



SAMLETTER 181



The next Assembly 181 meeting is **Thursday, February 6, 2020**, when **Guru Subramanian** will lead a workshop on the **Stand-up Parlor Effects** that he has been using for over twenty years. Come learn from a real Guru¹.

Guru first learned magic, when he lived in India, from books that he was able to obtain and study. When he moved to New York in the 1980s, he made regular visits to Tannen's to make purchases and learn more magic. Guru enjoys entertaining children and doing charity work where he can entertain with magic and mind-reading.

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 through 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.



¹ Guru is a Sanskrit term for a "teacher, guide, expert, or master" of certain knowledge or field.¹

From the President



If you hadn't noticed there is a competition going on. The competition is for attention and you are the target. There are more ways to distract an individual than ever before. Old standbys like movies, sporting events, theatre, eating out and clubs are competing against bigger and glitzier venues such as streaming TV, video games, Facebook, eBay and other high-tech enticements. It is harder to get people to leave their homes than ever before.

Recently, we have seen magic clubs shutting their doors. Clubs that have existed for decades are now defunct. Magic clubs, in general, are seeing a downturn in membership. What is the cause of this trend and how can it be prevented? Since I have been a member of SAM 181 and had visited other clubs, I have formulated my hypothesis on what is happening. I have concluded that nobody will go anywhere if they feel unwelcome. Conversely, they will travel great distances if they feel welcomed. Perhaps it is a simplistic view, however, from past experiences in other clubs, I felt just that I was unwelcome.

Interestingly though, SAM 181 is growing. We reached 53 paid members this past month and I half expect we should pick up a few more in the next month or two. Is it time now to sit back and give ourselves high fives? I think not. We should increase our efforts to bring back magic to its roots, the club and not the internet. We should still be promoting ourselves and bring in more members. Encourage those that may have left to come back. We should be ever more vigilant in making sure each attendee, member or not, feels at home and would consider coming back. So how can we do this? This would be a good start.

- If you see someone who is there for the first time, greet them and introduce yourself. Find out more about them.
- Mind your manners. Try to understand that everyone has different levels of sensitivity. If you can not tell your pet joke to a priest or a rabbi...do not tell it.
- Don't grab the front seats for yourself. If you are healthy or have good eyesight leave the front row for the elder members, it only courtesy.

- Don't try and dominate the meeting. Remember you are one out 53, they didn't come to see only you. Be respectful and let everyone shine.
- Contribute...pitch in and add your special something to the meeting.
- Invite friends to join...let's face it, with the internet the way it is there are very few secrets anymore. Share your world with people you like.

I know I can count on you all for helping make SAM 181 the best club around.



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Visit us on our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/magicsam181> or our website <http://www.magicsam181.com/>

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

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How do you Stack Up?

How do you stack up? That is what we tried to find out at our January meeting. The meeting started with a workshop by Robert Francis, who was recently back from his performances in the Close-Up Gallery at the Magic Castle, on stacked decks.

They are many card stacks that magicians use when performing and it would be impossible to teach them all in a single workshop. Rob focused on a few easy to use stacks with routines for each that really impressed.

The most famous of the mathematical stacks was published by Si Stebbins, (real name William Coffrin) around 1898. Stebbins maintained that the stack was his invention and he is certainly the magician who made it famous. However, mathematical card stacks in which each card's value progresses are described in magic literature as early as the 16th century.

After the workshop, we opened to stage to members who wanted to perform. First up was Randy Butters using a two-deck ESP routine inspired by John Archer. Many of the night's performances were original material or routines that performers made their own by adding their own handlings.



Les the Mentalist developed a new number force to augment his newest effect. Owen performed Colormatch by ProMystic, which is one of the most mystifying effects in all of mentalism. Rob Francis, who performed on the Asbury Park Boardwalk as a street magician for many years, returned to the stage to show us "how to kill a classic" with a tongue-in-cheek performance of Cups and Balls.



Jeff performed his handle of Jay Sankey's Target Practice, which is one of the better wild card routines on the market. Mike Gutman, the man with the most energy in magic, showed that cards have twins with a simpatico performance.

