



The Official Newsletter of Ring 1 - June 2024

Our Next Meeting
I.B.M. Ring 1
⚡ June 5, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. ⚡
Fall Show Video Auditions

YOUR Vote Helps Produce the Show!

AUDITIONS

↓ ↓ ↓

Dielmann Recreation Center
11400 Olde Cabin Road
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

6:30-7pm social time! 7pm start.

Scheduled Events:

The St. Louis Magic Roundtable meets every Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at Dierbergs, 1080 Lindemann Rd, Des Peres, MO 63131. Check the following website for the latest information before attending each week:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/374210993307299>

Board meetings are generally held the third Wednesday of each month over Zoom (virtual meeting), and all members are welcome to attend. To attend, please contact the president and secretary (contact info on last page).

Magic Conventions: <https://www.themagicwordpodcast.com/magic-convention-guide>

For kids performers: <https://alakazam.co.uk/products/toon-balloon-by-gustavo-raley>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>
June 5	Ring 1 meeting: "Judgement Day" Fall Show Auditions 6:30-7pm social time, 7pm start
July 1	Mentalist Lior Manor Lecture and Workshop - Location: St. Louis Activity Center, 5602 Arsenal St, St. Louis, MO 63139
July 3	No Ring 1 meeting
August 7	Auction and Flea Market - Auctioneer: Steve Corbitt
September 11	Contest (Gary S. Chan: contest chairman)
September 26	John Carey - In-Person Lecture (Jubilee/S.A.M. Assembly 8 sponsored.)
October 2	Columbus Smith Haunted Lecture
October 6	President's Banquet at Rosilita's (Tim Shegitz guest performer)
October 19	Magic and Fantasy Fall Show (Florissant Performing Arts Center)
November 6	New Product Lecture & Review (D.J. Edwards)
December 4	Annual Party & Gift Exchange

Nick Lewin

Magic Conventions

One size does *not* fit all



I think if they are honest about it, most magicians asked which was their favorite convention would reply, "My first one."

There is something special about that first convention. It is intoxicating being surrounded by so many other magicians, spending your time concentrating on the lectures, the shows, and of course the dealer's room. My first convention was back in the mid-1960s in the English seaside town of Southport. I had never been so entwined in things magical, and it was a giddy high. It was a truly eye-opening experience for this young magician.


I just returned from *The Gateway Close-Up Convention* in St. Louis, and I can

honestly say it was the most fun I have had at any magic convention since that first IBM convention in Southport. The Gateway Convention was attended by somewhere over 100 magicians, and it made me ponder about the nature and future of magic conventions. I want to tell you a little about our St. Louis gathering, and then discuss my thoughts on a split in the road that seems to be a major factor in choosing your magic conventions.

The Gateway Convention, formerly known as The Senior Tour, has an excel-



Nick with John Bannon



lent venue in the Hilton Doubletree. Great facilities, top-notch free breakfast, a bustling bar, and a comfortable main lecture/showroom with excellent video tech. The Gateway is the brainchild of Steve Zuehlke and Steve Buesking and they had everything running as smoothly as a P & L Reel. From the moment I was picked up from the airport (thank you Steve Bolland!) until I was dropped off back at the airport post-convention everyone was friendly, helpful, and went out of their way to make life easier for those of us lecturing and performing. Strangely enough, this isn't always the case!

There was a fine group of guest magicians booked for the convention After the opening cocktail party, we were treated to a superb lecture by guest of honor John Bannon. I have been a big fan of Bannon for many years and studied his books and videos endlessly: it was a delight to see John performing live. The routines he taught were ingenious and devious, this is someone who can do things with an Elmsley Count that would have made Alex himself blink, most of John's routines end up with a double punch finale that takes them into a different league. It was a great kick-off lecture and an amazing amount of magical wisdom was shared with the attendees.

Over the next two days other lecturers and

performers included Dan Fleshman, Robert Moreland, Antony Gerard, Steve Ehlers, David Parr, and Dr. Michael Rubinstein. The quality of this "cast" was of the highest caliber and everyone was delighted to be sharing their favorite routines. My personal highlights included Dan Fleshman who gave invaluable tips and insights on performing Restaurant Magic. It is easy to see why Dan is one of the very best restaurant magicians in the world. I was also very impressed by Robert Moreland, a performer of immense charm and skill. His Stand-Up sleight of hand performance had a poise and attention to visual subtleties that were more than impressive. Moreland is a performer to really watch out for.

There were workshops, breakouts, and everything you would expect from a Close-Up Convention. Best of all, the size of the convention allowed everybody to meet every other attendee. The friendliness of everyone in attendance was remarkable and I enjoyed meeting up with many of our friends and clients. I was especially delighted to catch up with my old friends Harry and Trudy Monti. Trudy has just released a rather special 2024 Magic Journal entitled My Magic Moments which contains a fascinating collection of magic trivia and information. The book contains 700 entries spanning 400 years and six hundred magicians. The book is available

What is your favorite convention?

