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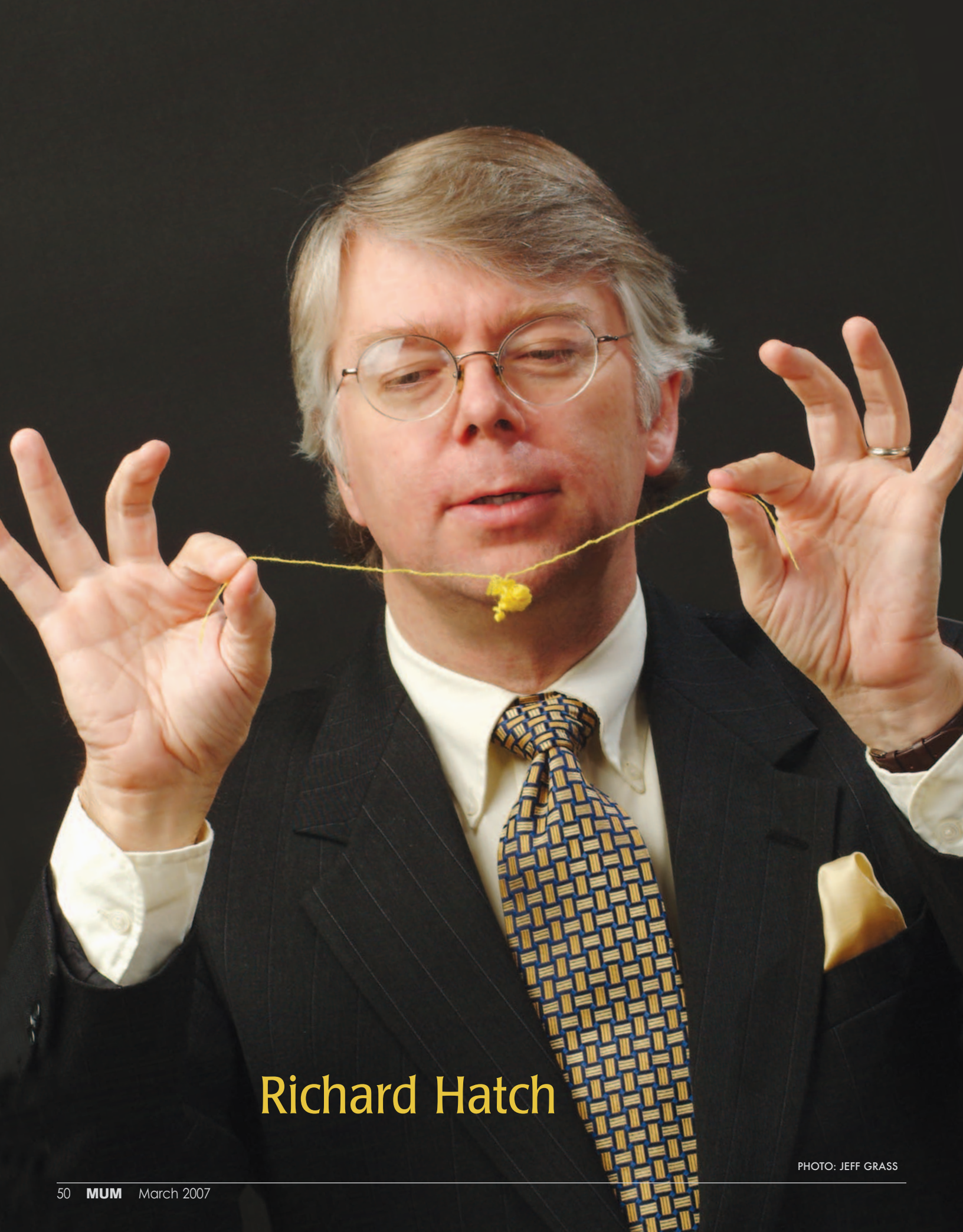
**Richard  
Hatch**

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Society of American Magicians Magazine

MAGIC • UNITY • MIGHT



# Richard Hatch

PHOTO: JEFF GRASS

“The more a magician reads about magic, the more he realizes how much more there is to learn and how many more magic books there are to read.”

Robert Lund (1925-1995), Founder  
The American Museum of Magic

# The Accidental Magic Bookman

By Bill Palmer

Born in California, raised in Germany, and educated at Yale University, how did Richard Hatch wind up in oxymoronic Humble, Texas? And how did this same fellow go from having a Master of Philosophy in Physics to being a respected magic historian, German translator, and successful publisher and book dealer in just a few years? “My wife and parents would also like to know what happened,” Richard says with a smile.

Richard Clawson Hatch was born May 24, 1955 in Pasadena, California where his father, Eastman Nibley Hatch, was completing his doctoral studies in nuclear physics at the renowned California Institute of Technology. When he was just three years old, the family moved to

Germany where his father worked for a clandestine branch of the U.S. Government for two years before completing a year of post-doctoral research at Heidelberg University. Attending German kindergarten, Richard began to learn the language at this early age, but it would not pay off until years later.

When Hatch was six years old, the family moved back to the United States and to Ames, Iowa, when his father was offered a tenured position with the Physics Department of Iowa State University. In 1964, Richard received his introduction into magic when he was given a copy of *The Golden Book of Magic* by The Great Merlini (Clayton Rawson). Soon, he was doing

magic shows in the basement for family and friends, performing tricks gleaned from the book. The climax of the show was the removal of brother Joe's shirt to demonstrate that his arms had been sawn through.

