



# WestsideWizards!



**S.A.M. ASSEMBLY 291, LOS ANGELES**

**MARCH 2022**

Next S.A.M. Meeting:  
Tuesday, **March 8**, 7:00 PM  
Theme: **Chris Herren Lecture**

Next S.Y.M. Meeting:  
Sunday, **March 20**, 3:00 PM, John Guastaferrero

## Chris Herren Lecture

**Finding your Authentic Voice in Magic, and Expressing it Through the Art of Movement and Gestures**

**Chris Herren** as Faust represented the United States of America at the 2021 FISM North American Championships, competing as one of the top 6 Parlor Magicians on the continent.

His performances have won him 4 international competition awards which include the 2018 and 2019 (PCAM) Pacific Coast Association of Magicians, 1st Place Gold Medal Award for Parlor Magic.

Faust has headlined at the World Famous Magic Castle's Parlor of Prestidigitation in Hollywood and has also made acclaimed performances at Jeff McBride's Vegas Wonderground, Ron Saylor's Celebrities of Magic, Washington Magic, and the Magic and Meaning Conference in Las Vegas.



In Chris' lecture presentation on **March 8**, he will share some of his signature magic routines by performing each piece and explaining the inspiration behind its development. He will also share simple movement and gesture techniques that he uses to establish emotional connections with the audience in an effort to create real magical experiences. Whether you are a silent performer or a talking one, Chris believes these techniques can be easily used by either. Perhaps through it all, he hopes this lecture may spark your inspiration by sharing his own journey and experiences - taking you one step closer to finding your own authentic voice in magic.

## Upcoming Meetings

- March 8 - Chris Herren Lecture
- March 20 (SYM) John Guastaferrero
- April 12 - Andy Deemer Lecture
- May 10 - TBA

## Using Zoom

If you don't already have Zoom installed, go to [zoom.us/download](https://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: 861 2385 0844**  
**Passcode: 516174**

**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.**

# DUMPING YOUR INNER ELVIS IMPERSONATOR

## Robert Baxt Proves “Presentation Is Everything” At February Wizards’ Lecture

When a guest lecturer arrives at a S.A.M. meeting declaring there will be no card tricks or knuckle-busting sleights, it raises a few eyebrows... unless you’re the funny, entertaining Robert Baxt, who presented a virtual lecture at the Westside Wizards’ February meeting.

Baxt, whose comedy magic resume includes a FISM trophy and an I.B.M. Gold Medal, understands that presentation, rather than method, is paramount. “I live by the rule of David Devant,” Baxt said, paraphrasing from Devant’s 1931 book *My Magic Life*. “The big secret around which a trick is based is comparatively unimportant; presentation is everything.”

That’s why Baxt’s routines, which incorporate custom variations of time-honored props, emphasize humor and personal connections. His rendition of Professor’s Nightmare, for example, is classic... except the three, size-changing ropes are intended as visuals amid a heartwarming tale about his father’s love for his three children.

“I try to make my tricks about something, because now people care,” said Baxt. “Only magicians play with ropes; only magicians make them different sizes. But everyone had a father, and they know what it was like to have siblings. So when I tell this story about my brother, my sister and me, it’s from the heart, and everyone feels that.”

Baxt wishes more magicians would embrace that approach. “Here’s what I’ve never quite understood: a guitar player does not come out and go, ‘look: the A note, the B note, the C note, the D note, thank you, worship me, applaud,’” Baxt said. “He puts those individual notes together, makes a story and a song... and that’s what makes the song great.”

Magicians, he said, “sometimes seem like the guy going, ‘the A note, the B note... thank you, worship me.’” Baxt therefore transforms old chestnuts into fresh material; a mathematical force became a list of Valentine gift options for a participant to select for their wife. The classic silk-to-egg? Baxt prefers a silk-to-soda can... where the soda is real. His spin on Tom Ogden’s bandana/banana trick uses Siri, a bull puppet, and an updated applause cue. (Ogden attended the meeting and told Baxt, “Your ideas are terrific!”)

It doesn’t hurt that the carny-voiced Baxt is flat-out funny. But since originality motivates his magic, he’s determined to not mimic other presentations. “I don’t want to be an Elvis impersonator,” he said. “I’m always asking what I can do to make a trick my own.” – Dan Cray



# President's Message

## A word from Dan Cray...



Hi Westside Wizards,

The shift to Daylight Savings is nearly here, and things are brightening in other ways as well. It's nice to see the nasty pandemic numbers dropping and the world cautiously reopening again.

