



THE TARBELL TRIBUNE

JUN. 2026

IBM RING 43 NEWSLETTER

The Month & Upcoming

Close-Up Competition

Next Meeting: **Friday**,
June 19th, at 7:00 pm
@ **Magic Inc**

Inside this month's issue, we look back at a fantastic May lecture with Nathan Kranzo, whose practical, inventive magic gave members plenty to think about, use, and discuss. You'll also find this month's Member Spotlight on Harlan Tarbell, a true giant of magic whose creativity, teaching, artwork, and showmanship helped shape the art we practice today. Plus, Mike shares a Houdini-themed Prez Says in recognition of the 100th anniversary of Houdini's death, along with book recommendations for those looking to dig deeper into the legend.

But the big event this month is our **Close-Up Competition on Friday, June 19th**, and this is one you won't want to miss

The Close-Up Contest is always one of Ring 43's most exciting nights because it puts our members' magic front and center. Performers will present 8–10 minute acts, and members will vote for three winners based on appearance, presentation, originality, audience reaction, and technique/skill. It's a great opportunity to support fellow members, see fresh material under real performance conditions, and celebrate the kind of close-up magic that makes our club special.

Whether you're competing, cheering from the audience, or looking for inspiration for your own magic, this is the meeting to circle on your calendar. After that, we head into summer break—so let's make June 19th a strong, fun, and memorable night for Ring 43.

Last Month: Nathan Kranzo Lecture

The theme for our May meeting was a lecture by **Nate Kranzo**. Nathan has been a magic creator and entertainer for years. His creations have been featured in places such as Genii Magazine and The Magic Magazine. He performs and lectures all accross the world, and even consults for TV shows such as 'The Virtual Magician' and Penn and Teller's NBC Special 'Off The Deep End'.

Kevin Owen opened the meeting and introduced Nate and **Michael Rich** our new-ish members. He also acknowledged Fred Lane who managed to attend. Fred is our most senior member. Kevin introduced **Pedro Nieves** who talked about upcoming Magic, Inc lectures/workshops and their Youth Magic Camp. **John Sturk** announced SAM 3's upcoming lecture and the SAM convention in Appleton Wisconsin July 1–4th. Kevin also mentioned the May 20th Knights of Sleight Flea Market, a big annual event.

Alec Schraegle introduced our guest lecturer Nate Kranzo. Nate immediately showed four Jacks with blue backs to match his eyes. He removed one card but showed he still had four Jacks remaining. He did this several more times and then turned the four Jacks over to show they now had red backs.





Next, Nate pulled out a coin and then shook it and it instantly changed to a kid's rubber ball.

Nate handed out a Mood List which associated different colors with corresponding moods. **Alan Koslow** picked a card and a mood (joy). Nate first found the mood then found a card with the back color that corresponded to it. He turned over the odd-backed card and showed it was the card Alan had chosen. (The Mood Deck)

Next came a card trick based on the Schrodinger Cat principle. He had a volunteer peek a card and claimed it was both in the deck and in his pocket. The card was named and he removed it from his pocket. "What's weird is that the deck is also in my hand and pocket at the same time", he reached into his pocket and pulled out a deck as the deck in his hand vanished!

Nate handed **Fred Lane** a silver dollar and Marshall Ellenstein a see-through silk. Fred placed the coin in the silk and Nate took it back and caused it to penetrate back and forth through the silk.



Next Nate put a Certs mint in Marshal's right hand and a quarter and a penny in his left hand. Marshal chose one, the penny, and when he opened his hands the penny was gone from his hand and appeared inside the plastic wrapper with the mint.

Nate finished with a book test done with two magazines (The Truth Test). He had Alan pick a magazine then say "Stop" as he flipped through. He tore out Alan's page, tore it into pieces, and had Alan pick a piece and concentrate on any word on the piece. Nate correctly predicted that Alan was thinking of "Lightning".



After the lecture some of the members adjourned to Primo Chukie's Restaurant for additional fun and fellowship.

