



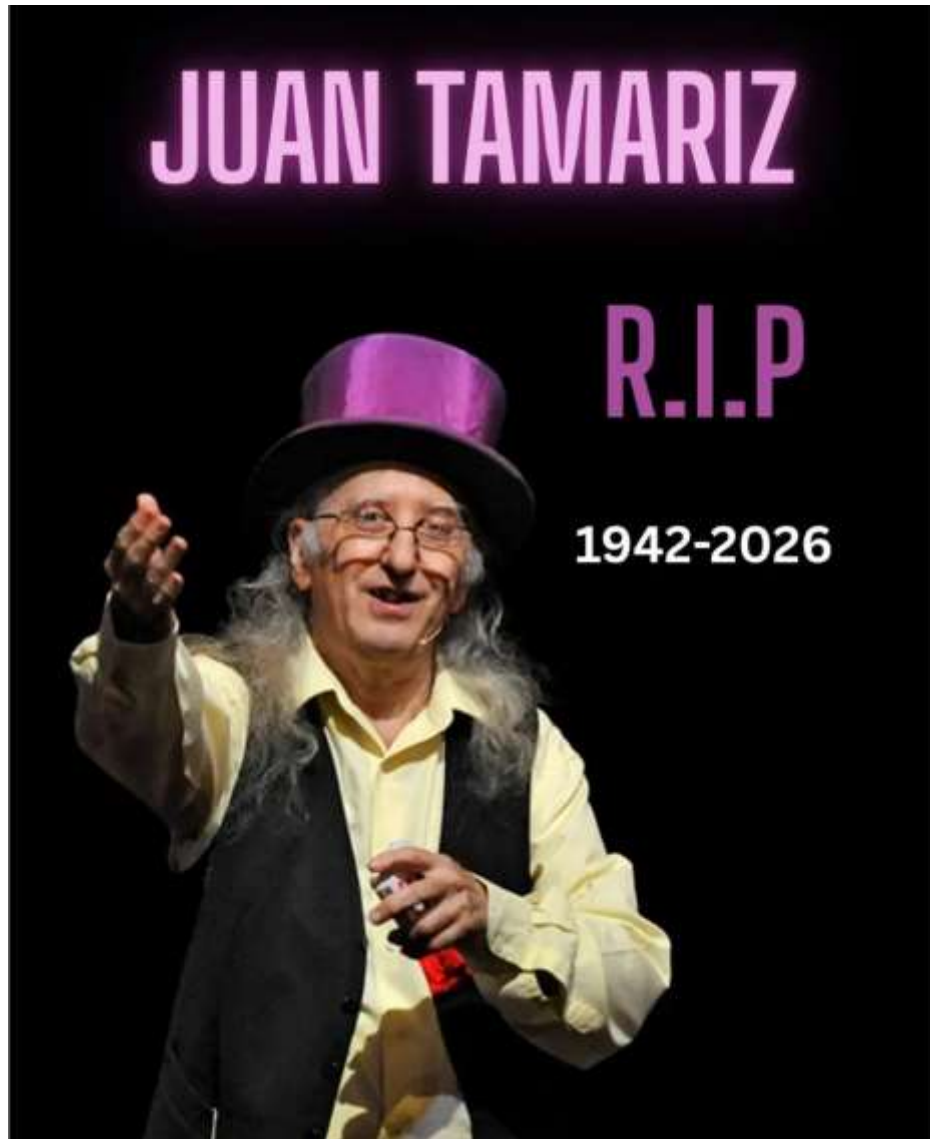
Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170, Assembly #99

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

Juan was unique and influential

Juan Tamariz died on August 18 at the age of 83 from complications related to Parkinson's disease, which had kept him out of the public eye in recent times





Many of the long-term ring members remember Tim Scarbrough.
He lived in Lake Wales and performed for a few of our Ring Banquets.
<https://www.theledger.com/story/news/2003/07/08/magician-takes-pride-in-conjuring-up-a-clean-act/26652782007/>



Janet Bass Scarbrough is with **Tim Scarbrough** and 4 others.

32m • 

It is with the heaviest of hearts that I have to announce my sweet funny man Tim passed away this morning at 2:10am. I am comforted knowing he was ready to meet King Jesus.

