



MAGI-GRAM



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Larry Hass Lecture on Nov. 3 Philosopher on the Art of Magic

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Ring 50 member Larry Hass, a world-leading teacher, writer, and philosopher on the art of magic will be our guest lecturer Nov. 3, scheduled for The Lyceum.

Larry, who recently moved to the Washington area and joined Ring 50, is the Dean of McBride's Magic & Mystery School in Las Vegas.

For 11 years, Larry ran the Theory and Art of Magic Program at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania. It featured guests such as David Blaine, Jeff McBride, Juan Tamariz, Teller, and other renowned magicians.

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 internationally-bestselling books include *Eugene Burger: From Beyond* (2019), *Dying to Change* (2019), *Life Magic* (2018), *Teaching*

Inspirations (2015), *The Show Doctor* (with Jeff McBride, 2012), and *Transformations* (2007).

With the Halloween release of *Eugene Burger: Final Secrets*, Larry expects to have copies on hand.

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



Dec. 1- Holiday Show

Jan. 5 – Teach-In

Feb. 2 – Henry 'Box' Brown

March 2 – NO MEETING

March– Magi-Whirl TBA

April 6 – Dan Lacey Contest

May 4 – Randy Shine

June 1 – Member Favorites

Happy Holidays!

Holiday Magic Show

Set for Dec. 1 at Lyceum

Ring 50's non-denominational Holiday Magic Show to benefit disadvantaged local children has been an annual community hit for many years. This year we plan to return to live, in-person performances again.

There is no charge, but guests are urged to bring non-perishable food items and new toys that can be distributed to needy families. In the past our shows have benefited the Salvation Army of Alexandria.

President Danny Selnick is looking for performers for this show—hopefully including some children's performers who have not participated in the holiday show in recent years.

Ring 50 member Richie Klein has indicated he will reprise his role as Santa for this year's event.

If you are interested in being part of the joy of the holiday season, please contact Danny at: president@ibmring50.org.

The Life and Magic of Henry 'Box' Brown

You didn't learn this history in school. Henry 'Box' Brown was a Virginia slave who earned his nickname after he literally mailed himself to freedom inside a wooden box addressed to a Philadelphia abolitionist.

He later became a public speaker and in 1850 fled to England where he was an illusionist and conjuror.

He returned in 1875 with a family and a magic act, which he continued performing in the U.S. until the late 1880s.

In honor of Black History Month, Ohio magician Rory Rennick will tell the story of



Rory Rennick

Henry 'Box' Brown at our Feb. 2, 2022 meeting and demonstrate some magic of the period.

Be sure not to miss this unusual and informative meeting.

Looking for January Teach-In Instructors

Member Teach-Ins have been a popular activity of Ring 50. This year, for the January meeting, we are looking for four members to teach various aspects of magic.

But instead of Ring leaders picking the topics, we are looking for members who feel they have something to offer to come forward with a topic they want to teach. Maybe it is a performance technique. Maybe it's a trick that goes beyond the boundaries of normal cards, coins, ropes and other props tricks.

We're looking for folks who have something they want to teach, particularly if they have not been a teacher for a few years. We're looking for a wider variety of volunteer instructors.

If you have something to offer – remember it doesn't have to be lengthy, each session will be about 15 to 20 minutes—please contact Danny Selnick at president@ibmring50.org.

Former President James Munton to Lecture at Kapital Kidvention

Former Ring 50 president James Munton is scheduled to be one of the magician lecturers at the 2022 Kapital Kidvention, run by three-term Ring 50 president Louis Meyer.

The annual convention of children's entertainers—including magicians, balloon twisters and face painters—will be held Jan. 13 – 17 at the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria.

James, who served as Ring 50 president from 2000 to 2001, is a highly successful magician, often performing as the Spy Magician James Wand, (he comes by the British accent legitimately).

James moved to the Dallas area in 2007 and quickly rebuilt his magic business from scratch. He taught his methods in the course Zero to Booked Solid. James will be sharing some of his favorite magic routines and business building skills at Kapital Kidvention.



Spooky Magic at First In-Person Meeting

Lyceum Stage and Large Room Offer Classy Venue

By Chuck Jones

The October meeting was held at our brand-new location, the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, located in beautiful downtown Alexandria. A special thanks to immediate past president and current Vice President Craig Fifer for securing the location. The room features a raised stage, ample seating, and a sound system, and is a more suitable performance space than our previous location. We look forward to many great meetings, lecturers, member performances, and shows in this venue.

