



The Flash Paper

December 2023

Bob Gehringer, Editor



A Letter from Lindy

A favorite Halloween tradition for the past 7 years has been the “Magic of the Night” shows at the haunted 40th street theater. The brain child of talented O.M.S. members **David Fox**, **Ryan Chandler** and **Theron Christiansen**. Each year a guest magician is invited to join them. This year the audience was treated to the magic of **Jeff Sikora**. Always a memorable night. This year’s edition did not disappoint. Every act was a real crowd pleaser! As usual the entire cast returns to close the show together. The ending was a unique and custom-made cube libre effect, with the surprise twist we’ve come to expect from these creative thinkers.

November's Monday night meeting was earlier than normal to accommodate our lecturer (more on this later). November is also the time we elect club officers for the following year. Two officers chose not seek re-election. **Tim Begley**'s involvement with the zoom portion of our meetings overlaps with his duties as Sargent-at-arms. **Bruce Jacoby**'s busy schedule is keeping him from running again. **Adam Schacht** entered his name for Vice President. With no other names from the nomination committee all positions were unopposed. So, starting January the 2024 officers will be **Bob Gehringer**-Treasurer, **Patrice Fisher**-Secretary, **Adam**

Schacht-Vice President, and myself as President. The addition of Adam will provide the board some age diversity, which can only be a good thing.



Business concluded; everyone’s attention turned to **Keith Leff**. The *2016 I.B.M. Close-Up Magician of the Year*. His lecture on restaurant and strolling magic was well received. For the workers in the group there wasn’t much new or earth shattering, but it was very comprehensive. Keith hit on most all aspects of working restaurants. For anyone wanting to break into this area, Keith’s lecture was a great place to start.

I was able to enjoy two great nights of magic before Thanksgiving. Several O.M.S. members were in the audience as the Illusionist’s returned to the Orpheum Theater on November 16th. This year’s cast of **Kevin James**, **Chris Cox**, **Hyun Joon Kim**, **Pablo Canovas** and **Steve Valentine** had the enthusiastic crowd in awe, as each performed their unique style of magic. Even



with all that talent on display, the moment that stood out for me was watching **Darren Kauk** bust some dance moves on stage! (You had to be there.)

The next morning Gina and I flew to Chicago in-route to South Bend for the Notre Dame football game. (I am a lifelong fan). That evening we had reservations for the Chicago Magic Lounge. If you have never been, it is a great experience. We were seated at our table as 4 or 5 strolling magicians worked the room. Then it was time for the stage shows (3 great acts). We had V.I.P. tickets so following the last act, we were ushered to the parlor for the close up show. After that it was back to the bar where the bartenders finished up the evening with some very fun magic. Next morning on to the game. (Spoiler alert - Notre Dame defeated Wake Forest 45-7!)

Pictured is the last featured magician for the year. “Mr. Showbiz”, **George Schindler**. A close-up and stage performer, as well as, actor, author, lecturer, comedian and ventriloquist. Among his many awards, George was named the Magician of the Year in 1986. He followed Jay Marshal to become the 9th Dean of the Society of American Magicians. Wishing everyone a fabulous Holiday Season and a great start to the New Year!

THE OMS 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW VIDEO HAS BEEN RELEASED!



Click this link to view the newly released video retrospective of the club's activities in 2023:

<https://vimeo.com/888132343/61209fcc01>

Please also consider copying the above link and posting it onto your personal Facebook page with a statement as simple as "Most of you know, I enjoy the art of magic. Here's an overview of what Omaha's magic club accomplished in 2023."

Thanks for helping get the word out so others might find us and come to enjoy the fun we're having ...

2024 Dues Due

The Omaha Magical Society 2024 dues of \$20 are due on January 1, 2024. You may mail our Treasurer Bob Gehringer a check at: Bob Gehringer/13405 Marinda Street/Omaha, NE. 68134 or pay them online here: <https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/membership>.



