



WestsideWizards!



S.A.M. ASSEMBLY 291, LOS ANGELES

OCTOBER 2022

Next S.A.M. Meeting:
Tuesday, **October 11, 6:00 PM**
Theme: **Magic at the Pumpkin Patch**

Next S.Y.M. Meeting:
Sunday, **October 16, 3:00 PM**
Theme: **Rope Magic**

Pumpkin Patch Magic!

Our next meeting will be from **6:00-8:00 PM (an hour earlier than we usually meet) on October 11** at [Shawn's Pumpkin Patch](#) in West LA. This will be an outdoor event during the wonderful Halloween season. Our theme, as we often do around this time of year, will be **"Spooky Magic"**!



Shawn's Pumpkin Patch has been a West LA staple for many years and many families make it their destination to not only purchase their pumpkins, but to also enjoy a festival atmosphere. There will be several carnival-style rides and attractions, a petting zoo, face painting, rock wall climbing, and even bungee jumping. Fun for the whole family!

The Pumpkin Patch will be setting up a separate area with tables and chairs for us to hold our meeting and perform our magic. Keep in mind that since our meeting will be at an outdoor public event, we may have families and guests enjoying it as well. So, make sure that your tricks and routines are appropriate and fun for all!

Shawn's Pumpkin Patch is **11650 Santa Monica Blvd (corner of Santa Monica Blvd and Barry Avenue)** which is just a few blocks away from our normal meeting space at OPICA. See you there!!



Upcoming Meetings

- October 11: Spooky Magic (at Pumpkin Patch)
- October 16 (SYM): Rope Magic
- November 8: Siegfried Tieber
- December 13: Holiday Event

No Zoom This Month

As we'll be live from the Pumpkin Patch, we'll have no Zoom meeting this month. This will be a great opportunity to meet in-person as we'll be outside and having fun with our community.



ONE NIGHT, TWO LEGENDS

Jim Steinmeyer and “the Elusive Moth” Captivate Wizards At September Meeting

There are S.A.M. meetings, and then there are truly magical S.A.M. meetings. The Westside Wizards’ September meeting was certainly one of the latter, as the club not only had the honor of presenting celebrated illusion designer **Jim Steinmeyer** with two awards but also hosted a surprise guest: **Adele Friel Rhindress**, one of Harry Blackstone’s assistants from 1947 to 1950.

Rhindress, best known as the Elusive Moth in Harry Blackstone’s legendary stage act, inspired the events leading to Steinmeyer’s visit to the Westside Wizards. Several months ago, Steinmeyer told her that his spring lecture for the Society of Young Magicians had not only sparked treasured childhood memories but made him wish he could be an honorary member. Rhindress, touched by his sentiment, decided she “had to figure a way to make that happen.”

That’s when two of her friends, Westside Wizards founder **Les Cooper** and treasurer **Doris Roach**, got involved. Working with Rhindress and national SYM executive director **Arlen Solomon**, they ironed out the logistics of a surprise presentation that would take place under the guise of a “Jim Steinmeyer Night” at Assembly 291.

The unsuspecting Steinmeyer was invited to visit in person and watch club members perform several of his published effects in his honor. Cooper, **Raul Fernandez**, **Jeff Thomson**, **Dan Cray**, **Phil Goodman**, **Alexander Scianna**, **Brian Schwartz**, and **Sirinda Sincharoen** all performed their takes on his work, as did **Robert Ramirez**, Steinmeyer’s friend and magical associate.

Then, Cooper and longtime SYM member **Oz S.** sprang the surprise. On behalf of Solomon and Rhindress (who attended via Zoom from her home in Philadelphia), they presented a startled Steinmeyer with a certificate making him an honorary SYM member. Rhindress, with Cooper’s assistance, also presented Steinmeyer with a surprise: her own “Adele Friel Rhindress Honorary Young Magician Award,” for his work advancing the art and history of magic.

“Oh, that’s fantastic,” Steinmeyer said, then told the group how the determined Rhindress, 92, recently



Sirinda Sincharoen performs One Man Band



Oz presents Jim Steinmeyer with an Honorary S.Y.M. Membership



Adele Rhindress presents Jim Steinmeyer with her award

ONE NIGHT, TWO LEGENDS (cont.)

tracked down information about a drawing from a decades-old magic show, against all odds. “Adele found the person who knew exactly what this drawing was, and how this was a key to the Blackstone show, so she is our Miss Marple,” he said. “Adele, it is a great, great honor, and I appreciate all of you for putting this together.”