Our club will also be "reopening" soon, by resuming in-person meetings! This month's meeting will be virtual, as will our April meeting. May, however, should bring with it our in-person return, beginning with a special kickoff meeting to relaunch the Westside Wizards face-to-face once again. Details on that next month.

In the meantime, we've still got two great virtual lectures coming up, with **Chris Herren** on March 8 and **Andy Deemer** on April 12. Expect more than just magic: these guys have plenty to say about character, plot, and so many other aspects of our art that goes beyond tricks.

For what it's worth I'd like to mention this incredible factoid: in just over two years of pandemic meetings, we've welcomed guest lecturers in 22 of the 25 months. I'm told that's something no other S.A.M. club has come close to achieving, and I'm certainly grateful to all of the lecturers who have spent some time with us.

When you also consider all the new friends and members that we've gained from our virtual meetings, along with the many Zoom gallery visitors we've hosted... oh, and that still-shocking "drop in" visit we had from **David Copperfield** in December of 2020... wow, this club has accomplished so much during a very tough window in time.

What else can I possibly say that's more magical than all of *that*? See you online for the March 8 meeting!

Dan

# SYM News...



We have a fantastic lecturer for the **March 20th** meeting.

Discover the magic of **John Guastafarro**. John has thrilled audiences across 12 countries and is a frequent headliner at the world-famous Magic Castle. Whether up close or on stage, John captivates people's imaginations with magic that is both artful and mind-blowing.

John lectured for the Westside Wizards in January, and I was so impressed that I asked if he would talk to you, the S.Y.M. members, and he quickly agreed to do so for your March meeting. You won't want to miss this lecture.

The **March 20th meeting starts at 3:00 PM Pacific time**, and John will join us a bit later in the meeting.

The Zoom link will be emailed prior to the meeting to the S.Y.M. mailing list.

And, just a heads up, already booked for April is **Jim Steinmeyer**. Another not to miss meeting.

See you March 20th for the John Guastafarro lecture at 3:00 PM.

*Les*  
S.Y.M. Leader



## The First of Many to Come...

How many of you remember going to your first magic convention? What were your thoughts and memories about the convention?

We are so lucky because, one of the Westside Junior Wizards members attended the S.A.M. Convention in Las Vegas this past January. He has written a review of the convention. This is just as **Oz** wrote the review. Enjoy, it's worth reading.

### My First Magic Convention

After a prolonged car ride to Las Vegas, we had finally reached our destination; The Golden Nugget. We came for the 2022 national SAM (Society of American Magicians) magic convention, where experts from around the world

# My First Magic Convention (cont.)

gathered to perform and learn new material. The putrid stench of lit cigarettes overwhelmed my senses, but we went to our room shortly after receiving the room keys. It only took a few minutes to settle in completely, so we used the rest of the night to plan for the upcoming busy schedule. The room was comfortable and led to a full night of sleep.

My father and magic mentor came downstairs to register for the convention with me first thing in the morning. The day had only just begun, yet we had already received free gifts from the SAM (Little did I know how spoiled we were soon to be)! It was time to go separate ways as I headed to the SYM Academy, ready to meet other young magicians.

As I entered the meeting room, the academy staff greeted me with a vibrant pink lei. The other children were kind to one another and happy to start a conversation with any topic relating to magic. It was clear that the next few days would be an exhilarating adventure with new friends. Kristi Toguchi led an activity in which we were able to socialize with the other children by acting out various roles as we walked around the room. After warming up and talking about our previous history and preferences as a magician, we took turns standing in front of all of the tables talking about any topic that was on our mind. Simple enough, except that we had to simultaneously look at different points in the air corresponding to their assigned numbers. We all had fun watching our peers shout numbers at each other, and soon enough, it was time for our first lecture, where Kainoa Harbottle demonstrated the most rudimentary element of coin magic and emphasized the importance of practicing simple effects.

