



SAMLETTER 181



The next **Assembly 181** meeting is **Thursday, April 5, 2018**, with a workshop led by **Jimmy Brown**. At Jimmy's workshop, you will see just about "everything".

Following the workshop, we will open the stage to others to perform in our "No Judgment Zone", so bring something to share.

Society of American Magicians Assembly 181 of Hightstown meets the first Thursday of every month, September thru June at the **First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520**. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM



The next **KIDabra** meeting is **Thursday, April 26, 2018**, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM.

KIDabra is an organization for Kid Show and Family entertainers. At this meeting there will be a workshop on Animation by **Johnny Cee**.

From the President



Spring is finally starting to make its presence and of course, that brings us to the spring holidays. Both Passover and Easter arrive at this time and for the first time in a long time, Passover coincided with Good Friday. It supposedly is a rare occurrence and it subtly reminds us that as much as we think we are all different, the truth there are more similarities between us than there are differences. The same can be true of our unique interest which is magic. Attending the second meeting of the newly formed KIDabra group which meets in the same location, the theme was balloon twisting. The workshop which was given by Dennis "Coco" was well received. Although there were veteran balloon twisters there such as Silly Reba, Jay the Magician and Dennis Thomas, there was still enough excitement and learning for us all to make an evening out of it.

Out of the ten attendees, there were six of us that had very little or no experience working with balloons. You might think that it would have been a tedious or boring evening but it was the opposite. The evening was filled with energy and the challenge of learning something new. Aided by the experience of the aforementioned "twisters" each one of them contributed advice, help and a different approach which made the time pass quickly. In the end, what was most fascinating was the fact that a majority of the attendees, which never had any experience with balloons prior, walked out excited about learning a new facet of the "magical" arts.

So one might consider themselves card or coin magicians, parlor or stage perfumers, kid show magicians or mentalists, and that's fine. We all have our preferences, however, it seems though that

when you take an individual and place them in an environment which is outside their normal realm if they give it a chance they may find that there is "magic" in all venues. So when you see someone working, performing or talking about the type of magic they perform, don't look at the differences between us, take a look at the similarities and you'll find that we all aren't much different after all.

Wishing you all a joyous holiday season!



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Claude Alexander Conlin (June 30, 1880 – August 5, 1954), also known as **Alexander the Crystal Seer**, and **Alexander the Man Who Knows**, was an American spiritual author, vaudeville magician who specialized in mentalism and psychic reading acts, dressed in Oriental style robes and a feathered turban, and often used a crystal ball as a prop.

His techniques were not revealed during his lifetime. He is credited as the inventor and/or popular developer of a number of electrical stage effects which were the forerunners of modern electronic stage effects.

EVERYBODY WINS



“Magic is entertainment that justifies child-like wonder and excitement” is Randy Butters’ motto and his enthusiasm during performances and the workshop he presented justifies such a statement.

Randy’s magical journey began in 2007 while Christmas shopping with his wife, Cheryl. Randy explains, “I was fascinated by the demonstrations at a magic kiosk at our local mall. At that time, I made my first magical purchase. Before I knew it, I was reading, studying, practicing and then entertaining the neighborhood kids.” Most of Randy’s shows are on a volunteer basis at pediatric clinics, school assemblies, church functions, Boy Scouts, military picnics, and elderly homes.

At his workshop, Randy “defied preconceptions” with his version of the True Chair Test Routine. This is not a simple chair prediction routine, it is a complete act, which allows for Randy to incorporate other individual mental effects.

Randy’s routine included Luca Volpe’s envelope shuffle and distribution, the Kozar Prediction Pad, Mental Epic, Everyone Wins Plus, and Steve Thompson’s Glance magazine test. His idea of the using the Kozar Prediction Pad to predict the outcome of the numbered envelopes order was fascinating. Randy used the Everyone Wins principle to predict male versus female participants. That is a whole lot of magic from one routine.

After the workshop, we open the stage to performances by our members. Rocco was first up. He did a psychokinetic metal

bending effect using a screwdriver. The screwdriver then went into his nose in a real blockhead display.

