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Magician bug bites youngster

By JUDITH BERNIE

Most 14-year-old boys wouldn't be caught dead in a shiny lavender shirt and fancy trousers.

But Steve Weikal of West Bloomfield, a budding magician, dons such an outfit with pleasure and ease.

"The magician is supposed to look different from the kids at a party," says Steve, who performs for both children and adult groups. "Most of the kids who perform magic wear tuxedos."

His mother quickly added, "Steve's in such a growth spurt. I wouldn't dare buy him a tux."

The area magic store is one of their sure spots.

In addition to tricks and sleight-of-hand, Steve also has perfected handling balloons into a number of animal shapes.

He saves the hardest part is blowing the balloons up. He insists the best training is practicing he does as a sousaphone player, headed this fall for the West Bloomfield High School band.

HE MAY CHANGE his mind, but right now Steve sees himself owning a magic shop and performing on the side.

"I like to fool people," he said. "And it entertains me and it gives me a challenge."

He makes nearly weekly visits to the Bloomfield Hills Nursing Center where he brightens up the day for Elmer Soncrant, a retired profes-

sional magician confined there due to illness.

Talking magic with the 79-year-old man does something for both magicians, according to Mrs. Weikal.

"I bring a trick for him to see every time I go," Steve adds.

A highlight for both was Steve's performance for residents of the home where he was billed as "Elmer Soncrant's protégé."

STEVE, THE YOUNGEST of David and Peg Weikal's four children, says he "got the magic bug in 1970" while watching a magic show sponsored by the West Bloomfield Public Library.

He is proud he has never had a magic kit. He began reading books about magic before he ever bought any of the materials.

Now, two years later, Steve spends many weekends performing privately and for civic groups.

"Adult groups go for magic more than the children do," he says. "I think it's because the kids are exposed to magic more than their parents."

Steve came full circle earlier this summer when he was the magician selected by the library to highlight a day of mystery and magic for local youngsters.

STEVE GOT his fill of magic recently when he attended a four-day convocation of magicians held in Colon, Mich.,—billed as "the magic capital of the world."

He attended lectures by renowned magicians covering such topics as "The School Show Circuit," "Basic Performing for Children" and a spook show highlighting "Weird Magic."

Steve picked up a few tricks both in terms of presentation and apparatus.

Part of the show's attraction was a school gymnasium chock full of magic for sale. "Twin vanishing candles" could be had for \$20. A "sword through the neck" was priced at \$45. A "giant guillotine" was listed for \$850.

He readily acknowledges his fees just about keep him financially solvent.

He will spend an entire day developing a single magic trick and "partner"—the chatter which accompanies it. He and his mother hunt local magic shops, and when they travel.



Steve Weikal demonstrates how he can stick a long needle through a balloon without popping it. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

Class schedules are available

Class schedules are now available for junior and senior high school students in the Farmington School District.

Junior high school student schedules may be picked up at the office of the individual schools on August 29, 30 and 31 from 9 a.m.-noon and from 1-3 p.m. Registration packets will be available for pick up at the office of individual high schools through tomorrow, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1-3 p.m.

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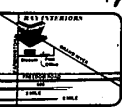
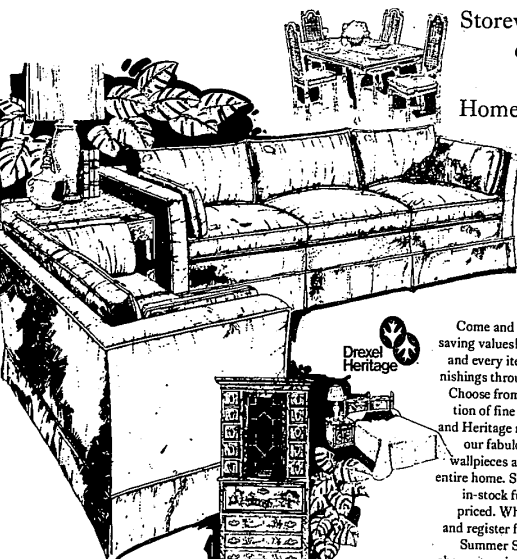
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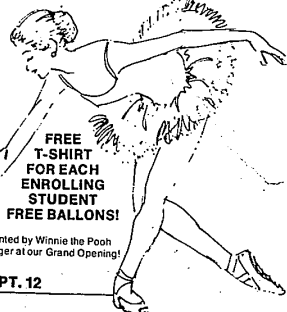
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