

THE ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER

FROM OUR WORLD-FAMOUS CLUBHOUSE, THE MAGIC CASTLE



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Deadline for the Next Issue:
The 20th Day of This Month

Open Sesame

IRENE LARSEN: THE PRINCESS DIARIES

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OUR MISSION: *The Academy of Magical Arts* has been and will continue to be the premier organization in the world dedicated to the art of *Magic*. We are an organization that encourages fellowship, promotes the art, and maintains the highest ethical standards in our actions. We will provide a friendly environment where *Members* and their guests can enjoy the art and each other's company. Our goals and objectives are to advance the art and provide a positive image of *Magic* and *Magicians* worldwide.

NEXT

As We Go To Press:

THIS ISSUE is larger than normal because many special events are taking place. One of those is **ORSON BEAN**'s well-reviewed one-man show, "Safe at Home" at the Pacific Resident Theatre. In case you don't know, Mr. Bean is a long-time AMA Member. Besides being a terrific comedic actor and raconteur, you can bet that you will see a little magic in this show. Check it out on page 16.

I'm going to wager that by the time you read this, our special Valentine's Day celebration, "Love Potion," is nearly sold out. Do check for availability (or cancellations) and see the details for this romantic evening on page 16. In case you are shut out, a Castle favorite, **LINDSAY BENNER**, will be doing her full show, "Book of Love" at The Cinefamily over on Fairfax. See page 8 for the particulars.

Founders' Day was a smash. A photo recap from the folks at Q36 Media (our house photographers) can be found on page 15. Be sure to check the AMA website for the video of the ceremony if only to see **DAVID REGAL**'s riotous monologue and our dear **PRINCESS IRENE** drop an F-bomb. What a grand day!

Speaking of our Princess, I am closing out the newsletter's Founders' Day celebration with an interview conducted with **IRENE LARSEN**. She talks about the early days of The Magic Castle®, some of its legendary magicians, and a lot more. See page 12 for more from Princess Irene.

Exciting things are coming in **BILL GOODWIN**'s column. Outgoing Trustee **STEVE VALENTINE** gave us a spectacular (and hand-to-forehead) idea that Bill and I wish we'd thought of first. We couldn't get it going this month, so Bill, along with this new feature, will reappear next month.

I am particularly happy with this month's "-30-" (page 24). **BILLY McCOMB** was a fixture at **THE MAGIC CASTLE®** for many years, and even while his life was an open book, there are still many unknown tidbits. To the best of my knowledge, few know the name of Billy's ventriloquist's figure, which he received when he was 10 years old. For this revelation, and a copy of the first playbill featuring Billy—all published here for the first time courtesy of **JOHN FISHER**—go to the last page of the newsletter where you will find its afterword, "-30-" (and if you need a reminder of what "-30-" is, go to the last page of the October 2015 issue to find out).

We are pleased with the reception the new format has received. It's a work in progress and you might still see some tweaking taking place here and there. So as they say, "pardon our dust" as we continue working on making your newsletter something you will anticipate receiving each month. As always, thanks for your time. ✍

Dustin
newslettereditor@magiccastle.com

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NEWSWORTHY NOTES

AWARDS SEASON IS HERE

DALE SALWAK has agreed to produce this year's Awards Show that will be held at the Saban Theatre in Beverly Hills on Sunday, May 15. Dale is a seasoned producer of magic shows and is sure to bring us a great evening. He will be supported by STEVE DICK's topnotch technical team, the BOARD OF TRUSTEES, the AMA EVENTS DEPARTMENT, and JOE FURLOW. The trustees have notified our Fellowship recipients and we expect them all to be present. (Reported by the TRUSTEES)



DALE SALWAK

Please email NEWSWORTHY NOTES contributions to newslettereditor@magiccastle.com. The deadline for the next issue is the 20th of this month. Anonymous contributions will not be accepted, however name(s) can be withheld upon request.

HERRMANN IS IN THE HOUSE

Courtesy of JIM STEINMEYER, an incredible print of a rare and historic portrait of ALEXANDER HERRMANN now hangs in the foyer of The Magic Castle® (below).

The photograph was taken in 1893 by Mathew Brady, famous for his images of the American Civil War.



ALEXANDER HERRMANN. PHOTO BY MATHEW BRADY

DID YOU KNOW ...

The first GENERAL MEETING of the ACADEMY OF MAGICAL ARTS was on December 15, 1963. The present members reelected the entire Board of Directors: WILLIAM LARSEN, JR., GEORGE BOSTON, ALVIN JANSEN, HARRY MENDOZA, and FRED (MIKE) SHIELDS. At the time, the Academy was made up of 190 regular members and 351 associate members.

THE 2016 GENERAL MEETING

The Academy of Magical Arts will hold its 2016 General Meeting on March 20, 2016. It starts at 4:00 p.m. in the Palace of Mystery.

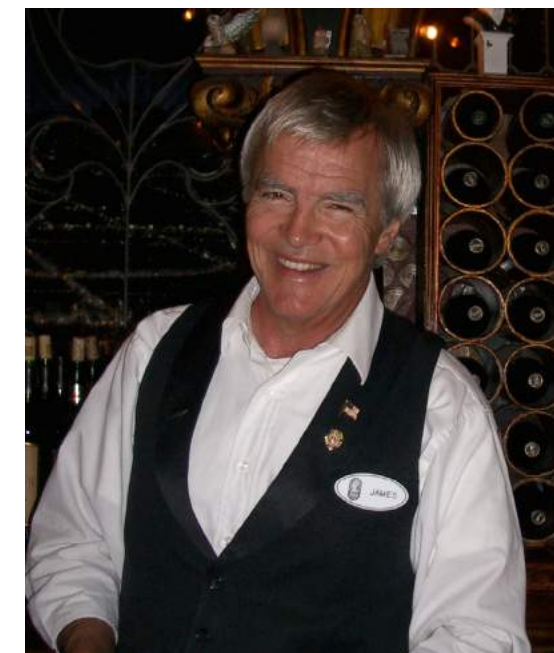
RESERVATION PLANNING

The folks on the Third Floor have created a spreadsheet of current reservation counts. It is updated on Fridays and covers the following couple of weeks. This can be quite helpful when planning your or your guests' evening at The Magic Castle®. Click on the silverware below to be taken to the spreadsheet.



JAMES PATTON, 1940 - 2016

The Academy has lost a giant. JIM PATTON passed away on January 24. Along with his close friends LARRY JENNINGS and BRUCE CERVON, he was a member of DAI VERNON's inner circle of students. Anyone who saw Jim work his magic behind the Owl Bar knows that he was among the very best. During the late 1980s and early '90s he authored "Magicana" the famous magic section in *Genii*. He will be missed. Aloha Jim. ✍



JAMES PATTON

“As I look back on the last six years, let me just say that it’s been quite a ride!”



GREETINGS. This is the second to last column I will write as your president. As I look back on the last six years, let me just say that it’s been quite a ride! I am very happy to have served with wonderful people who have contributed to the vision of the club with hard work and long hours. As President, I see a great many things in perspective, including the work of previous Board officials. I admit I was dismayed to discover that some of our past leaders were controlled by self-interest, rather than the overall good of the club. It was only a small fraction, and I won’t name names, but there were some years when we “survived” the leaders, rather than being guided by them. I’m only mentioning this because around the time you receive this newsletter, you will also be receiving your ballots for the upcoming Board of Directors and Board of Trustees elections. You’re going to need to decide on who will be in charge of our club.

