



MAGI-GRAM



Official Newsletter of IBM Ring 50 -- The National Capital Ring -- Volume 75 No. 3 March 2021

'Fool Us' Winner Mahdi Gilbert to Lecture April 7

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Mahdi Gilbert holds "Fool Us" Trophy

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Mahdi Gilbert (pronounced Jill-bare), a Canadian sleight of hand card magician and motivational speaker who was born without hands and feet and fooled Penn and Teller with an oil and water trick, will be our guest lecturer at the April 7 meeting.

A Zoom link will be sent to Ring 50 members closer to the meeting date. This lecture is exclusively for members of Ring 50. Please make sure your dues are paid up before the meeting.

Mahdi has been gaining significant worldwide attention for his manipulation skills and his inspiring life story. Imagine learning sleight of hand with no hands.

Mahdi had been scheduled to be a lecturer and performer at the 2020

Magi-Whirl, which was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

You can hear and see more from Mahdi at The Magic Word Podcast with Scott Wells.

Check it out at:
<https://www.themagicwordpodcast.com/scottwellsmagic/536-mahdi-gilbert>

To see Mahdi's amazing performance on *Fool Us* with Penn and Teller, check out this video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2S8hB2XoUb4&feature=emb_title

Mahdi also has his own podcast called "The Caged Canary" on the BeforeMagic.com website.

Chris Capehart to Lecture May 5

Second 'Fool Us' Winner in Two Months

Master magician Chris Capehart, who also was a "Fool Us" winner recently, will lecture for Ring 50 at our May 5 meeting.

Chris is an old friend of Ring 50. He lectured for Ring 50 in November 2008 and at Louis Meyer's Kapital Kidvention in 2009 and 2016.

He is an acclaimed children's performer and has been doing magic for more than 50 years. His ring routine is legendary. So is his comedy.

On "Fool Us" he did three routines including a "Jedi Card Trick" in which he made a card fall down just by pointing at it and popped one balloon inside another one—magically. The balloon trick is the one that Penn and Teller said they were fooled by, but Chris isn't sure they really knew how he did any of the tricks.



Chris began his magic career with a performance at the legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem in 1969 when he was 19 years old. He later performed as a street magician in Philadelphia and New York City.

He has performed at The Magic Castle, Monday Night

Magic in New York City, in Las Vegas and at the Blackpool Magic Convention in Blackpool, England.

Here is a link to Chris' performance on Penn and Teller's "Fool Us."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92GWTTYZjq0>

Mystery Props Challenge March 24

We had so much fun last July at the Mystery Props Challenge that we're doing it again at 7 p.m. March 24.

Go to the Zoom link

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtd-itrzsuG9Q1gLAJCZvjovxXhl0kpL_y

Participants will be split into teams using Zoom breakout rooms to gather privately. Each team will have 15 minutes to create and rehearse a magic trick using common props, which will remain a mystery until the challenge begins.



To be creative, each team will be allowed to replace one of the required props with any item of their choice.

Once the 15 minutes are up, each team will choose a performer to demonstrate

their trick to the Ring.

After each performance, the teams will explain how they created their magic trick.

Everyone is invited to offer constructive feedback on the trick and the performance.

MARIO 'THE MAKER' MAGICIAN MOTIVATES DIY CREATIVITY

By Drew Owen

Our lecturer for the March 3 meeting was Mario "the Maker Magician" Marchese.

Mario is a New York-based



Small silks deliver big impact on virtual screens.

(normally touring) performer with an all-ages theater show full of homespun magic, DIY robotics, and punk rock slapstick. Mario has developed an innovative virtual experience, available as a limited-engagement ticketed experience.

Mario has appeared on Sesame Street, NBC's Universal Kids, HGTV,

and live on tour with David Blaine, who calls him "the best kids magician in the world!!" He is the author of *The Maker Magician's Handbook: a Beginner's Guide to Magic & Making* and his lecture for magicians won him the 2020 lecture



This is NOT Mario Marchese, but this robot can do a mean Matrix.

of the year award from Penguin Magic.

