

THE SALT CITY MAGIC CLUB

Wandogram



"Warris A. Solomon Ring" IBM #74 Syracuse N.Y.

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Cover art by Chris Meece

Piff the Magic Dragon

by Bruce Purdy

John van Put (born 9 June 1980) is better known by his stage persona as “Piff, The Magic Dragon.”

While it may appear like Piff was an overnight success, this couldn't be farther from the truth. His accomplishments are the result of his endless dedication to honing and perfecting his craft. He's been grinding toward his goals.

Van der Put grew up in South East London. As a teenager, he was inspired by a magician on TV. At the age of 18, he became a member of The Magic Circle, and was one of the youngest members to have lectured there. Convinced by his parents to have a back-up plan, however, he completed a computer science degree, and began a career in IT.

A couple of years later, he quit IT to learn performance methods as a drama student at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

With three fellow alums, he co-founded the theatrical cabaret company Standnotamazed, becoming their artistic director. The com-

pany's “Love and Other Magic Tricks” won the Time Out Critic's Choice award as well as the 2009 Buxton Festival Fringe's award for Best Production, and was nominated for the Festival's Best New Writing award

Van der Put credits Fay Presto for enabling him to become a professional magician, combining restaurant table hopping, cruise ship work and corporate work for global companies.

He was influenced in his comedy by people who are a little more irreverent, like The Amazing Johnathan, Penn and Teller and Harry Anderson.

In 2008, van der Put created his stage persona of Piff the Magic Dragon, dressing in a green, red and yellow dragon costume, with self-deprecating humour and deadpan delivery. He is assisted by Mr. Piffles,” a chihuahua in a dragon costume.

“I was a regular human magician for many years and it never really worked out for me” he says. “I had a sort of very grumpy face, and I was getting

fired everywhere. And then I had to go to a costume party, and I didn't have a costume to wear and I said to my sister, ‘Do you have anything to wear?’ And she said, ‘Yes, I have a dragon outfit under my bed.’”

When he got to the party in the dragon outfit, nobody else turned up in costume. “It was just me. And one of my friends who knew that I was a magician said to me, ‘You should do this in your act. You could be Puff the Magic Dragon.’ And I said, ‘Wait, I could be Piff the Magic Dragon. You might have heard of my older brother, Steve.’ And that's where that came from.”

For the next few years, he performed at various fringe festivals and tours to great acclaim.

In 2011, Piff appeared on the first season of Penn & Teller: Fool Us, and in 2015, he appeared on the 10th season of America's Got Talent. Although he did well and wowed the judges, he ultimately did not win - but finished in the top 10.

Rather than being upset by not winning the competition, he launched a campaign as “The loser of America's Got Talent!” when in late 2015, Piff

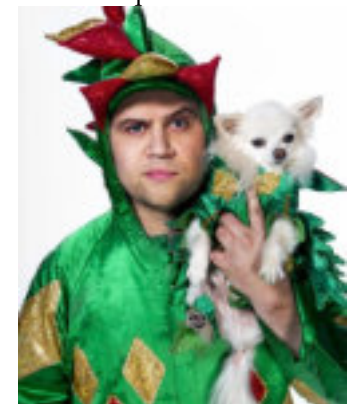
became the resident performer at The Flamingo in Las Vegas. The Flamingo renamed its “Bugsy's Cabaret theater” as the “Piff the Magic Dragon Theater.”

Since then, Piff has entertained more than half a million guests and was the first act ever to win Best Comedian, Best Magician and Best Headliner at the Best of Las Vegas Awards.

Most recently, Piff was named 2023 Magician of the Year by The Academy of Magical Arts at the prestigious Magic Castle

His first special Reptile Dysfunction is out now on YouTube and has released his first book, Piff the Magic Book vol. 1.

A fairy tail story for a fairy tail (tale?) character—but a reminder that success doesn't happen overnight. Evendragons have to put in the work.



Up Your Game: Becoming a Better Magician

Bruce Purdy

Do you want to be a better magician?

You may be—or aspire to be—a professional, or are a hobbyist who likes to perform tricks for your family and friends. You may like to appear on stage or prefer cards or other close-up magic. Wherever you are in this “house of magic,” I’m sure you want to get better at it.

(1) Should you buy or learn more effects or routines? Perhaps, but be selective. Know who you are, and especially how the audience sees you, and choose material that fits you. If you are a serious type person and perform mostly for adults, skip the gags, “magician in trouble” and such. At the same time, if you are seen as a funny guy, maybe you shouldn’t spend too much time and money on serious mentalism.

Just because a demo video appears to “knock the socks off” random people on the street, doesn’t mean that it’s

right for YOU!