Also, in January members of Assembly 181, Magic Mike Dziubas, George the Wizard Hann, Jay the Magician, Dennis Thomas, Randy Butters, Cookie Jensen, and Allen Zingg volunteered to stage a Family Magic Show as a fundraiser and community event for the Church where our meetings are held. The turnout was amazing, we packed the room. Good magic is always good entertainment.



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Do You Believe In Magic - Magic for the all-around magician



One of the most timeless plots in magic is Card to Impossible Location. For those that do not know the plot, a card is chosen by a spectator, the card is lost in the deck, the card disappears from the deck and ends up in a strange or impossible location such as a wallet, picture frame, etc. As impressive as that is there is always someone who wants to take a trick to the next level. One of the more interesting versions of this genre of magic is

Lit by Dan White and Dan Hauss. *Lit* seemingly starts in the same way, which is a card is chosen but instead of it being in an impossible location, the card itself becomes the impossible location.

The performer takes out an ordinary matchbook and a simple trick is done with it. The matchbook is then given to a spectator to hold. A deck of cards is now taken out and a card is chosen. What ultimately happens is the card is no longer in the deck but now becomes the very matchbook that the spectator was holding the whole time.

Lit is a great trick with a one-two punch. Nobody sees it coming. The trick uses gimmicked cards printed by the Bicycle Playing Card Company. The face of the card is ordinary but the back when folded up it looks an actual matchbook with the striker and all. There is a size discrepancy, but it is minor and would not be noticed. Initially released about ten years ago. The initial release consisted of a DVD and 14 gimmicks. Additional gimmicks were available but in small quantities. However, *Lit* sold out everywhere. There was a long period of time where there were no more gimmicks to be had. Just recently the trick was re-released with an updated training video. Now, the gimmicks are available again as a deck. That is 52 matchbook gimmicks and 2 for the new matchbox handling. The price ranges from \$24.50 - \$34.95 depending on where and when you order. The per gimmick price then becomes 47¢ - 67¢ each. Although I personally think the price is steep for a gimmicked card, if you reuse the gimmick and not give it away it would offset the cost. If this is one that you think you would like to do, I would wait for a sale of a magic website and stock up.

To watch a trailer on *Lit* click below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yETB5kXIQew>

Psycho Path - Magic for the Mentalist



If you've read this newsletter for a while you would probably remember that I am a big fan of carrying some items in case the opportunity presents itself and you are in the mood to perform. The question is often, what do I carry? Do I carry just one item, or do I carry many things and go from one to the next? Or, do I carry something that will allow me to perform multiple effects? If you were a card magician, a deck of cards would be the answer. However,

many mentalists shun the use of ordinary playing cards.

Perhaps a packet of ESP cards would be the item to carry. ESP cards will allow you to perform psychic effects and they are far enough removed from regular playing cards to quell any fears a mentalist may have in using them. A packet of 10 ESP cards in a wallet with a couple of additional cards. This will enable a mentalist to perform quite a lengthy set without having to keep dipping into his pocket for something else to use. There are many types of ESP cards available on the market. I recently picked up an excellent set of cards that not only allow the performer to perform a huge variety of effects with the one set but can withstand the rigors of hostile performing environments such as damp, hot evenings and dirty and wet bar tops.

Unfortunately, most ESP cards are manufactured by regular card manufacturers and look like playing cards. They have playing card backs which are not ideal. Naked ESP by Mind Effects is a ten pack of marked ESP cards that are printed on plastic stock. They are sturdy and will last virtually forever. They look like actual testing cards a lab would use and have a feature almost no other set has, which allows you to read the markings even though the cards are overlapped. The set comes with several additional cards for extra effects. With some thought and familiarity with other concepts in mentalism, one can create a set of varying routines that bear little resemblance to each other. A 20-30 minute set is not impossible with what is provided. You would have to do some research on tricks using 10 ESP cards as no routines are provided. I own several ESP card sets and to date, this is my favorite. I highly recommend Naked ESP to anyone looking for a good set of cards to perform with.

