

Volume 11, No. 3 March V020. 3 March 2020



Message from the President

2020 Perfect Vision for TAOM

Magicians of Texas, I hope you are all doing well. Spring is basically here. It is Spring Break in the local schools and we just sprang forward an hour by turning our clocks ahead by an hour last week! So far, we have had a bit of rain and some wind, but March has hardly come "in like a lion..."

Thank you SO much to those who replied and assisted us with feedback to the anonymous survey we started in December. We had responses from just under 200 people!

Yay! A list of the 9 questions and a summary of the responses is copied below this article.

Most of the survey responders, with a few exceptions, were magicians in some capacity. The overwhelming reason they attend conventions is *to learn*, more so than to socialize with others or to be entertained. I was surprised to discover this. My interpretation of this data is that magician-related events at conventions *presently* are more important than extracurricular events, such as spouse events, at least *for current attendees*. That does not mean that if more spouses and family members attended, that the results would be the same. 5% of our responders were spouses or other family members of magicians. Maybe, non-magic-related events, such as family events, spouse meetings, or local sight-seeing trips, might be more in demand if we drew more of the magician's family to our conventions. Hmmmm. This fact is interesting to consider and to work on for convention planning committees and marketers.

Question three indicates that the thing most attendees liked about conventions is the social aspect; visiting with friends and other magicians. This response superseded the entertainment value answer and the learning value answer. Wow! In contrast to the second question, where the goal for attending is #1, to learn, #2 to socialize, and #3, to be entertained. The net result, what responders get out of the convention is 1 the Social aspect, 2 the entertainment, and 3 the learning. This tells me that maybe we are not giving convention attendees what they really want, first and foremost....LEARNING!

It seems pretty obvious from the other answers that the rising costs of conventions are killing attendance. Outrageous cost is the primary thing attendees dislike about attending conventions, as well as the single reason people cite for not attending conventions that they really would like to attend.

The biggest things people would like to see changed about conventions, are to reduce the costs and to do more workshops and lectures.

Most responders (51%) attend only one convention per year. That is a sobering fact and it places a heavy responsibility on the convention planners to hit a home run. Just imagine if your

convention is the only convention that people attend that particular year. Wow...convention planners, you must bring your A-game.

As I digested and analyzed the statistics of the survey, it was obvious to me that cost, talent, and geographical location are the three biggest determinants for convention attendance. It seems in some cases that extraordinary talent can overcome the higher costs and still bring people in. On the flip side, poor or repetitive talent is the second reason for people to blow off the convention, especially if the cost is high. These are all important lessons, and data that I will pass along to my convention planning committee.

In reaction to this data, I have to admit that a few of these statistics caught me off guard. There were more part-time pros than either amateurs or full-time pros who responded. Most people only attend 1 convention per year; most people attend with the goal of learning as their primary reason - which is not being fulfilled. These and many more of the results surprised me. I have to say that our 2020 TAOM convention planners got a few things right here. We correctly saw the desire for people to learn something at a convention. We are offering 12 workshops, a speed bonus workshop, and a one-hour special workshop session on juggling to make your magic shows more entertaining, and a one-hour special presentation on the birthday business. That is 15 separate, one hour, learning events, with more hands-on than you will ever get in a 72-hour time frame.

What else did our planners get right? They listened. At TAOM in Houston in 2018 Jamie Salinas and the TAOM board invited Danny Garcia and Alex Rangel in to discuss why conventions were not better attended, and in particular by the younger crowd. One reason they cited was cost (our survey results validate their reason precisely). Another was because (paraphrased) "conventions are always the same old thing, featuring the same old talent. We need to mix it up. Young people want to see people they know from modern media and the web." I spoke with Scott Wells at Penguin MAXX in Dallas in 2019 and his advice was that people are not as concerned about staying in a five-star hotel as they are about keeping their expenses affordable so they can attend the convention, really enjoy it, and maybe have a few dollars left to spend in the Dealers Room. I communicated this to our planning team and we tried to take some initial steps in correcting some of the issues that were called out by Houston friends. Our registration is \$100 for the basic registration and \$225 for the workshop registration. The hotel rate is \$109 per night. I challenge you to find a more affordable convention these days! Additionally, we tried to mix up the traditional talent list a bit. Notice that we came out of the gate last September by announcing our female performers first. (Ladies first, right?) Sadly, a strong female presence is something missing from many magic conventions that you see advertised these days. We tapped into internet magic by bringing in DC Magic Girl and Alan Paoletti. We borrowed from the latest and greatest of the Magic Castle when we pursued Jared Kopf. We recruited Lian Walker to treat convention goers a particular stream and flavor of traditional Chinese magic that most magicians will never get to see.

