



WestsideWizards!



S.A.M. ASSEMBLY 291, LOS ANGELES

FEBRUARY 2022

Next S.A.M. Meeting:
Tuesday, **February 8**, 7:00 PM
Theme: **Robert Baxt Lecture**

Next S.Y.M. Meeting:
Sunday, **February 20**, 11:00 AM, Topic TBA

Robert Baxt Brings the Funny

For our February lecture, we're lucky to have local favorite, **Robert Baxt**, as our featured speaker.



Robert believes it isn't what you do, it's how you do it! As a full time working pro all his life, he truly believes that real people just want to be entertained; so he will focus on presentations of his original takes on effects. There will be no card tricks and no knuckle busting sleights, only commercial entertainment and laughs. As a winner of a FISM Trophy for Comedy, his rule is "Funny is Money".

Robert is proud of the fact that he has never had a "real" job. After putting himself through college with money he earned from performing, he was presented with the dual opportunities of being accepted to both Ringling Bros. Clown College, and to Law School. Without hesitation, he chose the one that would better for his comedy career: Law School! But after graduating with a juris doctorate degree and taking the Bar exam, Robert never practiced and proceeded on to a full time career in show business.

With his comedy magic act, he won both the 1st Prize in the National I.B.M. Gold Medal Stage Competition (Lance Burton handed him the trophy and Robert claims it still has his DNA on it!), followed the next year by a FISM trophy for Comedy in Madrid, Spain.

He has performed in Las Vegas, Comedy Clubs, Colleges, Cruise Ships, and on TV and at Magic Conventions around the world. He has a line of Comedy Magic Routines available for other performers at www.robertbaxt.com/shop and writes jokes for other performers.

Upcoming Meetings

- February 8 - Robert Baxt Lecture
- February 20 16 (S.Y.M.) - Topic TBA
- March 8 - Chris Herren Lecture
- April 12 - Andy Deemer Lecture
- May 10 - Siegfried Tieber Lecture

Using Zoom

If you don't already have Zoom installed, go to zoom.us/download to get the free Zoom application for your computer or download it from the App Store for your mobile device.

Note: Our meeting will start at 7:00 PM, but we will start letting Westside Wizards in around 6:45 PM before opening it up to the public at 7:00 PM.

This month's Zoom meeting info:

Meeting ID: 853 1171 0796
Passcode: 081158

JOIN NOW

Click on the link above and it will open Zoom and take you to the meeting. You will be then let in by the meeting host.

HEATING UP YOUR MAGIC BY 'ONE DEGREE'

John Guastafarro Shows How Small Changes Produce Big Results

The temperature inside everyone's homes during Assembly 291's January virtual meeting was presumably mild, but thanks to John Guastafarro it felt more like One Degree.

Guastafarro, the club's guest lecturer, is not only a magic creator and frequent headliner at the Magic Castle but the author of several books on magic, including the acclaimed One Degree (as in, one degree from a boiling point), which focused on small, incremental shifts that transform good reactions into great reactions.

For the Westside Wizards, he focused on effects from his book *En Route*, which continues the One Degree philosophy. "I don't think a trick is ever done," Guastafarro said, citing the ever-evolving need to create ideal magical experiences for audiences. "We might perfect the handling, but we're always en route to perfect our performance."



Guastafarro's principles for approaching such perfection boil down to simplicity (cutting out the fat), artistry (making certain an effect is beautiful to watch, even when nothing magical is happening), and creativity (a fun plot and presentation). "We can probably all do thirty minutes with a deck of cards," he said, "but I like to make sure that thirty minutes feels diverse, and that it's not just the standard plots."

Sometimes that means using the card box as a prop, or personifying the cards. Other times it's small presentational changes; referring to volunteers by name, waiting an extra beat during a pause, or inserting moments of silence. "This idea of one degree, it's not just handling," he said. "It's also how you interact with your audience." With that in mind, Guastafarro uses a light touch during card manipulations since "I don't want the audience to feel tense if I'm trying to do a double-lift."

Guastafarro's lecture featured several signature effects, including Virus (a "hacked" card deck can't return to normal until "deck support" magically removes the virus), Box Whisperer (a card appears inside an empty card box after someone whispers its name into the box), and Mini-Mental (a multiple-selection routine where Guastafarro "reads minds" to magically produce four cards). In each case, he demonstrated how he altered standard premises to either personify the effect or make deeper connections with an audience.