I urge everyone to consider your votes carefully. If you are fortunate enough to visit the club often, please talk to the candidates. Find out what they stand for. Make sure they have the future survival

of the AMA at heart, not their own agendas. And above all, ask yourself if they are truly qualified.

The recent successes of the AMA have been an important part of its history, but we can’t be deceived into thinking that it will all be “smooth sailing” ahead. There’s a big difference between a little wooden boat, negotiating its way around the shore with a few oars, and a gigantic ocean liner, steaming across the ocean. Our successful club has been growing, adding new members, new features, and new responsibilities. Things may be smooth at the moment, but there is a whole level of expertise required to guide us into the future. We are going to face serious issues in the years ahead. We need dedicated, educated, and financially savvy people at the helm of the AMA if we are going to survive. There is no place for petty politics or self-interest. Don’t bother bringing an oar, because it won’t do much good. A big vessel can only be maneuvered by a group of people planning carefully, working together.

I have often heard the mantra “Magic First” and

I agree this is a great sentiment. The club was founded by magicians. It’s dedicated to magic, and it’s this passion that distinguishes it. But there will be no magic if we don’t survive. All through history, there have always been great, innovative, creative magicians. But there’s only been an AMA/Magic Castle for about half a century. So allow me to say “Survival First.” I want our club to be around for a long, long time. Because if the club survives, magicians will have a home and audiences will have a place to see them. We are sustaining the place where magic is featured, flourishes, and innovates.

My dear dad, who could paddle a boat so beautifully that you knew you were in the hands of a master sailor, must be thrilled when he looks down at the AMA. Imagine what he’d think of the many shows, the excited guests, the specialty drinks, the wonderful dinners, the committees, special events, and the devoted members. It is, literally, his dream come true.

But that dream takes a tremendous amount of attention and expertise. When considering what is

(CONTINUED: ERIKA LARSEN)

“Our leaders need to be equipped to deal with complicated issues and they need to put the AMA’s long-term goals first.”

most important, please remember that our survival is not a guarantee. It’s something that needs to be worked on day in and day out. Our leaders need to be equipped to deal with complicated issues and they need to put the AMA’s long-term goals first.

As President, I have relied particularly heavily on Magician Members Jim Steinmeyer, Chip Chalmers, and, above all, Randy Sinnott, to help make the best decisions possible for our club. I thank them, and everyone on both boards, for all their hard work. Thankfully, we have many qualified candidates running, and I applaud them for stepping up. As I step down, I am confident that with people like them in place, we have a great chance of weathering whatever storms come our way. ✍

See you on deck!

Erika
elarsen@magiccastle.com

ELECTION COMMITTEE NEWS

BOARD ELECTIONS

After a six month process that began last July, ballots for the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees elections will finally be mailed out on February 1. Members will have approximately six weeks to mark their ballots and return them to our outside tallying agency by March 13.

Results of the elections will be announced at the Annual General Meeting on March 20. Final results and total votes cast for each candidate will be announced at the AGM. The newly elected (and/or reelected) Directors and Trustees will begin their terms immediately following the meeting.

SHOWROOMS AND LECTURER OF THE YEAR

February also means the Elections Committee is hustling to prepare the ballots for our Showroom and Lecturer Awards voting. Online nominations will begin March 7.

A reminder that if you had not paid your dues by January 31, you have lost all of your voting privileges, including for the Awards Show, for 2016.

Participate in the future of the AMA. VOTE!

Dale

Dale Boatman, Elections Chairman
Dale175@aol.com



A NOTE FROM THE TRUSTEES

WE HAVE A NICE MONTH ahead, including a long weekend in honor of the birthdays of two men important to our country, **ABRAHAM LINCOLN** and **GEORGE WASHINGTON**. Then, of course, there's Valentine's Day. Check the announcement from the **EVENTS STAFF** on page 16 and your Flash Papers for details on our romantic celebration.

WHO'S THAT?

Have you ever shown your guests around the clubhouse and not known how to explain who some of the magicians are and why some are memorialized with paintings? The Trustees thought that AMA Members might like to be able to inform their guests about some of the great people and Magic Castle® fixtures whose portraits line the walls of our club.

On Tuesday, February 9, I'll be explaining why some of these people were important, what they were like, and their place in the world of magic.

Then, the next time you come to the Castle, they will seem like old friends to you, just as they are to me. I hope to see a lot of members, including Associate Members, in the Peller Theatre at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9.

WEEKEND SEMINAR NEWS

Last month, I teased magician members with the news of another Weekend Seminar to be held in



ROBERTO GIOBBI. PHOTO BY DAVID LINSSELL

June. Well, here's the rest of the story. **ROBERTO GIOBBI** will be coming from Switzerland to be our guest!

Roberto has become one of the most sought-out voices on magic. He is one of forty members of the Escuela Magica de Madrid, magic's only think tank. His work has appeared in over 50 magic magazines and is the author of *Card College*. The best-selling five volume collection are the most widely translated magic books in history and are considered globally as the ultimate reference work for sleight of hand with cards. He has over 50 books to his credit, including their translation into six languages. Part of his life was captured in "Il giardino dei giochi segreti," a 50-minute documentary by Swiss TV. In 2012, he received the coveted Literary Fellowship from the Academy of Magical Arts, and in 2014 the John Nevil Maskelyne Award for Literature from the prestigious Magic Circle of London.



JOAN LAWTON

In addition to the Weekend Seminar, Roberto will be conducting a regular Sunday lecture, with material totally different from what he will be teaching in the seminar.

How lucky are we? Roberto Giobbi at The Magic Castle®! Space will be limited to around 25 people or so. Registration details will follow soon.

WHOSE HANDS ARE THESE?

Here's another quiz for you. The answer will be published next month. See you then. ✍

Joan
jlawton@magiccastle.com



“The night was spectacular with great magic, great food, great people, and great memories.”

GENERAL MUSINGS

from General Manager **Joe Furlow**



WE ARE already one month into 2016 and it has been an incredible start.

FOUNDERS DAY 2016 RECAP

Congratulations to David Regal as the emcee for our Founders Day Celebration. If you did not get a chance to see him live, please take the time to see a replay on the website. David was absolutely brilliant and had many in the audience laughing the entire time.

The night was spectacular with great magic, great food, great people, and great memories. I hope to see everyone here next year for our 54th. Mark your calendars now for Monday, January 2nd, 2017.

JANUARY SALES

We were predicting a large January, as we did in 2015 (and it did not disappoint). Much of our food and beverage sales for the month can be

attributed to a change we made a few years ago. This was moving the expiration date for guest cards to January 31 versus December 31. This change was made based on my first year on the job. I took a large number of complaints from individuals holding guest cards that had not redeemed them.

Due to the volume of business in December, they could not get reservations and were fearful that the pass would go unused. Thus, the Board of Directors agreed with my recommendation and we extend the pass one more month. That extension has led to some record-setting sales over the last few years during the month of January, and we experienced the same in 2016.

AWARDS SHOW 2016

The 48th Annual Academy of Magical Arts Awards Show will be held Sunday,

May 15th at the Saban Theater in Beverly Hills. It's too soon to release any information about the event, such as who will serve as host or ticket prices, but I do want to touch upon a few items.