We had conversations last week about our mansion in heaven that he will set up next to my father... [See more](#)



Kostya is a local working pro and glad to see that he did this Ted Talk.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SN_NW0wJI



How To Read Anyone In 6 Seconds | Kostya Kimlat | TEDxSarasota

Sad News from Jim King Jr. He let us know that his father, Jimmy King Sr. passed away last Friday July 24, 2026. He was the son in law of U.F. Grant. He married one of Grant's daughters, Mary Ann.

The couple in the mid-60s took over the Grant Magic Co and formed MAK Magic. (Mary Ann King).

After Mary Ann passed away the business transitioned to their son, Jim King Jr. who continue to run MAK Magic. In 2024 Jim King Jr decided it was time to close the business so over several months he sold off the remaining stock and some of the exclusive stock of MAK Magic. With the passing of Jimmy King Sr. another very important piece of Magic History is now gone. I think I can speak for almost all

Magicians that MAK Magic will be very much missed.



U.F. Grant (b.1901-d.1978), known as "Gen", was a magic dealer and inventor.

'Gen', or 'The Little General' as he is sometimes referred to, was a descendant of General U. S. Grant and is named for the General as well as the General's son.^[1] Grant started in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he created his first tricks. Later he moved to New York City joining Abbotts Magic Company, eventually settled in Columbus, Ohio creating his own firm, "U.F. Grant Magic".

In 1944, he partnered with R.N. Menge creating a line of products known as "Grant and Menge" or "G. & M." The partnership only lasted a year, and they ended up becoming rivals.

He created a long line of pamphlet-type magic booklets, which were often affectionately joked about by magicians for their brevity. [Don Tanner](#) wrote directions for and illustrated many of the items marketed by the Grant company.

Grant was a member of the IBM and SAM and the Order of Merlin, and the Columbus Magic Club Ring 7.

Grant turned the business over to his daughter **Mary Ann King** becoming "MAK Magic" and manufactured many of his items, which was run by his family until closing in 2024.



Ehrlich Brothers stadium show is stuck in the 90s. Is this normal in Germany?

Report by Stenlis on Quora

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7HLJY2EBJw>

I'm a magic enthusiast so I went to see the Ehrlich Brothers live in Germany . I was surprised how backwards some of the presentation was. It

took a lot of inspiration (and magic tricks like Card-o-Graphic) from David Copperfield. He used to do stuff like this in the 90s.

Good Trick, but the sexual jokes with spectators are dated now. Copperfield dropped them by the time he turned 40 at the end of 90s. The Ehrlich Brothers are mid 40s still doing this in 2024 - commenting on spectator's breasts, asking for a kiss "if the trick works", asking the (female) spectator to look them deep in their eyes while they find her card etc.

For me it's very canned, dated and cringe inducing. But I am an outsider who brought his cultural background from the US and doesn't watch German TV.

So, is it normal to comment on the breasts of a woman you've never met before or beg her for kisses on German media?

DIAMONDS

★★★ THE MIND-BLOWING ★★★

MAGIC SHOW



EHRlich
BROTHERS

SUPERSTARS OF MAGIC
LIVE ON TOUR

SHOW IN
ENGLISH



WWW.EHRlich-BROTHERS.COM



He is a clever mentalism method that combines classic principles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kK-b6CMp25E>



Predict Anything with this Mentalism Gimmick

Great lines and control by Harry Blackstone Jr.
His was a style of magic that is not seen much anymore.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BIMPVguh8s>



Harry Blackstone Jr - Magician - Wogan - 1988

This is an article published in *The Linking Ring* twice! (March 2002 and February 2005), a couple of e-zines, and two people's lecture notes.

It needs to be said again after this month of mega magic conventions and all the "Latest Things" in Magic.

"If I Knew Then What I Know Now..."

What would I do differently if I was just starting in magic?

- * I would try to discover why some tricks become classics and others collect dust.
- * I would spend more time rehearsing and less time looking for the next new thing.
- * I would look for tricks that had not been on television recently and were not big sellers at the last convention.

