

Magic: It's implanting and illusion

BY SHERRY KAHAN

Was the Wiz thought a moment as he tried to come to terms with the essence of magic.

A Redford township magician who performs throughout the metropolitan area as a conjurer, Robert W. Wicks, also uses magic in the films and shows he writes and produces for such companies as Ford and Chevrolet.

"Part of magic is implanting ideas in people's minds based on what they think they see," he begins. "It is the art of illusion. They will see things that never really happen."

Warming up in his subject, he looked at his hands saying, "There is much in the hands."

He added, "Magic is applied psychology, audience control, showmanship, patter and the use of clever, subtle principles such as misdirection. You might command an audience to look where you want them to look. There is also misdirection after the fact that causes people to think back and see the trick in a way different from what actually took place."

Like all true magicians, Wix the Wiz will not reveal the secrets of his trade. When he teaches a four- to six-week course in the fabulous Endy's enrichment program at Quanton Elementary School in Birmingham, he asks his students to sign a pledge that they too will keep forever mum.

"It's not good to give things away because it spoils it for the audience," Wicks said. "If they know our secrets the people would not be nearly as entertained."

His wife Beverly serves as his chief assistant during their performances before Scouts, church groups and students in such towns as Southfield, Troy, Birmingham, Redford Township, Westland, Livonia and Garden City.

"I enjoy it," he claimed bravely as he removed her head from the box into which it had just been placed. She manages that act of selflessly during each performance, even though her loving husband plunges a score of knives into the box.

But behind the performance she withdraws her untouched head from the box. She won't tell how she does it, but reiterates that doing the show is a lot of fun.

Another part of her job description is to rise of the floor, levitation, it's called, and to pick hold youngsters from the audience willing to volunteer for a part in the show.

Some of the kids are bold and some go in the other extreme and want to perform a little. "I smiled the magician. Most of them go along with the act and have fun."



Magician Robert Wicks demonstrates a bit of illusion. (Staff photo)

Kids are wonderful. They like to be treated on an equal plane as adults. They don't like to be talked down to. Sometimes it upsets us at shows when the kids are responding and having a good time and the teachers walk around telling them to quiet down.

While they are the most rewarding kind of audience they are also the toughest. They are not as easily fooled as adults. They can't be misled by logic.

They see things clearly. When you perform for them you have to be good. It's a warm feeling when you please them."

The Redford Township resident can see a thread of magic running through their followers, he said. "If you fool people they will give you a lot of credit."

But this aspect of magic stopped during our lives going back to ancient times. The chief was granted power, or the shaman, a measure of medicine man all used magic to give power in the minds of

with handing periods when the magician began to say that what they used was not real magic, but a trick.

He strongly asserted that the ethic of magicians is not to pretend to have magic powers.

"A mentalist or someone performing with ESP might claim power along these lines," he said. "But magicians jump on this because of their own ethics."

He explained that a magician could take a deck of ESP cards containing special symbols.

"Look, I give you five cards and keep five, and both of us shuffle them," he continued. "Then you lay each of your cards face down on each of my which are also face down. When you turn them over the symbols on each pair match."

"Using magic tricks with extreme subtlety you can play that as an ESP thing."

He offered the reminder that in some performances members of the audience can send up information on cards to the mind reader or mentalist.

"He will tear up the cards before your eyes, but you can be sure he knows what's on each card. But I won't tell you how."

Magicians don't like to see people reading benefits fairly. It is easy to fool scientists, doctors and psychiatrists because they have nice logical minds.

Digging into the matter now, he spoke of the mixed emotion brought into play by magic.

As a member of the audience you may feel at a disadvantage because you can't explain something, he commented. Yet you want to see that little miracle. It takes you back to your childhood.

Magic is associated with children, but it shouldn't be. I often find adults just as amazed as children at parties. There is some stunning magic for adults called close-up magic. The magician can sit at a table with people around him and create some of the most startling effects you'll ever see.

He enjoys making use of startling effects himself in full scale magic shows he puts on for business conventions.

Sometimes we have live people step out from a film onto the stage and then walk

back into the film or hand objects back and forth," he said.

President of Detroit Assembly 107 of the Society of American Magicians, Wicks frequently meets with other magic lovers at the Emporium of Magic, 1720 W. Eight Mile in Southfield.

"My father bought me a magic set when I was five or six," he recalled. "When you find you can baffle your parents and your aunts, you keep on doing it."

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Booklet offers inspiration to handicapped

"View of Life," a 20-page inspirational booklet for handicapped persons of all ages, is available from the National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults, 2023 West Chicago, Chicago.

Written by Henry Henscheid, a 20-year-old born with cerebral palsy, "View of Life" points out to the handicapped that they can enjoy life more if they will look at themselves and the world around them with a positive attitude and share with others the dignity of their existence. Henscheid examines this concept with a humanistic approach.

able-bodied persons greater insight into the capabilities and needs of handicapped persons from reading it. Henscheid, throughout high school and college in Idaho, was active in the student government, plus debate and oratorical competition, concert and band activities. He now is studying for his master's degree in

rehabilitation counseling at the University of Idaho and is president of National Youth for Easter Seals and an ex-officio member of the National Easter Seal Society's board of directors.

Copies of the booklet are available at 25 cents each from the National Easter Seal Society, Chicago.

"In many people's eyes," he writes, "and maybe your own, you may have been shackled to a wheelchair or condemned to a life fighting a body that just don't cooperate. When you really think of it, though this very limitation can be your unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to the world. You can show the 'normal' people of the world what life is really all about, and doing so, help them in a way in which they can never repay you."

The booklet's message also can give

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