"My first convention was back in the mid-1960s in the English seaside town of Southport. The Gateway Convention was attended by somewhere over 100 magicians, and it made me ponder about the nature and future of magic conventions."



Nick with Robert Moreland.

from Amazon and is a lot of fun. There will be a 2025 edition and I am excited to read it too!

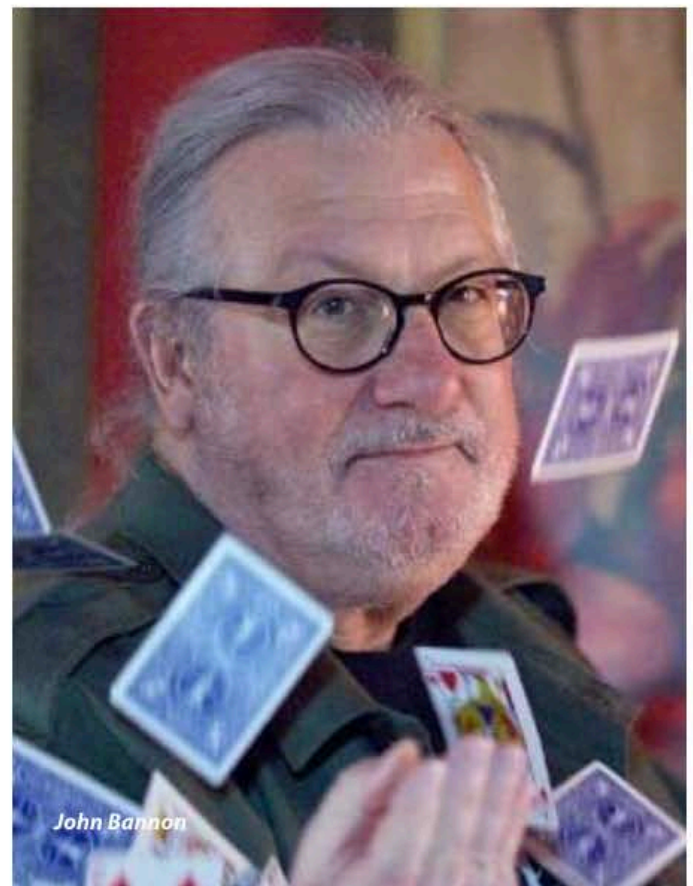
I mentioned at the top of this story the way things seem to be heading with magic conventions. There are huge conventions such as Magic Live, Magifest, Blackpool, FISM, etc., and the smaller, more boutique conventions such as the F.F.F.F., the Gateway Convention, the Magic Collectors Expo, and many others. I think the large conventions are great, but at this point not for me. I enjoy the conversations and camaraderie that a small gathering abounds in. I am no longer impressed by the numbers that big conventions offer. I happily embrace the smaller gatherings and there is nothing I like better than sitting "one on one" with someone who has questions about my lecture, show, or magic in general. The two Steves behind the convention have announced that there will be another Gateway Close-Up Convention next year. I plan on attending just to meet up again with the many old and new friends that I enjoyed spending time with this year. I highly recommend that any Close-Up magicians take advantage of the early registration discount. You will thank me.

If it is your first convention then you should attend a large one, this will give you that exciting immersive rush we discussed earlier. That memory will be imprinted in your brain and rattling around your psyche forever. However, as you learn to focus on your specific skills a convention where you can mix and learn from professionals can be an extremely rewarding experience. It probably isn't a trick in a lecture that will move you forward on your magic path, it is more likely to be having a Pro spend the time to teach you how to do a good double lift. Buy them a drink and they might also teach you a good force. With those two moves under your belt, you have an entire card routine!

Bigger isn't always better, and I encourage younger magicians to take the time to seek out the smaller conventions and enjoy them. Also, these gatherings could use your support, producing a magic convention is hard work and nobody gets rich from it, it's all done for the love of magic. Those bigger conventions need to be businesses because of the high cost of staging them. Mix and match your conventions, big and small and if you bump into me at one down the line say, "Hi." I might even show you my work on the Count Elmsley.

“Bigger isn't always better, and I encourage younger magicians to take the time to seek out the smaller conventions and enjoy them.”

Poster for the convention



John Bannon



Ring 1 Report by Sandy Weis et al.