Mario, known for his crazy homemade robots, seems to have more energy than all of his devices put together. He gave a fast-paced and

entertaining lecture focused on performing virtually. He shared with us the

three most important things he's learned from doing virtual shows: appreciation, positive interaction, and performance. He

said the first 30 seconds of the show are critical. Using a clip from one of his virtual performances, he showed us how he creates positive interactions with his audience from the very first minute.

Mario had some great ideas for getting the kids engaged, like a trivia contest all about the kids in the audience or a drawing game where the kids all draw a picture without looking and then show each other the goofy drawings they end up with.

Mario said every magician should ask themselves, "Who am I, and why am I here?" One way Mario answers these questions is with the first actual magic he does in his show, a torn and restored card trick. Instead of a playing card, he uses a picture of a lightbulb to tell an inspiring story about Thomas Edison. Mario uses this presentation to deliver his message that kids should tap



An inspirational opener.

this message across. He also encouraged us to explore some

into their creativity and never give up. He encouraged us to figure out our own message

and to use our magic to get

MARIO 'THE MAKER' MAGICIAN

of the resources he uses for his own props, such as 3D printing and computerized components like those made by the company Arduino.

By now, most performing magicians have had time to figure out ways to use the virtual setting to their advantage.

For example, Mario made a series of miniature colored silks appear from a hat drawn on a rolled up index card. By moving close to the camera, the silks filled the entire screen, making a close up trick play like a big stage production.

He has a fun take on the invisible deck routine that involves throwing the imaginary deck through the screen to the audience.



Mario reacts with wonder to a flying device he assembles right in front of the virtual spectators.

My favorite was the fake internet freezes he creates using an “electric deck.” He stops and stands still while streaming the cards from one hand to another as if the picture has frozen. The kids’ reactions in the clip we watched were hilarious! It’s a brilliant idea that only works online.

During various times during the lecture, Mario’s robotic creations attempted to steal the show. One robot would appear unexpectedly over Mario’s head to

deliver a magic wand; another one swallowed a deck of cards and spit out a chosen card. The most impressive and fun to watch was a robot that does a matrix-type coin



Adam Stone gets Mario’s kids to dump sponge balls over him.

effect. The robot makes coins move from one place to another on a table by covering them with its little cardboard hands. The robots are fun and fascinating, but Mario’s unlimited positive energy was really the highlight of the lecture.

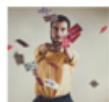


Ring 50 members were part of the lecture with Mario ‘The Maker Magician’ Marchese. From left, Adam Stone’s daughters help with an Invisible Deck routine, Mike Wolfson keeps his eyes on the magic box and Tommy Halladay picks a card. “But don’t pick the four of diamonds,” Mario pleads.



March 24 –Mystery Prop Night

April 7 –Mahdi Gilbert ('Fool Us' winner)



Broken Wand Ceremony for John Roberts at start of meeting.



April 22 –Magic maker/dealer Show & Sell

May 5–Chris Capehart ('Fool Us' winner)



June 3 –Ring 50 Open Performance Night

Redman Nominated for I.B.M. Executive Committee



Territorial Vice President

Dwight Redman has been nominated for a three-year term on

the International Brotherhood of Magicians' Executive Committee from 2021 to 2024.

Dwight and Jason Michaels were nominated at the I.B.M. mid-year meeting by the Board of Trustees to fill two positions on the Committee. If any other members are nominated by petition by May 1, an election will be held at the I.B.M. international meeting—set to take place virtually—in July.

The six-member Executive Committee, the I.B.M. officers and past international presidents form the Board of Trustees, which sets policies for the international organization.

In addition to serving on the Committee, Dwight will continue serving as the Territorial Vice President for the Washington area.

Be Sure to Keep Your I.B.M. Membership Current



Bob Patterson of the I.B.M. Membership Committee reminds us that you must be an active member of I.B.M. to belong to Ring 50.

If you haven't already, don't forget to keep your membership active in the International Brotherhood of Magicians to enjoy the benefits of membership. Send dues to: International Brotherhood of Magicians, 13 Point West Blvd, St. Charles, Missouri, USA 63301.

Ring 50 New Members & Applications



Have YOU brought a prospective member to the meeting? They must be interested in magic and be a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Applications are available from the Treasurer.