We will be offering shuttle service and a pre-party here at the Castle, much as we did in 2015. For those who purchased the shuttle ticket, the fun began and ended here the Castle. This makes travel to the Saban very easy both ways. We will have some more information next month in the newsletter on how to sign up. The shuttle sold out last year, so don't delay once we release the details.

The program for the Awards Show includes advertisements and congratulations. We are now selling the ads, so if you're interested in purchasing space (in either full color or black and white), please email me at jfurlow@magiccastle.com. This is a

great way to advertise your business and support the AMA!

- Centerfold: \$1,800
- Inside Cover: \$900
- Inside Back Cover: \$900
- Two Page: \$1,000
- Full Page: \$600
- Half Page: \$350
- Quarter Page: \$200

VOLUNTEER FAIRE

I have taken many calls from members wanting to know how they can get involved with the numerous committees here at the AMA. At the January BOD meeting, I gained approval to host a Volunteer Faire. On Sunday, April 3 between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m., we will have representatives from all our committees who can answer questions from those looking to get involved. Being a volunteer is a wonderful way to get involved in your

(CONTINUED: JOE FURLOW)

Academy and to surround yourself with other members that share a passion for the art of magic.

EL NIÑO

As predicted, El Niño has arrived. I am sure that the Lane Mansion has seen its fair share of rain over the last 108 years, but the recent storms in January did take their toll.

We have patched, plugged, tarped, and covered as much as we can to prepare, but when the wind howls and the tarps move, it can get unpredictable. We have taken on water, but we are managing the leaks as best we can. I do appreciate our maintenance team, who have worked hard all month to keep us dry and open for our members.

Hope to see you around the club! ✍

Joe
 jfurlow@magiccastle.com



EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Hanna Hunt

HANNA is one of the warm voices that every Member and Guest speaks with when making a reservation, and we could not be happier she is on our team. She is a detail-oriented person, meticulous at ensuring everything is correct. It's not surprising her other



interests include reading, puzzling, travel, and arts and crafts.

Having been born in Iceland where she spent much of her childhood, Hanna is very happy to be in Los Angeles and the Southern California sunshine. An employee of the Academy for the last three years, her other passions include acting and writing. She enjoys the outdoors and is an avid hiker. She has also recently gotten into aerial acrobatics, although she says she is nowhere close to being good.

Hanna is also very involved in mental health advocacy, as she feels this is an area where more awareness is necessary. Hanna exemplifies "The Castle Way." We are very proud to have her on our team. Congratulations to Hanna on being chosen as the AMA December 2015 Employee of the Month! ✍

LINDSAY BENNER'S



AND CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S "CITY LIGHTS"

SPECIAL VALENTINE'S DAY SHOW 3:30 PM

THE CINEFAMILY

611 N. FAIRFAX AVE.

AMA MEMBERS GET 20% OFF! CODE: "CASTLE"

TICKETS [HERE](#)

WWW.CINEFAMILY.ORG

“The reason why we’re here is because of love—the love of magic.”

Irene Larsen, Co-Founder

The Magic of MEMBERSHIP

Trish Alaskey



HELLO MEMBERS! I have a lot of information to share with you this month, so let's get right to it.

BOARD ELECTIONS

Election materials are being mailed out this week to all members who paid their dues by January 31, 2016. Any member who did not submit payment before the 31st of January will not be sent the ballot package and will not have any voting rights during 2016. This includes voting for the upcoming AMA Awards Show.

DUES DEADLINE FEBRUARY 1 TO MARCH 15

Dues Season 2016 is almost over. Phew! A huge thank you goes out to those who renewed their memberships before the deadline. Anyone who has not renewed their membership as of February 1 is considered late. The only benefit that these members have starting February 1 is the receipt of this newsletter. All other membership benefits have been suspended, including access to the club for the member and their guests.

From February 1 through March 15 there will be a **non-negotiable** \$50 late fee automatically applied to any dues payments made going forward. No exceptions or discounts will be granted. If you have yet to renew, and you wish to rejoin for 2016, please do so before March 15 to avoid the even steeper reinstatement fees that lie ahead. On the 15th of March, memberships will officially expire and those who have not paid will be removed from receiving

this newsletter in addition to losing all other benefits that have already been suspended.

EMERGENCY CONTACT FEATURE

Great news. We have an important new feature in which we hope everyone will participate. As staff, one of our main goals each evening is to provide an exciting, entertaining, and *safe* environment for our members and their guests to enjoy. One of the best ways to protect our members is to make sure that we have someone to contact on your behalf in case of an emergency. This is an opt-in program. You are not required to provide us with this information, but we hope you will. Here's how to submit the information:

Log in to the member's only section of the website at www.magiccastle.com/members. Click on MY CLUB/MY PROFILE/VIEW PROFILE. Scroll down past the sections PERSONAL INFORMATION/AMA INFORMATION/SECONDARY MEMBER and you will find EMERGENCY CONTACT information. If you'd like this information on file, please fill out those areas and click on the SAVE button. Once you save any information on this page, it will update your record in our Membership Database, which is what we use on our end in the office.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

While you're there, keep scrolling down to the bottom of the VIEW PROFILE page. The last section on the right hand side of the page reads "MY PROFILE SETTINGS." There is a check box there that says "HIDE PROFILE" which is likely checked. If you

(CONTINUED: MEMBERSHIP)

want to be included in the Membership Directory for all members of the AMA to see, please uncheck that box. If you do not want to be included in the directory, keep that box checked. The reason it is already checked is because this too is an opt-in program for our members. Each member is "hidden" until they choose otherwise. It has always been a rule of the Academy to protect the privacy of our members. We do not give out contact information for any member unless they've given us permission to do so. This program is no different.

