

STUDENTS DISCOVER AMERICAN MUSEUM OF MAGIC IN MARSHALL

Sunday, May 25, 2011, BC Enquirer

MARSHALL (AP) — Grace Corcoran, 13, stared wide-eyed at what suddenly appeared in her hand after waving a magic wand over it.

The Marshall Middle School seventh-grader opened her fist and was surprised to find two red balls in her palm, where seconds before there was only one.

It was a part of magician John Dudley's performance at the American Museum of Magic, where the entire seventh-grade took a field trip throughout the day.

Dudley entertained audiences on the second floor while other students wandered the first floor, looking at exhibits and hearing docent presentations on the history of magic.

The event, which included about 175 kids, is part of the museum's outreach into the local education community, a task it's accomplishing with help from a grant from the Marshall Rotary Foundation.

Marshall school outings to the museum aren't new. But museum board member and education coordinator Abbie Albright said the organization wants to share the history of America's magicians with more Calhoun County schools, such as in Battle Creek and Harper Creek.

Albright said subjects such as history, math, engineering, science and vocabulary are all part of the magic experience, and can be brought to more students with help from the \$2,500 Rotary grant.

"We have a lot to offer kids," she said.

Marshall science teacher Dave Karns said most of the kids didn't know what to make of the prospect of



Marshall Middle School student Grace Corcoran, 13, is amazed with John Dudley's magic trick at the American Museum of Magic in downtown Marshall.

a trip to the museum when they first heard about it.

"We have 175 kids in the seventh grade, and I would say less than 25 have ever been here or even knew it was here," he said.

Karns said that while the local history aspect of the trip was a big reason for going, some science lessons were being emphasized, such as optics that are used in optical illusions.

Upstairs, in Dudley's show, the magician instructed the audience to stare at a spinning disc for 30 seconds and then quickly glance at his face. As his face appeared to contort in an unnatural way, a girl in the audience shouted out, "Oh my gosh, your face is moving!"

Students were learning another valuable lesson from docent Katherine Carlton: Magicians keep their secrets. Middle school boys lined up to take a shot at trying to move or unbalance Carlton from her spot by pushing on a baton she held, a trick made famous by "The Georgia Magnet," Lulu Hurst, in the 1880s.

"They get really frustrated," Carlton said. "They all want to know how it's done, but we do have a code."