



The Servante

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

Volume 2018 - Number 11 - November 2018

Next Monthly Assembly Meeting Thursday November 15, 2018, 7:00 pm

Illusion Warehouse - 3917 McCart Ave - Fort Worth, Texas 76110

Three Blocks North of Seminary Drive - Across From Rosemont School

Magic **HOLIDAY**

Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the holiday season and your Executive Committee has chosen Holiday Magic for this month's theme. Our November 15 Thursday night meeting will commence promptly at 7:00 pm, the Illusion Warehouse, 3917 McCart Ave. Bring your favorite trick, routine, or other interesting magic (holiday related or otherwise) and we will have a great evening of magic and mystery!

OCTOBER MEETING FEATURED "Booism - the Study of Ghosts"

Despite torrential rainfall in the Fort Worth area, a good group of the SAM 138 Alliance of Illusionists attended our third Thursday October 20, 2018 Monthly Assembly Meeting at the Illusion Warehouse Party Room and Magic Shop. With the absence of President Mark Jones, Vice-President Frank Seltzer emceed the meeting. Members were reminded that The Illusionists were playing in Fort Worth, the Champions of Magic would appear at Fair Park in December, Penn and Teller's "Fool Us!" has been extended for another season, and Houston's Magic Island is slated to reopen. Then it was on to the November main core activity, "Booism - the Study of Ghosts!" (thank you Lance Pierce).

Jack McCoy began the evening with a presentation of his "Evil Card Trick" and the recitation of his morbid poem "The Disarray of Desiree." Lisa Fulce made a hank dance with her presentation of Glorpy and Pierce Brooks did some phenomenal card work. Bruce Roberts presented his version of Double Cross (an interesting version of the Ashes of Asrah effect) with the biblical patter of Daniel in the Fire with his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and concluded with a presentation of the Sharpie Perfect Pen effect. John Hale presented a very good card packet trick called "The Vampire."

Jimmy Fulce presented a vintage Chinese Bottle and then proceeded to spill rice all over the floor with his amazing coke bottles, rice, and chop sticks effect. Frank Seltzer performed a great card effect called Profit Motive. Bruce Chadwick showed a silk streamer production with a Mirror Glass, and then showed various versions he recently created. Enoch Ng concluded the evening with his "I Forgot" card effect. Afterwards, Assembly members adjourned to the Illusion Warehouse magic shop and perused the wares.



John Hale and "The Vampire"

2018 OFFICERS

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OCTOBER 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

In the absence of President Mark Jones, Vice-President Frank Seltzer called to order the October Executive Committee meeting on the Alliance of Illusionists on October 18, 2018 at about 6:30 pm. Present was Vice-President Frank Seltzer, Administrator Joey Byers, Historian John Hale, Communications Bruce Chadwick, and Member at Large Bruce Roberts. Absent were Sergeant at Arms Cindy Bighorse and President Mark Jones.

Copies of the October THE SERVANTE monthly assembly newsletter containing the minutes of the September Executive committee were distributed and the minutes were approved as printed. Treasurer Joey Byers gave an informal financial report showing \$161.85 in our coffer. The committee was reminded that most of the money received from dues during the 2018 fiscal year were spent with Legal Zoom to get the assembly's 501(c)6 non-profit status.

At the September Executive Committee meeting, President Mark Jones agreed to chair the nominating committee meeting to find willing assembly members to serve as officers for the 2019 fiscal year. With Mark's absence at the October Executive Committee meeting, Frank Seltzer suggested the following list be submitted to the Nominating Committee for consideration: President Frank Seltzer, Vice-President Joey Byers, Administrator Cindy Bighorse, Communications Bruce Chadwick, Historian John Hale, Sergeant at Arms Lisa Fulce, and Member-at-Large Pierce Brooks.

It was noted that the Bylaws nomination and election process must be followed. Also candidates should be contacted to determine their willingness to serve prior to their names being placed on the ballot. Also it was noted that individual Assembly members can nominate from the floor members in good standing at the November and December Monthly Assembly Meetings, with the final vote for officers to occur at the December meeting.

