



# The Flash Paper

## May 2023

**Bob Gehringer, Editor**



### A Letter from Lindy

Wizard Wars made a return at our April meeting, this version was the brain child of **David Fox**. David tweaked the rules from past competitions. In this reincarnation, the four teams had a full month to work on their routines. Still not an abundance of time, but far more than in past years. Another new twist, rather than be given props to work with on short notice, the teams received \$8.00 to purchase 3 to 5 props of their choosing from the dollar store. The result was a very entertaining evening, as the teams presented outstanding routines. See David's article for information on the teams and their performances. I will say the voting was very close. Though only one act could finish first and claim the custom trophy and bragging rights until next year's competition.

Spoiler Alert: The 2023 Wizard War's Champion .... drum roll please ... **Tim Begley** with "Miracle Product". Congratulations Tim, Nathan, Adam, Aleister, Mike, and Ruth. Great job everyone!

For an exciting new opportunity see the article "Balancing the Scales". We spend a lot of time mastering our tricks and sleights, which is great! But we should spend as much or more time with other aspects of our performances. Soon a great new resource will be added to our online video library. It will cover topics such as: audience management, character development, handling hecklers, scripting, etc. All the different skills that will make our performances more entertaining. Thirty-seven different topics that will take your act to another level. I

am reminded of one of my favorite quotes: "A magician is an actor playing the part of a magician". Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin

The local magic community lost a real gem with the passing of **Ann Rourke**. She will truly be missed. Our hearts and prayers go out the entire Rourke family.

As I am sure you have noticed, a different photo is submitted for my article each month, featuring myself with a well-known magician. Purposely I did not identify the magician, thinking it would be a conversation starter. Figuring among our members, all would know some and some would know all.

Since this is a shorter column, I thought I would go though and recognize the featured magicians:

**January:** The longest running magic show in Las Vegas history with over 10,000 performances since 2000, **Mac King**.

**February:** Was the Master of Levitation and the creator of the *Losander Floating Table*, **Dirk Losander**.

**March:** Creator of magic and consultant to many of the biggest names in the business. Maybe best known for his sawing a man in half on Britain's got Talent **Kevin James**.

**April:** Another Las Vegas icon the talkative half of the comedy magic team Penn and Teller, **Penn Jillette**.

**May:** An award winning performer, author and creator of magic, both close up and stage, **Meir Yedid**. I perform one of his marketed stage illusions "Giant Comedy Prediction".

I can't wait to see who will be featured next month....

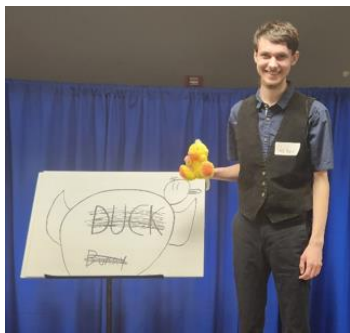


## OMS April Monday Night Magic

The 2023 April OMS meeting was centered around the OMS Wizard Wars Competition. This is the second time in the last 5 years we have held this friendly competition at one of the meetings. The first time we did this, around 5 years ago, the rules were slightly different. This time around we structured the competition to favor the competitors as much as possible, giving them plenty of time to structure their acts and rehearse. In February we introduced the competition and by the March meeting we had 4 teams sign up to compete at the April meeting. Each team was given a sample judging sheet and \$8 cash to spend at the dollar store. With the materials each team would come up with a 5–10-minute act. Each act would be judged on 4 different categories including: Use of Props, Originality, Creativity, and Theatricality.