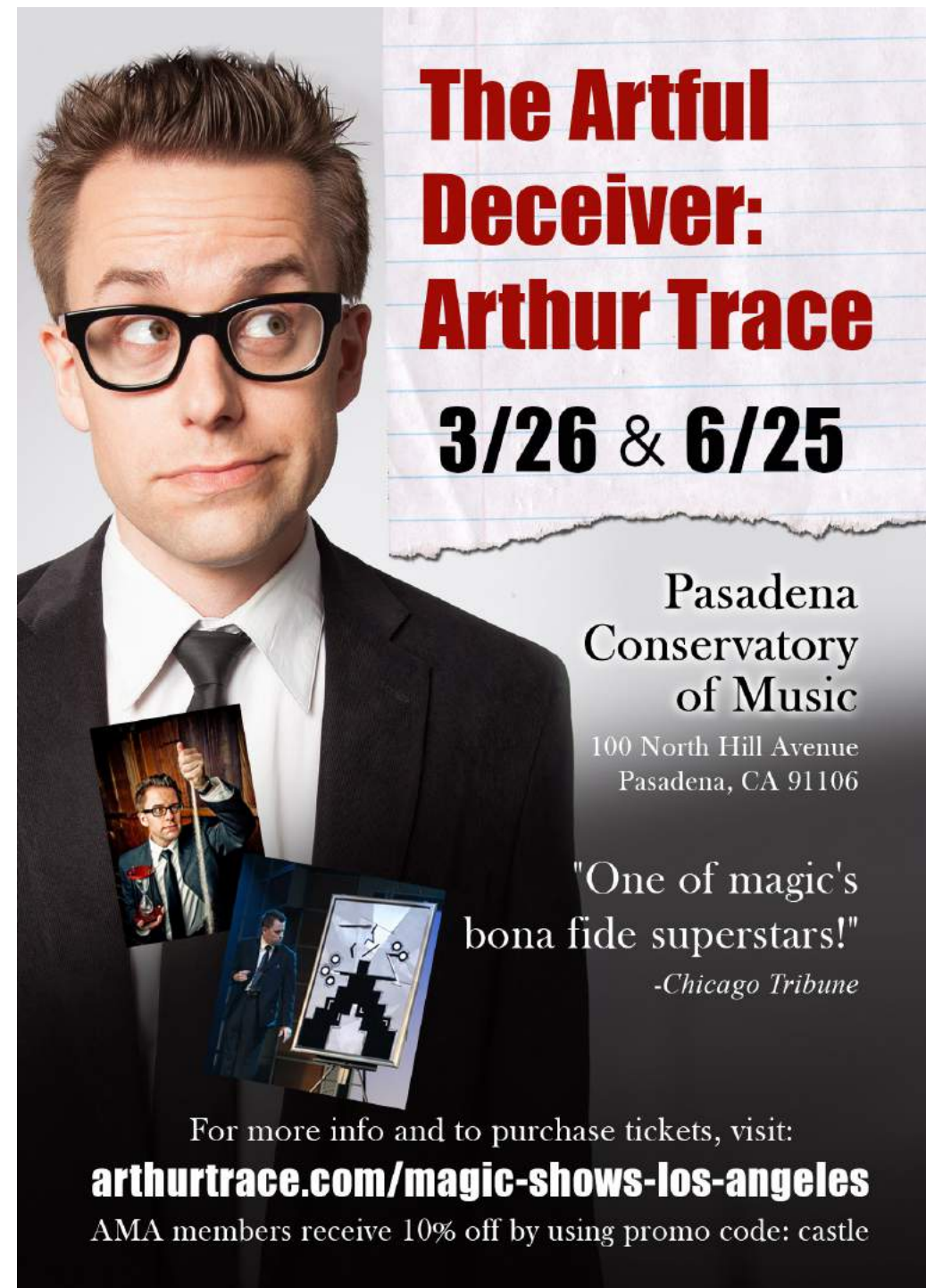
RENEWAL PACKETS

Members who have paid their dues will receive a renewal packet in the mail shortly after their account is updated. It usually takes about two weeks for the package arrive in the mail. In the renewal package you will receive a thank you note for renewing along with your four VIP passes for the year, two sheets of regular guest cards to get you started, and also two 2016 car decals which are used to show our Valet Team that you are a member in good standing. If you have paid your dues but have not received a renewal packet yet (and it has been longer than two weeks), please let me know by sending me an email at Talaskey@magiccastle.com. I will research your membership and make sure all is well on our end, and get you a new packet out in the mail if need be.

That's all for now. If you need anything at all, you know where to find me. I'm here and always happy to help. Enjoy your membership and again, thank you for renewing for another year with the world's greatest magic club, The Academy of Magical Arts! ✍

Trish

talaskey@magiccastle.com



**The Artful Deceiver:
Arthur Trace**

3/26 & 6/25

Pasadena
Conservatory
of Music

100 North Hill Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91106

"One of magic's
bona fide superstars!"
-Chicago Tribune

For more info and to purchase tickets, visit:
arthurtrace.com/magic-shows-los-angeles
AMA members receive 10% off by using promo code: castle

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Karen Rodriguez

Melissa Antrim

Richard Sheppard

Anne Ragsdale

Ami Francis

Christine Levinson Wilson

Ryan Silbert

Doug Couch

Michael Grebe

Michael Csurics

Kaito Ito

William Stellmacher

Frankie Foti

Evan Spiegel

Alex Acosta

Matthew Ziff

Monty Simus

Michael Kendrick

John Bobik

Derek Irwin

Kat Graham

Lara Seltzer

Rachael Wagner

Marco Ehgartner-Lipp

New Members: Don't forget to sign up for
your New Member Orientation! Contact:
memberservices@magiccastle.com



**ATTENTION MAGICIAN MEMBERS:
ANOTHER BENEFIT of MEMBERSHIP in The ACADEMY of MAGICAL ARTS!**

Genii

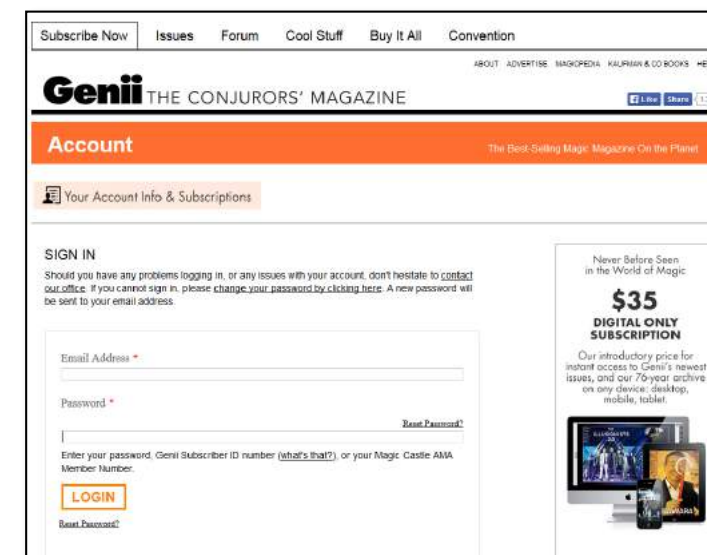
THE CONJURORS' MAGAZINE

THE BEST-SELLING MAGIC MAGAZINE on the planet, which has been closely associated with The Magic Castle since its inception, is available to you absolutely free of charge as a perk of your Magician Membership.

To access your digital subscription to Genii, which also includes all 77 years of back issues, please follow these steps.

1. Go to www.geniimagazine.com
2. Click the orange "Sign In" button in the upper right corner.
3. Enter the email address which the AMA has on file for your membership (make sure it's the correct one).
4. Enter your AMA membership number (just the numerals).
5. Click "Login."

Academy of Magical Arts Members:
Take Advantage of your FREE Digital Subscription to Genii!



MEMBERS ONLY

RESERVATIONS

HOTLINE

9:30AM-6:00PM
SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!

(323) 928-7040

The Princess Diaries



We proudly present a Q & A with the AMA's one and only princess, Irene Larsen. She chats about the early days of The Magic Castle®, her own work in magic, her role in bringing international magic to the masses in Genii, and more.

AMA: Do you remember when your husband, Bill Larsen, Jr., first brought up the idea of the AMA and The Magic Castle® to you? About how much time elapsed between the discussion of the idea and the actual opening of the club? Did you think it was going to succeed, or were you skeptical at first?

IRENE LARSEN: Oh yes I remember! They had already been working on it by the time Bill told me, so it was only about a year to opening night. None of us really thought it would be this successful back then. Bill and Milt had never run a bar, a night club, a private club, a restaurant—so I was skeptical, but only at first.

AMA: What are some standout memories of the last 54 years at The Magic Castle®?

IRENE: The night the fire department closed us down. We had to move into the garage. Thank goodness for John

Shrum and his friends from NBC. They put down a floor. We put together a makeshift bar, and for a week, Mr. Electric—Marvyn Roy and Carol—performed in a garage. That was in the early 1970s, before the Palace was built.

