



The Flash Paper November 2025

“Enjoying magic...with others...for others.”

Bob Gehringer, Editor



Prez Adam's Antics

Adam performing
Leviosa at the
Luminarium

October wrapped up another exciting season of magic for me! I had the chance to perform a few Halloween-themed shows, along with some strolling sets at the Kiewit Luminarium - one for their adult night and another for a member event.

In past years, I've simply done my regular material around Halloween and figured that was "spooky enough." But this year I started thinking differently: what actually feels eerie in magic? I found myself drawn toward mind-reading and small mysterious moments - things that feel just a little supernatural. One routine I really enjoyed using came from a lecture earlier this year - the palm-reading and hieroglyphics effect where an ash mark transfers onto the spectator's hand. (If you're looking for easy Halloween ideas next year, this one's a winner! It uses a similar principle to Double Cross or even the cue chalk version of the billiard ball trick.)

We also had our **Rick Holcombe** lecture in October - a real change of pace for the club, focusing entirely on coin magic. It's an area only a few members regularly explore, but I think Rick's approach reignited some interest. I heard thoughtful feedback from **Tom Neddo**, who said Rick taught some principles that challenged his usual thinking. Instead of brushing them off, Tom decided to test them out in his coin work and found it to work out! I'd encourage you to do the same! Sometimes

the best growth in magic comes from leaning into what feels uncomfortable or unfamiliar.

In other news, Omaha is getting its very own flagship Toys "R" Us - one of only eight permanent stores opening nationwide in partnership with Fantasma Magic! Their CEO actually reached out to me to demo Fantasma kits in the new store, and I've been working with the local franchisees to see how this might fit into my schedule. What's confirmed so far: I'll be performing for their Grand Opening Celebration on Friday, November 22, sometime between 11 AM and noon. They're even building a small stage for it! The store will be located at Westroads Mall, first floor under H&M (near the escalators). I'll post full details on Facebook once everything's finalized.

On a non-magic note - life at the steakhouse has been going great! I've been soaking up knowledge about food, wine, and hospitality. If you're ever looking for a night out, come visit! We've got Happy Hour Monday-Friday from 4 - 6, and an incredible Sunday Supper prix-fixe menu. By late November, the whole restaurant will be decorated for the holidays - it's truly stunning.

Looking ahead, I'm really looking forward to our November OMS meeting and class on Marked Cards - I'll be there this time!

As always, if you'd ever like to grab lunch or coffee, please reach out: 402-719-1178. I'd love to hear your ideas, dreams, and ways I can help strengthen our club. I plan to run one more year as President and want to make this a year of connection and creativity for all of us.

Thanks for making the Omaha Magical Society such a warm, talented, and unique community.

Until next time.



October Re-Cap by Matt Spielman

We had the great pleasure of hosting **Rick Holcombe** as our guest lecturer for last month's OMS club meeting. Rick is a very respected "underground legend" in the world of coin magic, known for his innovative thinking and contemporary routines. I happen to be very fond of his work and have already subscribed to his YouTube channel (@RickHolcombe) where he has many tutorials that emphasize simplicity and portability for up close coin magic, often designing routines that can be performed anywhere and anytime with a minimalist set of coins. Another aspect of his work that I greatly appreciate is his ability to string together a collection of smaller tricks into a larger routine, often using classics from J.B. Bobo or Eli Roth with excellent references to where the original routines can be found.



Starting off the lecture Rick performed a routine from his new book "Calico" called Captive Coins, **Tim Begley** was brought up to take part in the action. Tim was handed a silver coin and held it tightly as Rick brought out a different copper coin to display. After a few quick words and a shake Tim was now holding the copper coin while Rick held the silver. Both coins were handed to Tim to mix between his back and he was then instructed to pick one for the next phase. A copper coin was given

to Rick and again in an instant the two coins magically exchanged places between the two. After the routine we were given a thoroughly explained tutorial on how to perform it using 3 un-gaffed coins and relatively simple sleights. During the explanation we were also given tips on the "motivations and justifications for your hand movement and body position to make the sleights detectless.