The competing teams were as follows:

1. **Nathan Roberts** – The Nathan Robert’s Quartet
2. **Mike and Ruth Bitters** – The Bitters
3. **Tim Begley** – Tim Begley’s Miracle Products
4. **Aleister Knight & Adam Savage** – The double A’s



**Nathan Roberts** was the first to the stage with a highly original routine where a volunteer was randomly selected and blindfolded. The audience was in on a written prediction that everyone could see while the unsuspecting blindfolded

volunteer was set up to be amazed. However, things for Nathan didn’t go according to plan when the volunteer unexpectedly chose the only forced stuffed animal that Nathan predicted but completely different object that was never in play. This changed Nathan’s prediction as he scrambled to rewrite it in front of the audience. Starting from scratch the routine was repeated, but this time the stuffed animal, once again, changed back ruining the prediction again. This happened a total of 3 times before Nathan gave up, the volunteer removed the blindfold only to find that the prediction was magically correct all along!

Next up, the **Bitters** took the stage in a mini-play where a husband and wife were bickering over morning coffee.

There was light music in the background and everything reminded you of a “I Love Lucy” style TV show. As the couple expressed their passive aggressive disdain for each other, magic kept happening in unexpected ways. A black happy faced mug magically turned into a black sad faced mug and a cup of coffee turned into confetti as it was tossed in the husband’s face. At the climax of the piece, flowers were produced and the newspaper that “came between” the couple was torn and wadded up. The couple seemed to have made up and everything was right in the world, however once the wife left the room, the newspaper was magically restored so the husband could continue his morning routine.

Third up was **Tim Begley** with his “Miracle Products”. This act was scripted in the form of a late-night infomercial where you could buy a piece of rope to fit all of your personal needs. If you needed knots tied in the rope you could have them at a flick of the wrist. If you didn’t want knots in your rope, you could have them magically disappear. The rope, if ever cut or sliced, could be restored with ease. The Miracle Rope didn’t just come in one size, shape, or color. In fact, Tim presented many different styles of rope, and string that had similar magical properties. But if that wasn’t enough, if you ordered your Miracle Products within the next hour, you also received a wonderful bag that would magically un-knot any rope. By the end, everyone in the room wanted some of Tim’s “Snake Oil”.



The last team to take the stage were the Double A’s with a circus game styled performance. A randomly chosen volunteer took to the stage to play a game. The game was to toss a randomly chosen ping pong ball into one of 6 different cups. The ball was chosen out of several and each contained a prediction inside. The team acted as “magicians in trouble” a few times, but it turned out that in the end the prediction inside the ping pong ball matched a superhero that was on the bottom of the cup that the ball was randomly tossed into. The audience was led to believe they knew the secret method to the prediction only to be proven wrong in the very end.



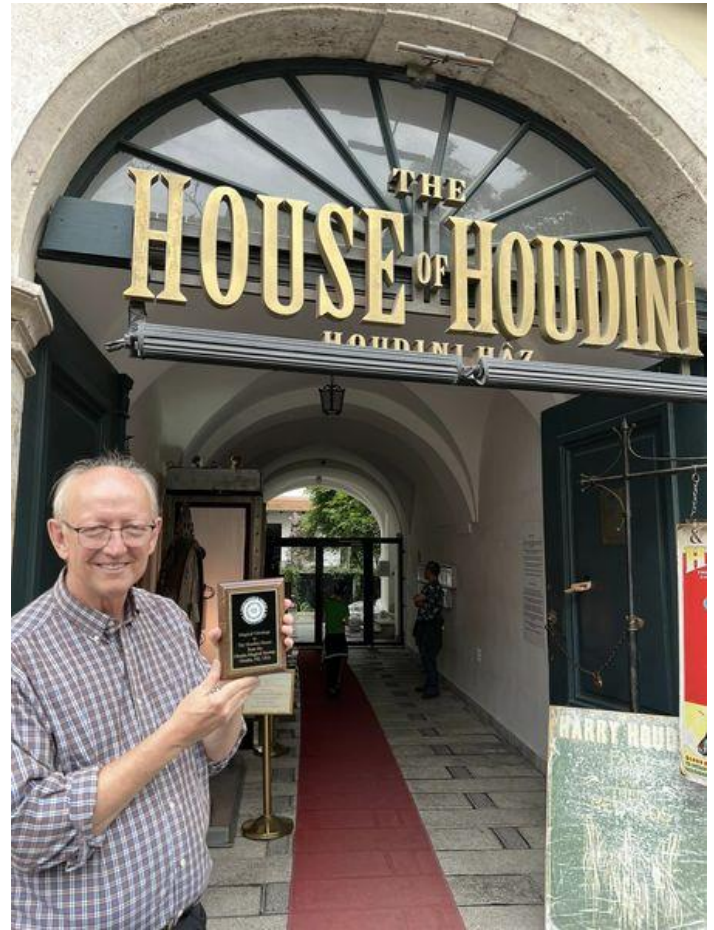
While the judges totaled up the final scores, the audience was shown how to create a deceptive magic forcing calculator purchased from the dollar store. This ordinary calculator could take any mathematical function and spit out any numbers you wanted. The beautiful part about this method, is you could have a volunteer clear the total and start again if something was typed in wrong (something you can't do with the Toxic method of forcing a number with a calculator).



