



MAGI-GRAM



Official Newsletter of IBM Ring 50 -- The National Capital Ring -- Volume 75 No. 8 August 2021

Learn Performance Tips Sept. 1 Zoom Meeting Features Ken Weber

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Learning performance tips was the number one top priority for Ring 50 members in our recent poll.

(See more page 4).

That is exactly what you'll get at the Sept. 1



Ken Weber

Just to be clear, Ken is NOT critiquing full performances, but using clips from performances that he'll scan through.

Please send performance video links (that you might have posted

to YouTube or Vimeo) to:

president@ibmring50.org

and Danny will forward them to Ken.

International Brotherhood of Magicians Ring 50 The National Capital Ring

President

Danny Selnick
president@ibmring50.org

Vice President

Craig Fifer
vp@ibmring50.org

Secretary

Jason Goldberg
secretary@ibmring50.org

Treasurer

Bob Patterson
treasurer@ibmring50.org

Sergeant-at-Arms

Reggie Rice
sgtarms@ibmring50.org

Magi-Gram Editor

Larry Lipman
magi-gram@ibmring50.org

Youth Activities Director

Drew Owen
youth@ibmring50.org

meeting featuring magician Ken Weber, author of the highly-acclaimed book *Maximum Entertainment 2.0: Director's Notes for Magicians and Mentalists*, the revised and expanded version of his original book, which has been called "the bible" and an essential for performing magic.

The Ring 50 Executive Committee has decided to make this lecture virtual on Zoom.

Ken will not only talk about techniques for mastering your audience, but will also make the lecture incredibly helpful by using clips from performances sent to him from members of Ring 50 -- to illustrate points from his book.



Oct. 6 – Spooky Magic

Nov. 3 – Larry Hass

Dec. 1-- Holiday Show

Jan. 5 – Member teach-in

Feb. 2 – TBA

March 2 – NO MEETING

March– Magi-Whirl

(Date and location TBA)

April 6 – Dan Lacey Contest

May 4 – Randy Shine

June 1 -- Members' Tricks

Members to Perform Spooky Magic for October Meeting

Get ready to scream in terror!



Okay maybe not. But get ready to be entertained with Ring 50 members' take on Spooky Magic.

It's an old Ring 50 tradition that members perform Spooky Magic at our Oct. 6 meeting, so we want to keep the tradition alive. Performers are asked to keep their act to eight minutes.

As of now, it is unclear whether this meeting will be in-person or on Zoom.

If you would like to perform at the Oct. 6 meeting, please contact President Danny Selnick at president@ibmring50.org.

Larry Hass Lecture In-Person in November at The Lyceum

Larry Hass, a world-leading teacher and writer who recently moved to the Washington area and joined Ring 50, will lecture at the Nov. 3 meeting at the Lyceum in Alexandria.

Larry is the Dean of McBride's Magic & Mystery School in Las Vegas. For 11 years, he ran the Theory and Art of Magic Program at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa.

Larry has written extensively on the topic of magic, primarily for other magicians, and has been published in leading magic magazines, both in print and online.

His philosophy of magic has been the focus of articles in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, and he has made feature appearances on The Discovery Channel and National Public Radio, among others.

Free parking is available in the lot adjacent to The Lyceum building.



Holiday Kids Show Performers Needed

Do you perform regularly for children? If so, Ring 50 wants you to perform at our annual

Holiday Magic Show for Kids, Dec. 1.

Assuming we will be meeting in-person in December, we hope to have a large audience of children, including many from disadvantaged families.

In the past, the Ring 50

Happy Holidays!

Holiday Show has benefited such organizations as the Salvation Army of Alexandria, and we hope to keep that tradition alive this December.

Although the show is free, we usually ask attendees to bring non-perishable food items or

new toys with them.

Ring 50 is looking for performers including those who have not

participated in this show ever or in recent years.

Please contact Ring 50 president Danny Selnick at president@ibmring50.org if you would like the joy of entertaining children and their families during this holiday season.