AMA: It was you who talked Bill into going to his first FISM (after which he didn't miss another). Is it fair to say that you helped open Bill's eyes to the international world of magic, particularly in the pages of *Genii*?

IRENE: Yes, that is true. Bill had never been to Europe. And I had a secret agenda: I wanted to see my family in Germany. FISM was in Amsterdam. So we went and Bill couldn't believe the magic at FISM. It was marvelous! Afterward, I went to Germany and he flew home to write about it in *Genii*. And it was my idea to change the name from *Genii: The Conjurors' Magazine* to *Genii: The International*

Conjurors' Magazine. And it did become an international magazine.

The way Bill described those FISM conventions made the readers feel like they were there. He saw everything and wrote about it all. Of course, Bill wrote about the Castle almost every month too!

AMA: Our older members know that you have a performing background, but of course our younger members might not. Can you talk just a little about assisting John Daniel, and of course your wonderful turn assisting Bill when he played Dante during an "It's Magic."

IRENE: When I was married to John, we at first did school assembly shows and I was his assistant of course. Sometimes we did four or five shows a day. He'd do his last trick, we'd pack up and go to the next school.

(CONTINUED: PRINCESS IRENE)

And then we did a spook show across the country. We stopped at almost every RKO Theater between Los Angeles and New York. A different city every night. We'd do a live show—either before or after a horror movie. Sometimes the lines were so long that we'd have to do an extra show. And then we'd pack up and move on to the next town. It was a real grind.

I assisted many other magicians. When Nani Darnell was pregnant with Greg, I assisted Mark Wilson.

When the Castle first opened, Jay Ose and Leo Behnke gave me magic lessons. I learned some good card magic from them. And Kuda Bux put a little show together for me. He taught me the act and gave me the props. I still have those original Kuda Bux props. I performed at ladies association luncheons, though no one really knew about it.

And then Bill performed as Dante several times. That was wonderful. I assisted him—sort of being Moi-Yo Miller to Bill's Dante. Moi-Yo was—is—a good friend. Such a wonderful

"I am so happy that there are more woman in the Academy now. We need more lady magicians."

lady. We were very close to Dante's family. My son is named for Dante.

AMA: Dai Vernon was very close with the Larsens, and of course he contributed to the early success of the Castle. And he was also a great big flirt. Can you tell us your favorite Dai Vernon story that involved you directly?

IRENE: No, not actually! [Laughs.] You see, it involves another friend, Dai of course, a vasectomy, and leopard print underwear. But that's all I will say for print! [More laughs.]

There was a time when we all went to Spain. A group there gave Dai a nice bottle of Cognac. On the flight between Spain and New York, he drank half that bottle, so he was pretty drunk. Goodness knows how it happened, but Dai and Bill Bowers missed the connecting flight from New York to L.A. Thankfully they got a flight that left a half hour after ours. On their flight, Dai woke up and

decided he wanted to talk to me about the movie that was playing on the plane. Bill kept telling him that I wasn't on that flight. But Dai kept trying to leave his seat and find me.

We were waiting at the gate when they arrived in L.A. and I greeted them as they came off the plane. Dai just thought I got off before him. You know, he never believed I was not on his flight! He thought I was ignoring him the whole time. You couldn't ignore Dai Vernon! I miss him terribly.

AMA: This amazing clubhouse has seen its share of remarkable personalities since its opening. Besides The Professor, who else—past or present—stands out in your mind?

IRENE: Otto Wessely. When Otto performed at the

Castle, the place was mayhem. He's crazy! And of course Cary Grant. Here was this huge Hollywood star up on the stage explaining why we should vote for him for the Board of Directors—as if we wouldn't! [Ed. Note: For our younger readers, it's fair to compare Grant's level of stardom then to that of Johnny Depp's today.]

I'll always remember Doug Henning when he came here to study with Dai. He got that grant from the Canadian government and came down here.



THE VERNON TOUCH

(CONTINUED: PRINCESS IRENE)

We knew right away that there was something special about him; that he would be a star. He was so childlike too. Doug was so special.

And I do have to say that Alan Bursky is a real character. Yes, I think I'll mention Alan too.

AMA: Well you just made Alan's year. Speaking of good years: After recently completing her first engagement in the Close-Up Gallery, your granddaughter Liberty has now worked all three of the Castle's main rooms. She has ensured the future of the Larsen Dynasty in magic. Do you have any advice for her that you can share with us (and perhaps other young women members of the AMA)?

IRENE: Oh, I am so happy that there are more woman in the Academy now. We need more lady magicians. And my advice to them is just be yourself. Don't copy someone else's style, act, or tricks. Be original. Libby is original. I am very proud of her. And of course, I should add, practice, practice, practice!

AMA: Erika has proven herself one of the best presidents in the history of the Academy. You have reason to be proud of her (as Bill would be too), but were you at all surprised when Erika told you she wanted to get involved with the politics of the AMA?

IRENE: She had been talking about it for quite a while leading up to her decision. And I agree with you, she is a great president. When she ran for the board and then became president, it was at the exact right time. And today the Academy is in better shape than ever. And not just because of her. The entire Board of Directors, the Trustees, the General Manager, and the whole staff. So, no, I was not at all surprised when she ran. She grew up in magic. Magic is her life. And yes, I am very proud of her.

AMA: Anything else you'd like to add; a message for the members?

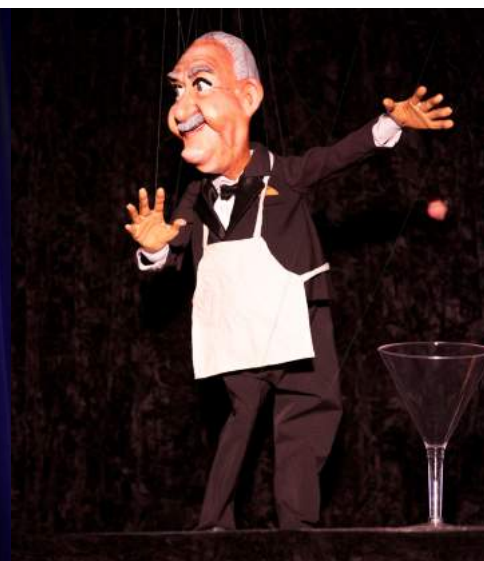
IRENE: Spread the love! ✍

Presenting the very first deck of **ACADEMY OF MAGICAL ARTS**
PLAYING CARDS
 \$10 each
 Available now in the gift shop or online at www.magiccastle.com/product/cards-ama

MEMBERS ONLY
RESERVATIONS
HOTLINE
 9:30AM-6:00PM
 SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!
(323) 928-7040

FOUNDERS' DAY 2016

THE FOUNDERS' DAY Ceremony took place on January 2. Here are some photographic highlights, courtesy of Q36 Media. Clockwise from the top right: **THE FAMILY LARSEN** gathers around the 53rd Anniversary Cake. **DAVID REGAL** emceed and, as they say, killed. **JON ARMSTRONG**, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, shares his thanks to the Founders. Co-Founder **MILT LARSEN** keeping it short. Co-Founder **IRENE LARSEN** keeping it PG-13. AMA President **ERIKA LARSEN** leads the Anniversary Toast. **RANDY PITCHFORD** poses with **SCOTT LAND**, Milt, and the marionette he commissioned from Mr. Land as a gift to Milt. **MINI-MILT** in Action, and Scott Land operating him.



