



# SAMLETTER 181



SAM Assembly 181's next meeting is on **Thursday, October 3, 2019**. A workshop on "**Do the Magic That's You: Finding Your Identity.**" by **Peter Cuddihy** will follow the meeting.

This workshop will discuss the importance of creating an identity for yourself as a performer that will resonate with your audiences and will incorporate effects created by such Magic legends as Patrick Page, Mark Wilson, and others.

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. Workshops start at 7:30 PM.

## From the President



*Two steps of transforming life and achieving any goal:*

*"Stronger visualization and determination"*

*"Powerful execution and moving in every condition"*

*Aayush Verma*

The above quote synthesizes every self-help book that was ever written. In essence if you want something you have to work for it, and not only work for it but execute it in a powerful way. We all have many things in our lives that we wished to be better or wished we had. In regards to magic, if we want to achieve a certain level of success, whether it be in a professional level or just for our own enjoyment, we need to venture out of our own comfort zone and push ourselves to do things we do not have a natural propensity to do.

A couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of seeing my favorite mentalist Derren Brown from the UK perform on Broadway. I can not tell you how my mind has been reeling since I had seen his show. It wasn't the tricks that I marveled at since I had already seen most of them on YouTube. It wasn't the method I was baffled with because as someone who has been studying mentalism for years I was keenly aware of how everything was achieved. What made my head spin was how he took ordinary and sometimes age-old routines and not only made them topical but emotional as well. Only the brilliant mind of Derren Brown and his team of writers can make an audience cry with a trick like Koran's Medallion.

His innate desire to create not just magic but an experience for the audience is why he is the world's best. No stone was left unturned. Every second of the two-hour show was carefully choreographed to bring an incredible and believable experience to the audience. Mind you this was not a "magic" show with smoke, lights, and music. This was a mindreading show and it was his interaction with the audience that left the spectators spellbound. A reviewer stated that "after leaving the show he felt all was right in the world"

Since that night I have been performing more and thinking about how I can make my "small presentations" bigger and brighter. With each move I make and every word I utter I'm thinking "How would Derren Brown perform this?" As we continue into our magical year make a determined effort to be the best you can be, I know that I will be.

## By George

In 1966, 8-year old George Hann was watching television and saw the card expert John Scarne performing card tricks on the Mike Douglass Show. He was hooked. It so happened, that a local variety store had a copy of "Scarne on Card Tricks" displayed in their window and George's Grandmother bought it for him. John Scarne became his hero and George became a fan of magic.

Fast forward 53 years and September is the opening month of our 2019-2020 season. George Hann is presenting a workshop on *Impromptu, and Easy to Perform, Card Magic using a Borrowed Deck*, and relying heavily on the ideas of John Scarne.



George is good at sleight of hand, but he still uses self-working card tricks by mixing them with effects that require sleights. This drives audiences wild, they can not understand how such things can be done and they start giving you more credit than you might normally have earned.

George performed and explained seven card effects and handed out lecture notes, to every attendee that included ten effects. Any of these effects could be mixed into your performance set. George's lecture notes were the best free lecture notes that I have ever seen, written in great detail and full of illustrations.

The last routine was a real blast from the past. George performed Henry Christ's Dead Man's Hand, which was originally published in the June 1937 issue of Jinx magazine. The storyline dates back to the legendary poker hand, Aces and Eights, held by "Wild Bill" Hickock when he was shot in the back by Jack McCall.

After a workshop, we always turn the stage over to members who would like to perform. First up, Joe Festa performed a routine that he saw on the

Master of Illusion TV series. The original routine, of course, can be found in Tarbell.

George Hann returned to the stage to perform an item from his notes, "Lucky Card by Dai Vernon. Dave Zboray performed a marketed product, "Ghost Cash" by Astor.

Mike Gutman did his card whispering routine which is just what it sounds like. Finishing, was Robert Francis with "a really darn good trick" and it should be, because Rob, a member of the Academy of Magical Arts, will be performing in the Close-Up Gallery at the Magic Castle November 4-10.



*"Never reveal how a trick is done. A good card trick is like a precious diamond; it must be guarded very carefully."*

John Scarne

## SAM 181 Review - *Secret* by Derren Brown



Some people have aspirations such as climbing Mount Everest. Others, wish to see the Pyramids of Giza. My aspirations aren't as lofty, I just wanted to see my favorite performing mentalist live and I finally have. On a Thursday evening in September, I sat at the Cort Theatre in New York City awaiting the famous Derren Brown

to take the stage. At 8 PM sharp the lights dimmed and the show began and what a show it was. Two hours of hard-hitting, theatrical mentalism unfolded before my very eyes.