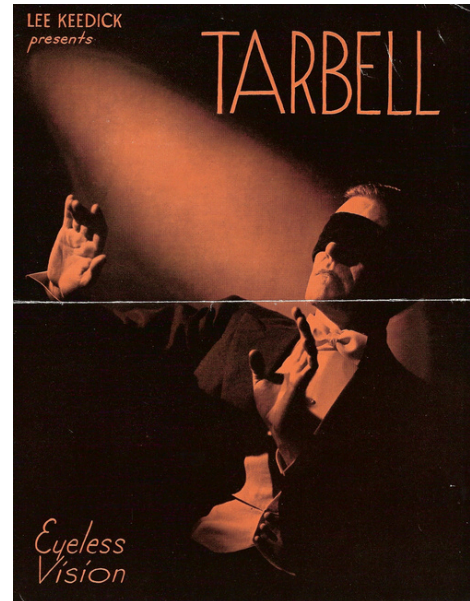
- John Hutsebaut

Member Spotlight

Harlan Tarbell: A Pioneer Who Transformed the Art of Magic

Harlan Tarbell was not only a brilliant magician, but also one of the most innovative and influential figures in the history of magic. Born in Delavan, Illinois in 1890, Tarbell became famous as a performer, inventor, artist, teacher, lecturer, and author whose work shaped modern magic for generations.

Tarbell's greatest contribution was the creation of the *Tarbell Course in Magic*, first released in 1926. The course contained 60 lessons and approximately 3,000 illustrations, teaching not only tricks but also presentation, showmanship, psychology, publicity, and professionalism. The course was re-written into books in the 1940's and is still considered one of the greatest instructional works ever produced. In 1952, the Academy of Magical Arts honored Tarbell with a Literary Fellowship, calling him "the greatest teacher and instructor of the art of conjuring."



Tarbell was also a true pioneer in entertainment. In 1927, he is credited as possibly being the first magician to perform magic over the radio, astonishing audiences by describing and teaching tricks through broadcasts on Chicago station WBCN. He later became famous nationwide for his "Eyeless Vision" blindfold act and daring blindfold drives through busy city streets, publicity stunts that newspapers across America eagerly covered.

As an inventor, Tarbell created original effects that amazed even the world's greatest magicians. His famous "Tarbell Rope Trick" was praised by Harry Houdini as "a real masterpiece," while Howard Thurston stopped his show to have Tarbell perform this legendary rope trick. Many of Tarbell's creations, are still performed today.

What made Tarbell especially unique was the combination of magic and art. A professionally trained illustrator, he created more than 1,150 illustrations for the landmark book *Greater Magic* and illustrated countless books, catalogs, and magic advertisements. Outside the magic world, he redesigned the famous Morton Salt umbrella girl logo and even created instructional artwork for Tinkertoy.

Tarbell was also ahead of his time in performance and promotion. He blended magic with chalk talks, comedy, storytelling, and motivational speaking, creating multimedia-style presentations decades before such performances became common. In 1934, he directed and starred in a short Buck Rogers science-fiction film and stage production at the Chicago World's Fair, using advanced illusion techniques and theatrical effects that amazed audiences.

Continued on page 4...



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Beyond his accomplishments, Tarbell was beloved for his generosity and dedication to fellow magicians. He lectured constantly, mentored younger performers, supported magic clubs nationwide, and served as President of the Society of American Magicians. His peers honored him with lifetime memberships, testimonial banquets, and awards recognizing his extraordinary contributions to the art.

More than sixty years after his death, Harlan Tarbell remains one of magic's most respected pioneers. His creativity, innovation, teaching, and showmanship helped transform magic from a collection of tricks into a true performing art.



Prez Says...Houdini

2026 is the 100th anniversary of Houdini's death and there are a bunch of Houdini books that have been released or will be released.