While visiting the above link, you can also see this year's thank you gift for continuing to support the club in this way.



A Holiday Gift for You

For the month of December, the Omaha Magical Society's smartphone magical app is available for no cost for both Apple and Android platforms.

Visit our website for how to get yours: <https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/our-magic-app>



November Re-Cap

by
Matt Spielman

Keith Leff, aka “**The Midwest’s Most Magnificent Magician**”, was the guest of honor for our November OMS meeting. With 25 years in the business Keith’s range of services span from close up/strolling performances, corporate events, trade shows, and even inspirational speaking. For our group Mr. Leff presented his lecture “A Close Up Look at the Art and Science Strolling Magic” which primarily focused on table hopping in the restaurant business and was designed for the “working” magician. Despite the focus on table hopping the lecture was inclusive to everyone in the group and contained extremely useful tidbits of information for everyone including the hobbyists in attendance.



Multiple courses were covered for the group interweaved with witty one liners and quick hitting close up magic. Topics covered were:

- When and how to approach a restaurant
- How to approach a table
- The science of how to negotiate fees and contracts
- How to handle tips
- Pitching a free “demonstration night” and how to handle the first performance
- Self-promotion
- Relationship strategies for customers, co-workers, and managers

25 years of expertise was on display as Keith covered each topic in depth with multiple stories from his professional career and several performances of close-up magic. Even though the focus of the lecture was for the restaurant working magician, the bulk of the lecture contained useful information applicable to everyone in the group. A clever mnemonic for names was taught, how to read and approach a group for a performance, and overall, how to create a great experience for your audience. Of course, high-level close-up magic kept the evening interesting as well. Multiple handlings of burnt-torn-restored-vanished match sticks were taught as well as a handful of slights to perform using one of his vanishing card boxes. An impromptu topit history lesson was covered as well as the Erdnase color change and the Mercury fold.



At the end of the lecture Keith had several items to purchase at a discount to OMS members, many of which were performed and taught to the group throughout the night. Many thanks to the club for getting this lecture setup, loaded with information to make everyone a better performer.





Larry's Logic Is magic an art?

Short answer? No. No, it's not. At "best", it could be considered to be a very MINOR art form.

But to explain my thinking, we're going to have to poll a group of people. And group of people is EVERYONE in the world you know – except – magicians, magic collectors, and people affiliated with magic. Such as grandparents of magicians, etc.

So, let's imagine that we're stepping inside any of your friends' houses. Look around at the walls. Disregarding family photos, do you see any other pictures or paintings? Any landscapes, pictures of animals, any drawings?



Maybe they have a poster or two framed and hanging on the walls. A poster of a movie for example. Maybe a teens room has posters of the latest boy-band sensation. Maybe the man-cave has a jersey that's signed by a Nebraska coach.

But you saw some stuff, right?

Now check around for CD's. MP3 players. Spotify accounts. Radios, vinyl, maybe an old tape-to-tape system. Maybe browse their phones to see if they have any songs cued up.

You saw some right?

Well, let's continue. Do they have any TV's. DVD collections. Do they have any streaming services. Computers?

Now, let's take one last look around. Find a poster, a DVD, a figurine, a "anything" that has the least thing to do with magic or magicians.

I'm guessing you're pulling up a blank on this one, aren't you? I believe that this is because art (paintings, sketches, photographs) and music (MP3 players, song lists) and sports/movies/TV stars all MATTER to these people. Whereas magic **doesn't**.

So, none of them have a single photo, a single taped magic special, a book about a magician. Because they don't really CARE about magic.

But why don't they? This is actually, in my mind, a pretty simple question.

It's because we can only offer SURPRISE as an emotion. One thing.

Books, movies, songs, and paintings can make you cry, make you feel patriotic, make you empathize, make you hate, make you love. They can make you experience the entire gamut of human emotion.

Heck, they can even make you think, and perhaps even change your mind.