The advice to give attendees something different did not fall on deaf ears. I would like you all to meet Harry Allen. I mean REALLY meet Harry. You say, "he is not something different" - or is he? You see him every year (and at every convention) behind a dealer table, right? But...how long has it been since you have seen him live and hilarious on big stage like when he made his bones. TAOM has not seen him like this for many years! Our survey results also indicated that people *still* like the big-name talent: the national and international stars. So, be sure to look at www.taom.org/2020 and access *2020 TAOM Talent* where you will find that we have a talent sheet that rivals, and in some years, exceeds, that of the national and international conventions! So, not only will you get to see your favorite international stars perform, but you will get to see them more than once over the course of the convention. You like Ariann Black? She is performing in three different capacities. You like Robert Baxt? He's part of three shows. Michael Finney? You will see him twice. How about Losander? Three shows! Oh...did I mention two-time FISM winner Rocco? Three shows!

We are halfway filled up, so register now at <u>www.taom.org/2020</u>. There you will find menu options with links to register for both the convention and the convention hotel at our special convention

rate.

As always, thank you for reading, and for making Texas magic great! Joey Byers Your 2019-20 TAOM President

The 75th annual TAOM convention will be in Fort Worth, hosted by SAM Assembly 138, Alliance of Illusionists. This column will keep you up on perpetual developments as they happen on a month by month basis. Our website will keep you up to date on the convention happenings and process your registrations as well. So, please visit www.taom.org and explore the website for the latest on talent, the convention schedule, hotel info, dealer info, contest info, and FAQs (frequently asked questions). Some of this info is changing daily, so it will be updated as we know more and finalize plans. Also, check out TAOM 2020 on Facebook for latest developments.



2020 TAOM Survey and Results

This Survey Monkey survey was originally announced and made available via hyperlink in the December issue of Magic Across Texas. The survey was live, accepting feedback for three months. We had just under 200 responses, most of whom heard about the survey from either M.A.T. - or one of the local club newsletters that re-run the column.

- 1. With respect to your experience in the world of magic, you consider yourself:
- A. Part time Pro 33%
- B. Amateur 28.9%
- C. Full time Pro 22%
- D. Hobbyist 7%
- 2. What is the primary reason you attend a magic convention?
- A. To learn from experts 37.8%
- B. To socialize with other magicians 20%
- C. To enjoy the entertainment 15.6%
- D. To advance my career in magic, see great talent, and dealer room each 6.7%
- 3. What do you like most about magic conventions (Free form answer)
- A. 30% of replies mentioned visiting/friends/ comradery
- B. 22% of replies mentioned entertainment/the magic itself
- C. 20% of replies mentioned learning
- D. 14% of replies mentioned new ideas, inspiration to advance career or grow in the art
- E. 8% of replies mentioned dealers room
- * Other multiple mention were to meet the stars and spouse events
- 4. What do you dislike most about magic conventions (Free form answer)
- *answers were all over the place on this one. Most common answers listed first
- A. 16% cost of convention and convention related expenses
- B. 14% over-packed schedule
- C. 12% venue (showrooms, close-up rooms, offsite theater, hotel layout)
- D. 9% show seating

Other multiple answers, none over 6%, in no order: lack of workout facilities in hotel, poor schedule time of day for events, poor event organization, repetitive talent, lack of food options

5. What 1 thing would you change about modern day magic conventions? (Free form answer)

* Only 2 responses were close to 10%, most all of the other responses were less than 4%. Most responses were only particular to 1 person - which made it difficult to classify. This question solicited a lot of pet peeve answers.

A. 9.8% Price conventions lower (reduce costs)

B. 9.6% - Do more workshops/lectures

C. 7% - Seating (seating-related)- some want assigned, some want to change close-up show seating, others want to change gala show seating.