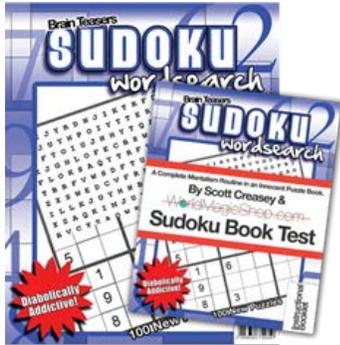
Many of us are familiar with the 21 card trick, the grandfather of mathematical card tricks. George Hann performed that classic first and then executed the modernized version by Ed Marlo, called appropriately, the 21st Century 21 Card Trick. The choice is yours, you can stick with the old, or go with the new.

President Stephan Sloan finished off the evening with Diamond Jim Tyler's Sentimental Postcards, which takes the audience on an imaginary tour through the most famous vacations spots in the world. After this snowy winter, arriving in the South Pacific archipelago islands of Fiji was very comforting ending to our meeting.



Psycho Path - Magic for the Mentalist

Sudoku by Scott Creasey



There are a few sharp divides amongst mentalists when it comes to some performance pieces. One is, why should a book be used in order to have a spectator think of a word? The answer, of course, is obvious. Well, a couple of thinkers out there tried to justify the use of a book for reference instead of just obtaining a word. This philosophy brought about a genre of books tests that are visually different than the traditional book test. There are some that look like travel guides, street maps, crosswords and other game type books.

Sudoku by Scott Creasey fits into this new "style" of book test. Looking like an ordinary puzzle book you would pick up at a pharmacy or grocery store, it allows the performer the opportunity to do almost a half hour (depending on performance style) with this one book alone. Not that it is recommended you do all of that with the single book but the options are there. Nestled between the front and back cover are 56 crossword pages and 56 Sudoku pages. In addition to the puzzle pages, there are four pages with forces and brain teasers. This was well thought out.

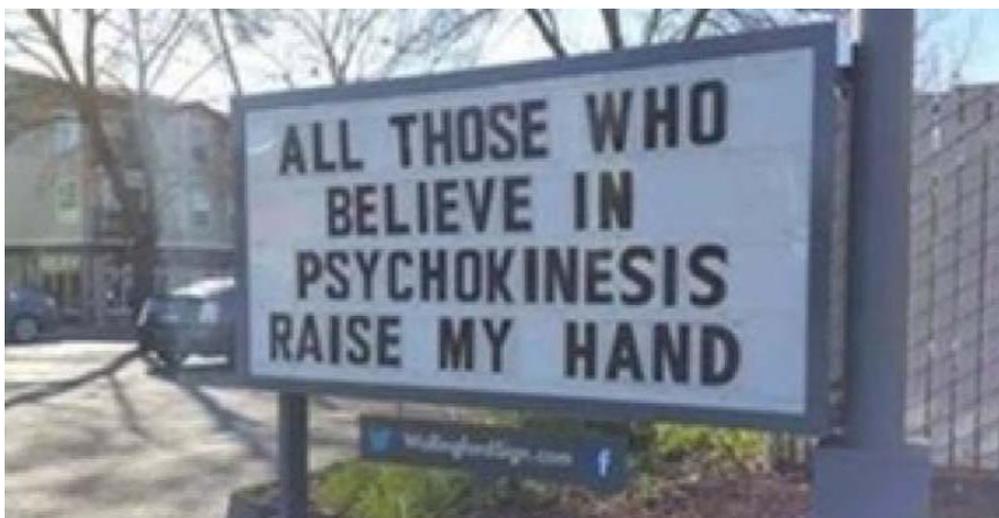
Like all effects, there are some pluses and minuses. On the plus side, there are a lot of pages which appear all different. The layout is very good and the spectator can pick any page. The layout is such that there is always a crossword on the left (spectator's view) and the Sudoku puzzle on the right. They can choose either one to start with. The book can be passed to another spectator and the revelations will be different. There is enough variation amongst the pages that repetitive performances shouldn't be a problem. The book is of high quality and should last years.

The extensiveness of the revelations as refreshing as it poses a little bit of a dilemma. There are more than 43 words to remember with no real mnemonic system offered. In addition, there are the Sudoku revelations as well. To do this well, there is a lot to remember. They offer a crib on the back cover but that is basically useless if the spectator is holding the book. It would have been nice to have a second copy with a different cover so the spectator can be offered a selection of two books, both with cribs on them. I always felt that some memory work wouldn't hurt and the performance seems "more real" if I can recall the words without having to use a crib, but some people prefer using cribs.

Sudoku is not very expensive for what you get. The book is well made and the instructions are fairly well written. For what some book tests cost, it's a fraction of the more expensive "wordy" book test and it is well worth carrying it around without the worry of losing a very expensive prop.