Ring 1 usually meets on the first Wednesday of every month. However, the May meeting was moved to the middle of the month since Naathan Phan agreed to visit Ring 1 on the evening after his show in St. Louis. Thanks to Mike McClure for reaching out to Naathan! Therefore, a review of his lecture will be published in the next Ring Report since it is occurring after the Ring Report deadline. Sandy Weis is constantly asking members to contribute to the Ring Report. However, for various reasons, members do not submit articles (she is almost certain other Rings are having the same problem). She asked several members to PLEASE send input for this newsletter and thankfully a few members did submit input.

Steve Buesking submitted the following-- "Our Ring has two sets of Steves. Where you see one Steve, you often see the other--Steve Zuehlke and Steve Buesking. The pair sponsored The Gateway Close-up Convention which was located in Collinsville, Illinois during the weekend of April 11th. This is the third year we have produced this convention. This convention consists of three days of close-up magic. Because the size is limited, attendees are able to interact with the performers. Prior years' performers return each year just to be a part of the crowd, magicians helping magicians during the day and into the late-night sessions. This convention offered Friday and Saturday breakout sessions. Each session placed the performers in a different room, allowing each attendee to choose the performer they would like to ask questions to, seek advice from, or any tips on performing. Personally, I would love to see Robert Moreland's Cloud Change again. He is so deceptive that I may never see how he does it. Such a likeable performer! Antony Girard is a David Crosby lookalike. If you don't know either of those names, as a personal note, be sure to research these names. John Bannon worked two days as a break room leader and no one wanted to leave the room - well, John possibly, but none of the attendees. His techniques and teaching are flawless. John, like the other performers, is approachable and willing to help. This explains why John was chosen as Guest of Honor and led off the convention and closed the Saturday evening show. As I was waiting to take a performer to the airport, I had the opportunity to sit with John and other attendees. We spoke about one unnamed effect. An attendee offered - TSA APPROVED - as a possible name. It could happen. Like many long-term conventions, we were able to secure top talent including Steve Ehlers - brilliant card work, Dr. Michael Rubinstein - brilliant coin work, David Parr who was just brilliant, and St. Louis's own Dan Fleischmann. Finally, many magic shows have a standing ovation at the end of the show. In all the years I have attended conventions, I cannot recall only a few standing ovations mid-show. Nick Lewin, second on the Saturday night bill, did his part to earn a standing ovation at the end of his performance. It was well deserved—a memorable performance. Nick was charming, funny, and a kind man. Nick was a highlight! I invariably, probably left someone out of my review. If that happened here, attribute that to a worsening memory and nothing more. The two Steves will be hosting the convention again during the first weekend of April 2025. I'm told the lineup is not to be missed. I highly recommend this convention for all magicians, not only close-up magicians, since everyone will leave having learned something new."

Michael W. McClure shared the following-- "My deeply magic-themed tabletop game, Masters To Mythics, will have its Kickstarter campaign launched in the August/September window of this year. This will ensure that the games are available in time for the holidays. Prototypes are already in the hands of popular game reviewers, and their resulting gameplay videos and evaluations will be included on the crowdfunder's landing page. Our continued goal is to provide diversified magic history, imagery, and exciting gameplay for the growing niche of tabletop enthusiasts, and help cultivate an interest in magic as a hobby or profession. We expect to see new performers enter our art as a result of this mission. Updates on our progress will be found at: <https://www.baskervilleproductions.com/masterstomythics>"

Dan Todd submitted the following—"Ring 1 has not visited Ranken Jordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital for Project Magic since November 2023. I have had contact with the organization and they stated that there have been several cases of respiratory illnesses and that they would tell us when they wanted us back performing magic. On the plus side I performed 13 magic shows at Ranken Jordan since 7/11/2022. I have been performing close-up magic in the lobby at Shriners Children's Hospital since I became a Volunteer there on 5/9/2023. I have performed 17 shows for them since then. The next shows scheduled are on May 14th, 23rd, and 28th. As for St. Louis Children's Hospital, I have performed 57 magic shows since 5/25/2018, mostly on their live CCTV. So as we go forward I will continue to entertain the children wherever they want me." (The Ring really appreciates the visits Dan makes to these hospitals providing magic shows. Thank you Dan)

Christian Misner contacted Sandy Weis and asked if he could submit a review of a product he is using. She said that it would be ok if he was using it and if he thought IBM members in general would be interested in a review. He felt it was very innovative and according to him, "The Future of Book Tests is Here!" Sandy Weis is fascinated by artificial intelligence because she remembers when computers were first installed in her school during her teaching career. What is AI Technology? For those who do not know, a brief definition is as follows—AI is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines. She wondered how could a book test use AI technology? Therefore, Christian Misner submitted the following regarding one book test he is using that uses AI technology. There are probably others who are combining AI technology with book tests but this summary of the WikiTest will give members, in general, information as to what AI has provided to enhance book tests. It was not written as an advertisement but just written to education members regarding new technology.