He also took time out to teach his stylish "Ballet Cut," which "reminds me of a pirouette across the stage." Considering how many Westside Wizards are now en route to one-degree changes, Guastafarro certainly stuck the landing. – Dan Cray

President's Message

A word from Dan Cray...



It's February, so love is in the air—our love of magic, right?

Between the cooler winter weather and the fact spring is still weeks away, I always feel like this is a great time of year to mess around with my “Someday Magic”: tricks I love but just haven't quite found a presentation framework to make them work for an audience. Some years, I actually manage to brainstorm a long-sought routine and the trick ends up on my go-to performance list for the rest of the year... so we'll see if that's the case this time around. Here's wishing you luck with your Someday Magic as well.

I don't know about you, but with so many dour things going on in the world I could use a good laugh... which is why I'm thrilled that the hilarious comedy magician Robert Baxt will be the guest lecturer for this month's virtual meeting. (Maybe you also saw him in January, he was in the gallery for last month's meeting.) I had a chance to talk with him by phone (a crude communication device that society used before Zoom) for a bit last month—what a fun guy, and he had me laughing right away. Definitely looking forward to this one.

With our own Phil Goodman fresh off of his Magic Castle debut last month, I want to close by repeating something I've said many times, but will now reiterate: the talent level in our club is flat-out amazing. Yes, we each come at it from different interests or performance levels, but I love that on any given day every one of us has the chops to lift people's spirits... in our case, through knowledge and/or presentation of magic.

That's not typical, and we shouldn't take it for granted. In recent weeks, I've had muggles tell me they wished they had a hobby or career that could take peoples' minds off of their real-life troubles, the way our Westside Wizards can. That's a pretty powerful compliment.

Have a healthy, magical February. See you online for this month's meeting!

Dan

2022 Dues Procedure Update



WESTSIDE WIZARDS 2022 DUES ARE PAYABLE NOW USING ZELLE.

We are kindly asking members to set up a FREE Zelle Account with their bank now to facilitate paying your yearly dues starting now.

Using Zelle is simple and is a direct transfer from your bank to the Westside Wizards bank account. No middle account like PayPal and no fees for either party. This is an instant transfer and is not reversible, so be sure to send your payment to the phone number listed below.

Zelle is FREE and available at most local banks, including, Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, One West Bank and more.

Zelle is usually located in the Pay & Transfer section of your account.

When you are ready to pay your Westside Wizards dues, set up a recipient in Zelle in the name of **Les Cooper** and phone number **310-621-8104**.

We will also accept checks made out to **Les Cooper** and sent to our home address at address is **1937 Midvale Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025**, until we are able to meet once again in person, hopefully soon.

Thanks in advance for your continued membership in the Westside Wizards.

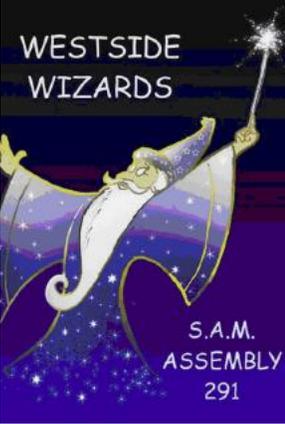


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<https://www.zellepay.com/get-started>



The **Westside Wizards** was formed to give the West Los Angeles area a Magical presence and hopes that you will participate and be active in Assembly 291. We also welcome your participation in the youth program with the **Westside Junior Wizards**, Assembly Y141.

Westside Wizards Officers (2021-2022)

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| President | Dan Cray |
| Vice President | Phil Goodman |
| Treasurer | Doris Roach |
| Secretary | Brian Schwartz |
| Member at Large | Raul Fernandez |
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| Immediate Past President | Les Cooper |
| M.U.M. Editor | Dan Cray |
| Newsletter Editors | Phil Goodman & Dan Cray |
| Webmaster | Bill Bedecarre |



Westside Wizards Meeting Location
 Stoner Park OPICA Adult Day Care Facility,
 11759 Missouri Avenue
 Los Angeles, CA 90025

Between S. Bundy Drive and S. Barrington Avenue.
 Park off Missouri Avenue, next to the ball field

Past Presidents

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 2015-2020 | Les Cooper |
| 2013-2014 | Bill Bedecarre |
| 2011-2012 | Frank Padilla, Jr |
| 2009-2010 | Raul Fernandez |
| 2008 | Les Cooper |

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