To see a trailer on Sudoku click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBgbCgq1Tuw>



Tricks are for Kids - Magic for the children's performer

Baxt's Boxes of Cereal - Robert Baxt



It's not easy to find a mentalism routine for school-age kids. However, Robert Baxt came up with a clever amalgam of magic, mentalism, comedy and the magician in trouble plot all rolled into one. With Baxt's Boxes of Cereal, you get a good solid five minutes of banter, jokes, and byplay, all the while making the audience think that they are in on the trick. The premise is

that an audience member is called up to the stage and is shown several front panels of cereal boxes. The magician makes a prediction, shows it to the audience and places his prediction in an envelope. A second set of boxes are gotten and the spectator is told that they will pick a box out of that set which, if all goes right, will match the prediction made by the magician. However, before having the spectator make a selection, he shows the audience that all the boxes are the same which of course matches his prediction. The magician implies they are all in on the gag and the selection process continues. Ultimately the spectator doesn't pick the force box but picks a different one. The magician is beside himself and is forced to admit something went wrong, however when he pulls the prediction out of the envelope, it isn't the one he initially put in the envelope and now matches the chosen box. The magician wins again.

The props supplied are actual cereal box fronts. I imagine Mr. Baxt had to eat a lot of cereal to put this one together. You are supplied with all the needed props and a performance DVD as well. Most of Baxt's material is easy to perform and leaves the door wide open for you to interject your own personality into the routine. Because the premise is very simple, it is easy to follow and appeals to the younger

kids because they all like to be in on the joke. I can see this playing very well at parties as well as Blue and Gold events. The only issue I see in the routine is when the magician shows the second set of boxes, there may be some smart-mouthed audience member that may shout out that they are all the same. Some crowd control is definitely needed to make sure this one plays the way it was intended.

I think Baxt's Boxes of Cereal is something you should consider if you are going to look for a different way of performance pieces. As a side note, Robert Baxt offers a complete act with 11 routines (this one included) that can be tailored for Adult as well children.

To see a performance of Baxt's Boxes of Cereal click here:

http://www.robertbaxt.com/product_cereal.html

Modern Day Proverbs

Support bacteria – They are the only culture some people have.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane and going the wrong way.

For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.

Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of checks.

If at first, you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.

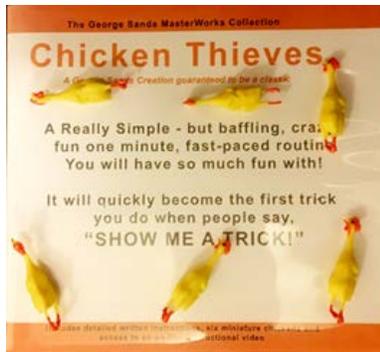
A conclusion is the place where you get tired of thinking.

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

Never do card tricks for the group you play poker with.

Do you believe in magic? - Magic for the general magician

Chicken Thieves - The George Sands MasterWorks Collection



"A really simple - but baffling, crazy fun one minute, fast-paced routine you will have so much fun with!

It will quickly become the first trick you do when people say,

"SHOW ME A TRICK!"

The above statement is printed right on the front of the box, and if you read it without seeing the performance you might consider it hyperbole. However, there may be some truth to that claim. Chicken Thieves is a clever take on an old coin trick called Thieves and Sheep by Milton Korn and Stewart James. What I like about Chicken Thieves is that the story can be understood by all but the very youngest of age and the props are funny. What you get in the box are six small plastic "rubber" chickens and a set of written instructions. On the instructions, there is a link to an online tutorial as well. The chickens are one and a half inches long and the trick requires five of them.

The premise is simple, a story is told about a couple of chicken thieves sneaking onto a farm to steal some chickens. The magician's two hands play the role of the thieves and alternatively pick up the chickens. However, as they are about to make their escape they see the farmer and start to put the chickens back, but not all. The farmer turns his back and the thieves (the magician's hands) start to gather up more chickens. Once again the farmer heads for the coop, now fearing getting caught, one thief hides and the other puts down one of his chickens. Noticing the lone thief, the farmer runs after him, the thief takes off leaving a chicken behind (but he has more, at least we think). The second thief grabs the chicken and runs home. The

hapless thief is caught by the farmer who demands his chickens back, but alas the thief can't comply because (as the magician's hand is opened) he has none, the other guy got them all.