As this was our first in-person meeting since February 2020, many members arrived early to catch-up in person with friends, both old and new. Sergeant at Arms Reggie Rice checked required Covid vaccination cards at the door, and all guests were masked and socially distanced throughout the evening's meeting and performances. Thanks also to Reggie for providing a headset microphone for the evening's speakers and performers.



A large audience filled the Lyceum.

Several members offered magic for sale, and the remaining items from the John Roberts magic estate were made

available to members who wanted something to remember our long-standing colleague, friend and mentor.

President Danny Selnick introduced several guests and potential new members, three of whom were introduced to Ring 50 at the recent DC Festival of Magic. All three potential new members indicated after the meeting that they would be joining the IBM and Ring 50. A big welcome to our new members!



Larry with zombie bunny

Craig Fifer received a standing ovation for his leadership in the role as president throughout the pandemic, for holding the ring together over Zoom during these difficult months, and for the high caliber guest lecturers he was able to bring to Ring 50—literally from around the world—during his tenure as president.

Danny shared the slate of upcoming meetings and performances, starting with a lecture by Larry Hass, dean of



Arnie calls upon Harry Houdini with Bob's help.

the McBride Magic and Mystery School, in November. Larry is also one of the newest members of IBM Ring 50. We welcome Larry to Washington DC as both a lecturer and a new member!

New member Mark Phillips talked briefly about his show, The Magic Duel. In this show, he is joined by Ryan Phillips in this duel filled with comedy and magic.

A 50-50 drawing was held, and the evening's big winner was Dwight Redman.

With ring business out of the way, Danny emceed our night of spooky magic in which several of our members offered their best Halloween performances. Larry Lipman began by showing how Zombies can go between



Chuck breaks the final egg

Spooky Magic Invades the Lyceum Stage

the Zombie factory and a donut shop, only to have the Zombie donut disappear – and then reappear on his back. Several of the attendees howled with glee in the same way kids do during Larry's shows. Larry also turned a white rabbit into a Zombie bunny and it correctly identified a selected card as a banana, rather than a carrot.



Linda with a key from the Titanic.

Arnold Fuoco showed how he makes candy disappear and change to a different brand, and then called on an assist from former IBM International President Bob Patterson – as well as the Great Harry Houdini – for help in selecting two cards using a spirit cloth.



Tom shows how witches were treated.



Marc tells Sam about a murder.

Chuck Jones followed this up with a spooky and suspenseful tale about a plague that visits a small village and kills its inhabitants – all represented by eggs - including the village lawyer, politician, clergyman, chef, doctor, and magician. A moment of silence was held for the “deceased” magician – as well as a very brief broken wand ceremony, which brought howls of laughter from the ring members. At the end, the last egg was cracked to reveal it was the plague itself – as blood oozed from the egg into a cup. This act got the entire audience involved as well.



Russell displays a skeleton.

Linda Barrett appeared as a spirit from the sinking of the Titanic and told her tale of tragedy aboard the doomed ship. She concluded her story with the presentation of a haunted key and squeezed “sea water” onto a spectator. Marc Carrion told the mysterious tale of a woman who shot her husband to death on their honeymoon and how the bodies and the weapon were never found. Marc produced some cards showing tintype-looking images of the couple. When he asked member Sam Brothers to take the cards, the sound of a loud gunshot scared not only Sam, but just about everyone in the audience.



Drew and a floating skull.

Tom Beutner presented his own take of Card Warp with the mysterious details of how witches were once tortured on Halloween (back in the day), and new member Russell Almond III shared some items from his Halloween bag, at one point turning a paper drawing of a skeleton into a real skeleton, then producing some candy.

Closing out our evening of Spooky Magic was Drew Owen, with an assist from his pet snake

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President's Message

President Danny Selnick



Ring Successfully Returns to In-Person Meetings

The October meeting of Ring 50 -- Spooky Magic Night -- was really magical in so many ways. First, after more than 18 months of Zoom meetings, we held our first in-person gathering with more than 30 attendees. It was refreshing, exhilarating and just plain good to be around magician-friends again.

