



The Flash Paper

October 2024

“Enjoying magic...with others...for others.”

Bob Gehringer, Editor



A Letter From Lindy

How cool would it be to recreate some of David P. Abbott illusions in the very parlor he performed them over a hundred years ago? When the house came

up for sale recently it caught the attention of many of our members. A once in a lifetime opportunity. Thanks in large part to our secretary **Patrice Fisher**. It was her vision and tenacity that got everything started. With a connection that could get her foot in the door She contacted Teller's business partner Richard to see if Teller would be interested in helping us preserve the historic home. Richard let her know that Teller was very interested, and that led to the first zoom meeting that got the ball floating. Err, I mean rolling. The board was all in to move forward with this project. I was at Abbotts Get - Together in Colon Mich. My phone turned off as I was attending lectures. When I turned it back on it blew up with urgent messages to call **Bob Gehringer**. He needed to record my vote to get the lawyers started on the process. A roller coaster ride of ups and downs followed. The sale was on, then it was off. A stumbling block worked out with the owners, and it was back on again. It looked as if I'd sign the deed the last week of August. I let the real estate agent know I was leaving town Saturday at 5:00 am. Friday morning I learned the lawyers would not have it ready until mid-week. A quick vote of the board gave **Bob Gehringer** the authority to sign. While still in Memphis I received a beautiful

picture of Bob signing the deed making the Omaha Magical Society proud owners of the historic David P. Abbott house of Mystery.



Bob signing the deed



Dave announcing to the club

This is only the beginning chapter- now we start our two-year journey to bring the house back to its former glory. A task I'm confident we are up to completing. I want to give a shout out to everyone involved, and a huge "Thank You" to **Mr. Teller** for helping put Omaha on the nations magic map. (Hmm... "The Magic Capitol of the Midwest"???)

At age 20 **Chris Capeheart** saw a live magic show and that is when he decided to pursue the art. Chris started his career in 1979 as a street performer in Manhattan. Chris is very funny, and extremely talented. He helped lighten my wallet as I picked up some great magic he demoed. One piece in particular went immediately into my show. The tie-in to this "Abbott" edition of the Flash Paper is that Chris has been friends of Penn and Teller for years. Ever since they all performed on the streets of Philadelphia. Chris has appeared on Penn and Teller Fool Us twice, and both times walked off with the FU trophy.



Pizza and Prestidigitation

By Patrice Fisher

Another creative night of magic at our O.M.S. meeting center was successfully organized and attended. It was Pizza and Prestidigitation Night and five of our member magicians entertained a full house. Not to bury the lead, but we also had a major announcement to tell the club before the fun began...

It was nice to get together early to enjoy a variety of pizzas that **Ruth and Mike Bitter** graciously served us. This gave a bit of extra time to get to know our newer members better, and to welcome back a lifetime member, **Pete Petrashek** and his wife, **Babe**. The Petrasheks are lifetime members of our society. Now living at their senior residence at *Ovations* assisted living, they are still fine OMS ambassadors for our volunteer magicians who perform at senior care facilities throughout Omaha. It was so good to see them back at our meeting facility because we wanted them to know the big news of the evening.

The Omaha Magical Society has acquired the **David P. Abbott House**, in partnership with **Teller** (of the famed **Penn and Teller**). Our society has a close relationship with Abbott's legacy. He has been honored by our society with our own, very prestigious, **Abbott Award**. This distinction is bestowed, very judiciously, to a club member who, through their actions, has proven their true dedication to the art and science of magic. There will be much more about David P. Abbott's life, his home, and his inventions as we move forward with our vision to provide a museum for the enjoyment of the man and his magic, right here in Omaha!

The announcement of such a surprising endeavor was met with much chatter, all positive and enthusiastic. It was hard a hard act to follow, but **Steve Lindeman**, **Trevor Groenjes**, **Niel Bable**, **Steve Nespor**, and **Darren Kauk** proceeded to perform close-up magic, rotating table-to-table, while our Director, **Dave Arch** held the stopwatch in order for the night to run as smooth as clockwork.

Each magician brought smiles, laughter, and respect as they entertained their groups with completely different types of effects. They filled the hour with smooth sleights with cards, coins, ropes, and even the use of a cell phone illusion, while the rest of us relaxed with full stomachs and welcomed each magician with surprise, laughter, and applause. September sleights and smiles!



