



Thirteen is a magic number for 13-year-old David Richards and his father, Jerry Richards, 44. The two are working together with

a repertoire of magic acts that the elder Richards has been perfecting since he was just 13.

Times Herald — Chris Walker

# MAGIC!

## Father and son conjure fun for area audiences

By GRACE FILION  
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**T**hirteen was a magic age for Jerry Richards, a Port Huron native who was captivated by the intrigue of illusion way back in 1954, after taking a course in sleight-of-hand at the Port Huron YMCA.

Richards, now 44, is teaching his own 13-year-old son, David, the bewitching ways of the magician.

"I work at making the impossible seem obvious, which is the basis of the art of magic," said the elder Richards.

David Richards never had to take a special course. He is still learning from watching his father and the result is a budding father-son entertainment duo.

And while the father is the artist, the son is the comedian. "I like to make people laugh," said David. "Sometimes, they say, 'Oops, I've been fooled again' and they laugh at themselves."

Their magic routines are varied. Snakes pop out of jars, magic scarves appear under collars or emerge from sleeves and you never know when a rabbit will come out a hat. Puffs of smoke, vanishing objects and card tricks are only a few of the acts in the Richards' repertoire.

**A**mong the six different shows the two have perfected is an educational act, using visual aids to help certain impaired groups learn.

Although magic has been known as a black art, the senior Richards insists it has nothing to do with evil influences.

"It is the black props that gave it the black art name. Objects show up better against a dark background and of course,

they disappear better too. That's why magicians wear a black cloak and dark clothes to put the emphasis on what is being done instead of who is doing it."

Jerry Richards has had his black cloak, lined in red satin, and the imposing black top hat since the mid-1970s. David may earn his official costume at the magician's convention in Colon in August when he will get an opportunity to display his expertise.

Richards has not always managed to conjure up sufficient income from magic. For many years he was a clerk-dispatcher for the St. Clair County Road Commission. A few years ago, he struck out on his own to tour throughout Michigan and Ohio with his magic acts. It is still, he admits, touch and go.

He has invented a few tricks of his own along the way. He transforms sugar into hard candy right before your eyes and has a floating body trick that defies logic.

**B**asically, Richards considers himself an illusionist and although self-taught, he earned a non-academic psychology degree from Neotarian College of Philosophy in Peoria, Ill. On the practical side, he earned an associate's degree in general education from St. Clair County Community College in 1975.

However, magic is the avocation that is becoming his livelihood as he strives for professionalism.

As for David Richards, nothing is definite yet. He enjoys magic as an entertainment form and he likes the way it amuses audiences. But then, he also thinks he might like to be a rock musician to amuse them in another way.