



The Servante

Official Newsletter of the Alliance of Illusionists Bruce Chadwick SAM Assembly 138

Volume 2017 - Number 6 - June 2017

Next Monthly Assembly Meeting Thursday June 15, 2017, 7:00 pm
Illusion Warehouse - 3917 McCart Ave - Fort Worth, Texas 76110
Three Blocks North of Seminary Drive - Across From Rosemont School

SAM Assembly 138 Celebrates 15 Years!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAM 138

Assembly 138 was originally chartered in Hurst, Texas by the Society of American Magicians as the Mid-Cities United Magicians Club (abbreviated as MUM). Seven members appear on the March 12, 1977 charter and include Robin Clay, James Eaton, William Ridge, Paul Shaffer, Darren Walker, Randy Yates and William Yates. Unfortunately due to inactivity primarily due to the demise the "Magic and More" store that promoted the club's formation, the SAM recalled the club's charter on October 14, 1981.

During the mid 1980's, a chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Magicians was established in the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas area. Led primarily through the efforts of a minister by the name of Cameron Ainsworth, the group named itself the DFW/FCM (Dallas/Fort Worth chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Magicians). After several years of continuous meetings, Cameron moved from Fort Worth to pastor a church in another state. Subsequently club meetings became infrequent, membership dwindled, and ultimately the club also became inactive.



REBIRTH OF THE ASSEMBLY

Early in 2001, a seminary student by the name of Darren Smith approached Bruce Chadwick, owner of the Illusion Warehouse retail magic shop (www.IllusionWarehouse.com), about once again starting a Christian-based magic group. Chadwick's store provided a good meeting location due to the fact that it was located only about three blocks north of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, at 3917 McCart Avenue, Fort Worth, Texas.

Subsequently a small group of individuals began to meet at the Illusion Warehouse. Within a matter of months the group grew to over sixty members. As emphasis of the club shifted towards general magic and illusion, it named itself the Alliance of Illusionists (AOI).

On Tuesday evening October 9, 2001, the Alliance of Illusionists members voted to become the Bruce Chadwick SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists. The National Council of the Society of American Magicians then renewed the Assembly 138 charter on April 20, 2002. Renewed charter members include Edgardo Ferrer, Bob Miner, Grady W. Patterson, Wilford D. Lewis, Jo Ann Lewis, Mark Jones, Raymond L. Landy, Martin Lee Patterson, Stephen C. Hires, H. Craig Davis, and Larry J. Brown, Jr., and Bruce Chadwick.

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MEETING CONCURRENTLY

Early in 2006, The Fort Worth Magicians Club Inc, the Ren Clark IBM Ring 15, and the SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists began discussing the idea of meeting together on a monthly basis. After surveying its membership and determining there was an overwhelming interest among Assembly members for the SAM Assembly 138, the IBM Ring 15, and The Fort Worth Magicians Club to become one, SAM Assembly 138 President Larry Brown sent a letter to the FWMC and Ring suggesting that the clubs merge into one entity.

The Fort Worth Magicians Club and the Ren Clark IBM Ring 15 objected to the idea however. At that time the FWMC and Ring had recently split so The Fort 'Worth Magicians Club could become a non-profit corporation. At that point the Fort Worth Magicians Club and IBM Ring were separate clubs that met concurrently.

The Fort Worth Magicians Club and the IBM Ring 15 then extended an invitation to the SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists to meet with them concurrently. On Thursday June 1, 2006 the three clubs voted to start meeting concurrently at the same date, time, and place to promote and seek the advancement of the art of magic, while at the same time retaining their independence as separate clubs.

MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE

It is interesting that the agreement for the three clubs to meet together and yet remain separate is often misunderstood. It has always been necessary for the clubs to remain separate from one another so that the IBM Ring and SAM Assembly can maintain proper alignment with their respective national magic organizations, and The Fort Worth Magicians Club Inc can remain independent from the Ring and Assembly for liability concerns and the obligations its non-profit legal status.

This also means that as separate clubs, only IBM Ring 15 members can vote on Ring business, only SAM Assembly 138 members can vote on Assembly business, and only Fort Worth Magicians Club members can vote on FWMC business.

However with the concurrent monthly club meetings usually referred to as Fort Worth Magicians Club meetings (and not also the meeting of Ring 15 and Assembly 138) and the three clubs appearing to function as a single club, it is easy to understand how some mistakenly think the IBM Ring, SAM Assembly, and the FWMC are the same club.

RENEWAL

As an independent non-profit corporation, The Fort Worth Magicians Club does not require its members to also be members of the IBM or SAM. Also with the Ring and Assembly rarely recognized at monthly club meetings and the benefits of joining the IBM and SAM seldom emphasized, over the past decade Ring 15 and Assembly 138 growth has been minimal.