Shabum! Show and Tell Of Magic Tricks You Can Teach Children

By Jason Goldberg

The August Ring 50 meeting brought Shabum (Emanuel Soltero) for a virtual show and lecture. Shabum, a children's performer who is widely known in Puerto Rico with a growing presence in South America, attracts large crowds of children, even in this virtual age, where he still has audiences of up to 350 school children. This is in addition to the television show he has been broadcasting for over 20 years. His character is gregarious, energetic, and bright, right down to the vivid red, yellow, and blue pattern on his costume and props!

Shabum started his time with us with a 20-minute show and featured some novel pieces and his versions of a few classics. For example, in his first trick, a clear box immediately filled with smiling spongeballs. Emptying the box, the box immediately filled with even larger smiling spongeballs! He performed his version of the Silk and Egg routine where a silk vanishes, only to reappear inside an egg that is then revealed to be a real egg when it is cracked into a glass.

In a nice nod to the pandemic, he showed a flip book filled with superheroes. Asking Augie Arnstein's grandchildren to say, "Stop," they chose the Hulk and Spider-Man. He then put on a



black mask which transformed into the two superheroes, showing that we all become superheroes when we wear our masks. All of his tricks were very visual and Shabum worked as much audience interaction as possible into his show.

Shabum's lecture offered solid



and practical advice on a dozen tricks that we can teach children, all of which work well in virtual

settings. Importantly, everything uses very common and inexpensive items that kids probably already have or can readily acquire, aren't hard to master yet teach basic magic skills, and they look great! (I may even perform a few of these at my staff meetings.) For example, in his first trick, two coins are placed on a tray. You tilt the plate to drop them to the table. Picking the

coins up, you drop them on the plate, immediately producing many more coins! The trick involves little more than a well-concealed envelope that is easy to prepare and use. In Lola the Snake, Shabum! turned a Ziploc bag into an animated animal.

Shabum has also found simple ways to turn some classics into versions that children can make and use, such as Cups and Balls, Coin Through Bottle, and a Phantom Tube for producing silks. Overall, his work will undoubtedly help many of us to think of new tricks that we can perform for and teach our audiences. Visit

www.shabum.com or Facebook at @ShabumMagic to learn more about Shabum!

E-mail info@shabum.com to get notes from Shabum's lecture and remind him that you are with Ring 50.

The Members Have Spoken

Results Will Help Shape Future Ring 50 Programs

A resounding 76 Ring 50 members participated in the recent membership survey, including 60 who chose to enter the gift card drawing. The winner of the \$100 gift card from Vanishing Inc. was Phillip Thomas.

According to Vice President Craig Fifer, these are the highlights of the survey:

- The highest-scoring goals for member participation are learning performance tips other than methods; hanging out with existing friends; learning methods; and making new friends.



comfortable meeting without any conditions; 34% think vaccination should be required (although not everyone agrees on age and proof); 22% would allow unvaccinated people with masks; and 4% don't expect to be comfortable attending

- More than half of respondents want Ring 50 to do more lectures; member teach-ins; member performances without competition; bonus workshops, and flea markets.

- More than half of respondents are interested in performance tips; cards; mentalism; other sleight of hand, and coins. Most of these are the staples of magic, but note that between the first three questions, respondents place heavy emphasis on improving their performances.

- Of the 101 lecturers/performers respondents would love to see, the only ones named more than twice are Dani DaOrtiz (5); Jay Sankey (5); Shawn Farquhar (4); Joshua Jay (4); Jeff McBride (4); Larry Hass (3); Eric Jones (3); Christopher T. Magician (3); Max Maven (3); and Juan Tamariz (3).

- Respondents were highly satisfied with the value of dues; and the meeting date, time, and location.

- Regarding meeting in person on Sept. 1, 39% of respondents expect to be

at all. Of 76 respondents, 66 said they're fully vaccinated, 7 skipped the question, and the other 3 said they don't plan to get vaccinated by the September 1 meeting.