D. 4% - Try something new

6. Which factor kept you from attending the last convention you wanted to attend?

A. 36.3% - Cost

B. 11.4% - Poor planning by convention hosts

C. 9.1% - Poor talent (lack of big names)

D. 7% - Schedule conflict (magic-related)

E. 6.8% - Distance to travel

F. 5% - Schedule conflict (non-magic-related)

7. How many magic conventions do you attend per year (on average)

A. 51.1% - one

B. 28.9 % - two

C. 13.3% - three

D. 4.44% - four or five

8. List three factors in order of importance that would convince you to attend a magic convention without hesitation.

Weighted answers (Primary Answer 3 points, Secondary Answers 2 points, Tertiary Answers 1 point) shown relative to other answers

- A. Good Talent 229 points
- B. Better Location 160 points

C. Better Cost 144 points

D. Huge Name 80 points - related to talent obviously (Lance Burton, Copperfield, Levent, Franco, unnamed)

E. Personal Schedule/Health allows 64 points

- F. Special, Better, Appealing lectures 40 points
- G. Being paid to perform, present, or be there professionally 40 points

H. Venue 36 points

I. Better/More/bigger variety of Dealers - 32 points

9. List three factors in order of importance that would cause you NOT to attend a magic convention without hesitation.

A. Too costly (travel, hotel, registration, etc) 283 points

- B. Poor, unappealing, or repetitive talent 136 points
- C. Geographical location (too far, flight involved, etc) 73 points
- D. Personal schedule conflict 68 points
- E. Poor venue/facilities of some type (theaters, showrooms, hotels) 48 points

F. Date of convention (date/time of year - e.g. Labor Day, July 4) 37 points

G. Host actions (Poor communication, poor advertising, offensive actions/words by convention host - 32 points

H. Poor variety of, or too few Dealers - 28 points

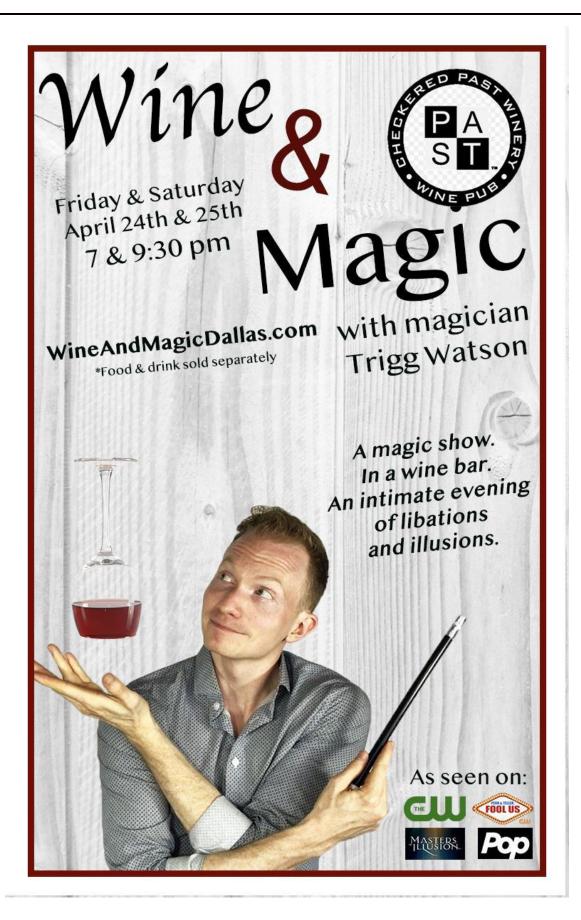
I. Too few/bad workshops - 24 points

J. Inclusion of Blue material or non-family-friendly events, performers, content - 21 points



Ben Jackson's Magic Music and Mayhem in March; April shows are still a go. John Carney Lecture in Dallas on March 22 Alain Iannone lecture in Houston on March 31 MAXX Southwest - Penguin Magic in Dallas on April 3 & 4 Ferran Rizzo & Nataly Machado lecture in Houston on June 2 Call other venues before venturing out to confirm events





PAUL PRATER Mindreading & Storytelling

"Paul Prater is brilliant, personable and good humored...highly recommended." MUM Magazine

Saturday, July 27th 8:00 p.m. Confetti Eddies Magic Parlor Tickets at prekindle.com



Mario the Maker Magician

Mario will lecture at the Dallas Magic Club's April 21st meeting. Lecture is free to members of DMC; \$25.00 for others.

Mario was featured (cover story) in the February 2019 M-U-M Magazine. He is known for his signature slapstick character and clever integration of DIY electronics and robotics into his show.

BEN JACKSON FOUR SEASONS HOTEL IN HOUSTON

Visit Houston's elegant Four Seasons Hotel at 1300 Lamar for Ben's incredible show. Reserve your tickets today at



https://www.benjacksonmagic.com/live The shows sell out quickly.

Upcoming shows: April 24 and 25 at 7:00 and 9:00 p.m.

DOWN THE ROAD.....