SAM Assemblies must maintain a minimum of ten national dues-paid-up SAM members to sustain their charters. With the SAM Assembly 138 membership critical, the Assembly Executive Committee called a special meeting on Tuesday evening July 5, 2016. Meeting at the Illusion Warehouse magic shop where the assembly began fourteen years earlier, the committee voted to reinstate its own Monthly Assembly Meetings on the third Thursday of each month.

The move for Assembly 138 to once again have its own independent monthly magic club meeting has been very successful. The Assembly has exploded in size. In fact on April 6, 2017 the Executive Committee of the Fort Worth Magicians Club even rescinded their ten year old invitation for Assembly 138 to meet concurrently with them. Now the Assembly meets only on the third Thursday of each month completely independent of other magic clubs. The Assembly has updated its bylaws, revised its membership application process, and renewed its mission to have the best magic club in Fort Worth.

MILT LARSEN: MAGIC MAN - By Keith Valcourt



In late February, tragedy struck The Magic Castle, an iconic, semi-private club in Los Angeles when a performer by the name of Daryl hanged himself in the closet of his dressing room - a bizarre and mysterious event in a place often shrouded with mystery.

The horrifying event shone an undeserved light on one of the coolest places you've never been to. But just a few months prior to the sad event, I sat down with the man behind the Magic Castle, owner Milt Larsen, to talk about how "The Castle" came to be.

Q: Is it true that you were born into magic?

A: Indeed, I was. The first time I opened my baby eyes, all I saw were two magicians: my mother and my father. And then everybody I knew when I was a kid was in the business. The house was full of magicians. Some of the great names in magic looked at me and said, "What a cute little

baby."

Q: Who were some of those great names?

A: One of the most famous magicians was Max Malini. He entertained for royalty. He was over at the house all the time. And names that people wouldn't know now but were famous in their days. My dad was a very good lawyer who handled Mrs. Houdini's estate after Houdini died. Everybody assumed he knew Houdini, but he didn't.

Q: How old were you when you started performing as a kid?

A: I was 8 years old. There is a picture of me doing a trick for Mrs. Houdini. She was a nice lady. My dad created "The Larsen Family of Magicians" shows, but he billed it as the cultural background of magic. It was a lecture. During the Depression, people who had money were at these resort hotels. They didn't want to flaunt their wealth because everybody else was in the bread line. They accepted lectures more than a vaudeville show. We disguised our vaudeville show as a lecture, and it worked out fine. Because of that we played all these absolutely gorgeous resort hotels and palaces. That's where I got my love of wanting to live in palaces.

Q: What is the Magic Castle?

A: The Castle is a private club in Hollywood, California, situated in a grand old mansion that goes back to 1910. My dad always talked about maybe someday having a private club for magicians. He passed away at an early age back in the 1950s. My brother Bill and I decided to fulfill Dad's wishes.

Q: What was The Castle like the first time you saw it?

A: The building was something right out of Charles Addams and "The Addams Family." It really looked dreadful with giant weeds covering the entire front yard. The shutters were falling off. It really looked like a haunted house. I met the man that owned it, and he didn't really know what to do with the house. He was thinking of just knocking it down to create a road to the top of the hill. I told him about this crazy idea of turning it into a club for magicians. He was a Texas businessman and I was a gag writer. Oil and water didn't mix. But I was able to make a deal with the owner of the property.

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Q: How did you and your brother put sweat equity into The Castle?

A: My grandfather was a master carpenter. I always liked woodworking and things. We had a magic company. I always liked working with mechanics and such. My brother was a business guy. We decided he would do the work in setting up the organization for the private club for magicians known as the "Academy of Magical Arts."

I was the dreamer. I took a hammer and a saw and paintbrush and turned that old house into what it is now. I'm considered the builder of the Magic Castle. He was the founder of the Academy of Magic Arts.

Q: When did the Magic Castle first open its doors?

A: Our opening night was January 2, 1963. We had to wait till after New Year's to open because we had to wait for our liquor license. When we opened, it was really small. We just had a reception room and a room for our invisible piano player and a third room for magicians to perform. That was it for the first run. Then we kept growing from there.

Q: Who were some of the early members?

A: We had a lot of celebrities because they liked magic and liked the atmosphere of the Castle. It's a private club so they weren't bothered by the paparazzi. They could let their hair down and enjoy magic without ending up in the tabloids. Cary Grant loved and did magic. He started in vaudeville. It didn't hurt to have Orson Welles, who was a wonderful magician and legendary actor. Jimmy Stewart was a magician. He used to hang out at the Castle quite a bit.



Q: Do the shows change?

A: In the Castle we have a whole new set of magicians every week. They all have to be different. You have to have the balance of illusion and manipulation. We have one showroom for the big illusions and a close-up room for sleight of hand. Between them we have the parlor for the stand-up club magic. Then there are informal tables for magicians to do some magic.

Q: Will The Magic Castle always exist?

A: There will be magic forever because magic is simply imagination. As long as people can dream of things that are impossible, there will always be somebody who can do it. As long as you can think of something that has never been done and have someone do it, that's magic.