- Regarding Zoom meetings, 56% of respondents think we should offer Zoom access to in-person meetings, 29% think Zoom should be used for separate bonus meetings, and 14% think we should stop using Zoom altogether.

- 40% of respondents classified themselves as amateur magicians, 25% have occasional paid gigs, 14% are full-time professionals; 12% are hobbyists; and 10% are part-time professionals.

- 75% of respondents have been members for more than 5 years; 17% for 2 to 5 years; and 8% for less than 2 years.

- 68% of respondents are age 55 or older; 27% are age 35-54; and 5% are younger than 35.

Craig noted that "the survey responses will help inform future Ring 50 board decisions about programming and other member benefits."



Herb Hughes	Aug. 16
Paul White	Aug. 19
Bob Patterson	Aug. 20
Mike Wolfson	Aug. 24
Jason Goldberg	Aug. 25
Tommy Meeker	Aug. 28
Ken Norris	Sep. 14
Richard Cohn	Sep. 15

President's Message

President Danny Selnick



Ring 50 Board Working Hard to Assure Our Future

I was so looking forward to seeing everyone at Ring 50's first in-person meeting in nearly 18 months, but it seems because of a number of Covid-related factors, we'll be continuing on with Zoom--at least for the Sept. 1 meeting.

As you know, we had a super interesting lecture with Larry Hass planned for that meeting and we expect (and hope) that we'll be able to go "live and in-person" for the Nov. 3 meeting at which we'll host Larry.

For a number of reasons we wanted his lecture to be in-person, but also because we'll

be hearing from **Jim Holloway**, of the Lyceum, who will talk for a few minutes about the history of magic at the Lyceum which will also be very interesting.

Most of all, it was very sad to not have been able to do anything magic-related, especially among friends we haven't seen in so long. We'll continue to monitor the situation and communicate back to you.

Don't forget October 6 will be Scary Magic Night--a Ring 50 member performance evening.

Anyone interested in performing some scary or Halloween-themed magic, please let me know at president@ibmring50.org.

Ring 50's Board of Directors met via Zoom recently to discuss important Ring business, including finalizing the Ring's 2021/2022 events calendar, Magi-Whirl 2022, membership, the Capital Conjurers (aka The Counts of Conjuring, the Ring's youth magic group), bringing diversity to Ring 50, and other important items. I have to say that this year's board is so fully-engaged and working hard to ensure Ring 50 remains the region's premiere magic club.

AND please know that much of what we discussed came from you, our members, having filled out the 2021 Ring 50 Member Survey.

Thanks so much for that.

One other very important thing we're looking at is the long-term viability of Ring 50 and the need for future leaders -- much of which is tied to our membership and the need to bring in magicians in our community who might not be members of our club -- so talk up Ring 50 to other magicians you know!

One last item -- I want to make myself fully available to any of our members who may have questions, concerns or even suggestions that you might not have thought of when answering the survey. You can always send me an email at

president@ibmring50.org or even feel free to call me at 703-347-5540.

Danny

John Roberts Magic Estate Give-Away

Our dear friend John Roberts' wishes were for his magic to go to Ring 50.

IBM Ring 50 President Danny Selnick will make John's collection of cards, coins, some props and packet tricks, sponge balls, mouth coils, craft items and more available on Saturday, Aug. 21 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 7121 Devonshire Road, Alexandria.

All the items will be on tables in Danny's carport and we will still work to have not too many people gathering together as a way to help minimize the risk of spreading

VACINATION IS REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE MAGIC ESTATE GIVE-AWAY.

Comedy Magic Show Featuring Chuck Jones

Ring 50 member **Chuck Jones**, performing under his stage name Chuck Thomas, will be one of four magicians at the It's All Smoke and Mirrors Comedy and Magic Show on Saturday, Sept 18 at The State Theater of Havre de Grace. Joining him will be Scott Alexander, Wayne Gonce and Glenn Edward. Tickets are \$10 and \$15 and the doors open at 6 p.m.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/its-all-smoke-mirrors-comedy-magic-show-tickets-166872721803>



Conjurors Use Everyday Objects

And Watch a Classic Cups & Balls Routine from The Professor

How can you do magic without magic props?