What we all enjoyed about our new digs is that the Lyceum is spacious and very comfortable. The raised platform (of about a foot high) allowed everyone in the room to have a birds-eye view of performers and the acoustics were also great. Again, magic hats off to Craig Fifer



Danny Selnick welcomes people to the October meeting.

who found this venue. Oh, also important also to note that parking was very easy for everyone -- with a number of parking spots at the Lyceum and, what seemed to be, unlimited street parking in close proximity.

With all that being said, because we have a new home for Ring 50, we won't be using

Zoom anymore, except for special events that might come up. I know that some members

were interested in hybrid meetings, but it's just not the same magical experience. While it's just too easy to stay at home and click on a computer, I think everyone is pretty much Zoomed out. So, I'd like to encourage every Ring 50 member to come to the meetings and share our love of magic among friends. The October meeting proved just how good it was to be together again!



Linda Barrett	Oct. 19
Rucj Uffelman	Oct. 22
David Edelstein	Nov. 1
Betty Heyman	Nov. 8
Arnold Fuoco	Nov. 10
Wes Iseli	Nov. 10
Richie Klein	Nov. 11
Robert Malinchock	Nov. 16

Spooky Magic at Lyceum

who gave him trouble as he tried to perform his act. Drew then finished his set with a beautifully choreographed musical zombie routine, using the head of a skeleton with glowing red eyes (who could also sing quite

nicely) in lieu of the traditional ball.

A special shout out to Danny, who presented various bits as emcee and rounded out his duties with a magic bell and some very funny jokes.



Drew explains the robotics of his rising snake to Marc and Danny.



Conjurors Learn Classic Magic Tricks

Can You Cut a Spectator in Half? Ask a Conjuror.

The Capital Conjurors meeting on Oct. 6 was held via Zoom. Youth Activities Director Drew Owen was at the Lyceum because of the Ring 50 meeting that would take place there at 7:30 p.m.

Drew started with some rubber band magic. First, he wrapped a rubber band around his index finger and then took it off. He taught the Conjurors a clever way to make the rubber band appear to instantly fly back onto the finger. Next he taught an old trick where a rubber band wrapped around two fingers jumps to the other two fingers. Drew showed the Conjurors a way to add one more layer of deception, trapping the rubber band on the two fingers by twisting another rubber band over each of his four finger tips.

Can you do the classic cut-a-person-in-half trick? Conjurors who participated in the meeting can do a model version of it. For a make-at-home magic project, Drew put a paper lady into a paper box--really just another piece of paper folded over and taped into an envelope open on both ends. With the lady sticking out of either end, Drew took a pair of scissors and cut the box in half. It seemed that the lady was also cut in half, but she was slid out of the box totally unharmed. Several of the Conjurors were able to make this trick and demonstrate it during



Youth Activities Director Drew Owen teaches a rubber band trick to members of the Capital Conjurors.

the meeting.

For some card magic, Drew taught the group a way to locate a chosen card using a key card and then talked about some ways to reveal the chosen

card that would be more interesting and entertaining than just going through the deck and pulling it out.

At the end of the meeting, Drew showed the Conjurors a remote controlled robotic snake named Darla he had made and planned to use during the Ring 50 member meeting later that evening. He demonstrated how he could make her rise up out of a paper bag and then do a funny dance.

The Capital Conjurors is the official youth group of I.B.M. Ring 50 and is open to all youngsters roughly between 8 and 15 with an interest in magic.

Starting with the Nov. 3 meeting, the Capital Conjurors will meet at 6 p.m. in the same place as Ring 50--The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria.

Conjurors must wear a face mask and will be socially distanced.

Who's Who in Ring 50

Mark Phillips—Magic, Music and CrossFit *From Trade Shows to Dueling Magic*

Hi Ring 50,
I'm happy to
be a member
and look forward
to participating in
Ring 50 events.

I was the
class clown
growing up and
in 8th grade I
bought a copy of
George B.
Anderson's
book, *Magic
Digest*. In

addition to easy tricks like the broken and
restored toothpick, and the vanishing (solder)
coathanger, this underrated book progressed
to more difficult versions of classics including
the Magic Square, Bill in Orange and the
Needle swallowing trick.

Growing up in an entertainment starved,
small town in Arizona, I had a lot of
opportunities to perform and supplemented my
repertoire with catalog purchases from
Tannen's and Magic Inc. In college at Arizona
State University, I did restaurant magic and
worked part time at a magic shop so, again, I
gained lots of performing experience in those
years.

