



Magic casts a spell at Pleasant Home

By **Bruce Ingram**
Pioneer Press

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A new interactive show at Oak Park's Pleasant Home provides a magical opportunity to tour the historic residence while exploring all five senses — with a sixth as a bonus.

Magician Jeanette Andrews has been developing "Thresholds," taking place April 22-25, over the past year specifically with Pleasant Home in mind. Audience members will move from room to room for a series of illusions illustrating sight, sound, scent, touch and taste, plus an attempt or two at telepathy.

"Magic has been around for thousands of years because people have always been interested in the possibility that there is more to reality than our everyday experience," said Andrews, who fell in love with magic at the age of 4 and began working at it professionally two years later.

Andrews describes "Thresholds" as "parlor magic," a concept with historic roots in the 1800s, when small audiences would gather for performances in the drawing rooms of elegant homes. Pleasant Home provides the perfect setting, she explained, and she has limited the audience size to 30 to create an appropriately intimate mood.

"It's a very personal, very up-close, very interactive style," said Andrews, who considers close-up magic, modernized for contemporary audiences, her specialty. "But it still allows you to have a theatrical edge, turning the performance into a complete show."

Andrews said she created some original illusions for "Thresholds," though most are variations on classics she developed during a month-long Escape to Create artist-in-residence opportunity she was awarded last year — all developed with the five senses as a theme.

"Some of the illusions in this show are variations on pieces of magic that are very, very old," she said. "A lot of them date back to the 1800s. But I've updated them and made them relevant for modern audiences."

Andrews' opening illusion, for example, involves a trick from late in the turn of the last century, calling for the magician to make a small ball appear, disappear and go through a series of transformations. Her modernized version is much the same in broad outline, but she uses video projections to achieve optical illusions. Andres has also developed a variation on a classic mind-reading trick that involves an audience member reading her mind for a change.

"I like meeting people and sharing extraordinary experiences with them," she said. "Especially when they help create them. I think of myself as a catalyst, a kind of guide. The show isn't about me; it's about them."

Magician Jeanette Andrews performs 'Thresholds'

7:30 p.m. April 22-25

Pleasant Home, 217 Home Ave., Oak Park

\$25

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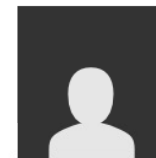
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