Richard enjoyed this kind of excitement. An early interest in hypnosis, which was encouraged by maternal grandfather Calvin Clawson, DDS, led to playground experiments in mesmerism. However, a painless ear piercing of a classmate during recess resulted in a banning of hypnosis from Sawyer Elementary. and, says Hatch, "ended my career as a hypnotist."

In 1966, he visited the Circle Magic Shop in New York City, where he purchased a Milk Pitcher and an E-Z Hat Loader, and with the addition of the Color Changing Knives, a Grant's Square Circle, Dove Pan, and miscellaneous other props that he would purchase from Loftus Magic in Salt Lake City, he soon had a respectable show to present at family gatherings.

Christmas of 1968 brought a copy of Henry Hay's *Cyclopedia of Magic* and the book encouraged Richard's interest in magic's literature and its history. The fact that the legendary T. Nelson Downs was a native of nearby Marshalltown made a strong impression.

In the summer of 1969 the family moved one last time, from Ames to Logan, Utah, where his father had been appointed a Professor of Physics at Utah State University and would later be Dean of the Graduate School. Although both his father and his mother, the former Anne Clawson, had been born and raised in Salt Lake City, three of Richard's grandparents had been born and raised in or near Logan in Utah's Cache Valley, and his Hatch grandparents had been married in the Mormon Temple there. According to Richard, "One of my great-grandfathers, Charles W. Nibley, a Mormon convert from Scotland, practiced polygamy (a common practice sanctioned by church teaching at the time) and housed his three wives in different homes on the same street. The homes were rumored to be connected by tunnels, but I have not been able to confirm the rumor as fact."

After spending his ninth grade year in Logan, in the summer of 1970, the family went on a camping trip in Europe, a journey that proved a turning point for Richard's progress as a magician. After traveling through France and Germany, Richard opted to remain in Germany a year and stay with family friends in Nieder-Erlenbach, a village near Frankfurt. There he attended the Georg-Buechner Gymnasium in nearby Bad Vilbel and quickly gained a speaking and reading fluency in German. But more importantly, Ruth Ettengruber, the mother of the family with whom he was staying, was so intrigued by Richard's hobby of magic that she called a local television studio and obtained the phone number of a professional magician, Fredo



Dick Hatch

### Magician Dick Hatch

Richard Hatch, the Houdini of LJHS, performed a magic act in the All-Talent Assembly. This act consisted of tricks ranging from ropes to lunches.

His first trick was very mysterious. He made a small yellow dog disappear, and where it went is a question still baffling the greatest mind of the school.

Next he performed a rope trick, somehow turning two ropes to one and one knot to three. Following this he told a dramatic story that ended with the statement, "Look, Hans, no ma!"

In his next trick, Richard used some mysterious magic words to produce a perfect example of a lunch which was taken out of an open cylinder.

To end his act, Richard repeated the magic words and came up with what looked like New Years' Eve! Richard said that he had other magic acts but did not have time to show anything more.

**What this review in the Logan Junior High student newspaper didn't mention was young Richard's tailcoat belonged to his great uncle, Hastings Clawson, who managed the second Dean of the S.A.M., Frederick Eugene Powell.**

Raxon, who lived in nearby Koenigstein im Taunus. She called Raxon and invited him to meet with her visiting American guest. When Raxon accepted the invitation he became the first sleight-of-hand magician Richard had ever experienced at close quarters.

"Raxon arrived in a large Mercedes, which made an immediate impression," Richard recalls. "He was impeccably dressed and pulled everyone into his circle of admirers with his

quick wit and genial manner. Although he had been invited for an afternoon *Kafeeklatsch* (coffee and cakes), no one wanted him to leave and he stayed for dinner as well. When he somehow managed to steal Frau Ettengruber's watch off her wrist without anyone, least of all her, catching him, there seemed to be no limit to his powers of persuasion." The fact that Raxon spoke several languages fluently and billed himself not as a magician, but as a *Täuschungskünstler*, a word he had coined which literally means "performer of deceptions," also made a powerful impression.

Richard quickly lost interest in apparatus magic and began to practice classical sleight of hand. Henry Hay's *Amateur Magician's Handbook* became his bible. He began to purchase any magic books he could find, in German and English. Through Bora's Magic Studio in Frankfurt, Richard was able to buy some back issues of *The Linking Ring* and became an I.B.M. member. He also attended monthly meetings of the local branch of the German Magische Zirkel in Frankfurt. And it wasn't long before Hatch was giving paid performances: the first one at the U.S. Armed Forces elementary school's Halloween festival and another for a 12-year-old neighbor's birthday party.

One of the highlights of his stay in Germany was attending a lecture on magic history given by Alexander Adrion at the University of Frankfurt. Richard had received Adrion's book *Zauberei Zauberei* for Christmas, as well as the then recently published first German edition of Robert-Houdin's memoirs, which Adrion had edited. Adrion kindly signed both books and encouraged the youngster's interest. Richard still has the knots from the rope that was cut and restored that evening.

Alexander Adrion was the intellectual face of magic in Germany at the time, playing a role similar to that John Mulholland, Milbourne Christopher, and Ricky Jay have filled here in America. Adrion was the man the media would contact if they needed special information about magic. He also performed in a style he called *Kammermagic* or "chamber magic," which was to inspire some of Hatch's later work.

At the end of his year in Germany, the Ettengruber's gave Richard a farewell party at which Bora (Emil Weinbruch, not to be confused with Borra, the famous pickpocket) and his assistant Tamara performed, as well as visiting American professional Roland Khan (Roland Hill) and his wife, who had been touring military bases with a nightclub act. Hatch has lost touch with Bora, but sees Roland Hill every few years at the Los Angeles Conference on Magic History.

