



The magician who specializes in card tricks can adroitly manipulate two decks at the same time.



Balls pass from cup to cup and change colors under McMichael's wand as he performs one of his favorite tricks.

## The magic touch

*'It ain't what you do; it's the way you do it'*

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

A professional magician who has special-ized in close-up magic for the past 15 years is coming to Farmington Community Center this month to teach three classes of the art for the first offering of its kind.

"Close-up magic," Jim McMichael explains, "means I work with a small table with small objects, cigarettes, coins, cards, ropes, in an informal setting. This is different from stage magic where the props are bigger and the magician makes birds appear and women disappear."

His students can expect, he said, "to get a little history of magic in the beginning sessions and a whole lot about it—what you do but the way that you do it."

Knowing the secret of the trick is not enough. It's the presentation of the trick that makes the difference. "I have to keep telling my students to slow down because slower is smoother and smoother is better," he said.

McMICHAEL is a retired salesman and a Westland resident who divides his time now between the golf course and helping out at Romig's Magic Shop in Ferndale.

At the magic shop he takes small groups of students, meets with magicians who come to him for help in smoothing out a trick and spends time "with the magicians who come here each trying to nail it and find the next. But we learn from one another," he said, "because if you do a trick well it is a mystery. If you do it poorly, it's nothing."

Beginners, both adults and children, can expect to learn the cut and restored rope trick, learn how to make scarfs vanish and re-appear, and some sleight of hand with coins and cards. Cigarette tricks are for adults only, and he is adamant about that. He is also adamant about a limited number in each class so he can devote time to detail and adamant that students have clean hands and fingernails.

Materials are inexpensive. "For a good rope trick you need a rope and a saw-saw," he said, "there's plenty to learn without having to spend a lot of money."

He said he would take catalogs with him to class to show students what is available and help them with whatever he thought they could handle, but that is one of his big problems with students.

"They have visions of making a lady float off into space when they should be concentrating on their ABCs."

OF HIS STUDENTS in the magic shop, two out of ten have gone on to make some money in the business, and he feels age 11 is just about the right age to start learning.

About 99 percent of his students are boys and he doesn't know why more girls don't take up the art because the "key is being graceful about what you do, not fast."

"The hand is not quicker than the eye."

## Mrs. Ditzhazy named to state committee

Helen Ditzhazy, principal of Novi High School, and a resident of Farmington, has been appointed to the publications committee of the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals.

John Woods, president of the association said the appointment was made in recognition of Mrs. Ditzhazy's abilities in that field.

"This is a high honor for her," Woods said, "to be recognized by the secondary school administrators in the state, to serve the association in this capacity."

## K. Lochrie elected

Karma Lochrie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lochrie of 3800 State in Farmington, has been elected to membership in Indiana's DePauw University campus chapter of Mortar Board.



The retired salesman is back in business, aiding customers in the well-stocked magic shop.

## Staff photos

by

Harry Mauthe

McMICHAEL SAYS he can perform steadily for an hour at a private party or club and not come near to having to repeat a trick twice working from table to table for the guests.

When asked how long it took him to perfect a trick, McMichael said he generally answered that question "in the number of miles."

He explained by saying that when he was traveling in his job for American Motors he would use the plane time to practice.

"If I had to go from here to California," he said, "I would learn a new trick there and perfect it on the way back. Cards don't take up a lot of space and I never watched the clock. I don't watch it now, either. When I'm performing for an evening, I just keep going," he said.

McMichael said he is looking forward to coming to Farmington. "It is a good town for magicians. Karrel Fox lives there, one of the biggest names in our business, and so does Larry Thompson, TV's Mr. Houdini."

Classes for young people, ages 10-12, and 13 and up, begin June 21, July 19 and Aug. 9.

Magic for adults will be held on Wednesdays, beginning June 23. Registrations are being taken now in the center.



HELEN DITZHAZY

## The Observer & Eccentric Farmington LIFE

Monday, June 21, 1976

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## High school musicians will tour state

Two Farmington area students will be among 19 Oakland high school students who tour the state in early summer with Sounds of '76, a bicentennial honoree ensemble sponsored and funded by the Michigan Bicentennial Commission.

Joanne Albert of 18041 Devonshire in Birmingham, a student at Our Lady of Mercy in Farmington, and Paul Thiel of 1221 Stonebrook in West Bloomfield, a student of Harrison High in Farmington, were cho-

sen from among 150 finalists for the opportunity to participate in the tour.

Sounds of '76 is made possible through the cooperation of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA) and Michigan School Vocal Association (MSVA), professional organizations composed of school music educators.

The honors ensemble roster of 120 is made up of high school musicians chosen from MSBOA and MSVA honor groups, au-

ditions and personal interviews.

A tour of the upper and lower peninsulas will follow intensive rehearsals at Inter-lachen National Music Camp June 15-21.

The five groups within the ensemble will have the capability of performing as orchestra, choir, jazz ensemble, swing choir and concert band. During each performance, these units will give mini-concerts coming together in a grand finale.

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