

A gift for young people from magic's only honor society,  
The Camelard College of Conjuring of Chemmis (C.C.C.C.)

## **SECRETS OF TALKING LIKE MAGICIANS:**

**how you can get the most fun from seeing a magic show  
or from doing magic tricks yourself**

By  
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<sup>1</sup> *Patrick* is a stage name or pseudonym. Stage names are much more common than you would expect among magicians and other people in show business. Congratulations...you've learned your first secret!

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## **Welcome to the fascinating world of magic!**

The Faculty of the Camelard College of Conjuring at Chemmis (CCCC) wants to help you to really enjoy seeing magic performed and hopes you will become interested in doing magic tricks yourself. This gift reflects one of CCCC's three main purposes: "*Instruction... passing on the secret details of the Magical Arts to the next generation.*"

You'll find some words below in **bold type like this**. Among themselves, magicians use **jargon** (a private language) that sounds like a secret code to **laymen** (non-magicians).

For centuries, you could learn magic or **conjuring** only as an apprentice, when the secrets of entertaining with magic were handed down to you. Today, even with learning from DVDs and the Internet, it is still best to learn to do magic in person from a magic teacher, mentor, or member of a magic club.

When you see a magic performance live, on television, or on the Internet, you are seeing a **performing art** that is thousands of years old. Shamans and priests of ancient cults used magic to impress their followers. During the Middle Ages, magic street performers sometimes had their own booths at fairs. Big traveling illusion shows performed all over the world from about 1880 to 1940. Today, you can see magicians like Criss Angel and David Blaine on television, and nearby magicians in person in school and library shows and at parties, trade shows, and special family and corporate events.

Other performing arts include acting, ballet, dance, juggling, opera, playing musical instruments, singing, and ventriloquism. Perhaps you have tried one or more of these arts yourself. Magic and other performing arts require **practice** and are all good ways to increase persistence, problem solving, and self-assurance.

Prominent magicians used to be mostly men, but now more and more **women** are noted magicians. June Horowitz and Joan Caesar are Past Presidents of The International Brotherhood of Magicians, and Jann Wherry Goodsell and Maria Ibáñez are Past Presidents of The Society of American Magicians.

Magic often appears to overcome the laws of nature; for example, making something **levitate** (float) in midair defies the law of gravity. Other natural laws are defied by something-from-nothing **productions, transpositions** (invisibly changing places), or making something **vanish** into thin air.

When they are performing, almost all magicians are acting out their **performing personas** that are a great deal more interesting, lively, dynamic, funny, dramatic, or mysterious than they actually are in real life. A persona may suggest a stereotype such as a lady in a gown or a gentleman in a tuxedo. Sometimes, at a psychologically deeper level, a persona may reflect universal mythic characters. Early psychoanalyst Dr. Carl Jung called some of them "archetypes" such as a jester, a real magician or wizard, or a sage old philosopher living in a cave – as the real Merlin probably did.

Magic shows can resonate at a deeper level other ways. The performances of a highly regarded teacher of magicians, Jeff McBride, are dramatic and moving because they include masks, martial arts, pantomime, kabuki theatre, myths and folk tales. Magic's routines and themes often build on mythology and archetypal images.

## ***How magicians choose which effects to perform***

Many magicians prefer to use the word "**effects**" instead of "tricks" because some people miss out on much of the entertainment and fun in magic by viewing it as just a series of puzzles to figure out. Magicians choose which effects to do according to the type of event, the **venue** (the place where they will be performing), and the age range of the audience.

If they will be performing right next to a few **spectators**, perhaps at a restaurant table, they will do small-sized **strolling effects** or **close-up effects** with playing cards, rubber bands, or borrowed items such as coins. They will depend on using **sleight-of-hand** perfected through lengthy practice.

In a home or on a small stage, perhaps at a library or school, they will add larger **parlor effects** or **platform effects**. They may use background music, costumes, and **volunteers** from the audience. Successful magicians always treat volunteers with respect and courtesy. Magicians often use platform effects for venues ranging all the way from children's birthday parties to management events at giant corporations. Their **props** (apparatus) may include **billiard balls**, bouquets of flowers, boxes and tubes, large **rings** that form patterns, **magician's rope** which has had the stiff inner core removed, **silks** (colored scarves), and sometimes live goldfish, pets, or rabbits.