Upon his return to the United States, Richard's interest in books had taken root and his practice and performance of sleight-of-

hand magic began to flourish. After completing the 11th grade he attended the 1972 I.B.M. convention in Buffalo, New York in June, staying at a nearby Y.M.C.A. It was his first convention, so it made quite an impression. He saw Eddie Fechter, Walter Cummings, and Gene Gordon, and recalls that Tom Mullica was helping Duke Stern run the Abbott's booth. But Richard knew where the real magic was and spent most of his money with Phil Thomas and Anthony Vander Linden on books. The rest of the summer was spent at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire where he took French (which he had begun to study in junior high), Russian (which he had studied in Germany), and acting. He performed in the school talent assembly, his two big tricks being Professor Cheer's Rope Trick and Slydini's Torn-and-Restored Newspaper, another effect he had learned from a book.

After graduating from Logan High School in 1973, Richard spent the summer working in Salt Lake City, living with his grandparents and learning the art of dice stacking from Senator Crandall's manuscript. He began the summer staying with his maternal grandparents, the Clawsons, who found the constant sound of the clattering dice rather annoying, especially when trying to watch their favorite television shows. So he moved in with his grandfather Hatch, who was not disturbed by the noise in his much larger home, allowing him to practice without restriction.

"I eventually acquired the knack of dice stacking," says Hatch, "and though I have never found a way to use it professionally, on one occasion I did find an opportune moment to showcase the fruits of my summer-long effort. It was about 20 years later at a Martin Nash lecture at Charlie McFarland's house in Kingwood, Texas. During a break Nash and another magician were looking at Charlie's dice stacking equipment. Neither of them could get the dice to stack." The excuses went back and forth: "The surface is all wrong," and, "The dice aren't the right size for the cup." Richard quietly took the cup, laid out the dice, and stacked them perfectly on the first try. He didn't say a word. He knew when to quit! Once more, his study of a somewhat obscure manuscript had paid off.

Hatch left Logan to attend Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota (the last town robbed by the infamous Jesse James) in the fall of 1973. The following year he went to France to learn to perfect his French. A small part of the summer was spent in Lourdes, where he worked on the construction of a religious themed wax museum. The Virgin Mary was to appear to Bernadette in the grotto scene

of the museum, and thanks to the Pepper's Ghost principle, she eventually did. Hatch only lasted two weeks at that job, quitting when the Fiberglas that he was fashioning into clouds around the wax figure of the ascending Jesus permeated his clothes to such a degree that it made sleeping difficult.

The short stay in Lourdes, however, did garner at least one new joke for Hatch's slowly growing repertoire. When his French landlord learned he was from Utah, he asked Richard if he knew the definition of "polygamy." Hatch asserted that he did, but the landlord volunteered in French that it meant "more than two wives." The landlord then asked if he knew the word for "two wives." "Bigamy," said Hatch. "And the word describing just one wife?" asked the landlord. Before Hatch could answer, he shouted out, "Monotony!"

After hitchhiking around France, including a memorable visit to Blois, the birthplace of Robert-Houdin, Richard traveled to England to "patch" roses in Peterborough. "I only lasted a week," he says, recalling his work grafting

their copyright registered (to prevent future embarrassment through unauthorized republication!) was more than I was paid for having written them."

To support himself while in Spain, Richard taught English privately. He deeply regrets that at that time his obsession with magic was in remission, so he was unaware of the great magicians, such as Tamariz and Ascanio, who were creating a revolution in close-up magic in Madrid at the time.

In 1979, Hatch returned to the States to enroll in graduate school at Utah State University, again studying Physics, but his real motivation was to generate letters of recommendation to someplace more interesting. It worked and, by 1980, he was accepted at the graduate school of Yale in New Haven, Connecticut.

In the interim, he hitchhiked from Salt Lake City to San Diego (in one day), and spent most of that summer in Toluca, Mexico, where he became more intimately acquainted with the techniques used by pickpockets than he would have liked, by having his pocket

picked by a "whiz mob" at a train station. Richard patiently waited in line for a ticket and just as his turn came, a man pushed in front of him to buy his. "I was so mad at his rudeness in butting in front of me that I did not feel his accomplices take my wal-

let out of the front pocket of my jeans!" The absent wallet was immediately apparent when he went to pay for his ticket, but by then the team had scattered in three directions with a healthy head start. The misdirection, though crude and temporary, was effective.

Not long after arriving in New Haven to begin his studies at Yale, Richard met Rosemary Kimura, a graduate student in violin at the Yale School of Music. He bought an inexpensive used violin and began to take lessons from her. He also began actively to pursue his interest in sleight of hand, which he had largely abandoned during his undergraduate studies. Curtis Kam, then a senior at Yale, showed Richard many things that he'd missed out on, as did Peter London, Jonathan Townsend, Tom Prete, and Slydini, from whom he took one lesson. He still recalls Slydini's advice when he asked him how to cover the exchange of the torn pieces for the restoration pieces at a crucial moment in his newspaper tear. Richard was expecting a bit of technical finesse, a way of holding the pieces and moving the hands that would resolve an awkward moment. Instead, Slydini responded with a single word, "Personality."

He saw Richard Osterlind lecture on mentalism for magicians, which opened his eyes

## The Virgin Mary was to appear to Bernadette in the grotto scene of the museum, and thanks to the Pepper's Ghost principle, she eventually did.

rosebuds onto other plants, but it gave him a respect for migrant farm laborers. Moving on to London, he hung out at Davenport's magic shop across from the British Museum, where the counter was manned by Patrick Page. Richard asked Page if they had a copy of T. Nelson Downs' *Art of Magic* (which had not yet been reprinted by Dover) and Page disappeared into the famous Davenport crypt and resurfaced with a copy that is still a treasured part of Hatch's collection. Richard also made a pilgrimage to Ken Brooke's Studio, where he tried to purchase Fred Kap's Floating and Dancing Cork. But, Ken, in his inimitable manner, refused to sell it to him.