THE ACADEMY OF MAGICAL ARTS PRESENTS



Valentine's Day 2016

at The Magic Castle

PRIX FIXE FOUR-COURSE MEAL ♥ STROLLING MAGIC FROM CUPID
FAMOUS CANDY BUFFET ♥ FREE COUPLES SILHOUETTES ♥ FREE PHOTO BOOTH
"SINGLES AWARENESS" COCKTAIL PARTY ♥ CASTLE-WIDE DÉCOR
CALL FOR RESERVATIONS ♥ 323-851-3313

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QUESTIONS? CONTACT BEN ROMAN, SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER, AT: BROMAN@MAGICCASTLE.COM

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RECOMMENDED! – Stage Raw
"Abundant belly laughs." – LA Observer
"A brilliant raconteur!" – Stage Raw

Opening Jan 22, 2016

Regular price tickets \$25.
AMA discount price with code **ORSON10** is \$15.

310-822-8392

www.pacificresidenttheatre.com

Special Limited Engagement For AMA Members

THE ILLUSIONISTS

WITNESS THE IMPOSSIBLE



The box office smash "The Illusionists" is coming to Hollywood's Pantages Theatre! On two special nights, the AMA has a limited block of tickets that includes dinner at The Magic Castle®, transportation to and from the theatre, and a ticket to the show!

*\$120/person**

Ticket price includes:

- *Prix fixe dinner at 6:00 p.m. with complimentary house wine, tax & gratuity*
- *Shuttle service between The Magic Castle® and the Pantages Theatre*
- *Orchestra-level ticket to "The Illusionists"*

Wednesday, March 2, 2016
Wednesday, March 9, 2016

To purchase a ticket (only 24 available for each date), go online to:

<http://pantagesmagic.eventbrite.com/>

Password: **AMAMEMBER**

Purchase your spots before they sell out!

Questions? Contact Ben Roman at broman@magiccastle.com.

**Ticket price does not include nominal EventBrite processing fee.*

Castle Perks Presents

As if.

A talk about acting and magic.

Hosted by Steve Valentine and Andrew Hill Newman

Andrew understudying Doug Henning on Broadway in 1983



Andrew producing "Nicky, Ricky, Dicky, & Dawn" for Nickelodeon in 2015



Tuesday, March 1, 2016 | 8:00 p.m. | Inner Circle

Steve Valentine will host with actor/writer/producer Andrew Hill Newman as they discuss Andrew's system and basic tenets of actor training, preparation, and process; and the application of those concepts to the performance and scripting of magic. They will also explore the nature of comedy and answer questions about acting, writing, and show business and how they apply to our magic business. Including fun exercises for those who want to get up on their feet.

Andrew's acting credits include understudying Doug Henning in *Merlin*, one thousand performances of *Little Shop of Horrors*, and scores of recurring and guest-starring roles on TV. As a writer/producer Andrew has worked on hundreds of episodes of television: seven series for Nickelodeon, as well as grown-up fare for *SNL*, *Bravo*, *FunnyOrDie*, and more. Steve Valentine has—well, you all know Steve!

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!

Sunday, February 28, 2016

OSCARS

88th Annual Academy Awards

VIEWING PARTY

3:30 p.m. Doors Open
Buffet opens at 4:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m. Showtime!
The Inner Circle

(Hot and cold buffet with soft drinks, games & prizes!)

\$37/person

Ages 21+ | Dress Code Required
Space Is Limited to 1st 100!

Purchase tickets online:
<http://oscarsmagic.eventbrite.com/>
Password: HOLLYWOOD
or RSVP to: broman@magiccastle.com



Hosted By
CHRIS ROCK



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2016



HOSTED BY DAVID KWONG

It's the inaugural Magic Castle Puzzle Hunt! Puzzle designer and New York Times crossword constructor (and AMA magician member) David Kwong has put together a fun and multi-layered puzzle experience just for the Castle. Solve puzzles on paper at the table, look for clues hidden around the room, and figure out how everything links together! No puzzle expertise needed, but bring your thinking caps!

Come with a team of six or we will match you up. RSVP to Ben Roman, Special Events Manager, at: broman@magiccastle.com by January 29th with your name and headcount.

All members & their guests are welcome! (Age 21+)

8:00 P.M. IN THE INNER CIRCLE

Thursday, February 11th, 2016

6:00 | 8:00 | 9:45 | 11:00 p.m.

"til Death Do Us Part..."



A NIGHT OF SEANCES

with Rob Zabrecky

Valentine's Edition

For parties of 2 to 10 pending availability.

\$35 per person

Tickets available online:

<http://zabreckyseances.eventbrite.com>

PASSWORD: TRUELOVE

Questions? Contact Josh Stern at jstern@magiccastle.com



Sunday, February 7, 2016

2:30 p.m. Pre-Party

3:25 p.m. Kick-Off PST

SUPER BOWL 50



VIEWING PARTY
in the Inner Circle



All members are welcome to celebrate the grand finale of football season at The Magic Castle® with:

Tailgate Food: Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, BBQ, Chips, Dips, Picnic Sides, Mexican, Sodas, Vegetarian/Vegan Options, Desserts & Build-Your-Own Super Bowl Sundae Bar!

Members are **\$25/person** (ages 13+) and **\$15/person** for kids 12 and under.

Bottomless* Draft Beer Special: \$20/person

Purchase your spots online at:

<http://magicsuperbowl.eventbrite.com>

(Password: TOUCHDOWN)

Or e-mail your RSVP to Ben Roman at:

broman@magiccastle.com and you can pay at the door.

Online purchases or RSVPs required for this event!

*Bartenders & managers reserve the right to refuse overserved members & guests.



Borrowed Time

An Immersive Magic Experience by HELDER GUIMARÃES

AMA MEMBERS RECEIVE 20% OFF WITH
THE PROMOTIONAL CODE **AMABTLA**
Discount code valid through February 21, 2016

BUY TICKETS AT <http://borrowedtime.la>

For the first time, since starring in his critically acclaimed two-man show "Nothing to Hide", Helder Guimarães is debuting a limited engagement magic experience unlike anything that's been seen before. Merging art, theater and Helder's sleight of hand virtuosity in a secret location, "Borrowed Time" promises to transport its very intimate audience to a space where anything is possible and magic is real.



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2016

Due to popular demand of the last installment, STREET MAGIC, PART DEUX is coming! Join Tom Frank, David Groves, and Steve Valentine for ANOTHER rollicking night devoted to the history and life of the street magician, with anecdotes, and performances and touching on everything from pulling the crowd to getting the money and all the magic in between.

8:00 p.m. in the Inner Circle

MAGICIAN MEMBERS ONLY!



HOUDINI SÉANCE

THE MAGIC OF LOVE

Houdini ♥ Bess

BECAUSE FEBRUARY is known as The Month of Love, I thought you would like to know how Harry Houdini met his wife, Bess.

In the 1900s as a teenager, Wilhelmina Beatrice Rahner, along with two other girls, performed as the Floral Sisters, a song and dance act in Coney Island, New York. Harry's brother, Theo, said that he met Bess first where she was performing then introduced her to Harry.

It must have been love at first sight—or real magic—because three weeks later Harry and Bess were married on June 23, 1894. Harry Houdini was twenty and Bess was eighteen. They honeymooned on Coney Island.