I had been a silent fan of Derren Brown for a few years now. As I made my journey through the typical mentalism venues available through the purveyors of magic products, I never found the type of mentalism that spoke to me. I questioned, is mind-reading just having someone think of something and you reveal it? I felt there had to be more substance to the entire process. Mind you some performers came close to what I was looking for. I latched on to the "reading" style methods of Luke Jermay and practiced the mind manipulating linguistic propless style of Peter Turner as well. Both of these performers are still tops as performers go but I still was searching. Finally, my search ended when I came across the name Derren Brown. After watching his performances on YouTube I found what I thought mentalism should be.

Mentalism as a performance art has the reputation of being boring. You would not think that after seeing Derren Brown's theatrical presentation called *Secret*. The audience is held spellbound as they strain to hear every word. Using spectators randomly selected from the audience, he seems to know their every thought and predict their every move. Derren Brown is incredibly glib, infinitely adjustable to each spectator and his obviously a master of his craft. There was no second wasted and left the audience wanting more.

The name of the show is *Secret* and you do not find out until the final minute why the show bears that name. I would love to tell you all about the

performances and routines that made up the show but we were asked to keep it a secret (that is not why the show is called as such) so I guess you will have to go and see for yourself. I can tell you one thing though that is not a secret...you won't be disappointed.

## *Secret is at the Cort Theatre, NYC 48th & Broadway*



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All S.A.M. Assembly 181 videos are posted on our Vimeo channel at <https://vimeo.com/magicsam181>

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A promotional banner for MJM Magic. On the left, "MJM" is written in large, white, stylized letters above "MAGIC" in a similar font. To the right, the text "Magic For Magicians, Jokesters, and Mentalists!" is written in white, with "Since 2004" below it. Below this text are logos for PayPal, VISA, MasterCard, and American Express. At the bottom, it says "WORLDWIDE SHIPPING - LOW PRICE GUARANTEE". On the right side of the banner is a cartoon illustration of a man with a red headband and a red shirt with "MJM" on it, pointing upwards.

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



The Okito Doll has been performed for decades. It typically looks like a stickman style doll made of straw and when placed on the performers' hand it slowly rises by itself. The performance of this routine is normally relegated to Halloween performances or Bizarre Magick performances being deemed too scary for children. The workings of such are based on the rising pencil. It is a shame that such a powerful piece is cast aside because of the fear factor it creates.

World-renowned performer Bond Lee of Magiclism must have felt the same way so he released *Gingerbread Man* a cute, non-threatening Okito Doll routine for children. *Gingerbread Man* is a colorful foam gingerbread man. It stands about 3.5" tall and is lovely to look at and hold. The foam doll is extremely well made and lends itself to numerous types of performances. Themes such as holidays, love, friendship and even baking can be explored with this little prop.

The prop is sent in a beautiful little cardboard case which you would see in just about any card store. It has a picture of the gingerbread man on it and is designed as a St. Valentines gift. Unfortunately, the video link does not work so you would have to write your own script or performance piece. The music on their trailer is beautiful and would be perfect in performance.

You would have to decide if *Gingerbread Man* is right for you. Due to the nature of its workings, you may not have the physiology or the mental attitude to perform this. In a roundabout way, if you are squeamish at the thought of getting an injection from the doctor, this trick is not for you.

To watch the trailer for *Gingerbread Man* click below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0zZV6rxhkE>

## Psycho Path - Magic for the Mentalist



For time immemorial, man has been intrigued with the unknown. Our quest to communicate with those who have passed on has been recorded in the oldest of texts. Modern Bizarre Magicians have adopted methods used by the Spiritualists and are supplementing their performances with modern technology and new techniques to create even more realistic presentations.

Most bizarre type of presentations are primarily story based. Since modern props would look out of place and ruin the dénouement, bizarre performers often rely on props specifically built for the presentation. An example of such a routine is *Luna* created by Gemini Artifacts. Gemini Artifacts is one of a few prop and effect builders whose main body of work centers around the bizarre magic performing crowd. *Luna* is a series of books designed to replicate a Patient Registry of a long gone insane asylum. The *Luna* registries are gateways to receiving signals from the forgotten souls of the asylum. The registries are records of the residents of the asylum, their ages, affliction and other pertinent information. Whether you have one, two or three books the spectator(s) looks up a patient's room number and the performer starts to reveal accurate information about that particular patient. The performer also reveals the information about others in the same ward. All this with no clue as to which room number they are looking at. Although there does require quite a bit of memory work, the whole routine is based on the acting skills of the performer. This effect is naturally more suited for a parlor where other support props can be placed such as old clocks, lamps and boxes.