"Mentalism has taken a quantum leap into the 21st century, folks. That classic of classics - the book test - just got one hell of an upgrade courtesy of cutting-edge AI technology. I'm talking next-level, boundary-pushing, mind-blowing amazement. The kind of zhoosh that'll have jaws hitting the floor when you reveal those cosmic-level coincidences. Here's the deal: WikiTest, by Marc Kerstein, ditched the old book in favor of unleashing an AI beast to dynamically craft Wikipedia articles on the fly. Your participant searches anything they want on Wikipedia, and what appears is an articulate, rational, and professional-grade article whipped up by an advanced language model. Every last detail faultlessly plausible...yet generated from scratch just for them.

No way those AI scribes could've known the randomly chosen topic beforehand! But here's where it gets downright unfair - you STILL nail their concentrated word from the conjured text. A total shot in the dark as far as they're concerned. (Cue the stunned silence and wth's). While the mechanics are delightfully simple on your end, the air-tight method seems to defy all conventional explanation. Now one potential fly in the ointment - there can sometimes be a brief lag period between when your participant locks in their search and the AI text populating. 30 seconds. Maybe a minute if conditions aren't ideal. A margin where that telltale loading screen taunts us. Your challenge is redirecting their attention while the AI engine crunches away behind the scenes. But once that flowery prose materializes...sheer sorcery. WikiTest already packed a bevy of pro tricks up its sleeve - live peeking their search, glimpsing the AI-generated image, on-the-fly translation to any language, and more. But integrating this dynamic AI model is a watershed moment for book tests. You've got cerebral, evergreen, interactive awesomeness that belies any precomputed tomfoolery. My advice? Get current and nab this AI-enhanced mentalism gem for your next gig. With some deft spectator choreography and magical patter to bridge the gap, you can leave them gobsmacked by your seemingly-psychic command over the cosmos. The future is now!" (Thank you Christian for educating members, such as Sandy Weis, regarding the benefits of combining AI with book tests. She is amazed and plans to continue learning about how artificial intelligence can be used in the field of magic.)

Christian also shared that he will be performing at the grand opening of *The Museum of Illusions* located in The City Foundry in St. Louis, Mo. on May 24th. According to the press release, he will make an appearance, bringing comedy and magic to the grand opening.

Sandy Weis

Be the Next Ring 1 Contest Winner!

Unleash your inner sorcerer and showcase your incredible talents by signing up for our I.B.M. Ring 1 Contest on September 11, 2024! This is your chance to dazzle an audience of peers, amaze our panel of expert judges, and compete for spectacular prizes. Whether you specialize in card tricks, illusions, mentalism, or sleight of hand, we want to see your best routines.

E-mail Gary S. Chan at ring1newsletter@finderstellers.com to register.

We are reviewing the contest rules to see if we can simplify them and make the event more fun. We are also considering expanding the Contest to allow both close-up and parlor routines, especially given the significant overlap between the two categories. The full rules will be published in July and included in the August issue of the Spirit.

A Lior Manor lecture will be sponsored by the Midwest Magic Jubilee

The location is where Assembly 8 normally meets...

St. Louis Activity Center, 5602 Arsenal St, St. Louis, MO 63139 on July 1st evening.

The evening's agenda will include the following (in this order):

1. Lecture. The Jubilee has paid for a lecture for everyone who is a member of Ring 1 or Assembly 8, so members do not need to pay.
 2. Lior will offer items for purchase.
 3. Lior will offer an additional workshop session for \$50.

More info on this event will be sent out in June.

Thanks to Shep Hyken for arranging for this lecture.

I.B.M. Ring 1 Contact Information

Role	Name	E-mail	Phone
President	D. Jay Lenz	djay1000@yahoo.com	(618) 462-3675
Vice President	Terry Richison	terryrich@charter.net	(314) 791-9108
Secretary	Al Zibits	alan.a.zibits@boeing.com	(636) 273-9974
Treasurer	Sandy Weis	sweis50@yahoo.com	(314) 378-4403
Board Member	Jerry Collins	gerald2554@gmail.com	(314) 517-7619
Board Member	Steve Finkelstein	sfinkelstein1@sbcglobal.net	(314) 409-6869
Board Member	Ted Schnarre	schnarreted@gmail.com	(314) 440-2341
Board Member & Webmaster	Michael W. McClure	watson7654321@gmail.com	(618) 826-5125
Board Member & Past President	Scott Smith	scott@platocom.com	(618) 610-5947
Spirit Newsletter	Gary S. Chan	ring1newsletter@finderstellers.com	(929) 525-3496
Assistant Spirit Editor	Paul Gregor	paulsmusicplus@gmail.com	(314) 827-4266

There will not be a July issue of the Spirit.