New members are always welcome at Ring 50. You must be interested in magic (full time or part time performer, hobbyist, collector, etc.). You must join and be an active member of International Brotherhood of Magicians prior to belonging to Ring 50.

Is This Your Next-to-Last Magi-Gram?

Don't miss out on the vital Ring 50 news including what's coming up in the next few months, what happened at previous meetings, Who's Who in Ring 50, the Magic Quickie, reports from The Conjurers and special features.

The Magi-Gram is only sent to Ring 50 members in good standing, meaning you must have paid your 2021 dues. Persons who have not paid their \$20 dues by April 15 (less than you'll pay the I.R.S.) will be cut off from future issues until their dues are current. Go to <https://ibmring50.org/membership/> or send your dues to

Bob Patterson, IBM Ring 50 Treasurer
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Lake Ridge, VA 22192-5263





Conjurors Learn to Perform Cups and Balls

The cups are solid.
The balls are solid.
Yet, somehow, the
balls pass through the
cups. One, two three.

The Cups and Balls
trick is one of the
oldest in magic, but to
laymen it is still a
mystery. It's **magic**.

Members of the
Ring 50 Conjurors
learned the secret of
the Cups and Balls at
their meeting in March.
Even those who already
knew the secret received
professional tips in how to perform
this classic magical effect for
great impact.

(We will not reveal the secret to
Cups and Balls here lest this
document fall into the hands of lay
people--known by some in the U.S.
as 'No-Majes" and in the U.K. as
"Muggles.")

Youth Director Louis Meyer
gave The Conjurors an hour
workshop on the method,
the trick and a basic
routine for the Cups and
Balls.



Youth Activities Director Louis Meyer conducts a workshop on the Cups and Balls for The Conjurors.

First Louis demonstrated
the trick. Then, using a split
screen with a magic camera
and a camera on himself, he
showed the step-by-step
workings of the effect.
Then he had the Conjurors
do the trick with him and
then on their own. At one
point, when a Conjuror
missed a step, Louis walked
him through the entire
routine.

The routine Louis taught
was a basic Cups and Balls
effect: Three stacked cups

are shown mouth
up with three
balls nestled in
the top cup.

The performer
dumps the balls
on the table and
lines them up
across the front
of the table. The
performer then
places the three
cups behind the

balls, one behind
each ball.

The performer
then places one ball on the
top (actually the bottom) of
a mouth-down cup and
covers it with another cup.
A magic move and magic
word and the two cups are
tipped over to reveal that
the ball has seemingly
penetrated the cup.

This is repeated once or
twice with the ball being
placed on a different cup.

Then a cup is placed
mouth-down over another
cup and a ball is placed on

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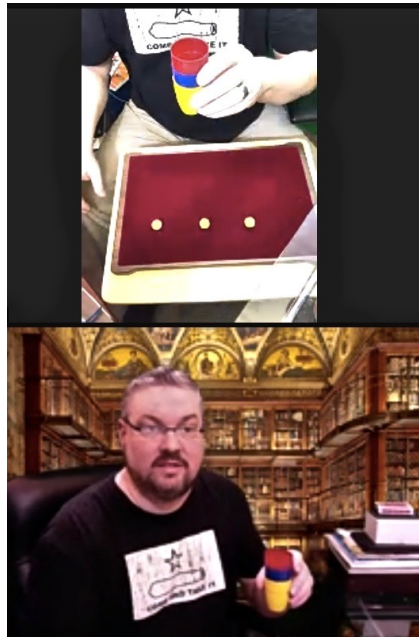
Conjurors Conquer the Cups and Balls

top. A magic word, a magic tap and when the cups are tipped over, two balls are now revealed beneath.

Leaving the two balls together on the table, a cup is placed over both of them. The third ball is placed on top and - magically - all three balls are shown now on the table under the cup.

To alleviate suspicion regarding the cups, Louis demonstrated a clever way of handing the cups to the spectators after the effect.

All of the Conjurors either came to the meeting with a purchased set of Cups and Balls or used household items to make their own sets.



Louis demonstrates with the same set that most Conjurors used.