That was the question Youth Activities Director Drew Owen put to members of The Conjurors who attended the August meeting of the Ring 50 youth group.

Pulling out a deck of



Youth Activities Director Drew Owen demonstrates how to bend a straightened paperclip using the power of the mind.

cards or a magic prop may be a bit awkward in certain circumstances, Drew said. So how about doing magic with ordinary objects found around the house?

Drew showed the Conjurors a regular paper clip and unbent it until it formed a straight piece of wire. Then, pinching it in the middle, he said he would use the power of his mind to melt the metal and make the wire bend. Holding the wire close to the camera, Drew made it appear as if the wire was slowly bending down at the ends.

One of the Conjurors guessed the method, which used a principle the Conjurors had discussed at the previous meeting. A discussion ensued about the best method for performing the trick. Drew also showed how the trick could be done with a long metal nail.

Next, Drew scooped a few goldfish snacks out of a bowl and picked one from his palm, popped it into his mouth and chewed. Then he picked up another goldfish and appeared to insert it into his ear. He opened his mouth and the goldfish was there. Then

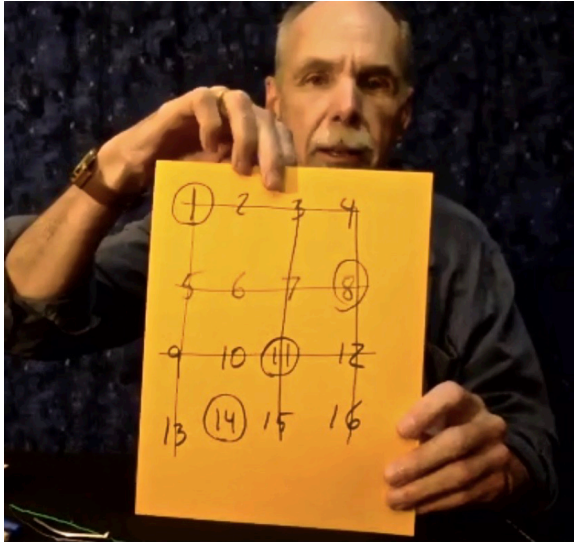
he seemingly pushed a goldfish snack into his eye and again the goldfish appeared in his mouth.

Drew explained how to perform the illusion of placing an object in his ear while vanishing the object. He noted that you should "never put anything smaller than a football" in your ear. Drew noted that the vanish he used had been perfected by Dan Harlan and was useful for making various objects seemingly disappear and reappear in a different place.

Taking a piece of paper, Drew wrote numbers from one to 16 on four lines. He asked a Conjuror to pick a number and he circled it. Then he drew a vertical and a horizontal line through the number. This was repeated two more times until only one number remained. He asked the Conjurors to add

Conjurors Learn A Puppet Can Add Interest and Time Misdirection

the values of the numbers that had been circled. The sum was 34. Drew turned over the paper and a large number 34 was written on the back.



No matter which numbers are selected, this method will always produce the number 34.

Drew said he hoped to regularly show the Conjurors video clips of famous magicians in action. This month's clip featured Dai Vernon performing his classic cups and balls routine on Mark Wilson's Magic Circus. Drew noted that the Conjurors probably knew the principles behind the performance because they learned how to perform a cups and balls routine several months ago from then-activities director Louis Meyer. Dai Vernon's routine was far more complex and Drew noted that many magicians used it as a template for their own efforts.

Finally, Drew did a card trick. He placed a deck of cards on the table and asked one of the Conjurors to tell him how far down in the pack he should go to cut the cards. He placed those cards on the table and then placed the remaining cards across the first packet.