- **Nick Diffatte** will entertain at the Dallas Magic Clubs' installation banquet on May 19 and will lecture at the Addison Tree House on May 20.
- **Tyler Wilson** will lecture at the Wylie City Hall on May 24.
- **Chris Philpott** presents "Magic and Mentalism" at the Wylie City Hall on July 5.

BITS AND PIECES OF INTERESTING STUFF

(Please contact the venue to make sure the event hasn't been cancelled)

Mid-Cities Magic Circle...

Meeting the second Tuesday of every month at Arlington Golden Corral Restaurant located at 465 East I-20 N in Arlington at 7:00 dinner. Magic gets underway about 8 p.m. The topic is "Your Favorite Trick". Bring any trick and perform. Check out Mid-Cities Magic Circle on Facebook for more details!



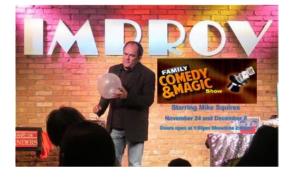




THE IMPROV IN ADDISON...

Mike Williams heads up an all star line-up in Addison every other weekend. It's Comedy and Magic that you won't want to miss.

Visit <u>www.improvaddison.com</u> for show information or to purchase tickets.



THE IMPROV IN ARLINGTON...

Mike Squires headlines shows at The IMPROV in Arlington on alternate Saturdays. Mike will casually blow your mind. Doors open at 1:00.

for

John Magic's Theater and Museum

Magic's Theater is owned and operated by magician John Magic and his family, including his wife who runs the front-ofhouse operations. Each week, the theater hosts a close-up magic show on Friday and a stage show on Saturday performed by Magic himself, who says his goal is to



give "the classics of magic to a fresh and brand-new audience." Elaborate stage shows start at 7:00 p.m. every Saturday night with family-friendly magic entertainment. Friday evenings feature close-up magic by John Magic and Chris English. Private close-up shows are available Monday through Thursday by appointment.

The theater is located at 13419 Fitzhugh Road off 290 past Oak Hill west of Austin. Buy your ticket at the door or make reservations at http://www.magicstheater.com

MONDAY NIGHT MAGIC IN ARLINGTON

All magic aficionados are invited to attend informal gatherings at THE ROCK at 2300 East Lamar Boulevard in Arlington every Monday night. Bring your cards and props to practice your "chops".

Second Saturday Magic Sale Magic, Etc., Fort Worth's premier magic shop hosts a Second Saturday Sale every month where magicians can score good savings on props and supplies. Magicians get "special" treatment and special prices. Magic, Etc. is located on Forest Park Boulevard at I-30 in Fort Worth.



Thrifty Third Thursday

Magic, Etc. and Fort Worth Costume started a new monthly gathering of magicians from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. You are invited to wheel and deal for the best buys ever only at Fort Worth's own Magic, Etc. and Fort Worth Costume.



Cards in South Austin SECOND SATURDAYS

Cardicians in Austin get together once a month to swap moves and stories, routines and fun. To confirm times, locations, and dates and for more info, contact Lou Hornung at <u>Ihornung@sbcglobal.net</u>





CHUCK LEHR

The Dean of Dallas Magicians Chuck Lehr lost his battle with cancer on February 29, 2020. He was 83. Everyone in the Dallas Magic Clubs, the Texas Association of Magicians, the Texas Clown Association, and the Society of American Magicians owes him a debt of gratitude. His kindness and wisdom guided all of these organizations during turbulent times and good times. His unfailing humor "saved the day" on many occasions. His intellect and magic showed true leadership.

Over the past few months he wrote his own life story, copied below.

The Life and Times of Chuck Lehr

By Chuck Lehr – Himself

My name is Chuuuck, People call me Chuuuck and I'm da DEAN of 13. I am 38 years old. (Darned AUTO CORRECT) - That is the fiction part of this story. I am really 83 at this writing, but the "Magic Bug" did not bite me until my 35th year. I left AFTAC as a SMSgt (E8) in 1975 and spent my final AF tour at Minot, ND, as Director of Administrative Services of the 5th Bomb Wing.

Retired, Joannie and I aimed for Texas and ended up living in Mesquite. I spent the next 20 years as the Administrative Assistant in the Safety Engineering Department at Employers Insurance of Texas.

A-HA! Despite some rants from Joannie, I was able to finally be a full-time professional magician. But – I digress. Let's now go back to the start of all this magic stuff.

