Margaret LeClair

On October 28, John Pyka of Nashville, TN, held a 9-11 benefit. I was asked to perform part of my American Flag show as part of it.

John emceed the show in his Big Daddy Cool personality. I was the first magician to perform and was nervous. But I am glad I went first because the other magicians -- such as Larry Wirtz from the Chavez School of Magic and Stephen Bargatze -- would have intimidated me. The benefit was not publicized very well, but it still raised around \$600 for the children hit by the tragic events of 9-11 in NYC and DC.

Two weeks later, Nov. 10, and Nov. 16, I performed at the dinner theater "Illusions" in Carmel, IN.

I had a blast performing there, having been booked to perform two shows. It was fun to hang out with local magicians, including one Little Rock transplant, Creel and his wife, Carol, were very good hosts.

I discovered that wearing contact lenses I couldn't see five feet into the audience when lights are on me. Audience members kept pointing to people for me to select to be volunteers, but I couldn't see them.

The shows went well and I hope to be invited back sometime.

(Continued from page 1)

and an appearing "woman ghost in white" who had been the subject of a story line throughout the show.

An interactive guillotine routine involved two children from the audience. You never know what to expect from volunteers and the 10-year-old girl started to cry when Maxwell asked her if she wanted to put her head in the contraption. He handled the sticky situation nicely.

Maxwell performed the familiar Metamorphosis illusion with a clever twist: he produced two (2) people in the exchange instead of the usual one. He said he is the only magician today doing it that way. Also impressive was his show-ending levitation of the woman in white.

Overall the show was enjoyable for the holiday crowd. I might suggest Scott do a warm-up act for the restless audience (especially when there is a delay to get started). Also, why not have Damon capitalize on the Harry Potter craze and have him do some of his "Tales of the Wizard" program? It would be timely.

Check out and go see his show later this month.