

CALENDAR

QUESTIONS? Contact Editor AnneMarie Smolski asmolski@wickedlocal.com or 781-431-2006.

WELLESLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

Gil Stubbs' 'World of Magic' to feature Pat Farenga

As a young boy growing in up in the Bronx, Pat Farenga worked at his father's funeral home on weekends when he attended grammar school. When the company hearse returned from the cemetery to go to its livery in Manhattan, Pat was allowed to hitch a ride because the hearse drove by the Circle Magic store on Broadway. The first time Pat pulled up to the store and jumped out of the hearse, the owner of the store, Mike Tannen, (the brother of Louis Tannen, of Tannen's Magic Camp fame in Pennsylvania), was watching from a window.

When the 12-year-old Pat introduced himself, Mike asked, "You drove here in a hearse?" and Pat replied with a smile, "Yes." Mike looked at the young boy in a dark suit and said seriously, "You scare me, kid." Then he brushed back his thinning red hair, smiled, and said, "So, what can I do for you?" This was how the first of several magic lessons began for Farenga. He was learning sleight of hand from a real magician surrounded by the excitement of Broadway, and that experience led to his ongoing studies and interest in the conjuring arts.

Farenga performs at children's birthday parties, senior centers, corporate events, restaurants and private parties throughout New England. He is a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians (IBM) and co-editor of its newsletter, "The Silent Messenger," and website (www.ring122.com). He enjoys exploring the links among magic, music, and theater in his magic performances, and he shares his enthusiasm for these topics in one-on-one, group and formal classroom situations.

However, there was a long period when magic lay fallow for him. During his college years and soon after, Farenga moved seriously into learning music (he plays piano and tenor saxophone), doing theater (where he met his wife) and his work as a teacher and writer. After graduate school he worked at Holt Associates in Boston, a company that promotes homeschooling, founded by the late teacher and author John Holt. Holt published the first magazine about learning outside of school, "Growing Without Schooling," in 1977 and, after Holt's death in 1985, Farenga



Pat Farenga. COURTESY PHOTO

continued publishing it until 2001.

By day, Farenga is a writer and editor, but by night he is a devotee of the conjuring arts. His work as an education writer and activist puts him in touch with young people who sometimes express interest in learning magic. To help support that interest he founded a Stage and Parlor Magic Club for homeschooled children that ran for three years, as well as a popular after-school magic club at the Forestdale Public School in Malden in 2014. He also privately tutors students of any age interested in learning sleight of hand and various performance techniques for magic.

Farenga performs on

stage, in small group settings (referred to in magic circles as parlor magic), and in close-up situations, where the magic often happens in people's hands. On Gil Stubbs' "World of Magic," hosted by the Wellesley Community Center, he will display examples from his shows in all three genres, as well as perform spectacular feats of legerdemain, mentalism, and illusion for children and adults.

This show is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 4 p.m. To sign up for free tickets, email the Wellesley Community Center at info@wellesleycommunity-center.org or call the main office, 219 Washington St., at 781-235-4172.

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