Cooper and Assembly 291 then turned the tables with a surprise for Rhindress, presenting “our Betty White of Magic” with an honorary membership in the Westside Wizards—along with a new S.A.M. membership card indicating she is a member of both her longtime home Assembly 4 in Philadelphia and Assembly 291 in Los Angeles. “Oh, my goodness, I love that!” Rhindress said. “You played a trick on me, and that’s the best trick I’ve ever had! Bravo to all of you!”

As it turned out, Adele later provided one of the night’s most enchanting moments. After Sirinda performed Steinmeyer’s “One Man Band,” Rhindress told club members that Blackstone had a near-identical routine he called “Afghan Bands” (which the cast referred to it as “the Red Rag Trick”), then proceeded to recite Blackstone’s word-for-word patter for the effect... unrehearsed, more than 70 years after the last time she had seen him perform it! The captivated room burst into applause.

Fittingly, Steinmeyer himself provided the evening’s grand finale, not only by performing but with a Q&A session in which he touched on his early experiences working backstage in Chicago, the challenges of recreating David Devant’s Mascot Moth illusion for Doug Henning, and his concern that today’s magicians focus on closeup routines even though audience interest in stage illusions hasn’t diminished. “Styles and fashions have changed, and that’s all good,” he said, “but audiences still want to see illusion shows—they just don’t want to see it done the old-fashioned way.”

Steinmeyer also joked that as each Westside Wizard launched into their own version of his published tricks, he initially had no idea which one he was watching. “This was fantastic,” he said. “A really amazing honor.” –
Dan Cray



Jim tells the group stories about how he came up with some of his routines

THANKS FROM ADELE

Fellow Wizards, we would like to share with you a note we received from Adele, showing her appreciation. It speaks for itself!

— Les & Doris

Many Thanks to Les and Doris,

You really ‘take the cake’ when it comes to planning and presenting a surprise celebration for a magic gentleman who made a wish ... to be an Honorary Young Magician! Jim Steinmeyer is the one.

It started with your ideas and hard work to pull together a magical night to remember. September 13, 2022, was now “Jim Steinmeyer Night” at the monthly meeting of S.A.M. Assembly #291, the Westside Wizards.

Arlen Solomon, Director of the Society of Young Magicians, sent a framed certificate stating Jim was now an Honorary Member of the S.Y.M. Oz S., an S.Y.M member of the Westside Junior Wizards, presented the certificate to Jim, who was smiling and enjoying his new title.

Members of the Westside Wizards gave beautiful tributes to Jim when they entertained with his favorite tricks and illusions. Each magician gave his/her own personal feelings to the magic. I was on a Zoom connection with the Wizards that evening, and when I saw the lovely lady magician, Sirinda, perform Afghan Bands, I could not help myself ... I HAD to say something. It was the first time I had seen the Afghan Bands since I was with Harry Blackstone & His Show of 1001 Wonders in the late 1940s. We, Blackstone’s cast, called it the Red Rag Trick. What memories ... thank you so much.

Next, was another gift for Jim, when Les Cooper presented my personal Award to the new Honorary Young Magician. It was a plaque saying it is for “Advancing the Art & History of Magic.”

Jim was so relaxed and comfortable, he rolled up his sleeves to tell some wonderful true stories about his magic life. A very nice personal highlight that night.

I was ready to sign off. Did not realize Les, Doris and the Wizards had other ideas.

Suddenly, “Jim Steinmeyer Night” had an additional surprise.

I know lots of Magicians who love to fool unsuspecting folks with their magical tricks, and I was the next one to be surprised.

Les and Doris, along with the Wizards, knew what was happening. They joined together to give me a surprise. I received my own Membership Card in S.A.M. Assembly #291!!!! How wonderful!! It states I’m now a member of Assemblies #4 and #291 and my card is signed by National President, Thomas Dante Gentile.

Les pointed out that I have memberships on both coasts now – West and East. California & Pennsylvania.

It was even greater when Dan Cray walked up to the Zoom camera and thanked me for being part of the Westside Wizards that night.

I was delighted beyond belief. And Jim Steinmeyer was smiling!