- * I would attend more club meetings and participate more.
- * I would learn more magic with everyday items so people would think the magic resides in me rather than in my props.
- * I would use my magic to help heal and bring smiles.
- * I would not use stock lines or perform something exactly as written.
- * I would work on developing a character and a cohesive act rather than just a collection of cool tricks.
- * I would study more acting, dancing, and writing.
- * I would look for inspiration from sources other than just magicians and magic books.
- * I would seek out experts.
- * I would learn how to enter and exit a stage, and how to take a bow.
- * I would find a mentor and mentor someone wanting to be a magician.

Behind, "The Merlin Award"

<https://www.tomstone.se/en/magic-world/the-merlin-award>



This was posted online:

The Merlin Awards are a punchline to a very tired joke.

Please stop telling it.

Learn how to do

BEGINNER'S MAGIC

by Tony Hassini



Mr. Hassini will teach you how to do tricks with cards, coins, paper, ropes, and other small objects that you have around the house. And Mr. Hassini shows you his method for doing the ***Famous Cut and Restored Newspaper Trick.***

You will learn a complete magic act (requires no skill) you can do right after viewing.

Mr. Hassini has appeared on the great stages of the world including the London Palladium and Radio City Music Hall, and has appeared on many TV shows such as *The Ed Sullivan Show, Johnny Carson, Merv Griffin, etc.* Mr. Hassini also has many Las Vegas club dates to his credit and has recently received "**The Best Magician of**

Save Money!

If you want to be an “International Award-Winning Magician”, just buy a trophy, like this from Amazon, and have it engraved with your name and use Chat GPT to doctor up some photos of you getting the “Award”.

Claim that you appeared on TV variety shows. (They included a camera shot of you sitting in the audience) and have been on many Las Vegas Club dates (with a paid girlfriend). I am just trying to help your career.

No one needs to know the truth. They just want to be associated with fame and power.

The Internet has created a new class of people who have done nothing and have no valid claim to being famous. They are only famous for being famous! (Honey Boo Boo?)

Show business always had a lot of hype and we all sort of knew it was hype for fun. PT Barnum was known for that

It is not new, just more common in the electronic mass media era.

Edward Bernays is the father of propaganda and manipulation:

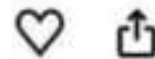
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Bernays

Learn from him.



Crown Awards
Visit the Store

6" Gold Magician Trophies - Personalized Magic Trophy
Awards Prime



Package Quantity: 1

1

\$29⁹⁹

✓prime
In Stock

5

\$49⁹⁹

✓prime
Only 10 left in

10

\$89⁹⁹

✓prime
Only 5 le

Steve Neruda

I knew the "Merlins" were less than credible, but being in corporate America, I know that most industry awards suffer from the same issues. I like perplexity as an AI tool, so I asked it to explain the award, and include Tom Stone's perspective. This is what I learned:

"The Merlin Award is an honor presented by the International Magicians Society (IMS), founded and run by Tony Hassini. Its standing is sharply disputed: Hassini presents it as a major recognition for achievement in magic, while Swedish magician and writer Tom Stone argues it is a misleading, commercially driven vanity award rather than a credible peer-reviewed prize.

Hassini's account

Hassini says he created the IMS to promote and preserve magic, and created the Merlin statuette—designed, he says, by art student Carol Michaud—as a public-facing award for exceptional magicians. His history places the organization's origins in 1968, with early unofficial awards to Franz Harary (1984) and Rocco Silano (1986), followed by an official presentation to Tony Clark in 1998.

The official Merlin site says the award is "80% recognition" and "20% competition." It says candidates submit a performance video to the IMS board, which considers talent, showmanship, originality, skill, and ability to entertain; it lists notable recipients including David Copperfield, Siegfried & Roy, Penn & Teller, Shin Lim, and others.

Importantly, IMS openly describes costs associated with receiving it:

A recipient may travel to Las Vegas at their own expense for the party.

If Hassini presents it at the recipient's show, the magician or management pays his travel and lodging.

In competition settings, entrants pay an entry fee.

Hassini's view is that these presentations help publicize artists and magic itself, rather than functioning exactly like a conventional contest award.

Tom Stone's viewpoint

Stone's position is unequivocal: he calls the Merlin Award a "fake award" and a "scam." He says legitimate magic awards normally have transparent rules, documented judging, and cannot be bought—contrasting them with what he sees as the Merlin model.