Tricks Are for Kids - Magic for the kid magician



It's no surprise that children's magic bears very little resemblance to adult magic. The methods that make children's magic entertaining to children have been well documented in books such as *Seriously Silly* and *Supersized Silly* by David Kaye aka Silly Billy. There

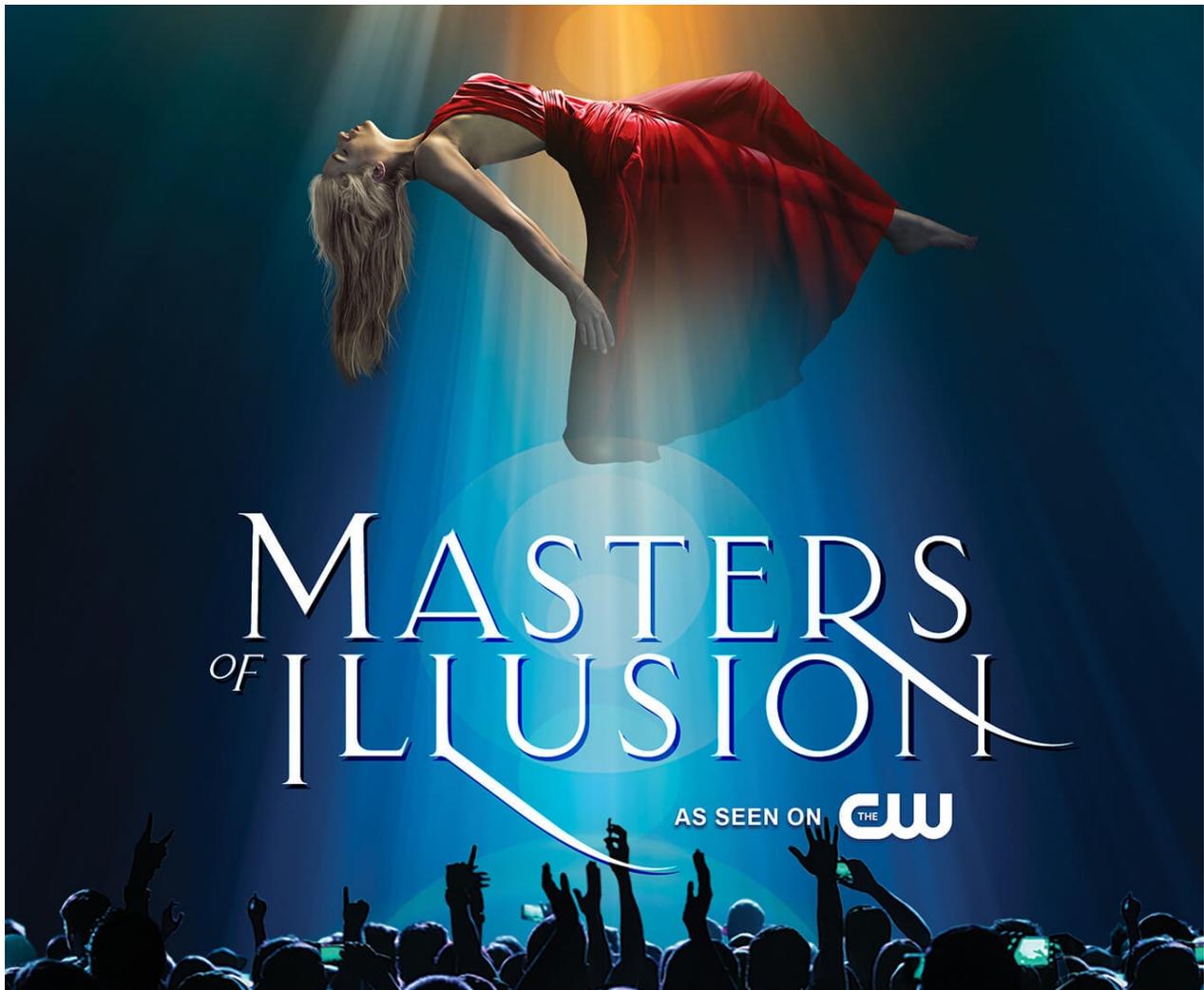
are other notable books on children's magic such as those by Christopher T Magician. One of the key constructs in children's magic is the idea that it is more about the journey than the destination. For children, the journey is what makes the magic entertaining. The end result is usually irrelevant to the child as they are more engaged with the by-play and silliness. We are also very familiar with tricks such as Run Rabbit Run and the Die Box. The concepts behind these tricks share a similar idea which is that the children think they know how the trick is being done.