(2) Attend lectures and conventions. Lectures are a great place to learn. Remember what I said about knowing what fits you? This does not apply to lectures. Although I am not into card magic, I have usually learned from, and gotten ideas from card lecturers like Micheal Vincent. Keep an open mind, and see what you can learn. It may be the way they interact with the spectators or something else.

Conventions are also a great place to see and talk with both old friends you only see there - and to meet new friends to exchange ideas with.

(3) Watch other magicians. If there is a magician performing in the area, whether it’s a friend performing at the library, a performer at a convention, a regional performer table hopping, or a national tour at a big theatre, see them! You can always learn something. (Not material you can steal, of course!)

Sometimes you will see things you don’t like and can learn what not to do. “Oh my gosh, I’ll bet I’ve done that before, I’d better be more careful!” Sometimes the stage presence—the way they stand, move and speak are so good, you’ll want to think more about how you could do it better. The important thing is to keep an open mind, and try to learn whatever you can.

(4) Watch other types of entertainers. Comedians, singers bands or anything else. By exposing yourself to good performers, not only magicians, you will psychologically pick up on performance styles that will affect the way you per-

form yourself. By exposing yourself to a variety of styles of comedy and types of music, it will also shape the type of music and comedy in your own act.

The same can be said of movies and TV shows. What (non-magic) books you read, what you watch and listen to shapes who you are. If you only think about magic during your show, the audience won’t feel invested in your show. On the other hand, if you are honest with the audience about who you are and what your tastes are, they will feel connected to you, and care much more about the show.



“We need to rethink our strategy of hoping the Internet will just go away.”

Substitute “AI” perhaps?



Our executive committee met in March to work on our first public magic show. It's been quite a while since we've done one.

Vice President David MacBlane is heading up this important project. He will be announcing the performers and the full agenda shortly. We have agreed upon an hour and half total show time with a short intermission.

Zoom member S.Patrick is a professional magic entertainer. He volunteered to perform and will have a spot in our line-up.

Now that The American Legion on James Street has been secured, we will be able to use this terrific facility for our show. This venue is perfect for our needs. It can accommodate a large audience and has an actual stage. It is extremely important that we now help ourselves and do what we can to insure a strong

audience attendance. The poster/flyer has been completed. Ken Frehm designed this and thanks to the input, suggestions and ideas of many, it is ready for dissemination.

Although the show will be held at the end of May, it is NOT too early to inform your family and friends. Please invite anyone and everyone who might enjoy our magic show.

I will be sending out the flyer to our mailing list as an attachment. Please distribute it as widely as you are able. I'll be bringing copies as well, to our next meeting for your use.

Of course, it will be a "Family-show." Although food will not be served, a bar with soft drinks plus adult beverages will be available at extremely reasonable prices.

We were very fortunate to have been contacted by an ex-member, Bill Wood. Bill donated the full set of the

Tarbell Magic Book Course in Magic. Bill requested the donation be in the name of Ray Cerio who was one of the founding members of our Ring. Bill was all aboard our idea of selling them and refreshing our needy treasury. Thank-you Bill! I know Ray Cerio would be very pleased.

Please join us for our monthly Zoom meeting. It is always scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month. This month, it will be on the 14th and sign-on is at 7:00 P.M. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7941606677>

Our In-Person month meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month. This

month, we will get together on April 21st at 7:00 P.M. Please join us. Feel free to bring in your own food for dinner as there are many local fast-food places nearby. If there is interest, we could bring in some pizza or whatever. We will have a chance to socialize, and schmooze about our love for magic and the performing arts. Everyone will have a chance to perform an effect. This is certainly not mandatory. Any and all magic topics are open.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Zoom meeting as well as our In-Person one!

Abracadabra

Ken Frehm



Public Show



Spring Forth



With A

Family Magic Show

The American Legion Hall

3701 James St. Syracuse, N.Y.

Saturday May 30, 2026

Starts: 3:00 P.M.

Adults at Door ~ \$15

Discounted Advance Tickets** (before 5/30) ~ \$12

Kids (12 yrs. & Younger) ~ \$8

Kids (4 yrs & Younger ~ Free

**For Discount ~ Scan QR Code below:



<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/spring-forth-into-magic>

Next meetings:

Tuesday, 14th April 2026
ON LINE Virtual meeting.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7941606677>

(Please sign in at about 6:45pm)

Tuesday, 21st April 2026
In Person meeting.
Eastwood American Legion
3701 James St., Syracuse

Save the Date!

Tue. 14th April	ZOOM Meeting
Tue. 21st April	In-Person Meeting
Sun. 26th April	MAWNY Convention
Tue. 12th May	ZOOM Meeting
Tue. 19th May	In-Person Meeting
Sat. 30th May	Our Public show
Tue. 9th June	ZOOM Meeting
Tue. 16th June	In-Person Meeting

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