Then Drew showed his dragon puppet, Trepak, and said the puppet would name the card that had been selected. Trepak (whispering in Drew's

ear) identified the six of diamonds. Lo, and behold, the selected card was ...the two of spades. Yikes!

The puppet then made several frantic gestures and the Conjurors suggested that it had something in it's mouth. Drew extracted a piece of paper from Trepak's mouth and it showed 2 of Spades.

A discussion ensued about the usefulness of forcing a card and how to use a puppet to enhance interest in what would otherwise be just a card trick and to provide time misdirection to divert attention from the cross-cut force. Drew gave credit to Baltimore magician Mike Rose for the routine in which Mike uses a monkey puppet.



Trepak identifies the chosen card.

Conjurors Get a New Name

The Conjurors, formerly The Counts of Conjuring, will henceforth be known as The Capital Conjurors.

The new name was suggested by one of the Conjurors at the July meeting and better reflects the location of our magic youth group and parallels the Ring 50 moniker of The National Capital Ring.

The Capital Conjurors are open to any youth over age 8 with an interest in magic. It will continue to meet at 6 p.m. at the same location and date as the regular Ring 50 meeting.

For more information, contact Drew Owen at youth@ibmring50.org.

Depth not Breadth

Ring 50 member Chris Bowers runs after school magic classes and is a writer of magic books pamphlets and columns, as well as being known as a "metaphysician."

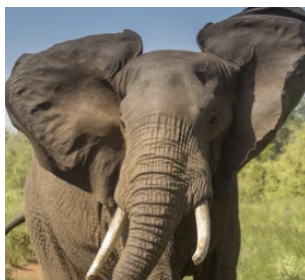
A wise man once said, "It is not how wide a river is, but how deep it is which gives it such force and power." Contrarily, one of the things that magicians enjoy about magic is how broad it is. You can do magic with cards, with coins, with billiard balls, with thimbles. You can even do magic with a banana. A magic set is a perfect example: there is this or that, and tons of "toys" to play with, do magic with, and manipulate. Even a deck of cards is "variety in miniature" there are numbers, suit symbols, letters, pictures of royalty, a joker, and we haven't even talked about card backs yet and their wonderful complexity and variety. An angel riding a bike?

As I was working on my upcoming book on magic, *Equivogue: Theory and Practice*, it struck me that while this breadth was fun, exciting and enjoyable, it lacked a certain *power*. As Bruce Lee stated "I fear not the man who has learned 1,000 kicks, but the man who has practiced one kick 1,000 times."

Focusing on depth is certainly something that magic often lacks, particularly in its literature. 99% of Magic books are a description of another magician's act, or favorite tricks. In a performance you have to have breadth and variety. No one wants to see 17 different ace assembly routines!

But this tendency for variety in magic books and in magic acts consequently makes magic *very difficult to learn*. In other fields, especially scholarly fields, any discussion of a subject refers to a number of different sources that have studied the *same thing* from several different angles. If you are studying, say the African elephant, a scholarly treatise on the subject will have references to many different researchers on the same subject. "Oh you're studying elephants? You *must* read Alfred Kinsey's essay on their ears..."

In fact, it's very likely that there are *dozens* of prominent scholars who research *just* elephant ears. When you finish



You can study elephant ears or the French Drop in depth.

METAMAGIC *Looking Behind Concepts* By Chris McCauley Bowers



writing about elephant ears you combine your own research and knowledge with several other scholars, and in the end you compare notes. That's what publishing in the academic field is like. People then critique and take potshots at your work, agree and disagree on points, and contribute to the same topic. And soon you will find your name in someone else's bibliography. *That* is depth.

How different a typical magic book is! A typical magic book is a carnival of different things going on. Here's a trick on sponge balls. Here's one on cards. Here's a coin thing and over here there's one with a handkerchief. There

is no space whatsoever for *depth*, there is only *breadth*.