There is a new trick by Silly Bill called *Yes, No, Maybe So*. It is a pack flat, easy to do, word-based trick that can fit into just about any children's show but the very youngest. The trick is like the Spot Card whereas two sides of the board change multiple times. The basic idea is that you ask the children if they can read the word in front of them. You show a board that has the word "No" on it. Of course, they shout out "NO". Obviously, there are all kinds of directions you can go with this response. You then continue to tease the kids by rotating the board vertically and horizontally and get words like "ON, OZ and ZO". This, of course, can continue until it gets old. You then challenge the kids to see if they can remember the words and you produce from the same board "Yes" and that's leads into another shouting session. Finally, the words turn into "Maybe and Always" to end the trick. When you watch the trailer, it seemed to have fooled even the adults.

Although it is a new release the quality would probably be on par with all his other products. Working in one of the most demanding environments, that being New York City, Silly Billy has carved out a name for himself as an expert on children's magic. He has honed his craft with some of the most discerning and savvy kids in the world and he knows what works for a modern young audience. Not afraid of being slightly edgy he feels that his bold approach bonds him with his audience and allows for him to "be on their level". I can see this trick in almost any child's magician's repertoire. Watch the trailer for yourself and decide.

To watch a trailer on *Yes, No, Maybe So* click below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVqsfgAS16E>



Friday, FEBRUARY 28, 2020 at 8:00PM

At the State Theatre New Jersey, 15 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
732-246-7469

Fun for the whole family! *Masters of Illusion*® includes grand illusions, levitation, escapologists, comedy magic, sleight of hand, and more! A hit TV show on The CW, this live show of *Masters of Illusion*® features comedic magician Chipper Lowell; illusionist Michael Turco; magician Naathan Phan, who is regularly featured on the CW show; the mysterious, mischievous, cirque group, The Monks; and rock and roll illusionist Tommy Wind.

<https://www.stnj.org/event/masters-of-illusion>

MAGIC CALENDAR

	THUR FEB 6	S.A.M. Assembly 181 meeting on Thursday, February 6, 2020, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Guru Subramanian will lead a workshop on Stand-up Parlor Effects. Doors open at 7:00 PM. http://magicsam181.com
	MON FEB 10	S.A.M. Assembly 161 meets on the second Monday of each month. February 10, 2020, at the Stoney Brook Grille, 1285 Easton Turnpike in Branchburg, NJ 08876. https://www.facebook.com/groups/SAM161CALENDAR/about/
	MON FEB 10	I.B.M. Ring 6 , The Delaware Valley Conjurers Club regularly meets every 2nd Monday, on February 10, 2020, at the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield – Lambert Hall, 356 Summit Rd., Springfield, PA 19064. Doors open at 7:00 PM. https://ibmring6.com/
	THUR FEB 13	Delaware Knights of Magic meeting is on Thursday, February 13, 2020, a Cokesbury Village, 726 Loveville Rd, Hockessin, DE 19707 at 7:30 PM https://www.dkom.org/
	TUES FEB 18	I.B.M. Ring 200 meets on Tuesday, February 18, 2020, 7:00 PM (Doors open at 6:30 PM) at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Edison, New Jersey
	THUR FEB 20	S.A.M. Assembly 4 meeting is on Thursday, February 20, 2020, at the Polish Home, 9150 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114, doors open at 6:30 PM.
	TUES FEB 27	A.C.E. , the Association of Children’s Entertainers meets on Thursday, February 27, 2020, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM.
	FRI FEB 28	Master of Illusion , as seen on The CW, Friday, February 28, 2020, at 8:00 PM, at the State Theatre New Jersey, 15 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732-246-7469. https://www.stnj.org/event/masters-of-illusion
	THUR MAR 5	S.A.M. Assembly 181 meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020, at the First United Methodist Church, 187 Stockton Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Doors open at 7:00 PM. http://magicsam181.com

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