The winners of the competition were announced at the end of the meeting, just after the prize drawing for all attendees. **Second Place** went to **The Bitter's** for their excellent creativity and willingness to try something completely different.



**First place** went to **Tim Begley** for an outstanding presentation on his Miracle Products and a well-rehearsed and scripted routine. Everyone who participated went home with a custom 3D printed deck hold, but the second-place versions were printed in Silver, and the first place trophy was a black and gold deck holder with a beautiful base that says "2023 OMS Wizard Wars Champion". Congrats again to all those that participated and **Tim Begley** for taking home the win! Hope we can repeat the competition again next year with more teams and original acts! – **David Fox**



**Steven Osborn**, our team leader for the club's *Magic in The Hospitals* initiative, presents a plaque from the club to the director of the Houdini birthplace museum in Budapest, Hungary.

Thanks Steve.

We wish continued safe travels to Steve and his wife.





## Larry's Logic

### Working conditions

One of the many lessons in stupid I've learned is how insane some of the working conditions are. And it's not just me. I've talked to plenty

of magicians that share a lot of these issues. And you need to be aware of them.

Walls covered in mirrors. Performing in front of a large window at night, and everyone gets to stare into the headlights of oncoming traffic. Working in the middle of the same doorway that waiters are coming through. Salad anyone? **Denny Rourke** has my favorite story. He worked in a tunnel type area where the ceiling was 2 inches above his head.

Closeup/Busking is perhaps worse. Working outside when the temp and humidity exceeds 3 digits causes cards to stick and warp. It melts certain gimmicks. I actually had the glue seam on a prop peel slowly apart during my show.

Wind can be a huge factor, as can air conditioning. In my misspent youth, I was booked to perform in a factory. Back then I was doing ZOMBIE. Right in front of the industrial fan that turned on mid-routine. Shortened my act immensely, although it did confirm that people will watch a moving object, as everyone watched my large scarf fly across the room. As far as I know, no one spotted the gaff.



But there are things you can do to mitigate your problems. Be a BOY SCOUT. Be Prepared! Make your act the best you can...and THEN have your SECONDARY act that you could probably perform while being set on fire. Tricks that don't require a perfect Faro shuffle. Or a wax candle.

Build your secondary act out of material that you don't need a ton of visibility for. Or audience help. Anyone that's performed at a bachelor party knows that you don't want their help. For any trick that you do that has a chance of failure...assume it will fail. So, write a recovery trick or script.

Bob Mason has a beautiful 'out' for a mental force. Mental forces, of course, are notorious for failing, so he came up a joke punch line and 3 outs. So, no matter what happens, he's ready.

Now, due to having been stuck with many of these problems through the years, I have actually written an adjunct to my contract. It steps the booking person through the RIGHT way to physically set up the room for the show. It also shows them the WRONG ways.

It specifies that food AND drink service should be shut down. And if it's not stopped, the document explains the damage to the show. If they still leave the bar open, I do the show with a clean conscience.

