

# WEEKLY WR READER™

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE WORLD?

### The Next President of Magic

**Merlina the Magician is very good at making things appear and disappear. Now, she's making history**

Merlina the Magician knows magic. For 28 years she has pulled rabbits out of hats and **conjured** turtle doves from thin air. She can even make a coloring book about her family history color itself. But next year she'll do something nobody has ever done. She's going to be the first Latin American to lead the world's oldest magic club, the [Society of American Magicians](#).



Merlina in action  
Photo courtesy of Merlina

Merlina's real name is Maria Ibanez. She started learning magic after her first son, Orlando, was born. Her second son's name is Jason. What was it like growing up with a magical mom? Orlando remembers: "The kids were always asking me, 'How does your mother do that?'" Even after Orlando learned how to perform the **illusions**, he never told his mother's secrets. "We're bound by oath," he says, "All magicians are."

Magicians are bound by more than oath ... they also have secret clubs. Merlina is a member of three major magic societies. She joined the Society of American Magicians 20 years ago by performing her act for a room full of other magicians. Not only did they decide she was good enough to join; now they want her to be president.

The Society of American Magicians was formed in 1902 and some of the most famous magicians in history have held its presidency. The great Harry Houdini was president for more than eight years, and was still serving in that office when he died in 1926. Merlina also belongs to two other magical groups. This year she joined to the **prestigious** Order of Merlin in the [International Brotherhood of Magic](#). She is also a member of the super secret [Magic Circle](#). Those societies give magicians a place to get together, share ideas, and practice their **craft**. The societies promote magical entertainment and try to get young people interested in magic by supporting youth clubs like the [Society of Young Magicians](#) and the [Young Magicians Club](#).

Merlina has really made her mark in the magic world. She was the first woman to lead the Florida Magicians Society and she will be only the third woman to lead the Society of American Magicians. "I've broken ground," she says. "Someone had to break the ground, and I was humbled to be the one to do it."

As president of the Society of American Magicians, Merlina wants to bring magic to young people who might not see it otherwise. "I'm an **avid** believer in the Society of Young Magicians," she says. The last woman to lead the society, Jann Goodsell, says that Merlina is perfect for the job. "I think that when young girls see her perform, they'll say, 'I want to be like her,'" says Goodsell. "Maria is going to be a great role model."

Links:

Visit [Merlina's Web site](#).

Merlina loves to tell stories. Her Web site even has a [storytelling page](#) that will write a story about you.

Read all about [modern magic](#).