I moved to New York City right after
graduating and over the next few years went
from being a part time to a full time performer,
beginning with private parties and events and
working my way up to corporate events and
tradeshows. I also became good friends with
Richard Kaufman and am proud to have edited
more than 20 of the classic books he published



in the 80's and
90's.

By the time I
moved to DC in
1990, I was working
at trade shows
exclusively,
eventually chalking
up over 1 million
miles on United
Airlines. Trade
Shows are basically
a close-up venue
so that was my
area of focus for

probably two decades. Once I began a
performing partnership with Karen Beriss, the
scale of our show grew and we had more
opportunities for parlor and stage
work. Recognizing my limited stage training,
I began working with director Bob Fitch, who
has had an unparalleled influence on my
work.

In addition to Karen, I've had the privilege
of performing with several magic partners,
including Bill Goldman and Brian Curry with
whom I founded The Magic Duel show for the
public in Washington DC.

Since 2016, the "Duel" has become an
ever increasing part of my business. Last
year, Richard Kaufman asked me to become
a trick reviewer for Genii Magazine, which I
enjoy very much. I consider my public show
my full time job now, though I still work
occasional trade shows. My new partner in
the Magic Duel is Ryan Phillips (no relation),
an excellent young magician with a huge
talent for physical comedy.

Continued next page

Mark Phillips

In addition to magic, I am a CrossFit athlete, and have been an avid French horn player since high school. You are invited, therefore, to both The Magic Duel and to concerts by the Symphony of the Potomac, with whom I have played for many years.

My wife Alexandra and son Tommy both help with The Magic Duel shows, and my daughter Sabrina just started college at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Mark Phillips



Ring 50, the largest Ring in the International Brotherhood of Magicians (excluding the British Ring which encompasses all of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) continues to grow with the addition of new members.

Please welcome these new members who have joined since June:

Larry Hass—joined in July
Mark Phillips—joined in October
Chang Yu Chun—joined in October
Haig Colter—joined in October

Ring 50 members must first join the International Brotherhood of Magician by enrolling on the web at www.magician.org.

If you know people interested in magic, invite them to a Ring 50 meeting and invite them to join the I.B.M.

Ring 50 Hosted 1977 I.B.M. Convention

Editor's note: Long-time Ring 50 member John Roberts wrote this article for Magi-Gram before his death last year.

By John S. Roberts

Did You Know? That in July 1977, Ring 50 hosted the 49th I.B.M. Convention at the Washington Hilton in D.C.?

The four-day magical conclave kicked off on Wednesday night, July 6, with an opening show produced by Ring 50 with Al Cohen as Master of Ceremonies. Kohl & Company was a featured act, which they reprised nearly 50 years later in 2018 at Ring 50's annual Magi-Whirl.

Howard Bamman wrote in the *Linking Ring*: "Washington Capital Ring 50 members went all out to provide an evening of entertainment, fun and fellowship that proved to be an auspicious beginning for the rest of the convention. It was a showcase that set the stage for shows to come. Producers Larry West and Art Emerson, together with Ring 50 members, did an outstanding job of keeping the (magic community) happy."

Ring 50 Past President (1974-5) Bill Wells was the liaison between the convention organizers and Ring 50. He says "The local Ring played a bigger role at that time than they do today. We were responsible for the first night show, the convention program, and many other details."

The president of Ring 50 that convention year was Doc Dougherty.

Throughout the four days, Ring 50 members played various support functions to keep the convention running smoothly. Prominent magicians who took part included

Paul Gertner, Trevor Lewis, The Gustafsons, Harry Riser, Tony Griffith, Mike Caveney, Denny and Lee and Rick Johansson.

Bill Wells: "Jimmy Carter was President at that time and we invited Amy Carter to attend one of the evening shows and to our delight, the White House accepted. We moved IBM VIPs off the front row to make room for Amy and her entourage. After the show, Amy came back stage to meet and thank all the acts. One of the acts was Christian from East Germany (not Magic Christian from Vienna). We later learned that he was actually a Russian spy using magic as a cover. I guess the secret service didn't do a great job of vetting in those days."

Howard Bamman wrote in the *Linking Ring*: "Trying to review a set of magic shows of the caliber presented at the Washington Convention (July 6-9) is something like describing the thrill of seeing a glorious sunrise. Words are somehow inadequate. From the opening night fun and frolic to the closing showing show convention registrants were treated to magic, Magic, MAGIC!"