What's interesting to me, and I don't think this is just my opinion, is that the magic books we tend

to go back to over and over and over are magic

books that provide us with *depth*. They take a single subject and analyze it in a much more focused way. You buy a set of *Tarbell*, because he takes topics and has some of the best magicians supply ideas on those topics. It's much more in depth and systematic. Heck, there's an entire *chapter* on producing a bunny: different methods and options, rather than just a single trick on the subject. JB Bobo takes a sharper look at coin tricks. And you can find so many magician's approaches to coin magic within the pages: they are literally comparing notes, just like in a scholarly field. Bobo even organizes his material in an in-depth way: here are concealments, here are vanishes, here is a whole chapter on gimmicked coins, 10 tricks on the Misers Dream. Now we are getting to *depth*.

Tired of the few trite sentences given to philosophical issues in most magic books, Eugene Burger wrote a whole book on the topic *Magic and Meaning*. I dare say it's one of the books I return to again and again. Other magicians report the same thing.

You will find that magic books that provide depth are the ones that sell out over and over and over again. Everyone wants to believe that a magic book that makes up someone's act is the best. And I'm not denying that

Continued next page

Stop Doing Magic Like It's a New Toy Every 10 Seconds

there are several wonderful books by wonderful magicians who have produced very quality acts and who I look at with awe for their performance and ingenuity on a variety of topics. I myself am an addict of David Regal and his body of work (of which his variety of topics is simply dizzying!).

However, what I urge you in reading this, is to stop going after variety and breadth all the time. Stop acting like a child: playing with a new toy every 10 minutes! Instead, try to plumb the depths. Find something you like and *research it till it hurts*. Let's say it's something simple like the French Drop. First stop in and ask Bobo a few questions. What's the standard way it's done? Isn't there a *reverse* French Drop in his book too? What about the Ramsey vanish? Isn't that the same principle with a different handling? How is it done in *Tarbell*? Now go to every person in your magic club. Ask them all to do a French Drop. Who has the best one? Why is theirs better than other people's. Where did each of them learn it? Glean some new sources. What? R. Paul Wilson has a *spinning* French Drop? What video was that on? That sounds really interesting!

Over time, you will start to know a whole lot about the French Drop. You will know the ins and outs of doing it, you'll practice it more than other people, and you'll develop your own bibliography of different variations on it. You will come up with *your* own ideas about the French Drop, your "unique

contributions to the field." You are developing *depth*. You are becoming a *scholar* of the field of French Drop, just as if you were a scholar... of elephant ears!

Someone who has *depth* is going to be far better than someone who doesn't. They are going to have thought (literally) of every angle, and their magic isn't going to be the result of just one source, but the strength of many sources. Consequently they are going to do it with a lot more power, and they will select the most powerful version of the trick, one that has combined the wisdom of many sages into its performance.

Stay thirsty for breadth my friends! In the magic world there are a million (fun) distractions. But rather than simply enjoying the surface of a carnival of toys, really dig in. Become an expert in an area of magic, and when you perform it I guarantee you will start blowing people away. Even other magicians!

If every magician did this, we would start seeing a lot more quality in magic acts and performances. Be like the powerful river, which is deep... not just wide!



Support Live Magic in Washington

Ring 50 member Brian Curry has created The DC Festival of Magic -- <https://www.dcmagicfestival.com/> -- which will be held Sept. 3-5, 2021 at the Capital Hilton, 1001 16th Street, NW, Washington.

The DC Festival of Magic has six amazing shows along with two lectures --one by Will Fern and another by Rich Bloch--and has offered special discounts for Ring 50 and other magicians: up to 50% off to attend any of the events.

There is even a special promotion for anyone who wants to attend all events -- the Insider Weekend Pass -- which includes all shows, both lectures and three drinks at the bar for \$100. <https://www.dcmagicfestival.com/lecture>. Remember the discount code is VERNON.

Brian has invited IBM Ring 50 to have a table before and after all performances and lectures at which Ring 50 members will talk about our club to prospective members and to young people interested in joining The Capital Conjurors.