Rick also went over a few of his favorite sleights including the fantasy display and De Manche change, a lot of these moves are showcased on his YouTube channel and are also included in his book Calico. If you happen to purchase the book you will also be given videos for every routine in the book, very handy for beginners that are unfamiliar with coin work. One of my favorite routines "Recoil" was also taught to us as well. It is a unique single coin spellbound routine in which a coin morphs into a solid ball and back, then it is stretched into a slinky and recoils back into a solid coin again. A big thanks to the OMS board for setting up this excellent lecture and another thank you to Rick Holcombe for sharing his time with us for the evening.

2025 OMS Officers

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Check out our website:

<http://TheOmahaMagicalSociety.org>



The Matter-of-Fact Magic of Rick Holcombe



While taking magician, **Rick Holcombe**, to the airport, it seemed the perfect time to get to know him better. What was his magic story? The only hesitation I had was that I would have to listen very closely while watching traffic, as Mr. Holcombe has a soft-spoken, very polite, and rather formal speaking voice. I couldn't miss this opportunity. After all, he was literally a captive audience in my car for the next twenty minutes!

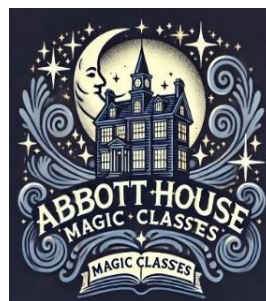
Rick was flying home after being hosted by our society for our monthly magic for October. He is a coin magician who our member, **Steve Osborn**, had the pleasure of meeting recently. North Carolina is where Holcombe resides, which explains his slight southern cadence specific to that part of the country.

Born in San Francisco, Rick was uprooted at a tricky age (pun intended). At thirteen, his parents moved across country to the Carolinas. With a totally new and different place to live, alone-time could be too long without a book to escape into. Thank goodness his local library had a whole section on magic and a magic store in his town!

After hanging out at the magic shop every weekend, sometimes spending his allowance, and sometimes putting an illusion on hold until he saved up for it, the owner took Rick under his wing. Soon, the teenager learned the moves for handling cards, ropes, and coins. Illusions with coins fascinated him and he began practicing his sleight-of-hand maneuvers with coins... his passion.

Even with my slow crawl along the back streets to Eppley, the ride went by all too quickly. I wish I had more time with this interesting, humble, and genuinely authentic handler of coins, but the airport waited.

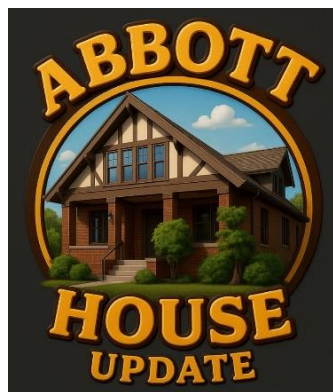
- **Patrice Fisher**



Joe Cole's Magic Class

"I had a delightful time with our magic group on the morning of Oct. 18th! It was a mini lecture of material I've been doing in the restaurants and parties since the 90's. A variation of coins across inspired by David Roth and my rendition of Chris Kenner's Free Fly. I've always loved doing my jumbo butter knife production which was the first trick I do at a table. I decided to teach my sponge rabbit routine with all my dad jokes included! From there we laid heavy into the cards, some packet tricks, shrinking the selection with Alice in Wonderland patter, and a couple of gambling routines. The best part of the lecture was seeing all my magic friends again and the support they have been giving me! You guys are the best!"





At October's board meeting, your Abbott House board consisting of **Darren Kauk**, **Kim Isherwood**, **Mike Ware**, **Carl Braun**, **Seanna Middleton-Sammons**, **Bob Gehringer** and **Dave Arch** saw our architect **Bob Perrin's** blueprints for the one bedroom apartment on the lower level of the Abbott House with the goal being that when completed the rent from the apartment will help pay for the on-going upkeep of The Abbott House for generations to come as well as providing a resident house manager. Click this link:

[Abbott House Updates with Patrice - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/@abbotthouse)

Or type in this url:

<https://www.youtube.com/@abbotthouse>

Recent visits by magicians



Tina Lenert and Mike Caveney paid a visit to The Abbott House



HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

The Historic Abbott House

You're invited to an Open House on Sunday,
December 7th from 1-4 PM at the historic David P.
Abbott House (3316 Center Street in Omaha).