This current permutation of *Luna* is the third and final version. A grandiose effort has been put into this project by Vic Nadata, owner of Gemini Artifacts to make this definitive version the best. Painstaking attention to detail and correctness has made this final version of *Luna* a real performance piece. Bare in mind, props such as these are not cheap. These props require much hand work and the limited production runs make these effects unique but pricey. Watch the *Luna* trailer at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lc3cUMGBOs4>

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



Since Halloween is around the corner, Bizarre and Geek magic is on the menu this month. These forms of magic revolve around the scary, unusual and macabre. If you are looking for an unusual routine that will make an impact if not cause some people to faint you may want to try *Thread* by Wayne Houchin

The premise of *Thread* is that you would tear a length of thread from a spool, swallow it and subsequently pull the thread out from your eye. The effect is amazing if you have the nerve and the time to prepare for it. There are no gimmicks per se as you do use real thread. One could imagine the reactions since the thread is actually coming from your eye. *Thread* is one of the most realistic bizarre effects I have seen and certainly will keep your spectators talking about you for a long time after.

Nothing is supplied with the DVD but the methodology on how to create this illusion. What you get is a DVD with two methods explained, the Geek method and the Slight method. The Geek method is the one that Wayne Houchin uses and is the most realistic because the spectators can be inches away and watch the thread slowly drawn from your eye. The Slight method is for the more squeamish performers but does have its drawbacks. The hardest part of the whole trick is walking around prepared to perform. If you know that you will be performing shortly after setup that would be optimal. If there is a period of time in which you may not perform the trick some people may suffer discomfort and irritation. All the pros and cons of both methods are fully covered on the DVD. As an added bonus there is also a Gypsy Thread routine shown if you wanted to do something with the thread after it comes out of your eye.

I had seen Wayne Houchin live at a lecture and all of his creations are great. There is not one trick that he released that is sub par. His work ranges from card tricks to effects like *Thread*. Currently much of his work is hard to come by, however searching the internet will reward you for your efforts.

Trailer on *Thread*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61AGt8JreQ4>

# MAGIC CALENDAR

	THUR OCT 3	<b>S.A.M. Assembly 181</b> meeting on Thursday, October 3, 2019, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00. A workshop on “Do the Magic That’s You: Finding Your Identity.” by Peter Cuddihy will follow the meeting. <a href="http://magicsam181.com">http://magicsam181.com</a>
	OCT 5 & OCT 6	Saturday October 5 @ 7:00 PM & Sunday October 6 @ 5:00 PM - TWO NIGHTS - \$ 25 TICKETS - <b>THE AMAZING KRESKIN</b> at Randy Now’s Man Cave, 134 Farnsworth Ave, Bordentown, NJ 08505 609-424-3766 <a href="http://www.mancavenj.com/">http://www.mancavenj.com/</a>
	THU OCT 10	<b>Delaware Knights of Magic</b> meeting is on Thursday, October 10, 2019, a Cokesbury Village, 726 Loveville Rd, Hockessin, DE 19707 at 7:30 PM
	MON OCT 14	<b>S.A.M. Assembly 161</b> meets on the second Monday of each month. October 14, 2019, at the Stoney Brook Grille, 1285 Easton Turnpike in Branchburg, NJ 08876. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/SAM161CALENDAR/about/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/SAM161CALENDAR/about/</a>
	MON OCT 14	<b>I.B.M Ring 6</b> , The Delaware Valley Conjurers Club regularly meets every 2nd Monday, with a meeting on Monday, October 14, 2019, at the Hancock United Methodist Church, 542 Wesley Road, Springfield, PA.
	TUE OCT 15	<b>I.B.M. Ring 200</b> meets on Tuesday, October 15, 2019, 7:00 PM (Doors open at 6:30 PM) at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Edison, New Jersey
	THUR OCT 17	<b>S.A.M. Assembly 4</b> meeting and Mini-Convention is on Thursday, October 17, 2019, at the Polish Home, 9150 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114, doors open at 6:30 PM.
	THUR OCT 24	<b>The Association of Children's Entertainers</b> is meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at the United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM.
	THUR NOV 7	<b>S.A.M. Assembly 181</b> meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2019, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00. <a href="http://magicsam181.com">http://magicsam181.com</a>
	SUN NOV 10	<b>Bob Little’s Super Sunday</b> “The Best One Day Magic Convention in the World” No Registration Required. Sunday, November 18, 2018, 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM All for a Low-Low Fee of \$40.00 <a href="http://www.boblittlessupersunday.com/">http://www.boblittlessupersunday.com/</a>

Visit the Magic Calendar on our SAM 181 website at [http://magicsam181.com/?page\\_id=95](http://magicsam181.com/?page_id=95)