Ron Wilson, in his book, stated that he once did a show in Las Vegas at 3AM for ONE PERSON. And he had to bring that person up onto the stage as a volunteer. My act would crumble under those conditions.

In the closeup world, you don't get to stop the hors d'oeuvres or the bar, so expect people to be tipsy, have slightly greasy or wet fingers, etc. Don't use an expensive custom deck of cards and think that you'll necessarily get a second usage from it.

So, make sure that you know what the conditions are that you'll be performing under. A dark room might be great for thread work, but it's going to be horrible for the Gypsy thread trick, or any trick that requires visual details. Center tears, peeks, etc. will all suffer.

And strangely enough, having this secondary act is empowering. You know that ANYTHING that gets thrown at you can be ignored. You can do it.

You can handle it. Because you planned for it. And you warned your clients about it.



## Monday Night

## Magic

**WHAT'S  
NEW?**

**SPONSORED BY THE OMAHA MAGICAL SOCIETY**



**FEATURING**

# TRAVIS NYE

Having performed magic professionally for over 17 years, Travis' diverse repertoire includes close-up, parlor, stage and a variety of "geek magic" (i.e. swallowing needles, fire eating, walking on broken glass, etc.).

As owner of The Spellbound Magic Shop & Theater, he is also one of the most knowledgeable people in the midwest in terms of knowing what new tricks are being invented and released as well as being willing to talk honestly about each effect's strengths and weaknesses.

In addition to his performance, he'll be bringing a pop-up shop to demo and sell some of his personally recommended magic.

Please don't hesitate to use the QR code below to visit his online shop and let him know of any tricks you'd like him to bring with him for this special event.

**SIMULTANEOUSLY BROADCAST ON ZOOM:**

<https://zoom.us/j/4028718108>

**MONDAY, MAY 15, 2023 | 7-8 PM (CDT)**

The Cross Training Center • 5030 N. 72nd Street • Omaha, Nebraska

No charge for attending this event.





## A Wedding Trick

From time to time, you just might get invited to perform magic at a wedding.

The Anniversary Waltz currently tops the list as one of the more popular selections by many magicians for such an event. However, its visibility is limited.

May I suggest as an alternative that you purchase two Split Decks. **Travis Nye** at Spellbound Magic in Sioux Falls can get you two with the same backs. In fact, if you go in with a friend on the purchase, each of you will have the deck you need for this trick as you exchange one half of your deck with one half of theirs.

What is a Split Deck?



It's a deck of playing cards literally cut in two diagonally so you can show the faces of each half of the deck all different but when you turn either half face down and anyone touches the back of one of the cards, you will have forced the card you want.

In most versions of this trick, you'd force 1/2 of the same card on both people. However, do to the fact that you've built your deck out of two decks, you'll be forcing half of two different cards.

In performance you show the back of a large prediction card and set it on display as you invite the bride and groom to join you up in front of their guests.

You then show them this most unusual deck split diagonally as you have the groom touch a card from one half of the deck and the bride from the other.

How compatible are these two? You triumphantly hold up the two halves selected by the bride and groom and show that the backs of the two cards match. Few members in the audience are impressed.

Then you turn the two halves over . . . and they don't match either!

However, you then go over to the large prediction card and turn it over only to reveal that half of that large card's face matches the card the groom selected and half matches the card the bride selected.

A good reminder that although they have now joined together in marriage, they will be strongest if they never lose the uniqueness of themselves.



Here' a quick taste of what Travis will be bringing from his Spellbound Magic shop in Sioux Falls to our May meeting.