Stone says he was unexpectedly handed a Merlin Award in Croatia in 2014—"Best Cabaret Act of the Decade"—without seeking or wanting it. He alleges that the presentation was used to photograph him with the trophy and lend it credibility; this episode is the reason he publicly investigated the award. These are Stone's allegations and interpretation, not findings of an independent adjudication.

His broader criticisms include:

Lack of transparency: Stone disputes IMS's claimed scale, governance, officer lists, and historical accounts.

Pay-to-receive dynamics: He argues that asking recipients to cover travel, hotels, events, or related costs makes the award function like paid publicity.

Reputational harm: He contends that marketing Merlin titles beside rigorously judged honors can confuse the public and diminish achievements such as FISM World Championship awards.

How to interpret it

A fair shorthand is: the Merlin is a private IMS recognition and promotional award, not a universally accepted equivalent of an Oscar or the principal competitive honor in magic. It has been given to several genuinely prominent performers, but that fact does not resolve the concerns over selection, oversight, presentation costs, and marketing claims raised by Stone.

If you see "Merlin Award winner" in a performer's biography, treat it as evidence that IMS recognized or promoted them—not, on its own, proof that they won a transparent, independently judged international competition."

**The Magic Capital of the World: Colon, Michigan and its
annual "Get Together" every August.
Oliver Corpuz**



I'm staying at a Travelodge in Sturgis, Michigan, about 18 miles from Colon and the Abbott's Magic Get-Together.

Sturgis is basically base camp—a rural crossroads just off the Indiana Toll Road with a Walmart, a Meijer, enough fast food to sustain a small army, and inexpensive motels for people who either planned to stop here or finally surrendered to the highway.

Colon is why I'm here.

Getting there takes about twenty minutes on two-lane country roads through southern Michigan, St. Joseph County.

Cornfields roll out in long green waves. Farmhouses sit back from the road. Old barns lean just enough to suggest they've been negotiating with gravity for several decades. The occasional horse and buggy moves along with the unhurried confidence of something that has never checked Google Maps for an estimated arrival time.

And as you get closer to Colon, time seems to loosen its collar a little.

The present starts slipping away one mile at a time. 20 miles and 20 years in the past

Then, almost improbably, you arrive.

Population: roughly 1,200.

Claim to fame:

The Magic Capital of the World.

And somehow, that isn't just marketing bullshit.

This tiny Michigan village has been intertwined with American magic for nearly a century.

Legendary magician Harry Blackstone Sr. owned property here and invited fellow magicians to visit. Australian magician Percy Abbott eventually settled in Colon and, with Recil Bordner, founded the Abbott Magic Company in 1934.

That same year came the first Abbott's Magic Get-Together.

What began as a small gathering grew into an annual pilgrimage. In its heyday, thousands of magicians and magic enthusiasts from around the world descended on a town barely large enough to contain them.

Colon didn't have hotels.

So townspeople rented out bedrooms and houses.

Magicians brought campers.

Others pitched tents in yards.

This was Airbnb decades before somebody in Silicon Valley figured out how to charge you a \$175 cleaning fee and call it innovation.

For a few days every August, Colon's population could seemingly multiply tenfold.

Magic tricks were performed on sidewalks. Dealers sold props. Magicians swapped stories and secrets. Giant stage illusions somehow traveled down narrow country roads and ended up on the stage at the local high school.

Magic became so thoroughly woven into Colon's identity that the high school teams are called the Magi, and their mascot is a rabbit coming out of a top hat.

Because what else would Colon's mascot be?

The Fighting Corn Cobs?

There was a time when Abbott's wasn't merely a magic shop.

It was an institution.

Its manufacturing operation produced magic apparatus that traveled to performers around the world. Imagine that: in a little Michigan town surrounded by cornfields, people got up every morning, punched a clock and went to work manufacturing magic tricks.

Actual magic tricks.

Illusions. Silks. Feather flowers. Strange mechanical contraptions designed to make things appear, disappear and otherwise violate commonly accepted laws of physics.

That world is mostly gone now.

Abbott's isn't the bustling magic-manufacturing empire it once was. Like nearly every surviving brick-and-mortar magic shop, it now lives in a world of online retailers, streaming instructional videos and instant downloads.