Since most of the Conjurors were using the plastic set with a red, blue and yellow cup, Louis

used a similar set so that Conjurors could follow along every move using the same color cup at each step.

During the workshop, Louis gave the Conjurors a pro tip that even experienced magicians can use: keep "the secret" in the bottom cup and peel it off from the bottom and place it on the table first.

At the end of the meeting, each Conjuror had a routine that Louis said could last a lifetime and become the foundation for more advanced work.

Prizes for Conjurors Trivia Contest Winners

Before the pandemic, several Ring 50 members donated magic props, books, tricks and equipment for The Conjurors.

At the Conjuror's February meeting, Youth Activities Director Louis Meyer said that prizes would be awarded to the winners of that month's Magic Trivia Contest.



Prizes awarded from the Trivia Contest

Four members of the Conjurors won prizes as a result of the contest. Those prizes, from the donations of Ring 50 members, were distributed in early March.

Once we begin meeting again in person,

Ring 50 welcomes donations of magic items for The Conjurors.

Who's Who in Ring 50

Chuck Jones – Chuck Thomas What's in a Magician's Name?

Around Ring 50, we know him as Chuck Jones. But on stage nowadays, he goes by the name Chuck Thomas.

What's in a name and why does Chuck use two similar names rather than a made-up magic name?

Here is a brief look at Chuck Jones, a.k.a. Chuck Thomas:

I have worked for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (aka Veterans Administration)

for nearly 35 years, most of that time spent in education and training staff. For the past 10 years, I have developed virtual training, e-learning courses, and performance support videos to support VA's managerial cost accounting program. I also work part-time as a Senior Instructional Advisor for Orgwide Custom Learning Solutions, where I've developed web-based training for a variety of clients including Mercedes-Benz, Booz Allen Hamilton, Cracker Barrel, Royal Caribbean, and Extended Stay America.

Like most magicians, I started as a young boy after watching Bob McAllister, Mark Wilson, and Doug Henning on television. I begged my parents for the *Mark Wilson Course in Magic*, which I received for my 10th birthday. Unfortunately, I fell out of magic when I



was a teenager--something which I've recently begun regretting.

I belonged to the Yogi Magic Club for a brief period back in the 1970's, and I got to watch a 20-something Denny Haney perform his Torn and Restored Newspaper just a couple years after he returned from Vietnam. He also did a dove act at the time, and I remember how

at a magic picnic, one of his doves had flown up into a tree.

I came back into magic four years ago at the age of 54. Between 2009 and 2013, I had six very serious seizures in my sleep, which doctors could not initially explain. Each time, my wife found me having fallen out of bed, convulsing on the floor, lips blue, bleeding from the mouth because I had bitten my tongue. When we moved from Memphis to the West Virginia panhandle in 2015, I scheduled an appointment with the Johns Hopkins neurology center, and they were able to tell me the exact cause of the seizures after a number of tests. They prescribed three things: medication, diet, and a creative hobby.

As I was in Baltimore, I remembered a magic store there from my youth, so I googled it. The Yogi store did not appear, of course, but there was a link for Denny and Lee. I drove straight there and the rest, as they say, is history.

I enjoy parlor and stand-up the most. I enjoy

Chuck Jones-Chuck Thomas What's In a Name?

being close to my audience and feeling their energy. Walking around performing my ropes at the 2019 Magi-Whirl was a rush.

My mentor says I can call myself a semi-professional, so that's what I'm going with.

My favorite tricks to perform (so far) are the ropes, egg bag, and multiplying bottles. My favorite magician was Denny Haney, and my mentor is Scott Alexander. He and I developed a trick together last year, based on a routine I had performed in November 2019.

I've been an IBM member for 3-1/2 years, both of Ring 50 and Ring 94 (Hagerstown). Both are completely different experiences.

I once got lost in the Bermuda Triangle on a jet-ski. Seriously, I did. I've also won various awards for several of my e-learning projects and, when I was a webmaster, the intranet site I had developed for VA in 2004 was recognized by the Nielsen group as one of the "Top Ten Government Intranet Designs in the World."

I believe that life should be fun. In fact, my favorite quote is by Jerry Lewis who said, "Never lose touch with your inner 9-year old."

So why have I adopted the name Chuck Thomas?