## Balancing The Scales

by Dave Arch

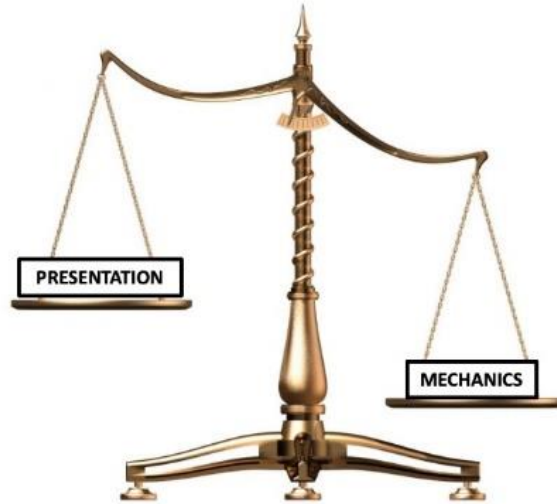
Few magicians would debate the fact that the presentation of a magic trick is at least as important as mastering the mechanics of that trick if the magician hopes to deliver an engaging and entertaining magic routine to a lay audience.

Yet as shown in the accompanying graphic, The Omaha Magical Society currently leans heavily towards providing plentiful resources for mastering the mechanics of a magic trick compared to resources geared towards helping members become better performers.

Having said that, I'm quick to admit that not everyone in the club desires to perform. Performing is not a prerequisite to getting involved with the fun of magic we all enjoy. We have more than a few who enjoy collecting books or props or exploring the thinking that goes behind the invention of a magic trick with little interest in ever performing that trick.

However, for those who do wish to perform and desire to grow in their performance skills we want to get better at balancing the scale - providing presentational resources for them. **Last month** . . . we began by publishing the *OMS Performer Feedback Form* which you can download here: <https://bit.ly/3H2rQXB> - giving us a standardized list of twenty-one areas of focus in evaluating our own performances and giving feedback to other club members who ask.

**This month** . . . we're announcing a series of thirty-seven short essays exploring presentational subjects such as Attention Management • Audience Energy • Character Development • Clarity • Contrast • Costuming • Flow • Hecklers • Motion • Music • Pacing • Predictability • Scripting • Timing • Variety • and more! Use this link (<https://bit.ly/3Na8cwO>) to subscribe and begin receiving these essays. A different essay will be sent to your email inbox every week. There is no charge,



and if you don't find them helpful, you can unsubscribe at any time.

**Then in June** . . . we'll release a series of showmanship discussion videos. We're calling them *Showmanship Learning Packets* - each packet containing a short interactive video, a handout, and a magic trick that illustrates the twenty-one showmanship principles from the previously mentioned *Performance Feedback Form*.

Our hope is that these series of initiatives jump start what will soon become an on-going part of our club culture - giving the same level of resources and focus to presentation skills as to what we currently provide for mastering a magic trick's mechanics.



**Dave Arch** is hosting Card sleight creator and teacher **Marcos Waldemar** who is coming from his home in Spain to Dave's house (2161 Broadwater Drive in Papillion) on Tuesday, May 30th from 7-9 PM.

If card magic is your thing, you're welcome to come. All I ask is that you message Dave at [dave@sandler.com](mailto:dave@sandler.com) and let him know so he can plan for drinks and snacks.

There's about ten of you who have already told him that you plan to be there. Here is a link to a video of Marcos: <https://vimeo.com/819814664/2f11189bd6>

Or try this QR code:





## Monday Night Magic

**Monday May 15<sup>th</sup> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

Cross Training Center  
5030 N. 72<sup>nd</sup> 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).

### 2023 OMS Officers

**President** – Steve Lindeman..... [amazinglindy@gmail.com](mailto:amazinglindy@gmail.com)  
**Vice President** – Bruce Jacoby..... [bruce@colorfulmagic.com](mailto:bruce@colorfulmagic.com)  
**Secretary** – Patrice Fisher ..... [patricekfisher@yahoo.com](mailto:patricekfisher@yahoo.com)  
**Treasurer** – Bob Gehring ..... [gehringerr@cox.net](mailto:gehringerr@cox.net)  
**Sgt-at-Arms** – Tim Begley ..... [tpbegley@cox.net](mailto:tpbegley@cox.net)  
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