By 1977, Hatch had graduated from Carleton (which is also Barrie Richardson's alma mater) with a B.A. in Physics. Traveling back to Europe, he spent a year living in Madrid, both to learn Spanish and to learn the discipline of writing. "I felt that if, at the end of year, I decided I was not a good writer, the discipline I would have developed by the attempt of writing daily would serve me well in other endeavors. Unfortunately, I did not develop the necessary discipline, and the literary result of my year in Spain was single short story and a poem, both published in the local newspaper in Logan, Utah. The cost of having

to new possibilities and led to their close friendship. Hatch began taking weekly lessons in card manipulation from Jimmy Brockett and had regular visits with collector Chet Karkut. Dr. John Henry Grossman was also very encouraging to Richard, especially when it came to collecting.

After a year at Yale, Richard arranged to spend the summer doing research in heavy ion experimental physics in Darmstadt, Germany. While there, he tracked down the address of the man whose magic books had so inspired him, as well as countless other budding magicians. Most Americans know him as Henry Hay, the author of *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*, *The Cyclopedia of Magic*, and *Learn Magic*. His real name was June Barrows Mussey, and he had also translated Ottokar Fischer's *Das Wunderbuch der Zauberkunst*, published in America as *Illustrated Magic* in 1931. Mussey had moved from America to Germany in the 1950s and settled there, becoming a highly regarded advertising consultant. When Hatch sent a fan letter to Mussey, he received a phone call and invitation in return. That sum-

mer, Hatch met Mussey and his wife (who had written a book on clay pot cooking under the pen name Henrietta Hay) while they were vacationing in Austria. They conversed and sessioned at length. A few years later Richard was invited to perform at a private dinner party at the Musseys' home in Düsseldorf. Mussey was flattered that Hatch's performance featured several effects from his books. Unfortunately, Barrows Mussey passed away just a few days after the performance. "I like to think it was just a coincidence," says Hatch.

On December 31, 1983, Richard married Rosemary Kimura. He stopped taking violin lessons.

Hatch dropped out of graduate school in 1984 to do magic full time. "I tell people that I decided that I would rather violate the laws of nature than discover them," he says. "The truth is, I find it easier." Not knowing anything about the business of show business, it took him some time to begin to obtain bookings and build a reputation. "Sometimes, you can be 'too clever' when it comes to advertising," Hatch says. "An early advertisement of

mine boasted 'Sleight of Hand and Sleight of Mind Deceptions.' Only later did a friend point out that 'sleight of mind' might easily be misinterpreted as 'slight of mind,' implying feeble mindedness!"

Hatch was inspired by Raxon's German neologism to bill himself as a "deceptionist" rather than a mere "magician." It stopped people from asking, "What instrument do you play?" But he now found them asking why he became a "receptionist"?

To fill the time between engagements, Hatch began translating Ottokar Fischer's *J. N. Hofzinsler Zauberkünste*, which was published in Berlin in 1942. He had first seen a copy of the book in the collection of Milbourne Christopher, who had pointed out the Hofzinsler correspondence in the appendix. After determining the work was no longer protected by copyright, Yale Library allowed Hatch to photocopy a copy of the book that was borrowed for him through the interlibrary loan system.

Richard views his Hofzinsler translation as his "dissertation" on magic, a project undertaken in lieu of doctoral work in Physics. Researching it took him to the Library of Congress, which housed original correspondence and manuscripts of Hofzinsler, as well as some of his original apparatus; to the Klosterman Collection, then in Cincinnati, where there are also some important Hofzinsler pieces; to the Mulholland Collection, which was then housed at the Player's Club in Manhattan; to the Raphael Ellenbogen Collection in Brooklyn; and to H. Adrian Smith's fabulous library now housed at Brown University, but then at his home in North Attleboro, Massachusetts. Finding a publisher was no easier than obtaining engagements, and Richard remains grateful to Walter Graham of Omaha, whose Modern Litho Company published his translation as *The Magic of J.N. Hofzinsler* in 1985.

In April 1984, Richard entered the second New England Close-up Magic Competition, sponsored by Assembly 16 in Worcester, Massachusetts. He placed third, behind Bob Greenburg and Dave Cresey.

He also went to the Magic Collectors' Association weekend convention in Chicago that year, traveling from Connecticut with Life President Dr. John Henry Grossman to Detroit, where they visited the Stoyan Mirkovich Collection, then spending an afternoon en route at Bob Lund's incredible American Museum of Magic in Marshall, Michigan. The MCA weekend that year was attended by Ricky Jay, Debbie and Doug Henning, and Harry and Gay Blackstone, among others. Richard gave a lecture on Hofzinsler, and roomed with H. Adrian Smith, who became Dean of the S.A.M. shortly thereafter.



An early promotional photo for *Chamber Magic* featured Rosemary's 1728 Joannes Florenus Guidantus Violin and Richard's 1986 Finn Jon Silver Stick.

In May 1984 Hatch attended a lecture by Mike Caveney in Old Greenwich, Connecticut. In addition to enriching his repertoire (Mike's "Powers of Darkness Comes out of the Closet" is still a favorite), it afforded Richard the opportunity to meet Neil See, who lived nearby. Neil had retired after a successful career on Wall Street and had built a fantastic library, which he invited Richard to visit after the lecture. Not only was Richard impressed with Neil's library, but with his performing ability. Neil had studied privately with Vernon, Frank Garcia, Francis Carlyle, and Charlie Miller, among others, and he continued to hone his performing skills. Neil tutored Richard in the performance of two of his favorite effects, the Cups and Balls, and the Gypsy Thread, and both remain cornerstones of Richard's performances.

