



First You See It, Then You Don't

After putting his wife in a box, Vestal magician Rick Dennis places 12 "swords" through the

sides of the container . . . and then, "Shazam!" the box is turned

around and the audience finds that she is "transformed" into a rabbit (in the lower left corner of the

photo at right). (Photos by Walt Adams)

Magician Seeking to Out-Houdini Houdini



His fire-eating routine nearly cost him his life when learning the technique years ago.



Dennis' routines involve two doves, three rabbits, a small dog and a boa constrictor.

by MARY ANN SCOTT
Staff Writer

Back from a successful state fair tour of escaping from handcuffs and a boa constrictor just as exploding gunpowder sends flames 10 feet into the air, Vestal magician Rick Dennis is busy booking a college tour for next year.

He will call the show, appropriately, "Houdini, Back From the Grave?" and will take on a partner, Scott Darling of Glenwood Road, in Vestal, for psychic and ESP acts. Darling is now serving in the Navy.

Young Dennis, 22, has been performing as magician, juggler, fire eater, sword swallower and

illusionist with the European Illusion Theatre, playing at 15 state fairs this year. He also handled promotional aspects of the show.

He and his wife, the former Pamela Schlauder, also have probably had a unique start to their marriage. Just five days after the wedding, Rick severed off his wife's head in a giant guillotine, turned her into a giant black widow spider, sawed through her with a 36-inch buzz saw blade, and cut out her middle and pushed it several feet from the rest of her body.

Pamela found herself, however, floating in the air.

In a scene in which only her head appears, she sings "I ain't got nobody . . ." and you don't know if she's wincing from the beheading or the pun.

During his year at home, Dennis is performing locally when he isn't planning the college tour. He recently entertained at a Vestal Senior Citizens dinner and plans appearances at local nursing homes and schools. He says he won't be taking his boa constrictor into nursing homes, however.

Dennis, who began practicing magic at the age of 10, has spent seven seasons as a touring magician.

He almost didn't make it in one act locally—when a fire-eating routine backfired and severely burned his throat. The day he got out of the hospital, he says, he performed the stunt again.

Dennis' stunts also include performing 5,000 feet in the air in a strait jacket with the aid of a helicopter, with the ropes holding him set on fire with gasoline. He says that he never uses safety devices in his shows.

For store promotions, Dennis also is sealed in a coffin and buried alive for 10 hours under four feet of dirt,

or remains alive in a casket of ice for several hours, or lies on a bed of 500 six-inch railroad spikes while an assistant with a 16-pound sledge hammer smashes a pair of cinder blocks placed on top of him.

Dennis and his wife now live at 334 Hill Ave., Endicott. Finding an apartment can be especially difficult for a magician, he points out.

He also needs room for two doves, three rabbits, a small dog and the five-foot exotic boa constrictor. And five furry tarantula spiders are on order from an exotic pet shop in Georgia for use in still another escape act.

As his newest act, Dennis is planning a water torture escape which, he says, is rumored to have killed Harry Houdini. He will be suspended upside down in 500 gallons of water, shackled with chains and handcuffs inside the big tank.

The tank, which will resemble a large fish tank, will cost almost \$1,000 to build and will be ready by next year, Rick says.

He also claims that he plans to retire at the age of 30. But he doesn't give a hint as to what "act" could possibly follow "Houdini."

Applicant Sought for Recreation Post

Vestal residents interested in serving on the Vestal Recreation Commission may pick up applications at the town clerk's office in Vestal Town Hall.

Deadline for submitting applications will be 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3.

The recreation commission meets on the first Tuesday of each month. Members serve without pay.

A vacancy on the commission was created recently with the resignation of chairman Harold A. Moore of 220 Alice St., Vestal, due to illness.

The commission thanked Moore for his many years as an outstanding member on the commission.

Robert Wendland of 4309 Brentwood Pl. was elected chairman to replace Moore.

Jaycees, Jaynees Plan Joint Dinner

The Vestal Jaycees and Jaynees are hosting a joint membership dinner and meeting on Saturday, Nov. 23, at Twin Orchards Community Center. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a spaghetti dinner prepared by the Jaynees.

There will be a short business meeting followed by entertainment.

All past presidents of both clubs have been invited to participate in the meeting. Chairman Roxanne Gross said "We would like an opportunity to share ideas with all past members on projects which the organizations might do to help the Vestal community."

The evening is free to all members, past and those considering joining. For reservations, call Roxanne Gross at 754-1774.

Weekend Weather

Cloudy with rain likely today, possibly mixed with or changing to snow. Highs in the upper 40s. Chance of flurries Friday, variable cloudiness Saturday, chance of rain developing Sunday. Weekend daytime highs in the upper 30s to mid 40s, overnight lows in the 20s to low 30s.

Breast Self-Exam Program at JCC Mon.

On Monday, Nov. 25, the American Cancer Society and Jewish Community Center will sponsor a breast self-examination program. Three programs will be held at the Jewish Community Center on Clubhouse Road in Vestal at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 7 p.m.

The program will consist of a film, "Breast Cancer, Where We Are", followed by a talk and demonstration done with an anatomical model. Participants will also have the opportunity if they wish, to examine their own breast's with instruction from trained registered nurses made available through the Cancer Society and the Health Committee of the Jewish Community Center. This part of the program is designed to give

the participant actual training in the proper methods of breast self-examination.

National figures show that nearly 83 per cent of all women are aware of breast self-examination, yet only 23 percent actually make the process a monthly habit. Breast cancer knows no economic or social class, and all women have a better chance of early detection through the self-examination process. The American Cancer Society urges all women of Broome County to attend this life-saving program.

For further information call the American Cancer Society at 722-6471 or the Jewish Community Center at 724-2417.