Many thanks and Love to all,

Adele

Adele Friel Rhindress
Blackstone Show 1947-1950



SYM News

Society of Young Magicians, Assembly Y141 The Westside Junior Wizards



When I started the Westside Wizards in 2008, my hope was to also have a magic youth program. That hope became reality in June 2010, when the Charter was signed at the National Council Meeting and the Westside Junior Wizards was created.

For the past 12 years the S.Y.M. Leaders have all volunteered their time to teach and guide the future magicians. The S.Y.M. is for kids 7 to 17 who want to learn magic. A few of them stayed with the Assembly until they reached 18.

It was important to me to share our knowledge in all aspects of magic with the kids. We covered cards, coins, rope, parlour, stage, black art, mental magic, and so much more. With the help of the other S.Y.M. Leaders, who shared their passion for magic with the members and taught them the dos and don'ts of magic, performance, and stage presence, they become better magicians.

My guess is that over the past 12 years, we had more than 100 kids who became part of the program. It was most gratifying to see several of them become members of the Magic Castle Junior Program on their first try.

The best day of the week to meet was a Saturday morning, and we competed with all sorts of sports and family activities. As kids grew up, their interests changed, and we lost many of our members to other hobbies, etc.

Our resources were very limited, but we made do with what we had. All the leaders brought in their own magic to share with the members and do a show and tell about the props. We encouraged the kids to read magic books and not watch YouTube to learn about true magic.

For me personally, some of the members stood out above others in their quest to learn about magic. Most of them achieved much more than we taught them and were able to share their knowledge with the other members.

Here are the kids that stood out to me in no order: **Alexander Barns, Carlos Flores, Eddie Rosato-Johnson, Aiden Lam, Mathew Levine, Andrew Goodman, Evan Cray, Nathan B, Leor S., and Oz S.** All but the last three are now adults, and I hope that they took some of what we taught them into adulthood.

As they moved on, we lost track of most of them. I would really like to have a conversation with any of them to see how they are doing and what they are doing with their lives. If any of you read this last article about the S.Y.M., please give me a call or send me an email and perhaps we can set up a phone call or an in-person meeting. Send an email to cooperl@ucla.edu or call 310-473-1820. I would love to hear from you.

SYM News (cont.)



Of course, I did not do this alone. First and foremost, I want to thank my wife, **Doris**, for her support and help with the S.Y.M. program. She attended every meeting and supported the kids.

Then there were the S.Y.M. Leaders who took special training to become Certified S.Y.M. Leaders. Thanks to the following Leaders, in no order: **Phil Goodman, Dan Cray, Raul Fernandez, and Bill Dow**. Although he was not a S.Y.M. Leader, “**Egbok**” was loved by all the members. Who could forget his gruff voice telling the kids to speak louder, then being as gentle as a lamb explaining a card effect. Egbok was a huge supporter of the S.Y.M. members.

You all made the past 12 years enjoyable by giving your time, energy, and knowledge to the young magicians.

There was no one cause for the decline of the S.Y.M. Certainly, COVID did not help the situation. Kids just did not want to Zoom into a meeting after spending 6 to 8 hours a day on Zoom for school.

There are other factors that led me to make the decision to end the Westside Junior Wizards program. At present, we only have one active member, and I am not willing to start over again to rebuild the Westside Junior Wizards at this stage in my life.

The charter will remain active for some time. If someone can take over the reins and leadership of the S.Y.M. program, I will give you my full support. I really hope that someone will come forward so the Westside Junior Wizards can continue to thrive.

Another reason for discontinuing the Junior Wizards program is that the Magic Castle is in the process of developing an elementary program for youth 7 to 12. This was our prime age target to attract kids to join the S.Y.M. I don't have the resources of the Magic Castle to back me up. I hope their program is successful as we need the youth of today to become the magicians of tomorrow.

I will continue to help and support the online S.Y.M. program along with **Arlen Solomon**, the S.Y.M. Executive Director. Each month we assist youth from all over the country and Canada to learn about different aspects of magic.

So, it is with a heavy heart and much sadness that I write this last newsletter article and thank everyone for their support for the past 12 years.

It's been a fun and magical journey, that I will remember for a long time.

Les

President's Message

A word from Dan Cray...



Hi Westside Wizards,

At last, it's the magical month of October!

This year's Halloween season brings tricks (yours!) and a treat: we'll be holding our meeting at Shawn's Pumpkin Patch. They'll have tables and chairs set up for us, and the place is mere blocks away from our regular meeting site at OPICA.