The topics for the two remaining Assembly meetings for 2018 were discussed. It was agreed that the November meeting will be Holiday Magic and that there will be a Christmas party at the December meeting. With no further business, the October Executive Committee meeting was adjourned at about 6:45 pm.

OCTOBER TAOM 2020 CONVENTION PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Immediately following the Executive Committee meeting on October 18, 2018, TAOM Vice-President Joey Byers called to order a quick meeting of the 2020 TAOM Convention Planning Committee meeting. The same officers in attendance at the Executive Committee meeting were present for the Convention Planning Meeting.

The main discussion at hand was the ongoing investigation to secure a hotel for the 2020 TAOM convention. It was reported that via Carole Machol-Atler of Helms Brisco, the committee finally received a proposed hotel contract from the "Atrium Hotels Management, LLC dba Embassy Suites by Hilton Dallas-Frisco Hotel/Convention Center and Spa." Subsequently Frank Seltzer, Joey Byers, Bruce Chadwick and others reviewed the contract. Their notes were then submitted back to Carole and subsequently a revised version of the contract was received back from the Embassy Suites.

Some discussion revolved around the concern of the \$139 proposed Embassy room rate. Bruce Chadwick suggested that the committee ought to investigate the possible use of either the Fort Worth Radisson at Fossil Creek (north) or the Fort Worth Radisson South. He reported his conversation with Andy Anderson, owner of Kudo's Clown and Magic and Image Engravers in Hurst, Texas who recently was involved in a Shriner's convention at the Radisson north. He reported to Chadwick that the hotel was very satisfactory to the Shriner's needs and subsequently Anderson has secured the same hotel for their 2019 Texas Clown Association group. Chadwick was commissioned to contact both of these hotels and report his findings to the 2020 TAOM Convention Planning Committee. It was noted that time is of the essence. In particular, the deadline for signing the Frisco Embassy Suites contract is November 5. With no further business, the 2020 TAOM Convention Planning Committee adjourned.

HOWARD THURSTON, THE MAGICIAN WHO DISAPPEARED

Overshadowed by more famous contemporaries, the visionary behind “The Wonder Show of the Universe” left a far-reaching legacy

By Eliza McGraw, smithsonian.com, August 9, 2018

A woman rose in mid-air. Cards hovered, and a box of candy became a rabbit. A horse and rider vanished, floating away as if in a dream, spangles sparkling in audiences’ eyes. At the magician Howard Thurston’s show, the world flouted nature. Through it all, the audience felt Thurston’s affection. Dale Carnegie included Thurston in his famed self-help book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, because Thurston had told Carnegie that before every show, he stood behind the curtain, saying over and over, “I love my audience.”

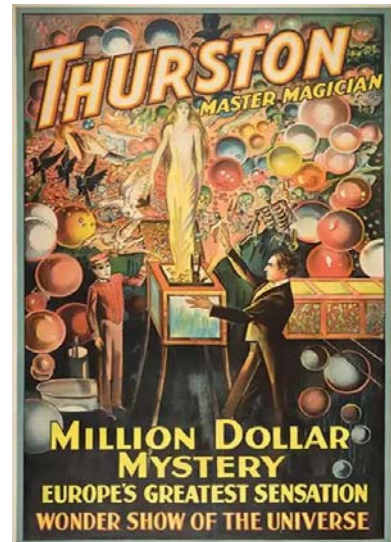


In the 20th century’s first decades, Howard Thurston thrilled people with his own brand of stage magic, a giant production requiring 40 tons of equipment. Today, he’s all but forgotten, eclipsed in history by his contemporary Harry Houdini, even though Houdini was more of an escape artist than a magician. But in his day, Thurston was the best. “It’s sort of like the hype of everybody that wanted to see Hamilton,” says Rory Feldman, a magician with a Thurston collection of more than 65,000 pieces. “Thurston—that’s what it was.”