Hatch now belonged to the Society of American Magicians, the Magic Collectors' Association, and he had reinstated his membership in the I.B.M. At the 1984 S.A.M National Convention in Las Vegas, thanks to the generosity of Dr. Charles A. Preuss (Life Member #1), and at the recommendation of Dr. John Henry Grossman and Past National President Bill Andrews, Richard became S.A.M. Life Member #49.

In September of 1984, Richard and Rosemary, along with pianist Thomas Martin, offered a joint program of magic and music at the small Puppet House Theater in Stony Creek, Connecticut. Richard had taken acting lessons at the theater that summer and the director suggested he put on a full-evening performance there. Not feeling he had enough solo material to sustain a concert-style show, he suggested an evening of magic and music, featuring Rosemary as well. The director liked the idea and the only obstacle then became convincing Rosemary to participate! She initially balked at the idea of an alternating program of magic and music, but agreed to give it a try if they could come up with some ensemble pieces that combined their talents.

Richard and Rosemary's first program was simply called *An Enchanted Evening* and featured only four ensemble pieces: a card manipulation sequence Richard had worked on with Jimmy Brockett, climaxed by the production of a single dove, accompanied by Fritz Kreisler's Schön Rosmarin; Punx's Heart of Glass penetration frame presentation accompanied by Saint-Saëns The Swan; the Gypsy Thread trick, re-titled The Miracle of the Jadoo-Wallah, and accompanied by Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherezade, and Vernon's Symphony of the Rings, accompanied by Kreisler's Tambourin Chinois, which closed the show. Solo magic and music alternated to fill the rest of the program.

Their opening Friday night performance was competing with a free concert by Arlo

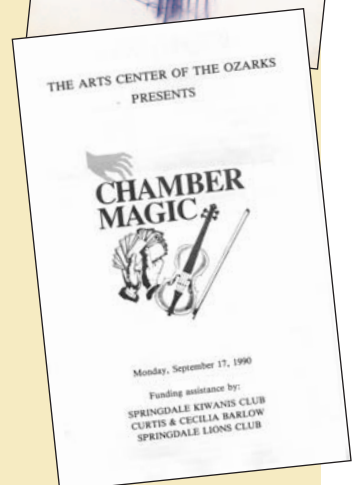
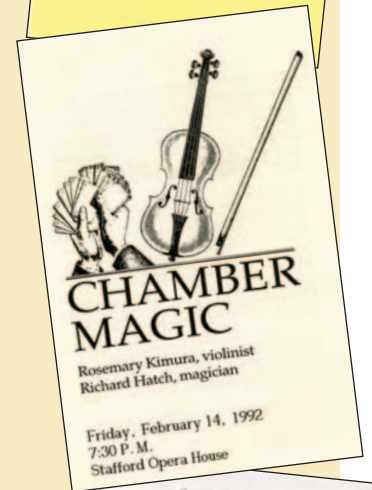
# Chamber Magic

with  
Richard Hatch, Magic  
Rosemary Kimura, Violin  
Celice Clark, Piano

"Reality consists of a thousand illusions"  
— Josef von Sternberg

Suite Italienne (Introduzione)	Stravinsky
Schön Rosmarin	Kreisler
La Cartomanie	Brockett
The Power of Suggestion	Anderson
Danse Espagnole	de Falla/Kreisler
The Aerial Treasury	Robert-Houdin
The Invisible Visible	Malini
The Powers of Darkness	Corinda/Caveney
Obertass Mazurka	Wieniawski
Le Cygne	Saint-Saëns
Das Gläserne Herz	Punx
Intermission	
The Rag-Time Dance	Joplin
L'Escamoteur	arr. by See
Überall und Nirgends	Hofzinger
Liebesleid	Kreisler
Tempus Fugit	Annemann/ Adrion
Scheherezade	Rimsky-Korsakov
The Miracle of the Jadoo-Wallah	arr. by See
Tambourin Chinois	Kreisler
Les Anneaux Chinois	Vernon
Rumanian Dances	Bartók
The Silver Wand	Jon
The Butterflies	arr. by Hatch

Monday evening, September 17, 1990



Guthrie in nearby Guilford, Connecticut and, in retrospect, Richard says he would rather have been there himself! But the performance went sufficiently well that they were encouraged to try again, expanding their ensemble features and renaming the show *Chamber Magic*. Because the printed programs featured the names of the musical composers, Hatch credited the magical creators as well, listing Punx, Hofzinsler, Vernon, Downs, Robert-Houdin, Brockett, Caveney, See, and others, as those who had inspired his repertoire.

In the Spring of 1985 Richard again entered the New England Close-up Magic Competition and this time won first place. Richard Osterlind

placed second, but Hatch says, "The only reason I won was because I had slept with one of the judges!" H. Adrian Smith had been his roommate at the aforementioned Magic Collectors' Weekend.

Richard and Rosemary continued to perform *Chamber Magic*, and that summer they were booked as part of a summer music festival in Grenoble, France. Hatch then attended his first F.I.S.M. in Madrid, and it was here where he experienced the performances of René Lavand, Ascanio, Pepe Carroll, and Juan Tamariz, and realized how much he had missed by not having been active in magic while living in Madrid!