There is already a famous illusionist named Chuck Jones. I didn't know this when I first returned to magic 4 years ago. Denny was the first person to tell me about the "other" Chuck Jones. Denny's advice to me was that as soon as I think

about doing magic professionally, I should adopt a stage name.



The pandemic seemed like a perfect time to do this because I could come out of it on the other side with my new stage name.

The "Thomas" part was simple. That's also a common last name, and it's my middle name. I needed to drop the "Jones" primarily for the URL.

ChuckJonesMagic.com is already taken by my more famous namesake. And ChuckJones.com is taken by the man who drew all those famous cartoon characters.

But ChuckThomasMagic.com is mine. All mine!



Dan Miller	March 14
Drew Owen	March 14
Bob Greenwald	March 20
Robert Branter	April 1
Jacob Miller	April 1
Gil Jackson	April 4
Mitchell Marovitz	April 9
Mike Leggett	April 18
Bob Weiman	April 18
Eric Henning	April 24
Christophe Jelinski	April 29

Magicians in the White House

Wayne Alan Book Coming in July

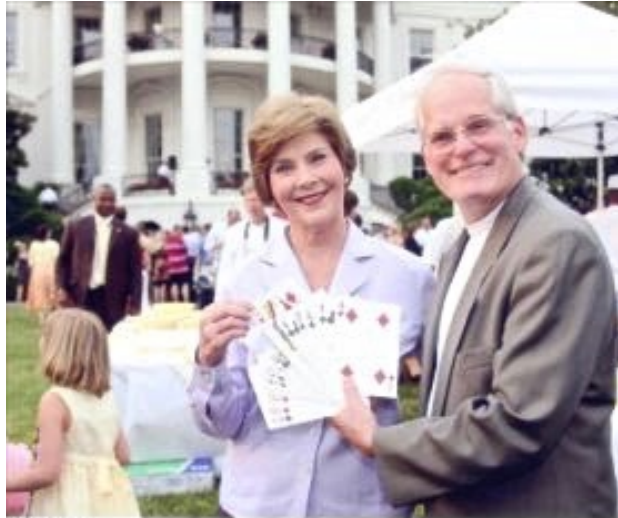
Ring 50 member Wayne Alan, America's only World Champion Illusionist (FISM 1982) announced that his book, *Magicians in the White House-Famous and Not So Famous Magicians Who Have Performed or Lived at the White House* will be published on July 19, 2021.

Wayne has performed 13 ½ times at the iconic address, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. He has entertained presidents from both parties since 1975 at the most famous address in the world.

The book reveals that four presidents were fans of magic or actual amateur magicians. The first president to invite a magician to perform at the White House was President James K. Polk in the 1840's. He had Heimburger-Alexander the Conjurer perform, who was not an American.

Both a CIA director who was a magician and a presidential speechwriter who was a magician performed at the White House. This unique and fascinating book will feature over 100 photographs, many never published before. The curtain is pulled back so that the reader will discover many interesting previously untold stories.

Wayne shares inside knowledge and behind the scenes stories about magic shows and performers at the White House.



-- Wayne Alan and former first lady Laura Bush

"In addition to using my own unique experiences and inside information in writing this book, I have also appreciated my many magical friends and colleagues from around the country who have shared their experiences performing at the White House with me," he said. "I know or have known personally 18 of the 39 magicians who are profiled in this book."

Many of the greatest magicians of all time are featured, including from the past--Houdini, Kellar and Dunninger--as well as from the more modern era which include Doug Henning, David Blaine and David Copperfield. Research was also conducted in thousands of newspaper articles, dozens of Presidential libraries, in nearly 100 books, plus numerous private collections.

Magicians in the White House-Famous and Not So Famous Magicians Who Have Performed or Lived at the White House will be

published by Atlantic National Publishing who also published Wayne's book *Magical Meatless Meals-Famous Foods from Famous People and Places*. He is the only magician to write a cookbook which was critically acclaimed and sold out its first printing in 2009.

Wayne is a world champion Illusionist and the only American to ever win the prestigious gold medal for grand illusion at FISM, which is considered

the Olympics of magic competition in Switzerland in 1982.