Steve Nespor, Steve Lindeman, Darren Kauk,
Neil Bable and Trevor Groenjes



Monday Night

Magic

PLEASE
NOTICE
NEW DATE

LOSANDER THE ART OF LEVITATION

SPONSORED BY **THE OMAHA MAGICAL SOCIETY**

Inventor of the popular floating table (see QR code),
Dirk Losander will be lecturing live - promising us the following:

- Learn how to animate any small object.
- Move a glass and float it under your command.
- Anything you wanted to know about magic with bubbles.
Float a bubble in mid air and pop it at your will.
- Learn how to make a straw dance and a business card rise.
- Learn the right handling of a thumb tip.
- Learn how to apply the secret ingredient and make your show AMAZING!

"Losander is one of the most unique magicians in the world. His creative thinking will refine the art of levitation. I'm proud to have used some of his magic in my own show."
- David Copperfield



**SIMULTANEOUSLY
BROADCAST ON ZOOM**

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024
7-9 PM (CST)

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

There is no charge for this event.





What's Our Magic Story by Patrice Fisher

On July 2, 2024, when **Dave Arch** sent me the Zillow real estate advertisement about the David P. Abbott house going up for sale, little did he know that the passion I have had about that house and our O.M.S. would be energized to the extent that it was.

Dave had sent me the listing as an FYI, because he knew that I have wanted our society to somehow buy the house if it ever came on the market. Every so often, I would mention this to the OMS Board to a common response of eye-rolling, because, of course, being a non-profit club, we are impecunious. That is a fancy word for having no money. (I have always wanted to use that five-syllable word in a sentence, sorry.)

Ever since reading an article in the Omaha World Herald detailing the relationship of our lifetime O.M.S. member magician **Walter Graham** and his relationship to **David Abbott**, I have been fascinated by their story. Abbott's magic may have ended with his death in 1934, but in 1938, fifteen-year-old **Walter Graham** went to a magic performance by **Harry Blackstone Sr.**, at Omaha's Orpheum Theater. After seeing the show four times, Walter was hooked. His love and dedication to the art and science of magic eventually led directly to the Abbott house and the genius who inhabited it.

As an adult magician and owner of an Omaha printing company, Walter knew about the "Abbott House of Mysteries" and the evening soirees Abbott hosted with his wife and assistant, **Fannie**, for magicians who were invited to the house after they performed at the Orpheum Theater. Also, being an avid collector of magic books, over time, Graham acquired a partial manuscript detailing Abbott's invention, scripts, and how to re-enact his illusions. In the hopes of finding the missing photos and text he needed to finally publish the masterpiece that **David Abbott** had often mentioned as his legacy, Graham doggedly contacted the owner of the former Abbott residence. Miraculously, there was a treasure trove of Abbott items that had been left in the house and not destroyed! Included were binders containing the lost

pages and pictures needed to complete *Abbott's Book of Mysteries* (David Abbott's own title), that Walter Graham finished, self-published and printed in 1977.

To promote this critical book that Abbott had wanted to finish, Walter ran ads in magic publications. A young, beginner magician named **Teller**, of **Penn and Teller** fame, read the book, became fascinated with David Abbott, and wrote Graham a fan letter. That one action started decades of friendship between Graham and Teller, until Walter passed away in 2018 at the age of 95 years old.

Their relationship was the key to the Omaha Magical Society acquiring the Abbott house with our vision of creating a museum dedicated to the legacy of the magic of David P. Abbott.



I texted Dave immediately after seeing the ad he had sent me regarding the house. "Do you think Teller will think I am a crackpot if I

contact him and describe my dream of a museum in the Abbott House of Mysteries?" "Not at all, go for it...you might want to mention our Magic Research Library at UNO" was his encouraging reply.

First, I had to find a way to email Teller directly. I couldn't post this on his website. I wouldn't trust that he would see any messages soon if I wrote to his *Fool Us* TV show. Even if he were to see my missive, time was of the essence! Hmmn... Well, without divulging my connections, after reaching out, I was able to obtain contact information. I felt like quite the sleuth.

So, after crafting an email detailing my hopes about acquiring the Abbott house to create a magic museum, I held my breath and pressed the send button. After all, I had just asked one of the world's most famous magicians, **Teller**, to buy a house for the Omaha Magical Society! Now, some nervous regret was setting in. I was pretty sure that Teller would understand my excitement about the brilliant life of the inventor and magician David P. Abbott and the importance of his home to his legacy in the history of magic. But what if Teller and Walter Graham had had a falling out?

I hoped I had adequately conveyed the essence of my vision to support our society's mission, dedicated to



bringing the joy of magic to Omaha. This would be the ultimate form of spreading the joy of magic not only to Omaha, but throughout America, and beyond! My thought has always been... "Omaha is the geographical center of the United States, so let's make it the magic center for our country!" What better way to do that, but through a museum honoring David P. Abbott and his amazing contributions to the art and science of magic!? Would he even see my email?