And yet Abbott's is still here.

Tenaciously.

Almost defiantly.

Every year when I return to Colon and see those familiar white skeletons painted on the Abbott's building, I feel a little relieved.

They're still there.

Abbott's is still here.

The Get-Together is still here.

And somehow, against every reasonable principle of modern retail, Colon still has three brick-and-mortar magic shops.

Many major metropolitan areas with millions of people are lucky to have one.

Colon, Michigan—population roughly 1,200—has Abbott's Magic, Sterlini Magic and FAB Magic, which returned to Colon this year.

Three magic shops.

Twelve hundred people.

That makes absolutely no economic sense.

Which makes perfect sense for Colon.

Because a magic shop used to be more than someplace where you bought a trick.

Someone demonstrated something across the counter. You asked questions. Another magician wandered over and offered an unsolicited opinion. Some other guy informed you the trick you were about to buy was complete crap and showed you something better.

Forty-five minutes later, you walked out with three things you hadn't planned on buying.

Basically the Internet, except with human interaction and significantly more sponge balls.

Seeing FAB Magic back in Colon feels like a small victory.

Things disappear.

Sometimes, against all odds, they come back.

Around here, that's practically the definition of a magic trick.

This morning I drove into town and stopped for breakfast at the Magic Capital Grille.

And sitting here reminded me that what I love about Colon isn't only the magic.

It's the town.

The placemats advertise local businesses. Service is a little slower, but nobody seems to care. The coffee keeps coming. Country music plays softly through what appears to be an ancient mono speaker propped up in the back.

Vintage hand-painted figurines decorate the windowsills, the sort of things that look like they've occupied exactly the same spots for decades, and moving one would somehow constitute vandalism.

Then the door opens.

An elderly gentleman wearing a weathered brown Carhartt jacket over a University of Michigan polo shirt slowly shuffles inside.

From somewhere in the back comes a yell:

"How you doin', Chuck!"

Chuck doesn't need to introduce himself.

Chuck doesn't need to explain where he wants to sit.

Chuck probably has been sitting in the same damn seat since the Reagan administration.

He sits down.

Conversation resumes.

Outside, an old white Ford F-150 with visible rust and a muffler that surrendered sometime during the first Bush administration rumbles past.

An American flag waves outside the local American Legion.

Nobody seems particularly interested in getting anywhere quickly.

And I love it.

Back home around Chicago, we're conditioned to hurry like it's a civic responsibility.

Traffic moves quickly. Restaurants turn tables quickly. People walk quickly. Everybody has somewhere else they're supposed to have been fifteen minutes ago.

Here, people sit.

They drink coffee.

They talk.

They know who Chuck is.

And increasingly, I think that's part of why I keep coming back to Colon.

Yes, I come for the Abbott's Magic Get-Together.

And the Get-Together is still here.

But it's different now.

Every year, sadly, the crowd gets a little smaller.

The people who made the pilgrimage to Colon year after year for decades are getting older. Some can no longer make the trip. For others, traveling has simply become too difficult.

And some are no longer with us.

You notice the empty chairs at empty tables.

You realize you haven't seen a familiar face for a couple of years. Then somebody tells you why.

That's the part of nostalgia nobody particularly likes talking about.

Eventually, nostalgia starts acquiring names.

But even death has become part of Colon's strange relationship with magic.

Many magicians—some famous, some known mostly within the magic fraternity, and some who simply loved this ridiculous little town—have chosen the Colon cemetery as their final resting place.

Walk among the headstones and you'll recognize names from magic books, convention programs and stories you've heard for years.

Some were stars.

Some weren't.

It doesn't particularly matter here.

For decades they made the pilgrimage to Colon every August.

Eventually, some of them simply stayed.

Their chairs may be empty at the Get-Together, but they're still here.

Just a little farther down the road.

There's something both sad and strangely beautiful about that.

Because the Get-Together has never really been about tricks.

It's about people.

Old friends.

Old stories.

Old arguments about tricks everyone insists they performed much better thirty years ago when their hands were steadier and their eyesight didn't require three different pairs of glasses.

It's standing around a magic-shop counter listening to somebody tell the same story you've heard six times before—and listening anyway.

There was a time when thousands came to Colon for Magic Week.

