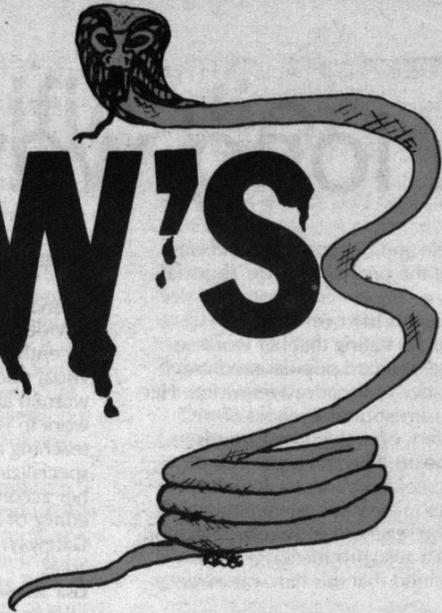


ALLOW'S EYE



because one has to not only remember the meanings of the cards, but be able to weave these meanings into a convincing story line as well. Likely the custom of telling stories

Melinda Vester spoke to one such individual about his arts:

Magic is a secret business, so when I entered "Willards House of Magic" I was asked for identification proving my affiliation with "The Gateway". This gave the interview a sense of mystery from the start. Freddie Willard then told me the reason for such secrecy is that spies often try to steal illusions from their competitors. To the dismay of the magic community, there are also some "magicians" that publicly reveal the secrets of illusions. These kinds of people are likely to bring the wrath of the magic community on themselves in the form of legal action. Skepticism is difficult enough to contend with without people giving away secrets.

A magician's livelihood depends on keeping the audience in awe. If the secret of an illusion is revealed, the wonder is gone. Freddie Willard is a master illusionist who, even in a simple conversation, can keep you spellbound. Although he gave me permission to record our conversation, I got the distinct impression that he didn't want me to. Our conversation was so engrossing that before I knew it, it was over. I hadn't

gotten anywhere near my tape recorder. (Interestingly enough, the film that I shot turned up blank...). He says that magic takes talent, study and hard work. He should know.

You could not find a more accomplished magician than Freddie Willard, who has performed magic professionally for 31 years (41 if you include his time as an amateur). He is well known in magic societies all over the world and has over 130 magical inventions to his name — all under copyrights, of course.

There are always young people in Mr. Willard's shop and he willingly shows them how to perform magic with the items they buy. (He will perform any trick in the shop, but until it is sold, he will not reveal the secret.) When Mr. Willard comes across an exceptionally talented youth, he takes him under his wing as a protegee. He has two so far.



place. Now, he is the man to amaze audiences by performing miracles.

Although Mr. Willard is not on the stage anymore, he is still very involved with magic. His major concern is for magic's reputation, he does not want people to "degrade magic". He hopes illusion will remain enchanting in a world where there is very little enchantment left.

Mr. Willard made a point to say that you should be very careful when hiring a magician for parties, many performers are only concerned with lining their pockets. Their lack of ability as entertainers could destroy the illusion to their audiences. The magic must be protected!

At the end of our visit, Mr. Willard did what he called a simple, mechanical trick. He transformed a handkerchief into a cane... leaving me in a state of awe. I must say, Mr. Willard restored a sense of wonder to my life.

Magic is not a widely accepted belief in our society, but don't you ever have any nagging suspicions? Do Halloween, Tarot Readers, Magicians and all the other mystics prey on those suspicions. Or are they real? Until you are sure, maybe you should stay away from the high level bridge at night; especially at this time of year. Remember Sleepy Hollow...

Boo!

Story by:
Dragos Ruiu and
Melinda Vester
Graphic by:
Randal Smathers



accompany performances (that most modern magicians use) originates from Tarot readings and the histories that readers create during the divination. There are stories with each trick. The stories intrigue you, and keep your interest.

Though probably the most popular Tarot isn't the only method of divination practiced by mystics. Tea leaves, Tarot, and Palm Reading are scoffed at, but most people still retain a morbid curiosity about the future. They say, "I don't believe it for a second!", but when their fortune is being told their eyes widen, and the mystic receives their undivided attention.

Most people truly want to believe in magic. They want their world to be dramatic and surprising. The luck of the draw is not as romantic as a cosmic force controlling destiny. It is these hidden fantasies that mystics and magicians prey upon.



Fortunately, Freddie Willard and his wife, Rita, love children so the young people that hang around the shop are not a bother. "Magic is a clean art," Mr. Willard said, and he feels great when young people are interested in it, "it keeps them off the street." He likes to see wonder in young faces just like his inspiration, a magician named Dante, whom Willard first saw when he was nine. Dante borrowed Freddie Willard's pocket watch and smashed it. To young Freddie's distress, Dante went on to other tricks carefully ignoring Freddie's squirms of concern. When he asked for his watch back, Dante pointed to three potatoes and asked Freddie to choose one. Dante sliced the chosen potato open and to Freddie's amazement, there, inside, was his watch. This performance inspired Freddie's dedication to magic for all time.

Now, Freddie has taken Dante's

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