Magic goes "BOO"! And the very format of magic works against us.

We have to create our scripts to work WITHIN the confines of the trick. Imagine if movies had this type of restriction. A restriction like "every scene in a movie must be shot from behind". Think how different movies would be.



We have 3 to 10 minutes to do a trick. A movie has 2 hours to explore its theme. A book has 200 pages. A sport has a season...and a lifetime of being a fan.

How can we express much of anything other than light comedy in 3 minutes, WHILE we attend to the needs of the magic?



I even think the formal definition of art proves my point. Art is – per Wikipedia - “**Art** is a diverse range of human activity, and resulting product, that involves creative or imaginative talent expressive of technical proficiency, beauty, emotional power, or conceptual ideas. “
So, let's look at our resulting product, shall we?

“Expressive of technical proficiency”. We aren't. In most cases, we HIDE our technical proficiency. We don't want it noticed.

“Beauty, emotional power, or conceptual ideas”. I certainly don't see this in 99.99999% of the magic being done.



Copperfield’s FLYING routine certainly tried to express the concept of flying, but how successful was it? Did people talk about “Boy, I'd love to fly like that” or did they ask “How did he do that?”

As a matter of fact, the day after that special aired, I had someone at work say, “That was really neat how he floated in the air.” Not FLEW...floated. Ugh.

We've got “Boo”.

So, we've got at best a minor art form that really can't progress much past that.

And that's ok. We'll always have “Boo.”



THE OMAHA MAGICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS
THE 2024 MIDWEST MAGIC COMPETITION

Drawing both close-up and stage magicians (ages 18+) from throughout the Midwest, qualifying rounds are held during the first half of the year with the finals held in October.

The feedback from a panel of judges from Omaha's University of Nebraska Theater Department contributes to attaining the ultimate goal of the competition - refining the performance skills of each contestant.

PLEASE USE THE QR CODE AT THE SIDE OF THIS POSTER FOR MORE DETAILS AS WELL AS GETTING A LOOK AT THE FIRST PLACE AWARDS.

THEOMAHAMAGICALSOCIETY.ORG/COMPETITIONS

2024 MIDWEST MAGIC COMPETITION

Might you want to compete in either close-up or stage?

Here are the dates to keep in mind:

- Your twelve to fifteen-minute audition video is due by April 1, 2024, submitted to: samassembly7@gmail.com;
- Up to six contestants will be selected from the submitted videos to compete at our two-hour Monday Night Magic event on Monday, June 17, 2024;
- With the top four performers from the semi-finals competing at the finals in October (location and date still to be determined).

For more information Visit:

<https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/competitions>.



Crafting Magic with AI:

Psychological Depth in Your Close-Up Card Act enriched with insights from ChatGPT, OpenAI

By **Greg Adams**

Introduction

Greetings for the final time in this series, revered members of the Omaha Magical Society! What a journey it has been! We've explored using ChatGPT to design the Perfect Close-Up Card Act, elevate audience engagement, and master the narrative. Today, we culminate this exploration by delving into what makes magic genuinely mesmerizing—Psychological Depth. As the final touch to our Perfect Close-Up Card Act, we'll explore how an understanding of psychology, aided by ChatGPT, can make your magic acts not just astonishing but genuinely unforgettable.

A Quick Recap of the Perfect Card Act

For the sake of continuity, let's briefly revisit the Perfect Close-Up Card Act we've established:

1. **Engaging Opener:** Chicago Opener (Red Hot Mama)
2. **Building Suspense:** Ambitious Card Routine
3. **Interactive Magic:** Two-Card Monte
4. **Touch of Mystique:** Mentalism Card Prediction
5. **Grand Finale:** Card to Impossible Location

Understanding Psychological Depth in Magic

Magic captivates not just the eyes but also the mind. A set of dazzling tricks can impress the audience. However, creating an unforgettable feeling requires psychological depth. You can achieve this by building tension, evoking emotions, and asking thought-provoking questions. These elements will leave your audience amazed and emotionally invested in your performance.