After only a few hours, my husband asked me to come over to where he was comfortably settled in his recliner. (When asked "what type of décor is your home?" I fittingly call our décor, "Early Lazy-boy.") I did not think he would show me an email from Teller's business manager saying that "Teller was very interested in learning more and would like to discuss this with me at my convenience." At my convenience! Immediately, I began flop-sweating and after dropping the phone twice, I dialed Dave Arch's number. Aside from my big dream, I knew Dave would be essential to having a coherent conversation about any concrete plan we would have for a meeting with Teller. I had seen Penn and Teller in the mid-eighties at the Blackstone Theater in Chicago and had decided then that when I retired, I would love to learn magic, and I didn't trust my brain and mouth to coordinate and convey any useful information when I finally met Teller!



What a relief. Teller was very excited about the prospect of creating a museum to David P. Abbott's legacy! He fondly told us about his relationship with Walter Graham and his wish to pay some type of homage to Walter as part of the museum. Also, let's not forget the role **Fannie** played in those home performances, he added. After that, he generously showed us those prized binders of Abbott drawings and detailed descriptions of his illusions. We brainstormed ideas, and he smiled as he said that he "*might* be able to help with rigging the floating ball routine in the house". He was so gracious and personable that I was actually able to contribute to the conversation a bit. At the end of our meeting, Teller handed the details over to his business manager who was

also there. Before leaving, Teller enthusiastically ended our meeting by saying, "We can do this together!"

With the support and approval of The OMS Board, now our journey begins!

Patrice's Email to Teller

Hello. My name is Patrice Fisher. I'm the Secretary of the Omaha Magical Society, but I am writing to you as an individual member of the club. Terri, the Director of Tannen's Magic Camp, to which we give student scholarships to attend, gave me your contact information.

This email is for Mr. Teller and relates to his two-volume book about David P. Abbott, titled Abbott's House of Mystery. As I understand, Mr. Teller worked with one of our lifetime members of OMS, Walter Graham, when writing his book.

I am writing because David Abbott's home is up for sale. This property, I believe, would be a perfect destination point for magicians and fans across the nation. Omaha, Nebraska is the geographical center of the United States and could also be the center for magic in our country.

Since reading excerpts of Teller's book about our own David P. Abbott, I have had the lofty thought of making our city the hub for magic here in the Midwest. So, I wanted to contact Mr. Teller about my idea the moment the home came up for sale. The price is \$415,000.

Would Mr. Teller want to purchase the home to make it into a research center (OMS has the largest public library in the nation, housed at the University of Nebraska/Omaha) or museum, school, and store, etc.?

If this is not a possibility, would Mr. Teller lend any ideas on how I would go about contacting other magicians in order to create a consortium to purchase this property?

I realize this is a very grandiose idea and I have no experience with fund raising, but if this is a possibility, I would give all of my efforts to bring this Midwest Magic dream to fruition.

Thank you for reading my email and for any consideration or guidance you can offer.



David P. Abbott House FAQ's by Dave Arch

Since Monday, September 16th when the OMS board announced the acquiring of The Abbott House in partnership with Teller, these are the most popular

questions being asked about this opportunity.

Q. Where is the David Abbott House located?

A. It's located at 3316 Center Street in Omaha, Nebraska.

Q. What's so special about the Abbott House?

A. This article from the Omaha Word Herald expresses it better than I could:
<https://bit.ly/3z6oEtv>



Q. Why would the club want to own the house?

A. With the acquisition of the house, the club expands its base to include both those who enjoy magic and also those who enjoy the preservation of Omaha history. The OMS board believes this heightened public visibility for the club will continue expanding the purpose of our club as stated in our constitution: "To promote and advance the art of magic and to secure its general recognition as one of the performing arts."

Our vision for the ways we hope to use the house in fulfillment of that purpose can be found on our website at: <https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/mystery-house>

Q. Will we hold our Monday Night Magic events in the house?

A. Due to the house's room configurations and the limited off-street parking, we will not be holding our monthly events in the house but will instead be using the house for special occasions throughout the year.

Q. Did Teller really give the club the house?

A. Not exactly. Teller purchased the house from the seller and put a lien on the house for the amount of his loan to the club. If The Abbott House is a self-sustaining tribute to David and Fannie Abbott after twenty-four

months, his loan will be forgiven, and the house will be fully owned by Omaha Magical Society, Inc.