Don't let the "pumpkin patch" label fool you. Shawn's has all sorts of carnival-style entertainment for families (animals, rides, etc.), and the muggles exploring the attractions will absolutely love stumbling upon a group of magicians while they're out browsing pumpkins.

As always, we'll be performing magic for one another... but possibly performing for our muggle viewers as well. If you'd like to perform a trick or two (this month's theme is "Spooky Magic," but other effects are welcome), I'd suggest bringing something you're reasonably familiar with, since this will be an outdoor meeting that's open to the public. Trust me, people will really appreciate finding magic in such an unexpected place.

To me, that element of surprise will be the best part. It also seems like a fun follow-up to last month's meeting—what an honor, not only welcoming Jim Steinmeyer but presenting him with an award on behalf of the national S.Y.M. Then our surprise guest, Adele Friel Rhindress, had her own personal special award for Jim.

And then, hearing Adele spontaneously recite the dialogue from a Harry Blackstone routine, after more than 70 years? Wow. Seriously, I think that's easily one of the best Wizards meetings the club has ever had. Thanks again to our own Les and Doris for successfully navigating the oh-so-many planning details. And welcome to Adele, our new honorary Westside Wizards member!

This month's meeting will be memorable too. I hope you join me and all of your fellow club members in creating (or assisting with) some magic at Shawn's Pumpkin Patch!

See you on October 11.

Westside Wizards Membership News



We have a new member!

Please welcome Jeff Thomson to the Westside Wizards. When you see Jeff, please say “hi” and welcome him to the Westside Wizards.

In other membership news, congratulations to Phil Goodman and Andrew Goodman who joined the 10-year membership club.

We all know Phil, but you may not know his son Andrew who was a S.Y.M. member for many years and is now a Magic Castle Junior and is attending college.

We also want to congratulate former S.Y.M. member, Evan Cray, the son of our President Dan Cray, who celebrates his 10-year membership with S.A.M. Evan is also a Magic Castle Junior member and is attending college.

WESTSIDE WIZARDS 2023 DUES ARE PAYABLE NOW USING ZELLE

Last year we asked our members to pay their dues by using Zelle. It was very successful, and we would like to continue this process for collecting your 2023 dues.



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. This is an instant transfer and is not reversible, so be sure to send your payment to the phone number listed below.

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**.

Westside Wizards dues remain \$25 and \$5.00 for your spouse or partner.

We will also accept checks made out to **Les Cooper** and sent to our home address, **1937 Midvale Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025**, or you can pay your dues in cash or by check at our monthly meetings.

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

You are invited ...

and your family and guests

...to attend

An Afternoon of Magic

*by the Society of American Magicians
Hall of Fame and Magic Museum, Inc.*

Saturday,
October 22, 2022
National Magic Week – Fall Show

Westminster Gardens, in Packard Hall, 1420 Santo Domingo Ave.,
Duarte, CA 91010.

Doors open at 1:30 p.m., with “curtain time” scheduled for 2:00 p.m.

WILL YOU PLEASE CONFIRM OR DECLINE THESE RESERVATIONS:

Mr. John Engman

or

Ms. Kim Hallinger

626-239-0349

310-832-7812

YOUR RESPONSE IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

What is An Afternoon of Magic?

The S.A.M. Hall of Fame and Magic Museum, Inc. is pleased to invite you to an Afternoon of Magic. The magical presentation is geared to family audiences.

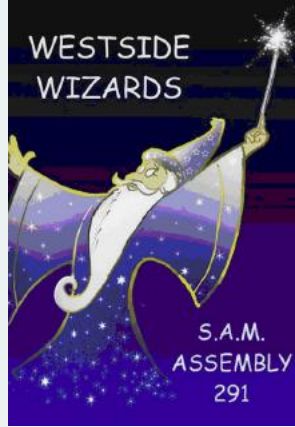
There will be a professionally staged magic show. Magical apparatus, posters, and memorabilia will be on display.

Enjoy your visit to this unique, entertaining and educational institution.

- There is a large parking lot.

There is absolutely no smoking in the Hall of Fame and Magic Museum or Westminster Gardens at any time, by any person, in any room or area. Photography and audio or video recordings are also not permitted in the facility without prior approval.

<http://www.samhalloffame.com>



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.

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



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
INFO@WESTSIDEWIZARDS.ORG OR SYM@WESTSIDEWIZARDS.ORG FOR THE JUNIORS**