The crowds are smaller now.

But they're still coming.

And maybe that makes coming here feel more important than it used to.

Because traditions rarely end with a grand announcement.

Usually, they just get smaller.

A few fewer people come back.

A familiar face disappears.

A store closes.

A chair stays empty.

And eventually somebody realizes that "this year" quietly became "back then."

So while the Get-Together is still here, I want to be here too.

I still come for the shows, the dealers, the magic shops and the garage sales where I inevitably purchase something I absolutely do not need and later defend as "a good find."

But increasingly, I come because Colon feels like a little piece of America we're slowly losing.

Not because everything was better fifty years ago.

It wasn't.

But some things were worth keeping.

The locally owned store.

Curly's Bar. Dawn's café. Five-Star Pizza. Magic Capital Grille.

The American Legion.

The high school football game.

The rusty pickup truck.

The waitress who knows your name.

The shopkeeper who actually knows what he's selling.

People stopping to talk because there isn't any particular reason not to.

In Colon, they just added magicians.

Lots and lots of magicians.

For nearly a century, they've traveled these same country roads into this ridiculously tiny Michigan village. They've slept in spare bedrooms, campers and tents. They've eaten at the local diner. They've performed at the high school. They've demonstrated tricks on sidewalks and stayed up far too late talking about magic.

Some came once.

Some came every August for decades.

And some loved Colon enough that when their final curtain came down, they chose to remain here forever.

Then Magic Week ends.

The dealers pack up.

The visiting magicians go home.

And Colon becomes Colon again.

A tiny village surrounded by Michigan farmland.

A diner.

An American Legion.

A high school whose teams are called the Magi.

Three magic shops.

A cemetery filled with generations of magicians.

And those white skeletons still painted on the side of Abbott's, grinning at the weather like they've seen all this before.

Maybe that's what I've been feeling sitting here watching Chuck settle into his usual seat.

Colon feels like it's holding onto something.

And maybe those of us who keep coming back are holding onto it too.

Not because anyone believes it's still 1975.

But because some things from 1975—and 1955 and 1935, for that matter—were worth keeping around a little longer.

These places aren't museums.

They're survivors.

So is the Get-Together.

It's smaller now. There are fewer familiar faces in the audience. But the stage curtain still opens up at the high school. The magicians still take the stage. The magic shops still open their doors. And every August, people still drive those country roads back to Colon.

This is, after all, the Magic Capital of the World.

Maybe that's what nostalgia really is.

Not wishing you could turn back time.

Just hoping that when you come back next year, Chuck is still sitting in his usual seat, the skeletons are still grinning on the side of Abbott's, and the curtain opens for one more show. One more Get-Together.

My comments on the Strait Jacket escape that I did at the August 19th Ring Meeting.

There is a You Tube like below courtesy of Mike Martin

I have not done the straight jacket escape for about 10 years. When I was younger and maybe 10 to 15 pounds lighter, it was easier, so what started out as what should have been a mostly acting performance ended up with a lot more physical effort and not much need for acting.

The jacket I used was a medium Abbotts (Levante style). When I got it ,40 years ago, I shortened the arm strap gaff because I wanted it to be tighter and able to be briefly examined. Well, I am older now and a bit heavier. Last Wednesday afternoon, I put it in at my house and had my son-in-law just hold it together at the back and I did not have him buckle me in. I just wanted to see if it still fit. It did, just barely!

I structured my presentation for the Ring meeting, a bit like a TED talk and all the background information I gave is true. I kept the gags to a minimum. The escape algorithm that I explained is: 1) Get my hands over my head and free (2) undo the between-the -legs strap (3) undo the neck strap (4) use the foot insole for leverage, to shed it like a snakeskin. It is the only way to get out.

I am glad the Ring liked it. It only cost me a few Tylenol tables Thursday and Friday for my lower back and upper leg. I am almost 78 years old,

The escape video at the Ring meeting is here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwgozE0ySmo> it was preceded by a history of the strait jacket and how it was used.

The photo below on the left was made around 1990 when I was younger and thinner (funny and sad, huh?). The one on the right was from the mid-1980s.

High School kids always loved it, and you can see that by the expression on the face of the kid who buckled me into it!



Dennis