Exposing Houdini by Charles Greene III is a very nice coffee table book that is filled with never before seen images from glass slides that Charles discovered at an Ohio auction. The book contains additional images and text to put the slides in context. This is a great book for Houdini fans. Ordering info can be found at <https://www.ioniasecrets.com/>

A Strenuous Career: The Personal Challenge & Advertisement Scrapbook of Houdini is another beautifully produced book limited to only 300 copies. Bruce Averbook owns Houdini's scrapbook that contains a ton of the challenge escapes advertising, newspaper clipping etc. As you may be aware, when Houdini's show came to town, local businesses would "challenge" Houdini to escape from all kinds of things. The majority of the challenges were packing crates, ropes/handcuffs, mailbags, straitjackets and other devices used in mental institutions at the time.

Continued on page 5...

Close Up Contest Rules



8 - 10 Minute Acts



10% penalty - under 8 minutes, over 10 minutes



Members vote 3 winners



Spectator welcome to join before time starts



Appearance

Were the contestant's dress, presence and handling of helpers (if any) appropriate? What was your overall impression?

Presentation

Did the contestant handle material properly? Was their act well structured, flow smoothly, and have good patter?

Originality

How creative was the contestant's effects, methods, presentations, and props? Did they have any novel ideas?

Audience Reaction

Did the audience experience enjoyment, wonder, surprise or mystery? How was the contestant's entertainment value?

Technique / Skill

Did the contestant exhibit a mastery of any sleights or misdirection they used? Did the contestant "flash" or expose any magic?

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There are a few unusual ones including a large envelope. While this is a fascinating look at the challenges, it's just scans of the scrapbook pages. The last scrapbook that Bruce published (through Mike Caveney) was Houdini's travel diary. Escaping Obscurity - The Travel Diary of Harry Houdini, 1897-1899. That book was annotated by John Cox; deciphering Houdini's handwriting and including context and photos about what Houdini was writing about in the diary. So, while this latest book is good, I did enjoy the previous book much more. A Strenuous Career can be ordered at <https://www.1878press.com> and Escaping Obscurity can be ordered <https://www.magicwords.shop/books>

There are more books coming out later this year that I'm looking forward to including:

- Houdini: The Man who Died Twice by Larrian Gillespie M.D. (July 1)
- Houdini's Library by Eric Colleary (August 18)
- Houdini Revealed by William Rauscher (Fall)
- Handcuff King: The Conquests of Harry Houdini 1900-1909 by John Cox (Fall)

- Mike Kamlet

NEW MEMBER

Yen-Peng Liao

Happy Birthday

Robet Dahlquist
Juan Friguglietti
Gordon Gluff
BJ Jones
Rob Mendell
Gordon Meyer



Events Calendar

Jun 19 Close Up Competition

SUMMER BREAK

SEPT 18 TBD

Meeting location is graciously
hosted by



1838 W Lawrence Ave. Chicago, IL 60640

*Meeting date may be different from our normal 3rd
Friday of the month, on Tuesday

Chicago Magic Lounge - Shows Every Night!
chicagomagiclounge.com.

Coin Magic Study Group - Work through the classic coin magic book, Bobo's Modern Coin Magic, on the second Saturday of every month from 2 pm - 4 pm.

Magic Inc. - Support your local magic shop! For more info, call 773-334-2855 or magicinc.net.

Club Meetings:

S.A.M. Assembly 3—At Magic Inc, first Monday of the month 6:30pm.

www.magicalchicago.com

Conjuror's Corner Magic Club—Fourth Monday, Mr. Beef & Pizza, 1796 S. Elmhurst Rd., Mt. Prospect.

Magic Masters—Fourth Wednesday, The Station Pub & Restaurant, 6657 South Street, Tinley Park.

S.A.M. Assembly 106—Second Monday, The Timbers, 1100 N. River Rd., Shorewood.

S.A.M. Assembly 148—Third Monday, Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church, 314 W. Valette St., Elmhurst.

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Dedicated to teaching its members to become better magical entertainers!