How ChatGPT Can Provide Psychological Insights

1. **Analyzing Audience Psychology:** ChatGPT can help brainstorm questions or conduct surveys that provide insights into what keeps an audience glued to their seats.
2. **Emotional Arcs:** Use ChatGPT to map out the emotional highs and lows your act should follow to keep the audience emotionally engaged from start to finish.
3. **Subconscious Symbols:** Symbols are potent tools for subliminal messaging. ChatGPT can suggest universally resonant symbols or gestures to incorporate into your act.

Applying Psychological Elements to the Perfect Card Act

1. **Chicago Opener:** Use ChatGPT to understand how to set the emotional tone immediately. Do you want awe, laughter, or curiosity? Make that clear from the first trick.
2. **Ambitious Card Routine:** Leverage psychology to enhance anticipation and suspense. ChatGPT can help you devise dialogues or moves that psychologically prepare the audience for something grand.
3. **Two-Card Monte:** It's not just a trick but a psychological game. Use ChatGPT to figure out how to make this a mini-drama that engages the audience mentally.
4. **Mentalism Card Prediction:** With the help of ChatGPT, make this the psychological climax where you leave the audience questioning their understanding of reality.
5. **Card to Impossible Location:** Craft a finale that not only astonishes but also offers psychological closure, ensuring that your act lingers in the minds of your audience.



Deepening Audience Engagement

Pay attention to elements like tension, surprise, and release. ChatGPT can help you refine these elements to produce a roller coaster of emotional and psychological experiences.

Gathering Feedback for Psychological Fine-Tuning

1. **Post-performance Analysis:** After each show, you can consult ChatGPT to analyze audience reactions and understand which psychological elements worked and which didn't.
2. **Iterative Refinement:** Adjust your act based on these insights, continually refining its psychological depth for maximal impact.
3. **Conclusion**

As we conclude this series, we have journeyed from the mechanics of designing an act to the artistry of psychological engagement. With ChatGPT at your side, you can craft tricks and narratives and explore the depths of the human mind to make your magic memorable. In the digital age, magicians can use tools like ChatGPT to create acts that people will see, applaud, feel, and remember. Go forth and conjure magic that resonates not just in the eyes but in the soul. Thank you for joining me on this fascinating journey. I look forward to the day when our magical paths cross again!

ChatGPT Prompts for Fine-Tuning Psychological Depth

1. "What psychological tricks can help enhance audience engagement?"
2. "How can I create a sense of wonder or disbelief?"
3. "What are some symbols that universally resonate with audiences?"
4. "How can I measure the emotional impact of my act?"
5. "What psychological principles can make my finale more impactful?"

May your magic continue to evolve, influenced by both the art and science of today's world. Happy conjuring!



Dave Arch says "Guess what I'm bringing with me to this month's Monday Night Magic? I'm hoping everyone can see in person the First Place Prize in next year's Midwest Magic Competition. With its highly polished wood and 24 carat gold plated tips, it's the prettiest wand I've ever seen. See if you agree."

Thank you, OMS member **Gary Gates**, for this donation.



Monday Night
Magic
2023
2ND ANNUAL
HOLIDAY PARTY

In honor of the holidays, we've ransacked the club's magic closet and gathered armloads of holiday presents for those who attend December's Monday Night Magic.

Everyone joining (both in-person or on Zoom) will go home with at least one magic book or DVD. Plus... it'll not only be fun when we first open our gifts but also when we successfully swipe a gift from another.