My magic life began in paradise, and for the next many years, I spent a large part of it doing everything from trade shows for Rolls Royce to birthday parties for soooo many kids – and every-thing in between.

I was blessed with a unique and interesting Air Force career, which landed me in Hawaii for the better part of ten years. Under the watchful eyes of Hawaiian magicians Jimmy Kane and Jimmy Yoshida, Joannie and I, as POSEY and FLOWER KLOWNS, got the break of a lifetime with a two-year stint at the Holiday

Inns at Waikiki Beach and Honolulu International Airport. Since settling in Dallas in 1975, I continued to provide family-rated entertainment to audiences across the USA; including Boston, Tampa, Atlanta, Kentucky, Orlando, Las Vegas, and across Texas and its neighboring states. Of course, our magic income was supplemented by a grateful government and with another career as an administrator in the insurance field. My employer made good use of my magic, using me at various tradeshows in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas; and teaching in seminars for the company.

Over the next several years, I had all but abandoned the "painted face" and adopted costumes such as a fancy tux, western gambler, ancient wizard, Uncle Sam, or even a Chinese magician.

But, my very favorite performance attire (almost my trademark) was a zany slick street magician, complete with pop-up tie and flying flower. Some FUN. I have done a variety of magic; comedy, sophisticated, trade show, magic with a message, hospitality rooms, close-up, stage, libraries, and schools; and I always worked for the SMILE. Of course, it was all purely G-rated.

Over the years, I left them LAUGHING and APPLAUDING at places like Southfork Ranch, Six Flags over Texas, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Rolls-Royce of Canada, and Local & NBC National TV. "Never failed to win a smile" said the Waikiki Holiday Inn. Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge said, "He even made ME laugh". I was a "fulltime pro" from March of 1994. The year 2001 (a slow year), I performed nearly 300 shows. That should give you an idea of how busy I was. I stayed busy with magic full-time and tried to involve myself in the Society of American Magicians (S.A.M.) and Dallas Magic Club activities. I was voted a "Life Member" of the Dallas Magic Club. How does magic fit into my life – better stated – how does my life fit into magic? The best answer is "By Appointment". We found ourselves making appointments and clearing calendar dates just to enjoy an evening with our grown children.

How did I develop my act? Performing as Posey Klown for many years with Joannie gave me experience and "guts" to be in front of a group. It helped me polish my magic. Pretty soon I found that I could do the magic - without the face paint. My life suddenly became easier. I could now do more shows. Next, I learned that with just a bit of added sophistication, I could do the same magic for adults. For the most part, they were all just big kids anyways.

An observation of caution for you "fulltime wannabees". One – keep your day-job. You need a fallback position because it does not happen overnight. It takes time to build your reputation and client base. Once it got rolling, my magic (business) became a 16-hour a day job. Always "on", always checking phone messages, always getting ready for the show. There was a time when I was doing as many shows as I could fit in a day. I learned.

Yes... I am slowing down. I began to "coast" in 2007 (A typical weekend now was limited to three shows on Saturday, two on Sunday, and an occasional day off during the week). As much as I loved magic, I knew it was important to "smell the roses", so a major part of my schedule continued to be birthday parties (my favorite). Further, I loved sleeping in my own bed, so I tried to stay close to home.

What kept me busy working was a basic club-type show that could expand or contract to fit the situation. Normally, 40 minutes of funny magic got me through a banquet, or a shortened version would suffice for a business seminar-meeting break. I also spent a lot of time performing strolling magic – which I dearly loved. Did I do restaurants? Yes – but I tried to stay away from the extended contracts. I preferred the excitement of different venues.

Maybe I am not the best example of a "career" magician. A real "full-time" magician would have to work a lot harder than I. I had military and civilian retirement benefits to fall back on. Without those, I certainly would be a nervous wreck, and still beating the bushes for work. I was fortunate that I was in a position to pick and choose my gigs. Another blessing for any "full-time pro" is an understanding mate who is involved in the lifestyle.

My peers in the entertainment field have seen fit to award me First Place in several magic competitions: Close-up Magician at the Midwest Magic Jubilee and the Texas Association of Magicians Convention for two separate years, and Comedy Stage Magic at the Texas Association of Magicians Convention.

I am a Past President of the Texas Association of Magicians (over 1,000 members nationwide); twice Past President Dallas Magic Clubs; Past S.A.M. Regional Vice President for the Gulf States, Society of American Magicians; Volunteer Coordinator in S.A.M. for several years; and finally, National Secretary for the S.A.M. from July 2006 to July 2008.