Q. So, will the club need to make payments on Teller's loan?

A. No. There are no payments required and no interest accumulates for the twenty-four months.

Q. Is there an Abbott House board?

A. Yes. There is a group of five members on the Abbott House board primarily selected due to their relationships within Omaha's philanthropic community and their willingness to make introductions to those foundations for donations to the house.

Gary Gates*, a member of the Omaha Magical Society has been taking private magic lessons from me for the past five years and serves as the Chairman of that board. Our Treasurer, **Bob Gehringer**, serves as ex-officio member on that five-member board and a liaison between the house board and the board of the club. He will keep the books for both entities.

I also serve as an ex-officio member of the house board, and the primary person who will approach the various charities for donations to the project.

Since the house is owned by the Omaha Magical Society, the Abbott House Donor Board serves under the authority of the magic club's board.

Each Abbott House board member has committed to donating \$2500 per year for two years to sustain the on-going expenses of maintaining the house during its refurbishing.

*You can learn more about Gary here:
<https://bit.ly/4e0uSu1>



Abbott and his floating ball



Q. How will the club pay for the refurbishing the house?

A. If you visit

<https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/abbott-donation>

you can see the various ways finances will be raised to refurbish the house in addition to the foundation grants for which we'll be applying.

Donation of furnishings will also be needed. As you look at the various pictures of the house in its original state, you might even think of some vintage furniture you would be willing to donate in support of the house?

Q. Who will ultimately decide on how the house will be refurbished?

A. Although we are working with an interior designer, Teller has the final word on the refurbishing of the house to bring it back authentically to the time when David and Fannie Abbott lived in the house (circa 1920's).

Q. Will there be someone living permanently at the house?

A. Yes. The club will have a Resident Property Manager living in an apartment on a full-time basis at the house. It will be announced when that person has been selected.

Q. When will club members get to tour the house?

A. The twenty donors and their spouses/partners who have contributed to the club's 2024-25 annual 20x15 fund raiser will be the first to tour the house with a set of two thank you receptions hosted by the OMS board scheduled for the evenings of Friday, November 1, and Saturday, November 2. You can read more about that fundraiser on our website at:

<https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/donate>

Abbott House in the 1920's



Thank You Teller





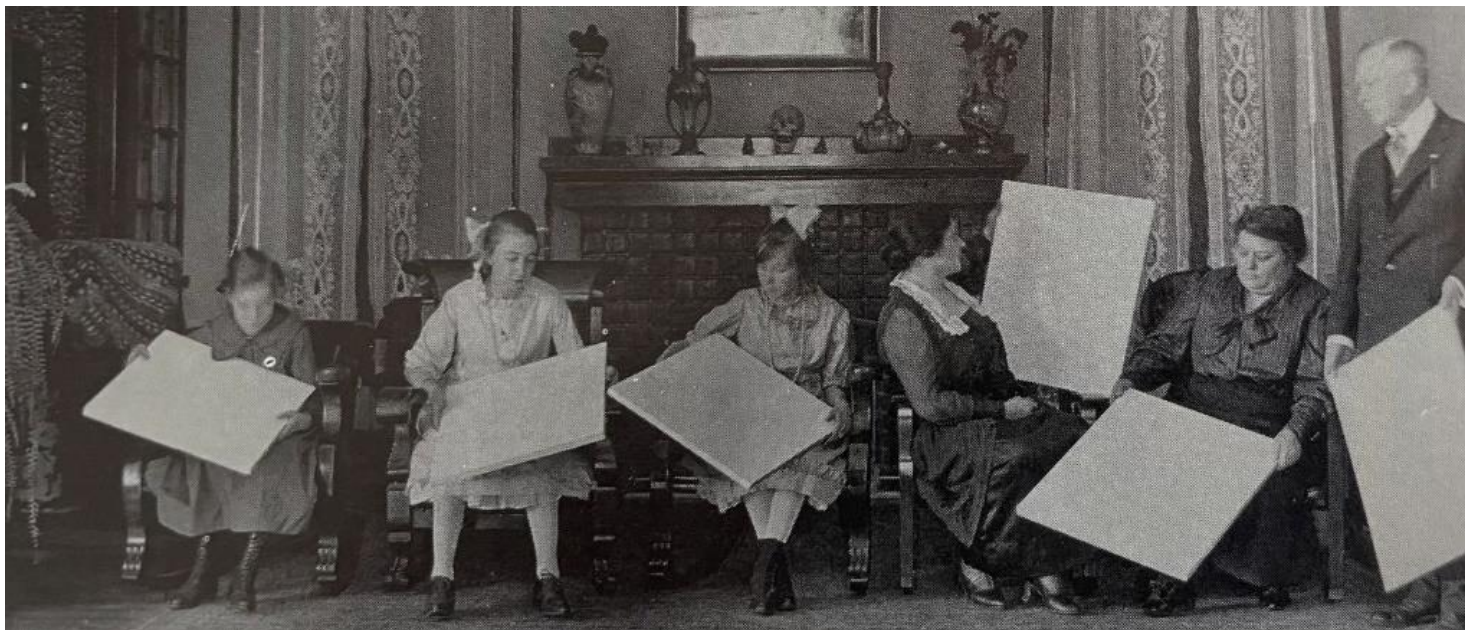
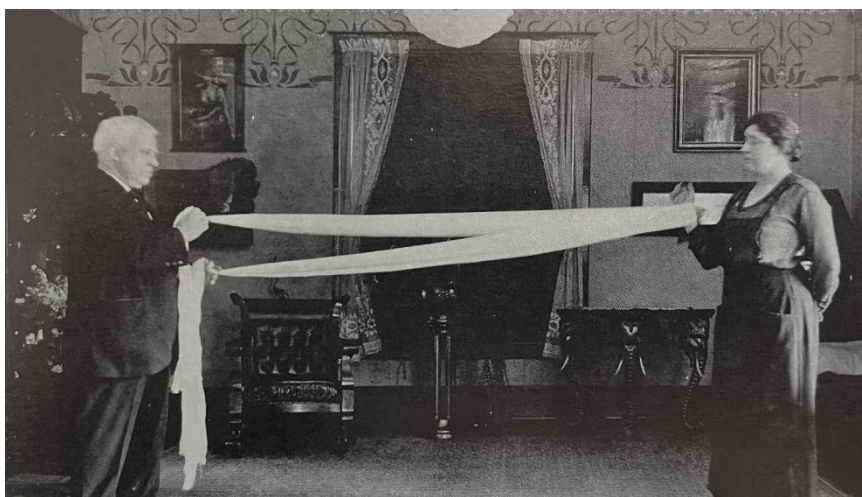
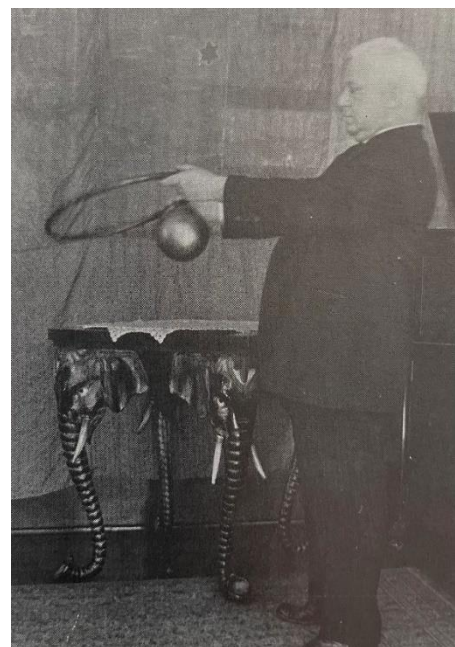
Read The World Herald Article [HERE](https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/world-herald-article)

<https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/world-herald-article>

Watch A Video Overview [HERE](https://vimeo.com/998834985/c50434c96d)

<https://vimeo.com/998834985/c50434c96d>

Pictures of David P. Abbott and Fannie performing from an original photo album





20x15

With the OMS Board committed to maintaining our membership fee at only \$20 annually, we seek 20 people willing to contribute \$15 per month for twelve months to help underwrite the on-going operating expenses of the club (i.e. room rental, monthly newsletter printing and distribution as well as maintenance of the website and email lists).

Thank you for giving consideration to being one of those 20.



**A thank you reception/tour will be held at The Abbott House for you and your spouse/partner on two evenings:
Friday, November 1 and Saturday, November 2.**

You may use the subscribe link below to begin giving automatically twelve-monthly payments with the understanding that you may discontinue your support at any time.

You may also mail a check to our Treasurer:
Bob Gehringer | 13405 Marinda Street | Omaha,
Nebraska 68134

Some Donation Options

<https://theomahamagicalsociety.org/donation>



Monday Night Magic

Tuesday October 8th

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Note the Date change

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).

Check out our website:

<http://TheOmahaMagicalSociety.org>

2024 OMS Officers

President - Steve Lindeman amazinglindy@gmail.com

Vice President - Adam Schacht schacht2222@gmail.com

Treasurer - Bob Gehringer gehringerr@cox.net

Secretary - Patrice Fisher patricekfisher@yahoo.com

Executive Director - Dave Arch dave@sandler.com

13405 Marinda ST.
Omaha, NE 68144