Simultaneously broadcast on Zoom:

zoom.us/j/4028718108

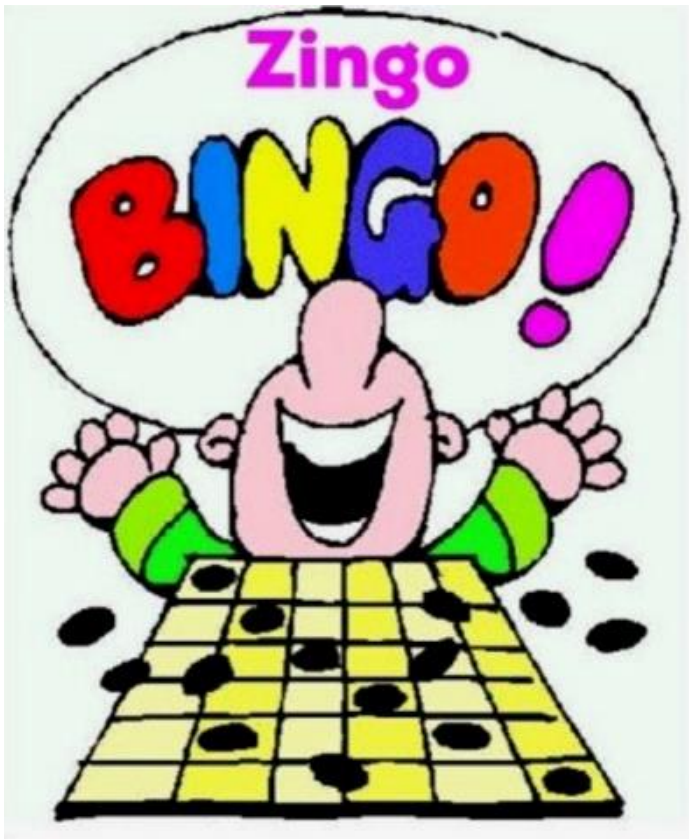
No charge for attending this event.

Monday, December 18, 2023 | 7-8 PM (CST)
The Cross Training Center - 5030 N. 72nd Street
Omaha, Nebraska



Steve and Dave Stuffing gift bags for our December holiday party. Everyone is guaranteed to receive an audible “WOW!” when opened. Join us live or on zoom, you don’t want to miss this one. See you on the 18th.





ZINGO BINGO!

So, you're getting together with some family for the Holidays, and you suggest a quick game of bingo before dessert.

You grab the bingo cards and start handing them out to the family. Everyone can see that their Bingo card is different from the ones around them.

You begin calling the numbers from the little slips of paper you have mixed in an envelope, and everyone can see that family members around them are crossing off different numbers than they are.

Yet suddenly and surprisingly the entire group yells BINGO! at the same time! There's a moment of silence and then suddenly laughter.

"Desserts for everyone," you announce.

Download what you need here for this little bit of Holiday fun: (<https://bit.ly/3shhkro>)

Happy Holidays from your Omaha Magical Society.



I couldn't imagine many people wanting to sit through 45 minutes of Boomer's radio interview about The Omaha Magical Society. So, here's a fifteen-minute edited version:

<https://audioacrobat.com/play/WCxIxQX6>

And look who else was in the building for the interview! 🍷🍷🍷



Meet your 2024 board. Please PM them, email, or text them with any ideas you have for next year to make our club better and better throughout 2024.

All of their contact information is now on our club website : (<https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/board>) and will be posted in each of our 2024 Flash Papers too.

THANK YOU to both **Bruce Jacoby** and **Tim Begley** for serving as board members in 2023.



Monday Night Magic

Monday December 6th

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Cross Training Center
5030 N. 72nd Street
Omaha, NE

Or just click on this link: <https://zoom.us/j/4028718108>
(which is the same link we use for all of our monthly meetings).

2024 OMS Officers

President - Steve Lindeman amazinglindy@gmail.com
Vice President - Adam Schacht schacht2222@gmail.com
Treasurer - Bob Gehringerr gehringerr@cox.net
Secretary - Patrice Fisher patricekfisher@yahoo.com
Executive Director - Dave Arch dave@sandler.com

Check out our website:

<http://TheOmahaMagicalSociety.org>

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