A theater stage is needed for **illusion shows**. You may know some adults who saw the spectacular shows of Blackstone, Lance Burton, Doug Henning, Siegfried and Roy, or John Calvert, who was still performing when he was more than 100 years old! Shows like David Copperfield's large touring productions use expert staffs, music, dramatic lighting, **sets**, costumes, and custom-built props. Kirby VanBurch even does magic with a helicopter.

## ***Two big secrets***

Almost all magicians use **patter** (interesting and often funny stories). It sounds as if they are just talking spontaneously, but they are not. They know exactly what they are going to say at key points in an effect. Sometimes they write out the whole patter story word-for-word in a **script** just like the scripts memorized by actors and actresses.

**Misdirection** is an important secret of magic. It leads people to look at something irrelevant, or to pay attention to something that doesn't matter. Misdirection is often the real reason for waving a **magic wand** or using it to tap something. Skillful misdirection may take only a word or two, a gesture, or even just a quick glance.

## ***More words magicians use***

An **assistant** used to just carry props on and off the stage. Today, an assistant like Johnny Thompson's wife Pam is often a full partner in the **act**, a **co-star** who, in fact, makes much of the magic happen.

A “**Big O**” is a **standing ovation** that means the audience liked the performer so much they are *standing up* and clapping.

A **booking** is a future **gig** (show) under **contract**, either with the magician directly or through a **theatrical agent** (paid representative).

**Clean** means ending an effect with empty hands and ordinary props, which spectators may be invited to **examine**.

A **gimmick** is a hidden object that makes the effect work, such as a mirror. When it is in a prop, the prop is **gimmicked**.

A **load** is something hidden, such as a rabbit, until it is produced.

A **routine** is a sequence of several effects in a smoothly flowing, logical order.

**Secrets** of magic effects should never be **exposed** (revealed). If you perform an effect yourself and people ask you how you did it, *don't tell them*. Just give them a big smile and say “Very well!”

## ***Getting started as a magician***

Buy a good-sized magic set. It will contain apparatus for a number of effects, plus a booklet of directions with many more effects you can do with objects found around the house. You can add smaller sets endorsed by Lance Burton or Mac King.

If you are doing magic yourself, never repeat an effect. If a spectator says, “Do that again,” *don't do it!* Say “Let me show you something new” and immediately begin some *other* effect that works in a different way.

Search the Internet for magic dealers, magic museums, and video clips of professional magicians performing. Start at [www.allmagic.com](http://www.allmagic.com). You can buy used magic books and apparatus at online **magic auctions** and on eBay.

Read magic books borrowed from your school and community libraries. You may find magic shelved at number 793.8. (Magic books for young children may be shelved in a separate children's area.) Fun Fact: There are more publications about magic than any other performing art!

You will usually benefit far more from buying magic books, particularly used ones, than from spending the same amount on a one-or-two effect CD or DVD.

You can learn a great deal from magic magazines. The two largest magic clubs each publish their own magazine (*The Linking Ring* and *M-U-M*). *MAGIC* and *Genii* are very substantial magazines available both on the Internet and in printed form. Some magic newsletters and e-zines exist only on the Internet.

Consider taking some individual or small-group magic lessons.

## ***Members of magic clubs***

Get active in a magic club for young people, at least online. You also will be very welcome (as a guest of a member) to attend certain meetings of adult groups. Club programs are fun and usually full of laughs. They include auctions, book reviews, contests, critiques, demonstrations, field trips, flea markets, guest lecturers, meals, performances, **public shows**, teach-ins, and workshops.

Few club members are **professionals** who support themselves with magic on a full-time basis. Some are **semiprofessionals** who regularly supplement their income by performing on the side. Most are hobbyists who may occasionally take a paid gig but usually entertain just for fun or to benefit charities. Semiprofessionals have “**day jobs**” in all sorts of trades and professions. No matter how serious you get about a career in magic, you need to get a good education, so you will have some way other than magic to make a living.

Most magicians are fun-loving, generous people. Club members donate thousands of hours a year performing in homes for children, facilities for children and adults with special needs, nursing homes, and hospitals (particularly hospitals for children and for veterans).