Bill Wells recalls: "Working on the convention was a great thing for Ring 50 – most everyone pitched in and worked on the convention. It really strengthened the Ring. Those years and the next few years were high points for the Ring and the membership. Because of hotel rates and theatre unions it is unlikely there will be another IBM convention in D.C. in the foreseeable future, particularly with the declining convention attendances."

Photos From *The Linking Ring* of the 1977 I.B.M. Conention in Washington, D.C.



THE NIGHT BEFORE PARTY in Washington offered something for everyone. Talent included, top row, l. to r.; The Federal City Four and Bill Wells. Center row; The Perna Family and Bob Olson. Bottom row; Al Cohen and Kohl & Co.

Rick Bamman Photos

the historical period portrayed by each act -
- altho he always remained Al Cohen. He
was assisted by Larry James and Russ
Glover.

September, 1977

Bob Olson opened the show and received
a standing ovation for his portrayal of
Potter, an early 19th century magician.
Not only did he use the equipment and

The Monk With the Lamp

METAMAGIC
Looking Behind Concepts
By Chris McCauley Bowers



A Zen story tells of how a blind monk on a long journey was given a lamp. Though the monk protested, another monk mentioned that the lit lamp would at least tell others he was coming. About two miles later a man bumped into him. "Can't you see me?" said the monk, "I have a lantern!" "Sorry brother," the man responded, "your lamp has gone out!"

We often do things because we are imitating and listening to others, and nowhere is that more true than in our magic. Last month in this *Metamagic* column, I talked about *Thor's Hammer*, the concept that professional magicians create powerful tricks by honing them for years or decades. But sometimes the influence of others can actually hamstring us, and we are stuck doing something that's truly unsuitable.

As a child, I watched Johnny Fox, magician and sword swallower extraordinaire, at the *Maryland Renaissance Festival*. Truth be told, I wanted to be him. I loved his jokes, his incredible magic, and his incredible sleight of hand. And rolling four half dollars over his knuckles simultaneously? Well... I wanted to be him.

In 2008 I went to Magic School with Jeff McBride and Eugene Burger in Las Vegas. Their most striking comment to me was this: "Chris, you're such a nice, sincere, person. Why is your magic so different than that? You seem like a carnival barker." Well, what had happened was that I was carrying Johnny Fox's lamp, rather than simply being myself. With someone like Eugene Burger there (and I got to spend a whole week with him!) and Jeff McBride, they gave me lessons in true authenticity. Namely, that I could be friendly and kind with my magic. And at that moment, my whole act began to change.

What I learned was that being myself on stage and not carrying someone else's lamp was a far better way to go. And the things that I do that *are* funny are made more so by being authentically myself. Remember, it's "funny" because it's "so true."

I don't mean to dissuade anyone from playing a character. Many magicians play characters on stage. But in that sense they are *making their own lamp*, they are not imitating anyone else's lamp. When you create your own lamp you are doing something a little bit from yourself, but you are *conscious* of it. When you do that, you are shedding light on something intentionally, and you're keenly aware of what part of it is "you" and what part of it is just a mask.

So how is a magician, someone pretending (falsely) to have magic powers, supposed to be authentic? Well, I just wrote an article where I made myself vulnerable. I told you that I had a problem, that I screwed up, and then I told you how I fixed it. I was being completely honest, because people are rarely honest about their screw-ups and mistakes.

You can be honest, even about things that don't make you look good. A magic act can share a tragedy or a true moment from your memory. It can be about something you're passionate about, a concept you really care about, or a cause you really care about.

Bad things or flaws aren't your only option. You have to share things that you really love and feel strongly about, that people might ridicule. Are you courageous enough to do that? I am—now—but it's been a long road to get there. It's much easier to hide behind the façade of the perfect magician who's better than everyone. But that's someone else's lamp. That's inauthentic. Your magic is best when you are sharing aspects of *you*.

I think a lot of magicians have a problem with authenticity and being themselves because they use the magic as a deflection to keep the audience from knowing who they are. The monk in the story was afraid to assert "No, I am blind, this will not work for me." Hold up yourself authentically and don't walk around with someone else's lamp! Keep walking the road with no barrier between you and others, and I guarantee it will be a more fulfilling journey.