Born in Ohio, in 1869, Thurston had a rough childhood that included some time riding the rails. While contemporary accounts reported that he’d been training for the ministry when he decided upon magic, biographer Jim Steinmeyer says that the young Thurston was a near-criminal who escaped institutionalization by saying he had found religion. Steinmeyer unearthed correspondence between authorities about the high-school aged Thurston. “It’s kind of jaw-dropping what they write about this kid,” he says. “They say ‘If you don’t take him, he’s at the end of his game.’ And ‘I really think this guy is redeemable, but he’s the roughest case I’ve ever seen.’” Thurston overcame those early trials, hiding his background to become, by the time he reached his early 30s, a stage magician whose success rested in part on his gentlemanly demeanor, what Steinmeyer calls his “bank president” grandeur.

In his white tie and tails, Thurston performed incredible tricks. One, called the “Rising Card,” started with an audience member choosing certain cards, as if for a regular card trick. But expectations turned upside down when Thurston put the deck into a glass goblet. He would then call up certain cards—the king of spades, the ten of clubs—and they would rise two feet in the air, into his hands. The dazzling end was when all 52 cards were thrown, serially, into the audience. One reporter wrote that they fluttered to audience members “like beautiful butterflies.”

Audiences of the ’10s and ’20s loved magic. Many vaudeville shows included magic acts. Thurston inherited the “mantle of magic” from Harry Kellar, who popularized the floating woman illusion, or the “Levitation of Princess Karnac.” Thurston added Ziegfeld-inspired touches



to his show, like gaudy costumes for his assistants. And he closely observed European magicians he encountered, as Steinmeyer writes, especially those at London's Egyptian Hall, where the most accomplished magicians gathered.

By 1925, a typical Thurston show included elements of the circus, dancing girls, and a full orchestra and featured an astonishing 36 presentations with engineering marvels. Sometimes, a Baltimore reporter wrote, the number of attendants drew attention to the "complicated apparatus" that made a particular trick work. A list for Act 3, from one of Thurston's workbooks: Nine People Cabinet, Pigeon Pie, Bangkok Bungalow, Egg Trick, Glass Trick, Prisoner of Canton, Phantom Piano, Lady and Boy, Triple Mystery.



Thurston performed for royalty, celebrities and presidents. He pretended to smash President Calvin Coolidge's watch to pieces, only to have Mrs. Coolidge find it in a loaf of bread. Theodore Roosevelt's son Quentin saw the show so many times that he outsmarted Thurston once, by bringing a bag that foiled a trick involving an egg.

Children flocked to Thurston's shows, causing reviewers to remind readers that if they were insistent on spotting a false panel move during one of the cabinet tricks, they should let it go to preserve the kids' happiness. He performed annual shows for orphanages. "They're all children, these patrons of mine," Thurston said once. "I am proud of my calling as an entertainer—a dealer in magic art that involves the practice of deception without causing harm."

Feldman says that part of Thurston's impact was the language he used. "It did not appear as though he was reciting lines. And the stories he shared felt like he was saying them for the first time," he says. "The impression that he made on people was so strong. People who saw him perform returned years later with their own children to see 'The Wonder Show of the Universe' once again."

An excerpt of Thurston's stage patter found in one of his workbooks shows his unique delivery style:

"Many of you are saying to yourself that it is impossible for Fernanda to float in space without any performance and that Fernanda is hypnotized. I'll prove it to you. Wake, wake Fernanda and raise your right hand. Rest and sleep, Fernanda. In all our lives there are certain events that stand out that cannot be forgotten. I am going to show you something now, ladies and gentlemen, you will remember a long as you live. Behold the impossible."

Feldman says that in these moments, many people trusted what they saw. They thought that Thurston himself was magic. "They really believed it. I have some letters that are to Thurston where people are like can you help me find the love of my life? Can you tell me where my brother is?"

Thurston took his role seriously. "The conjuring fever was consuming me, and there was no relief," wrote Thurston in his 1929 autobiography, *Life of Magic*. "I know of no business, trade or profession that exerts so powerful an influence as magic. The love of it becomes a passion." He told a reporter in 1903 that he practiced card tricks for an hour every day and then again before his performances, and he had his hands massaged three times a week, to keep them smooth.