In late summer 1985, Richard and Rosemary moved to Houston, Texas, where Rosemary enrolled in the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. She had been offered a rare opportunity to study with renowned concert violinist and pedagogue Sergiu Luca. For a violinist, this is very much like being granted permission to study for an extended period with a master like Dai Vernon.

The local press quickly picked up Hatch's academic approach to the art of magic. Within weeks of his arrival there was an article in the *Houston Chronicle* about the young magician who had just translated Hofzinsler's work into English. And as Rosemary made music, Richard became an integral part of Houston's magic community, becoming friends with Charles Greene, Paul Driscoll, Steve Burton, Banachek, Bill Palmer, Scott Hollingsworth, Walter Blaney, Frank Price, Curt Miller, Mike T. and other pros in town. He also began working at Magic Island as one of the house magicians.

"Becky Blaney was entertainment director at Magic Island and was kind enough to book me to work one week in a room that featured stand-up comedy magicians. Unfortunately, the week I was to begin, management decided to remodel the room as a banquet facility. Since I had a contract, Becky shifted me to performing close-up, which led to steady employment there for several years. It was a fantastic training ground and gave me the nightly performing experiences that remain at the core of

my close-up repertoire."

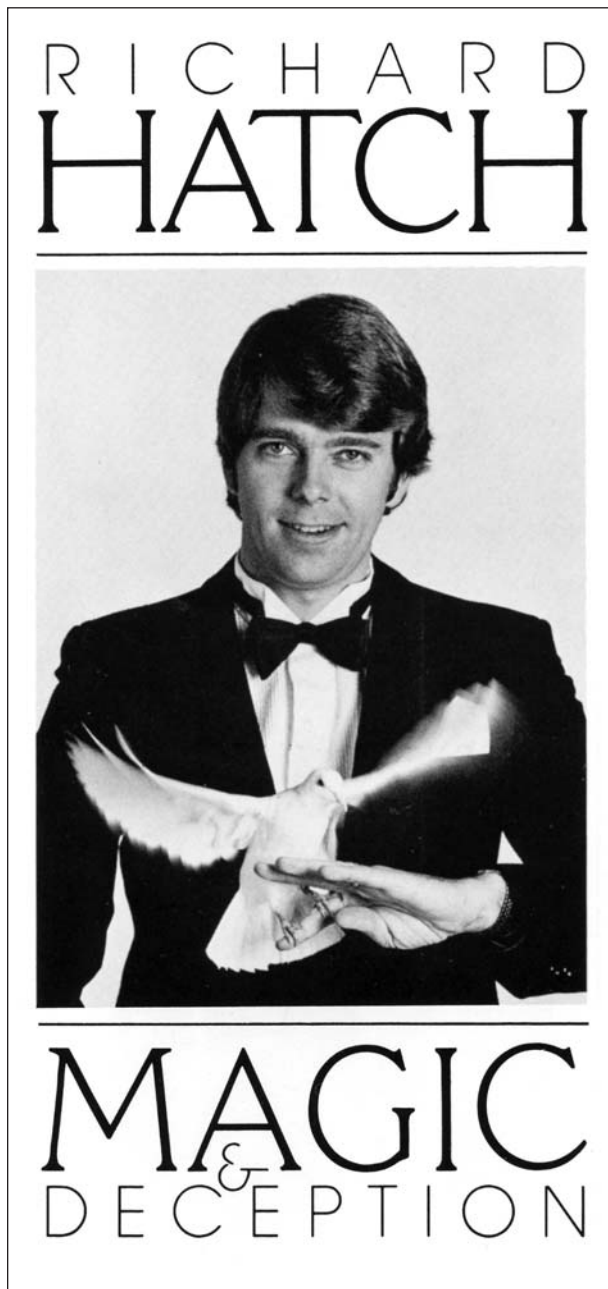
The city's social climate was well suited to Hatch's performing skills. "Houston has a very active and socially conscious party scene. Only a couple of months after our move, I performed at a private birthday party that rented out the entire Astrodome. Then I was flown to West Texas to perform at an oil baroness's company Christmas party. Both were heady experiences for me, having never before experienced that level of conspicuous consumption!"

Subsequent performances transported Richard to venues as distant and exotic as Budapest, Hungary; Tapei, Taiwan; and Eddie Murphy's mansion in New Jersey for a New Year's Eve party, which was attended by Sugar Ray Leonard, Arsenio Hall (himself a former magician), and numerous other celebrities.

Although he and Rosemary performed *Chamber Magic* at a private event attended by former president George Bush, Richard was more impressed with the audience in Las Vegas, when the local arts council sponsored their program. In attendance were Mike Skinner, Larry Jennings, and Gordon Bruce, all of whose techniques Richard used in his version of Hofzinsler's *Everywhere and Nowhere* in that performance. On another memorable occasion, Dr. Persi Diaconis attended a lecture Richard gave on Hofzinsler for the Goethe Society in Boston. A *Chamber Magic* performance at Hope College in Holland, Michigan was attended by Bob and Elaine Lund, Dan Waldron, and David and Anita Meyer.

Rosemary, meanwhile, had begun performing as a core member of Houston's Grand Opera, and as a substitute member of the Houston Symphony. In August 1987, a daughter, Catherine Elizabeth Hatch, was born. She is currently a sophomore at Smith College in Massachusetts (but spending this semester at the University of Grenoble in France). And in October of 1989, son Jonathan David Hatch was born. He is currently a junior at Humble High School and is a talented pianist and juggling enthusiast.