Dr. Harbottle (coin expert), Brad Kerwin, Kurtis Kam, and Nadina (The Dragon Lady) took us to eat lunch with Tom Gentile (the current SAM president). There, we enjoyed pizza and breadsticks while practicing cardistry techniques. We gathered around Tom as he presented an original effect that he had been working on, took a few group photos, and expressed our gratitude on our way out. Some of the older children sat down with the younger ones to provide assistance during sessioning, and friendships were built. George Saterial presented the highlights of his legendary grandfather clock routine and the long process required to reach those heights. Joel "Batman" Zaritzky came into the room with a full Batman costume and performed a mini-routine that he taught us by the end of the lecture! We were gifted many astonishing and wonderful effects by the SAM committee before getting picked up by our parents that evening. The day came to a close when we headed down to see All Things Magic magicians perform live! Everyone's act was astonishing and some were full of the funniest and most creative content that I've ever seen on stage.

At last, the following morning had arrived with new lecturers and experienced mentors to meet. Avi Yap showed us the greatest sleight of hand that we will probably ever see in our lifetime and reminded us that we will never be good



Oz helping a younger future magician at the S.Y.M. Academy in Las Vegas

# My First Magic Convention (cont.)

enough (Can always improve upon ourselves). Alan Rorrison showed us the beauty produced when combining wax with cards to create seemingly impossible effects. Robert Moreland explained his process to accumulate a profit off of performing magic for guests in theme parks. After eating Subway with friends of mine and showing the cashier a mind-boggling effect, the time came to wish our friends good luck as they headed to perform at the Stars of Tomorrow Show! The young MC (Master of Ceremonies) exceeded all expectations along with each individual performer. We saw a variety of personalities, card magic, coins, stage, Rubix cubes, contortionism, and even tap dancing. The presentation was absolutely AMAZING from start to finish! Immediately after congratulating the courageous performers, we returned to our meeting room in which Amanda Nepo (The youngest female Penn & Teller fooler) toured us through the process of constructing original effects off of original ideas. Ice McDonald and Jeff Quinn gave us valuable input on marketing and their experience in magic while we all enjoyed our own individual, refreshing ice creams. We were fortunate enough to receive a donation of magic books from the family of Reverend Knight, who passed away at the age of 108.

It was our final morning in Vegas, so the members of the SYM rushed to the award ceremony, where Arlen Solomon gave thanks to each person who helped the program progress. We logged onto Zoom to listen to Connie Boyd explain her perspective on what magic meant to her, and helped us identify why we perform as individuals. Cody Clark demonstrated his visual routine and how to properly perform magic to audiences that behave differently. The Youth Academy came to an end earlier than originally anticipated, so I said farewell to my new friends and instructors that I felt like I knew for years. The next show was my favorite part of the entire convention; Collin Cloud. Collin performed his astonishing mentalism routine that left the crowd of magicians with their jaws on the floor. After the muggles got out of the theatre, Collin thoroughly explained his entire set step by step. The convention was full to the brim with excitement and thrill, but all good times must come to an end. That night we headed back home after eating dinner with another generous magician.

I would like to thank each and every one of the people I mentioned, amongst those with a large impact on me who were not included in this article.

Oz S

# 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.

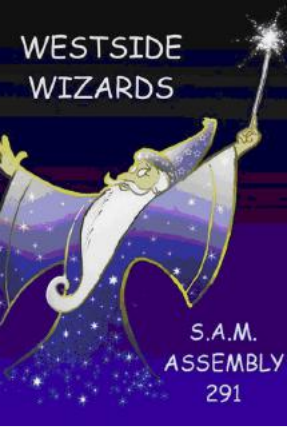


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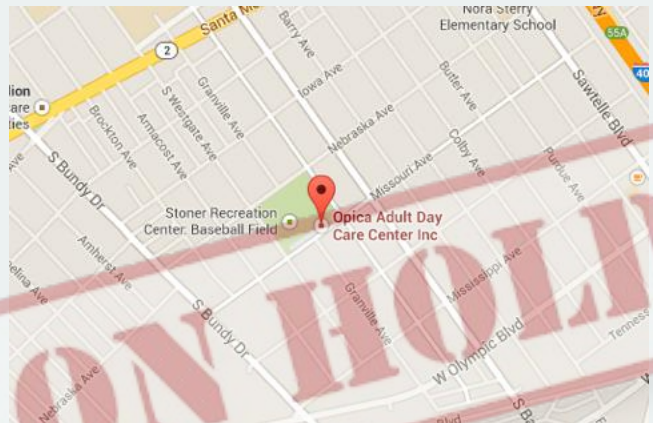
<https://www.zellepay.com/get-started>



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
Member at Large	Jim Witoszynski
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

**Contact us:** [WWW.WESTSIDEWIZARDS.ORG](http://WWW.WESTSIDEWIZARDS.ORG)  
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