Mid-2008, the writing was on the wall, and we had to change priorities, so my "coasting" became almost "retirement". No more travelling, no evening shows - just simple and occasional daytime shows. That was so I could be available for Joannie during her times of recurring illness. This turned to total retirement when Joannie was diagnosed with further cancer problems, directing us to a brand new "low profile" senior life in Missouri.

I conclude with what I believe might be the most telling of my magic life. In December 2008, my

friends at the Dallas Magic Clubs saw fit to designate ME as the official "Dean of the Dallas Magic Clubs". This action may have been due to my advanced age, or an effort to make me stop performing at each and every meeting, but I like to think that it was because "magic" has brought me one of the greatest of treasures – "friendship".

I am now "coasting" in our new home in Wentzville, Missouri where I tried to make life for Joannie as comfortable as possible. Joannie left for Heaven after Valentine's day in 1996, leaving me to fend for myself. Thankfully, with my family and many, many friends here at Twin Oaks – I survive. Our management even honored Joannie and I with a major billboard on the main highway out of St Louis. She is always on my mind and in my heart.

So, that's my story, and I'm stickin' to it!

Chuck Lehr





The magic world, like everyting else, is changing. Magicians won't be performing in public nearly as much as before for a few weeks or months, but we can still hone our skill and learn. Check out online meeting venues such as Zoom to hold meetings and jam sessions. This is a good time to dig into those unread tomes in your magic library. Your mirror is a good audience. See yourself as others see you! *Non illegitimi corborundum.*

> Judy Hollingsworth Editor, Magic Across Texas

Copied below is great list of magic challenges from Dallas magician Doc Blum Organize your magic books and lecture notes

- Pull out a bunch of magic for the next magic auction or flea market
- Learn two new tricks you bought at a lecture or convention
- Find you IBM and/or SAM lapel button, shirt, hat, or whatever and wear it to the next club meeting
- Look through your old photos and share some of the vintage pictures on social media
- Re-read past issued of Magic Across Texas on the TAOM website or your club's newsletter

MAGIC CLUBS IN TEXAS

AUSTIN - IBM Ring 60 First Monday at 7:00 p.m. except January and September I.H.O.P at 11654 Research Boulevard in Austin Contact:president@ibmring60.org

AUSTIN - SAM ASSEMBLY 206 Third Monday at 7:00 p.m. Various Locations Contact bertilfredstrom@hotmail.com or <u>magicpta@gmail.com</u>

CORPUS CHRISTI - IBM RING 157 First Thursday at 6:00 p.m. Ronald McDonald House at 3402 Fort Worth Street in Corpus Christi Contact: <u>douglasjp3@yahoo.com</u>

DALLAS MAGIC CLUB - IBM RING 174 & SAM ASSEMBLY 13 Third Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. Addison Treehouse at 14681 Midway Road in Addison Contact: <u>dalsanders@stagemagic.com</u> <u>http://www.dallasmagic.org/</u>

FORT WORTH - IBM RING 15 and FORT WORTH MAGICIANS CLUB, INC. First Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at 4055 International Plaza Call 817-606-7770 for details Contact: fortworthmagiciansclub@hotmail.com

FORT WORTH - SAM ASSEMBLY 138 Third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Illusion Warehouse at 3917 McCart Avenue in Fort Worth Contact: <u>communications@allianceofillusionists.com</u>

HOUSTON - IBM RING 39 Fourth Monday at 7:00 p.m. except May and December Bayou Manor at 4141 South Braeswood in Houston Contact: judy4birds@yahoo.com http://www.houstonmagic.com

HOUSTON - SAM ASSEMBLY 19 First Monday at 7:00 p.m. except September I.A.T.S.E. Union Hall at 3030 North Freeway in Houston Contact: milesroot@aol.com http://www.houstonmagic.com LUBBOCK MAGIC CLUB First Monday at 7:00 p.m. John Ransom's Home, 6405 CR 7410 Contact: drhonea@gmail.com http://facebook.com/magicclublubbock

MID-CITIES MAGIC CIRCLE Second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The Golden Coral, 465 East I-20 in Arlington Facebook: "Mid-cities magic circle"

SAN ANTONIO - IBM RING 18 Fourth Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Beethoven Hall at 422 Perida Street in San Antonio Contact: <u>paul.mims@hotmail.com</u>

SAN ANTONIO - SAM ASSEMBLY 52 First Thursday at 7:30 p.m. The Longhorn Café, 12311 Nacogdoches Road Contact: <u>douggorman@att.net</u>

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