Invite your special Valentine and friends to the private dining experience of the Houdini Séance Room.

The Séance Dinner Package is \$125 per person for the four course dinner including bottomless house wine, a memory token (the commemorative Houdini Séance Coin) for each guest, and tickets to the Palace of Mystery Show (pending availability).

The evening itinerary requires a 6:00 p.m. arrival for 6:30 p.m. dining in the Séance Room. The Séance will begin at 8:00 p.m. The Palace of Mystery Show is scheduled for 10:00 p.m.

Please contact Josh Stern, our Séance Manager, at jsstern@magiccastle.com or 323-851-3313, extension 303, for help planning your Houdini Séance Dining Experience. ✉

May good spirits be with you,

Leo Kostka
Resident Medium



NOW PLAYING AT THE MAGIC CASTLE

Jack Goldfinger, Entertainment Director

FEBRUARY 1 TO 7

CLOSE-UP GALLERY

Early-Early: Tricky Devil
Early: Michael Rubinstein
Late: Mark Matsumoto

PARLOUR OF PRESTIDIGITATION

Early: Tom Ogden
Late: Mark James

PALACE OF MYSTERY

Lady Mystina
 Ice McDonald

PELLER THEATRE

Chris Korn
 Nathan Kranzo

W. C. FIELDS BAR

Steve Wastell

FRIDAY LUNCH

Michael Rubinstein

SATURDAY & SUNDAY BRUNCH

Dennis Forel

FEBRUARY 8 TO 14

CLOSE-UP GALLERY

Early-Early: Brian Markenson
Early: Suzanne
Late: Jonathan Levit

PARLOUR OF PRESTIDIGITATION

Early: Kerry Ross
Late: Oscar Muñoz

PALACE OF MYSTERY

John Carney
 Johnny Fox
 Dan Birch

PELLER THEATRE

Ali Shelley
 The Bornsteins

W. C. FIELDS BAR

Rich Cowley

FRIDAY LUNCH

Suzanne

SATURDAY & SUNDAY BRUNCH

The Amazing Geebo

FEBRUARY 15 TO 21

CLOSE-UP GALLERY

Early-Early: Steve Silverman
Early: John George
Late: Will Fern

PARLOUR OF PRESTIDIGITATION

Early: Stan Gerson
Late: Stoil Stoilov

PALACE OF MYSTERY

Keith Fields
 Jean Paul Olhaberry
 Jarol Martin

PELLER THEATRE

J. Neal
 Bob Dorian

W. C. FIELDS BAR

Ron Bell

FRIDAY LUNCH

Will Fern

SATURDAY & SUNDAY BRUNCH

Stoil Stoilov

FEBRUARY 22 TO 28

CLOSE-UP GALLERY

Early-Early: Bill Bentz
Early: Richard Turner
Late: Tam Vo

PARLOUR OF PRESTIDIGITATION

Early: Doug Gorman
Late: Kevin Viner

PALACE OF MYSTERY

Murray Hatfield
 Robert Baxt

PELLER THEATRE

Lou Serrano
 Mark Furey

W. C. FIELDS BAR

Tim Wise

FRIDAY LUNCH

Richard Turner

SATURDAY & SUNDAY BRUNCH

The Magic Genie

FEBRUARY 29 TO MARCH 6

CLOSE-UP GALLERY

Early-Early: Tim Isaac
Early: Mike Pisciotta
Late: David Malek

PARLOUR OF PRESTIDIGITATION

Early: Bob Cassidy
Late: Jimmy H.

PALACE OF MYSTERY

Pop Haydn
 UGMagic
 Dale Salwak

PELLER THEATRE

Parkash Peru
 Matt Holtzclaw

W. C. FIELDS BAR

Brian Gillis

FRIDAY LUNCH

Mike Pisciotta

SATURDAY & SUNDAY BRUNCH

Nancy Jean Gray

MAGICIAN ONLY LECTURES

3:00 to 5:00 p.m. | Parlour of Prestidigitation*

(Magician Members In-Good-Standing Only)

FEBRUARY 6 (SATURDAY)

MICHAEL RUBINSTEIN

Michael's 1½ hour lecture consists entirely of un-gimmicked coin tricks that are very commercial. Although a couple of the effects are knuckle-busting, most are practical, don't use classic palming, and are within the ability of the average magician.

FEBRUARY 14

OSCAR MUÑOZ

Oscar will be lecturing on special gimmicks for magicians. These gimmicks may be well-known to some, but will be new to many magicians. These include silk ball, coin holder, ball holders, and silk vanish gimmicks. Make your magic easy and magical with this lecture.

FEBRUARY 21

KEITH FIELDS

During the lecture, Keith will demonstrate and explain elements from his street show, his close-up material—the magic that made him International Street Entertainer of the Year. He is a Magic Circle Close-up Champion and a Member of the Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star. Keith will also share some of the amazing magic he has invented that has taken him, quite literally, around the world several times.

FEBRUARY 28

RICHARD TURNER

Richard will open his lecture with an expanded demonstration of what kind of magic miracles can be performed using gambling moves. He will render particulars on false deals seconds, centers, and bottoms. Richard will also give details for palming, brushes, stacks, false shuffles and cuts, shifts, card switches, and more.

****Time and location are subject to change pending capacity, scheduling, and popularity.***



Executive Chef Jason Sperber

FEBRUARY 1, 2, & 3

Pork ossobuco, creamy polenta, braised vegetables, and sherry wine reduction.
VEGETARIAN: Artichoke and cheese ravioli with braised kale and creamy vodka tomato sauce.
VEGAN: Grilled polenta cake, roasted winter squashes, harissa tomato sauce.

FEBRUARY 8, 9, & 10

Grilled salmon with tomato olive relish, broccolini, and wild rice pilaf.
VEGETARIAN: Eggplant Marsala. Crispy eggplant over Parmesan risotto with wild mushroom Marsala sauce.
VEGAN: Vegetable and potato pot pie. Vegetables and potatoes cooked with sherry wine and fresh herbs with a puff pastry crust.

FEBRUARY 15, 16, & 17

Manicotti ala Bolognese. Manicotti filled with three cheese blend, roasted garlic, and fresh herbs topped with homemade Bolognese.
VEGETARIAN: Manicotti primavera. Manicotti filled with three cheese blend, roasted garlic, and fresh herbs, topped with a tomato and vegetable ragout.
VEGAN: Seared organic tofu and carrots with orange sesame sauce.