He has performed on national TV on Entertainment Tonight, MTV, Inside Edition, Good Morning America, ABC, NBC and CBS Network News programs.

He's also appeared with Oprah Winfrey, Larry King and Maury Povich. He has acted as a consultant for magicians David Copperfield and Criss Angel.

Semiretired he purchased The Historic North Theatre in Danville, VA in 2012. The 1947 theatre with 500 seats including a full balcony was beautifully restored in 2005 with \$3.5 million.

Wayne performs his magic and illusion show there about once a month.

Broken Wand Ceremonies Celebrate Lives of Al Cohen and Scotty Scafidi

Ring 50 held Broken Wand ceremonies recently to honor the lives and memories of long-time members Al Cohen and Arnould F. “Scotty” Scafidi.

I.B.M. Territorial Vice President Dwight Redman conducted the ceremony for Al on Feb. 24 and for Scotty on March 3.

Family, friends and former employees of Al’s Magic Shop participated in the evening of remembrance, which also included a video slide show of photos of Al and highlights from an interview he did with members of the King Ring in Hagerstown, Md., a few years ago.

Scotty was fondly remembered by family, friends and Ring 50 members.

Al’s son, Stan, and Scotty’s daughter, Susan, and his wife, Wilma were the guests of honor for the two ceremonies.



Al Cohen



Scotty Scafidi

Stan Cohen told us a few stories about Al. He said Al was doing magic right up to the end of his life and never lost the ability to entertain people. John Swomley showed excerpts of a video of an interview with Al made after he had retired from running the magic shop.

Other speakers included Larry Lipman, who also read a statement from Mike Hummer, who was not able to be at the

meeting, Michael Kranish, Matt Neufeld, Eric Henning, Jonathan Steigman, Glen Farrington, Joe Zabel, Robyn Mustich, Bob Weiman, and Danny Selinick.

Dwight shared a personal story about Scotty. When Dwight’s son, Eric, was a boy and just getting interested in

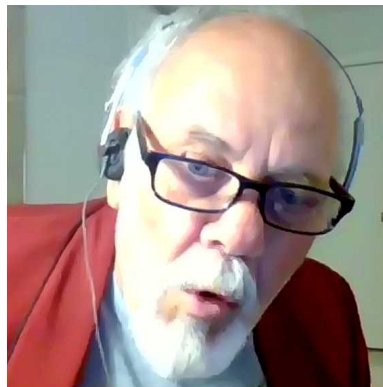
magic, Scotty gave him a large trunk of magic tricks, with the condition that he get good grades at school. Magicians Jason Goldberg, Eric Redman (now grown up and a professional magician), and Wes Iseli also honored Scotty with a few heartfelt remarks.

Wes and his wife, Natalie, recalled traveling around the country doing performances and Scotty accompanied them.

Scotty’s wife, Wilma, was also on the Zoom call.

Roberts Broken Wand Ceremony

A Broken Wand ceremony will be held April 7 to celebrate the life and memory of long-time Ring 50 member John Roberts.

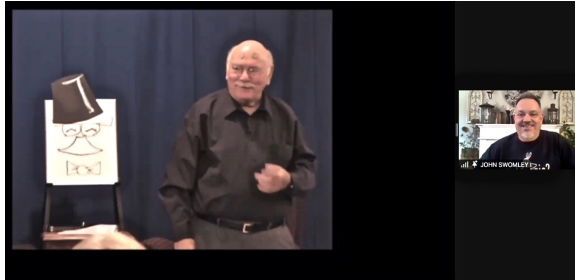


Stan Cohen and Susan Scafidi recall their fathers and how much magic and Ring 50 meant to each of them.

Broken Wand Ceremonies



Dwight Redman performed the Broken Wand at both ceremonies.



Joe Swomley showed clips from a talk Al gave to the King Ring in Hagerstown.



Bill Wells



Craig Fifer



Eric Henning



Larry Lipman



Danny Selnick



Joe Zabel



Jonathan Steigman



Matt Neufeld



Glenn Farrington



Michael Kranish



Bob Weiman



Robyn Mustich



Jason Goldberg



Eric Redman



Wes and Natalie Iseli