Although Richard and Rosemary still give occasional performances of *Chamber Magic*, and even jointly attended Bob Fitch's 2002 Performance Workshop in Canada ("A fantastic experience that forced me to rethink the fundamentals of performing!" says Richard), they no longer tour and only give occasional performances together nowadays. Richard continues to give solo platform and close-up performances and Rosemary teaches violin privately in addition to her solo and chamber music engagements. If they do decide to start performing together more regularly, they'll likely do so under a different name. "My friend Steve Cohen has had deservedly great success with his own wonderful performances under the name '*Chamber Magic*.' So rather than risk marketplace confusion, we'd most



Cover photo of a promotional brochure printed in 1984, when Hatch made the decision to pursue the practice of prestidigitation rather than study physics.



likely rename what we do.”

In the late 1980s, thanks to referrals from Walter Blaney, Richard purchased the libraries of deceased Houston magicians Sigmar Hofeller and Glenn Davison. He was also lending books to close-up magician friend and computer expert Charlie Randall. With the common goal of growing their magic libraries, at some point the two realized that if they purchased books in quantity, they could get them at wholesale prices. In most cases, they could purchase just three books, get them at a sizeable discount, leaving one left over to sell. They soon found themselves surrounded by a surplus and decided to make up a list. At the next Texas Association of Magicians convention they showed up with boxes of books and let people come up to their hotel room where they could browse through the priced books. A mailing list was next, they took out small ads in magic magazines, and soon Hatch and Randall had a reputation as the guys to go to for hard-to-find magic books.

When Charlie and Richard jointly purchased the library of Wayne Raeke in 1990, it was the formal beginning of H&R Magic Books as dealers of second hand books. One thing led to another, and soon they were acquiring collections from people who wanted to get rid of their libraries or widows who needed to dispose of their husband’s accumulations. Subsequently, they purchased the magic libraries of S.A.M. past national president Jim Zachary and noted authors Bill Severn and Martin Gardner.

They also acquired the book co-op that magic dealer Bill Whittington established at Golden Gate Magic, which included his mailing list and contacts with publishers. Then, in 1994, they purchased the massive book inventory of Mickey Hades’ shop in Seattle. Up until that point, they had been working out of their houses. Now, with a huge truckload of books on its way, they had to lease some warehouse space and officially set up shop.

In 1998, H&R Magic Books became publishers, thanks to Charlie Buckner, who introduced Richard and Charlie to German mentalist Satori. His book on contact mind reading, *Making Contact*, became H&R’s first title. Jerry Sadowitz put them in touch with the popular

British magical performer Derren Brown, who allowed them to publish his *Pure Effect* and *Absolute Magic* in America. They would go on to publish books by Joseph Atmore, Walter Pharr, Pit Hartling (who was raised in Nieder-Erlenbach, the German village where Richard lived for a year), Howard Adams, Robert Neale,

Franklin Andrews was quite a tall man (well over 6 feet) in his late 20s.

Magician and author David Alexander had mentioned to Hatch that he had discovered the true identity of the author of *Expert at the Card Table*. Alexander claimed it was not anyone the magic community had heard of, though he would not tell Hatch who it was. But he had hinted that whoever wrote the book exhibited such skill in doing so that he must have been an experienced writer, so Hatch resolved to follow Alexander’s lead and search out other candidates. Hatch quickly found one James Dewitt Andrews, who seemed to fit the known facts, being the author of several “treatises” all published in Chicago during the time Erdnase was rumored to have been active there. Hatch assumed he had discovered Alexander’s candidate for the man who was Erdnase, but was to soon find out that was not the case.

Both Hatch and Alexander presented back-to-back lectures on the Erdnase identity question at the November

1999 Conference on Magic History. Alexander revealed his candidate to be a mining engineer named Wilbur Edgerton Sanders, and wrote a full report on his reasoning in the January 2000 issue of *Genii* magazine.

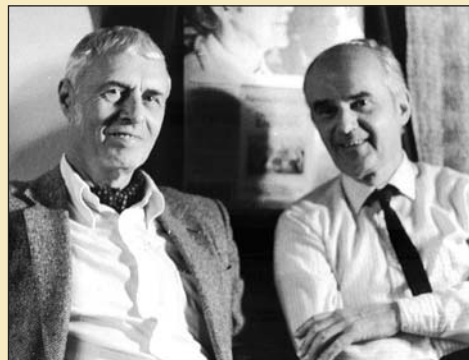
Hatch, meanwhile, had stumbled on yet another candidate, Edwin Sumner (E. S.) Andrews, who made an even better circumstantial candidate than James Dewitt Andrews had. While he believes that none of the current candidates, including an intriguing new one proposed by Todd Karr, can conclusively be shown to have written the book, Hatch remains optimistic that the mystery will someday be solved. “In someone’s attic,” Richard says, “there is a first edition copy signed by the author or some other clue waiting to be discovered.”

An article by Hatch entitled “Searching for Erdnase” that appeared in the December 1999 issue of *MAGIC* helped draw further attention to the pending eBay sale of Gardner’s copy of Erdnase. In fact when the book sold for just over \$10,000 that February, it was bought by someone who had learned of the auction from the article in *MAGIC*.

In addition to his interest in Erdnase, Hatch has investigated the activities of German magicians during the Third Reich period, finding that



**A montage of mentors: Fredo Raxon [above] was the first in 1970, Jimmy Brockett (shown with wife Lucy) tutored Hatch in card manipulation, and Barrows Mussey (a.k.a. Henry Hay) and Alexander Adrion, shown together in a 1982 Irving Desfor photo, were inspirational through their writings and encouragement.**



Arthur Moses, Christopher Taylor, Bob Cassidy, and Paul Potassy.