FEBRUARY 22, 23, & 24

Stuffed sand dabs. Sand dabs stuffed with crab, herbs, and bread crumbs. Served with lemon herb risotto and seasonal vegetable.
VEGETARIAN: Stuffed Portobello mushroom. Marinated and grilled Portobello mushroom stuffed with farro and roasted vegetables, topped with burrata cheese and seasoned sour dough bread crumbs.
VEGAN: Winter squash stuffed with wild rice pilaf and tomato fennel sauce. 🍴

Jason
 jsperber@magiccastle.com



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Dustin Stinett / newslettereditor@magiccastle.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Feb. 2: Perk: Castle Puzzle Hunt with David Kwong**
 - Feb. 7: Super Bowl Viewing Party**
 - Feb. 9: Perk: Who's That Portrait Adventure**
 - Feb. 11: Non-Dining Houdini Séances**
 - Feb. 14: Valentine's Day Celebration: "Love Potion"**
 - Feb. 14: Singles Awareness Cocktail Party**
 - Feb. 28: Oscars Viewing Party**
 - Mar. 2 & 9: The Illusionists "Night Out"**
 - Mar. 15: Strolling Magic Showdown**
 - Mar. 17: St. Patrick's Day**
 - Mar. 20: 2016 Annual General Meeting**
 - Mar. 27: Easter Bunny's Visit (Brunch)**
 - Mar. 28 & 29: Young Adults Nights**
 - Apr. 3: Volunteer Faire**
 - Apr. 16: Spring Swap Meet**
 - May 7: Kentucky Derby Party & Bourbon Tasting**
 - May 15: AMA Awards Show**
 - Jul. 25 – 31: Future Stars Week**
 - Jul. 25 & 26: Young Adults Nights**
 - Sep. 10: Fall Swap Meet**
- CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
 Events are "All Members Welcome" unless otherwise indicated.
 Keep an eye out for detailed information on these events and more in upcoming AMA Newsletters, Flash Paper Emails, our online member calendar on www.magiccastle.com, and our Members Only Facebook Group!
 Questions? Contact Ben Roman, Special Events Manager, at: broman@magiccastle.com

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

CASTLE PERK

PORTRAIT ADVENTURE!

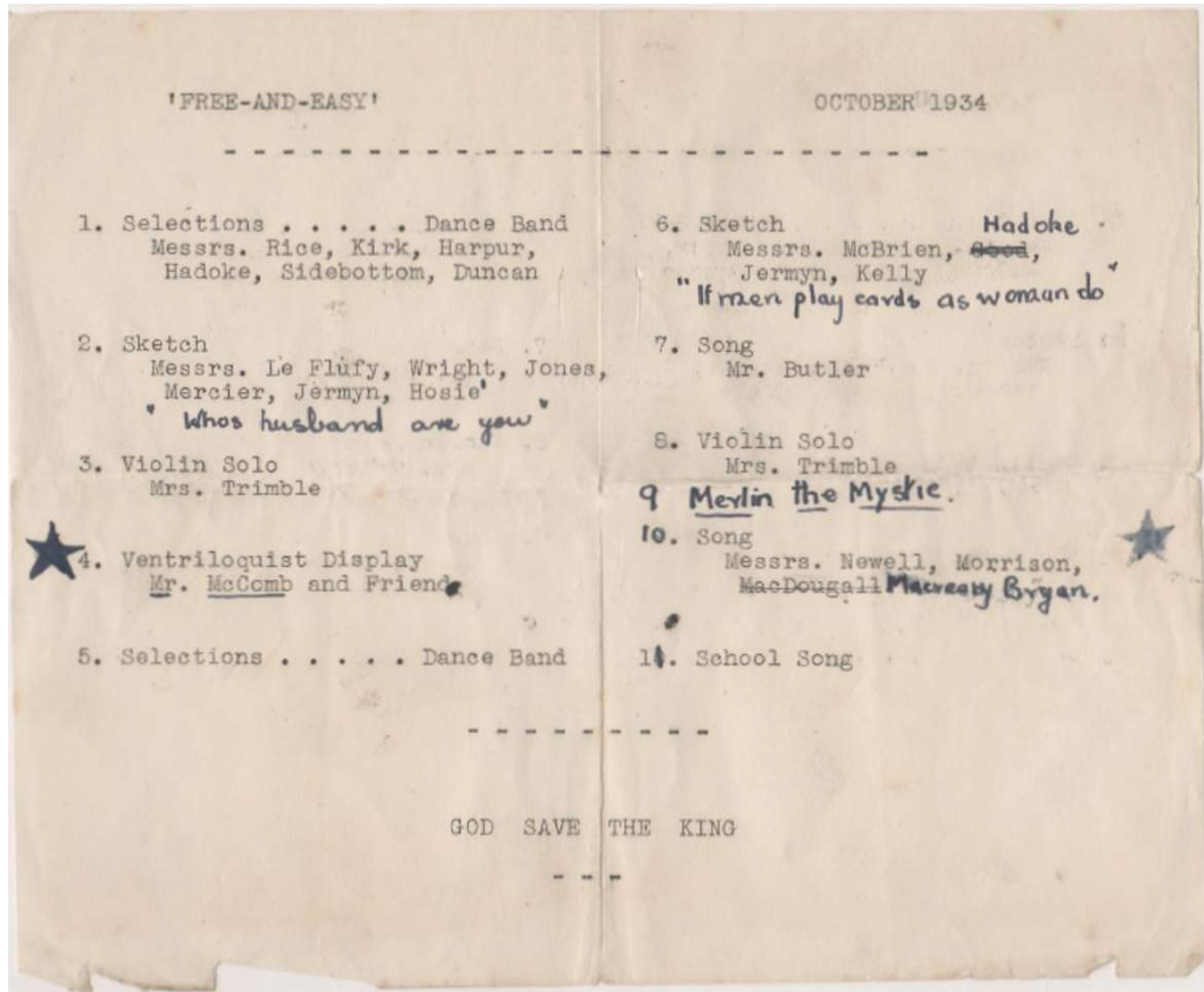
8:00 p.m. | Inner Circle

"Who's that?" one of your guests asks you as they point towards one of the many portraits that haunt our hallowed halls. And, unless you're Milt Larsen himself, you may not know the answer. Now here's your chance to become the ultimate Castle tour guide!

Join Board of Trustees secretary **Joan Lawton** as she guides you on a fun and comprehensive virtual tour of all the magician portraits around the club. Learn the important history of these performers and their place in The Magic Castle® legend. Attendees will be able to give more educated tours to their guests (and even other members!).

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!

MR. McCOMB AND FRIEND



IN OCTOBER of 1934, **BILLY McCOMB** was 12 years old and attending Portora Royal School in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. Established in 1618 (yes, *sixteen* eighteen—it moved to its current location in 1778), it was still a boy’s boarding school when Billy was there. In the collection of **MR. JOHN FISHER** is a remarkable assemblage of letters young William wrote home to “Totie,” his nickname for his widowed mother, Eleanor. (He also called her Tot, Totums, and Mumsie.) Billy attended Portora from 1932 to 1939, matriculated to Trinity College, Dublin, and then Queen’s University, Belfast. World War II interrupted his education, and then he received his medical degree in 1949. He never took up its practice.

On one late October night in 1934, the school held its annual “Free-and-Easy” talent show. On the bill was “Mr. McComb and Friend.” That friend was a ventriloquist’s figure. It was the first time Billy McComb appeared on a playbill. Billy sent a copy of the typed program home, complete with his many annotations. It is published here for the first time courtesy of Mr. Fisher.

The playbill is not the only revelation found within the almost 100 handwritten letters. In one earlier that month, Billy included a note he received from **MR. J. BOURNE**, the gentleman who repaired Billy’s vent figure. That secondhand figure was gifted to him years earlier. It was old when Billy received it, having been crafted in the late 19th century. Billy named it **GINGER**. Mr. Bourne promised a short script for Billy, “something to say that is suitable for a respectable boy like Ginger,” who arrived nattily attired in a dark suit, Eton collar, and mortarboard cap. The show and Billy’s performance “came off grand ... Ginger and I were cheered to the moon.” In subsequent letters home, he would write of getting other engagements. And he signed off one of those letters to his mother with, “Billy McComb, Ventriloquism and Conjuring.” ✍

-30-