This trick packs ultra small, I have all the chickens in a 2" x 2" velvet bag. It is practically weightless and it takes up virtually no space in your pocket. The storyline is cute and appeals to children as well as adults. There is no slight of hand. Its workings are totally mathematical and it will only take about fifteen minutes of practice to get the pattern down as to how to pick up and put down the chickens. If you should lose any chickens they are available online in packs of twelve for about \$10. Chicken Thieves is a fun but not complex trick that will baffle even the smartest spectator.

To see the trailer on Chicken Thieves click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sulfNIOtFO>

RABBITS AGAINST MAGIC



The Magic Library - A Book Review

The Aretalogy of Vanni Bossi - Compiled by Stephen Minch



There are very few magic books I found that are a pleasure to look at, touch and read. Many are great in one aspect or another but very few hit the mark in all three categories. The Aretalogy of Vanni Bossi is one of those books that ticks the boxes in all categories.

The book is hard covered and beautifully crafted with brown cloth covers and a darker brown shaped leather spine with gold type. The pages are beige and the stock is slightly heavier than normal page stock. The edges are not cut even so there is a sensation of handling something that has ancient wisdom within it. Up until I got this book, I had no idea who Vanni Bossi was. Not one to thrust himself in the limelight, Bossi was an Italian magician who had the respect of many of the greats of magic, not just for his skill and creativity but for his extensive knowledge of magic history.

The information in this book was gleaned from numerous sources. Vanni himself never kept complete records of all his magical creations. Not only was he innovative when he developed his routines but he was an inventor as well. Unfortunately, the inventions are not included in the book because recreating them would not only be costly but near impossible since many of the materials used are not available anymore. However, amongst the 206 pages is a collection of 56 original tricks, routines and slights. In addition, there are over 400 drawings clearly illustrating the most important information.

The simplicity and cleverness of his magic are quite apparent when you read the first trick in the book called "La Belle Captive"... or

MAGIC CALENDAR

	MON APR 2	I.B.M. Ring 165 on Monday, March 5, 2018, at the First United Methodist Church, 704 Garden Street, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035.
	THU APR 5	S.A.M. Assembly 181 is Thursday, April 5, 2018 , with a workshop lead by Jimmy Brown . With over 50 years experience and thousands of show, at Jimmy's workshop, you will see just about "everything" at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00. Workshop at 7:30 PM. http://magicsam181.com
	SAT APR 7	Robert Francis is at the Denny & Lee Magic Studio, Baltimore Studio, 9004 Yellow Brick Road, Suite H, Rosedale, Maryland 21237 on Saturday, April 7, 2018 at 7:00 PM, ADMISSION IS FREE! Please reserve your seat by email or phone: dennymagic@aol.com or 410-686-3914
	MON APR 9	I.B.M Ring 6 , The Delaware Valley Conjurers Club regularly meets every 2nd Monday, with a meeting on Monday, April 9, 2018, at the Hancock United Methodist Church, 542 Wesley Road, Springfield, PA.
	MON APR 9	S.A.M. Assembly 161 meets on the second Monday of each month at the Stoney Brook Grille, 1285 Easton Turnpike in Branchburg, NJ 08876. April 9 lecture is by Marc DeSouza. https://www.facebook.com/groups/SAM161CALENDAR/about/
	TUE APR 17	I.B.M. Ring 200 meets on Tuesday, April 17, 2018, 7:00 PM at the Stelton Community Center, 328 Plainfield Ave, Edison, NJ 08817.
	THU APR 19	S.A.M. Assembly 4 will be meeting on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at the Polish Home, 9150 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114, usual time; 7:00 PM.
	MON APR 23	Jason Bishop performs his "Believe in Magic" show at McCarter Theatre, 91 University Place, Princeton, NJ 08540 on Monday, April 23, 2018, at 7:30 PM. https://www.mccarter.org/season/2017-2018/pdps/jason-bishop/
	WED APR 25	I.B.M. Ring 123 will be meeting on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at the King of Kings Lutheran Church, 250 Harmony Road, Middletown, NJ 07748 starting at 7 PM
	THU APR 26	The next KIDabra chapter meeting is Thursday, April 26, 2018, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM. Our next meeting will be a workshop on Animation by Johnny Cee.

Visit the Magic Calendar on our SAM 181 website at http://magicsam181.com/?page_id=95