In the summer of 1999, prior to their purchase of his library, Martin Gardner sent H&R his first edition copy of S.W. Erdnase’s acclaimed *Expert at the Card Table*, unsolicited and uninsured! They had never had a first edition copy for sale, nor did they have personal copies of the first edition, and the only price reference they could find was the auction sale of Richard’s friend Neil See’s copy by Swann Galleries in May 1990 for \$1870. After consulting with Gardner, they decided to offer his copy on eBay. Martin suggested that it might attract more interest if he included his source materials relating to his quest for the mysterious author. This included his correspondence with Marshall D. Smith, the illustrator of the book whom Gardner had tracked down in Chicago in 1946, and Edgar Pratt, a magician and gambler who ultimately led Gardner to conclude that gambler Milton Franklin Andrews (1872-1905) had authored the book.

In reading the correspondence between Gardner and Smith, Hatch was struck by the discrepancies between Smith’s consistent recollection of the author as a short man in his early 40s, and the fact that Milton

the magic community mirrored society as a whole, with politics overshadowing even the world of pleasant deceptions. His article “Kalanag and the Vanishing Banknotes” in the July 1998 issue of *MAGIC* summarized some of his research into the career of Helmut Schreiber, the German film producer who performed as Kalanag. Hatch’s current translation project — Günther Damman’s *Die Juden in der Zauberkunst* (Berlin 1933), a collection of short biographies of Jewish magicians by a Jewish scholar who perished in the Holocaust — continues that research. Richard’s most recently published translation (again, from German) is *The Magic of Paul Potassy* by Uwe Schenk and Michael Sondermeyer, published in 2005 by H&R Magic Books.

Although he has written articles for *MAGIC*, *Genii*, *Magicol*, *Yankee Collector*, and *Perennial Mystics*, and is a columnist for the German periodical *Magische Welt* that is published by Wittus Witt, Richard feels that his most lasting contribution to the literature of magic will likely be his translation of the first four volumes of Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College*, an encyclopedic course in sleight-of-hand card magic. Giobbi praised Richard’s translation, saying, “Collaborating with a man who has translated the works of Viennese genius Johann Nepomuk Hofzinsler gave this task an almost mythical flavor for me.” Richard, however, feels that publisher Stephen Minch deserves the lion’s share of any credit for the work’s literary qualities in English, having taken his translation and polished it to its current form.

Over the past three or four years, some of Hatch’s most interesting pieces of writing have appeared on the Internet. No, he doesn’t maintain a blog site, where he spews forth in diary-like fashion his random thoughts on the past, present, and future of the art. Instead, Hatch occasionally pops onto the Internet, most often on the *Genii* Forum, with some of the most informative posts imaginable. For the most part, his posts are insightful and incisive answers to someone’s request for the provenance of a sleight, the inventor of an effect, or the birth or death date of a particular performer of yore. Sometimes his posts can be lengthy and filled with minutia if, say, he’s identifying a German magician performing during World War II or profiling a possible acquaintance of Erdnase. And other times the posts are laconic and witty, like when he’s sharing a gossipy bit of behind-



PHOTO: SCOTT WELLS

Richard Hatch and his bookselling and publishing partner, Charlie Randall, bookend H&R Magic Books’ hardback publications to date.

the-scenes magic news.

In May of 2005, when John Moehring made the decision to accept the S.A.M.’s offer to become the new editor of *M-U-M*, one of the first people he called was Richard Hatch. And it was not because he wanted the news of his new job spread throughout magicdom. Instead, he wanted to talk Richard into becoming one of writers who would assist with the makeover of *M-U-M* and help him take the magazine into the new directions he was planning. Moehring had worked with Hatch during the years he edited *MAGIC*, and having appointed him as both a contributing editor and a regular book reviewer, he was more than appreciative of Richard’s capabilities as a relentless researcher and a writer who could meet deadlines. Jon Racherbaumer was already on board to write and edit the tutorial material. Moehring needed Hatch to be *M-U-M*’s associate editor.

That July, after John’s editorship was announced at the S.A.M. convention in Boston, he flew to Houston to meet with Richard. Since they had agreed in principle that Richard would serve as associate editor, it only took a handshake to make it official and they spent the rest of the day developing game plans. “And while I’m still not sure what the associate editor does,” Richard says, “I figure if I do it long enough, someday I may know what it is that I do. One of the primary benefits of being a Life Member in the S.A.M. is a lifetime subscription to *M-U-M*, so from the start, I was excited by the prospect of increasing the value of that benefit to all members. Other primary tangible ben-

efits of membership are the fellowship of monthly meetings and the annual convention. I feel the magazine should reflect those benefits as well. It should be like getting a convention in your mailbox every month!”

From the time Richard was six years old and given that copy of *The Golden Book of Magic* by The Great Merlini, to the years in Germany when he sought the friendships of writers and teachers Alexander Adrion and Barrows Mussey, to his masterful translations of *The Magic of J.N. Hofzinsler* and the four volumes of Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College*, it’s plain to see that Richard’s interests in magic have been influenced by the written word. He has experienced and continues to realize a performing career that remains inspired by his studies of the literature. He has managed to amass one of the finer collection of books on the art, craft, and history of magic — proving it is a fallacy that the biggest magic libraries are put together by people who can’t make it as performers. And unlike those magical bibliophiles who spend their years buying, buying, and buying, Mr. Hatch stumbled onto a way to grow and sustain his collection by actually selling some of the books he was purchasing.

Hatch is fond of quoting his favorite Beatle, the late John Lennon: “Life is what happens while you’re making other plans.” Looking back, that decision to forego a career as a physicist and become a professional magician may have been calculated and by design, but it was serendipity that prevailed the day Richard Hatch became the accidental magic bookman.