## ***The largest clubs***

Young people have two magic clubs: **Magical Youth International** of the I.B.M., and the **Society of Young Magicians** of the S.A.M., as set forth below.

Adults can belong to four large international magic organizations.

### **IBM: The International Brotherhood of Magicians**

The largest group of all: several hundred local clubs are “Rings” – in no less than 73 countries. Their magazine is *The Linking Ring*. The website is [www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org), which includes the e-zine of **Magical Youth International**, named the *Top Hat*.

### **The Magic Circle**

Based in London, England; their magazine is *The Magic Circular*.

### **Magic Collectors’ Association**

Based in Canada; their journal is *Magical*.

## **SAM: The Society of American Magicians**

The oldest, and in spite of its name, an *international* group: some 250 local clubs are “Assemblies.” Their magazine is *M-U-M*. The website is [www.magicsam.com](http://www.magicsam.com), which includes the e-zine of the **Society of Young Magicians**, named the *Magic SYMbol*.

### ***Recommended magic books***

You may want to ask for a little help reading these from a parent, teacher, or librarian.

Fajuri, Gabe

***Mysterio’s Encyclopedia of Magic and Conjuring***

Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2008. (Easy to read; nicely written)

Kaufman, Richard

***Knack Magic Tricks***

Washington, D.C.: Genii Magazine, 2012. (450 color photos)

Jay, Joshua

***Magic: The Complete Course***

New York: Workman Publishing Co., 2008. (Many color photos and a DVD)

Jay, Joshua (Ed.)

***Magic in Mind: Essential Essays for Magicians***

Free 553-page document from [www.vanishingincmagic.com](http://www.vanishingincmagic.com). (Some forty authors; excerpts donated for this resource for the youth programs of the S.A.M.)

Pogue, David

***Magic for Dummies***

Foster City, CA: IDG Books Worldwide, 1998. (Fun to read; some photos)

We hope you liked exploring the world of magic. If you choose to pursue magic as a hobby, you can use it to make the world a happier place, while having lots of fun yourself.

The next time you see a magician perform, just sit back, relax, and enjoy letting the effects reawaken in you a childlike *wonder and delight*.

*You may want to save this information, in case someday you want to look further into the fascinating hobby of entertaining people with magic.*

*(EXAMPLE of an added localized page.)*

**Contact information for magic clubs near Fort Collins, Colorado:**

There are two **International Brotherhood of Magicians** “Rings.”

In Denver, The Mile High Magicians Society (I.B.M. Ring #131) website is [www.milehighmagicians.com](http://www.milehighmagicians.com). “Mile High” is a large group with an active program including very frequent guest lecturers; meeting times vary. Fine newsletter.

In Fort Collins, The Presto-Digitators (I.B.M. Ring #250) website is [www.prestodigitators.com](http://www.prestodigitators.com). They produce the superb “Magic in The Rockies” convention every autumn featuring programming for young people, a Junior Showcase, and at least one evening public show. Fine newsletter. Ordinarily meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, except for a banquet in January, a picnic in July, and a holiday dinner in December.

There are also two **Society of American Magicians** “Assemblies.”

In Denver, the Dr. Earl Reum S.A.M. Assembly #37 is combined with the I.B.M. Ring above at [www.milehighmagicians.com](http://www.milehighmagicians.com). It sponsors a **Society of Young Magicians** program.

In Greeley, the Dr. Ronald P. Dutton S.A.M. Assembly #292 ordinarily meets at 11:00 a.m. on the second Saturday of the month. Lunch is optional. It sponsors an informal **Society of Young Magicians** program. The website is [www.sam292.com](http://www.sam292.com). For current meeting information call Dr. Lloyd Worley at (970) 356-3002 or email him at [lloyd@worleythewizard.com](mailto:lloyd@worleythewizard.com).

*(EXAMPLE of an added individual ad.)*

**MAGIC LESSONS**

“Rich” Nakata has years of experience *teaching magic* to children, teens, and adults as individuals and in small groups. Mentor of international professional Derek McKee. A fulltime professional performer. Alumnus of two Master Classes at McBride’s Magic & Mystery School. Senior Full Professor, C.C.C.C.

Wrote *Bizarre Magick* and *The Nakata Cups and Balls: A Magic Lecture/Workshop*. Subject of a cover photo and feature article in the November 2010 *M-U-M* magazine.

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