Lance Burton and the talking tea kettle at the The Abbott House



**Also,
our guest lecturer,
Rick Holcombe**



Monday Night

Magic



SPONSORED BY THE OMAHA MAGICAL SOCIETY

Come and not only learn a DIY system for building a deceptively easy-to-read deck of marked cards, but go home with your own deck and four proven favorite marked card routines taught by four of our members!

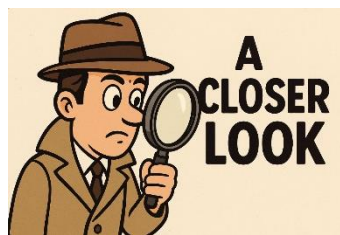
SIMULTANEOUSLY BROADCAST ON ZOOM <https://zoom.us/j/4028718108>

Please note: If joining the fun on Zoom, have available your own deck of red backed Bicycle playing cards and a safety pin.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025
7-8 PM (CST)

The Cross Training Center
5030 N. 72nd Street
Omaha, Nebraska

No charge for attending this event.



Card Forces

From time-to-time **Andy** in his **Jerx Blog** conducted research on various magic

methods. Here are the results of one he conducted on Card Forces that proved to be an eye-opener for me. - **Dave Arch**

The Forces and How They Look

Classic Force: Cards spread from hand to hand; the spectator reaches out and takes one as they go by.

Cross Cut Force: Spectator cuts the deck into two piles. The cut is "marked" by placing one half across the other. After a moment, the spectator is instructed to look at the bottom card of the top portion (the "card they cut to").

Dribble Force: The cards are dropped singly in rapid succession from one hand to the other (i.e., "dribbled") and the spectator stops this process at any point. The card is displayed at the point they stopped.

Riffle Force: The performer holds the deck in dealing grip and runs his thumb along the corner of the deck. The spectator calls out stop and the deck is split where he called stop to determine the selected card.

Second Deal Force: The cards are dealt on the table one at a time. At any point the spectator can call "stop." They are given the option to keep going or stay where they stopped. When they're happy with where they stopped, the card that is on top of the deck is turned over.

Under-the-spread Force: The cards are spread between the hands and the spectator is asked to touch any one. They are given a chance to change their mind. Once they settle on a card, the selection and the cards above it in the spread are raised to display the chosen card.

The deck was shuffled and then each procedure was demonstrated for the respondent but without the covert action involved that would force a card, so they were given free choices in a way that would mimic the actions of a force. After each one they would rate how "free and fair" the selection seemed on a scale of 0-100.

If you want, see if you can predict the order in which the spectator's ranked them from least fair to most fair. Take

out a piece of paper and rank them from 1-6. This is your last chance.

The Results

Here are the forces with their average "fairness" score next to them. From lowest (least fair) to highest (most fair).

Force	Average Score
Classic Force	45
Riffle Force	51
Dribble Force	54
Under-the-spread Force	72
Second Deal Force	80
Cross Cut Force	86

After breaking down *why* certain procedures felt more fair, the rankings above seemed very obvious. There were two important things that we gathered from discussing the procedures and their scores with them.

Important Thing #1 - Speed Kills

The lowest rated forces all had one thing in common: **the moment of choice was over in an instant.** When we asked, "Why did you rate this one the least fair?" very often the answers dealt with the speed in which the choice was made. They would say something like, "It just happened too quickly." Or, "I didn't have time to think about it."

Regarding the riffle force, one person, who scored it the lowest, said, "It was too fast to completely connect when I said stop to when you actually stopped. It *seemed* close, but maybe it was a little before or after. It was hard to see. "This is one of the many things that seems obvious now after talking to real people, but I don't think it's something most magicians ever consider. Think about how magicians will jokingly riffle through the deck or dribble through the cards completely before the spectator has a chance to say stop. Like idiots, we're *emphasizing* the fact that it's all happening too fast to be meaningful.

If you had to select **any other object in the world**, and you did so by having them whiz by your face too quickly to see, and you just randomly shouted stop and then you were presented with one, would you be confident that was truly a free choice? Probably not.

The highest scoring forces were all slow forces. The participant isn't rushed. You can spread through the entire deck. You can deal through the entire deck. Or they can take as much time as they want cutting the cards in two piles. But one thing this doesn't explain is why the riffle force scored higher than the classic force. They're both "fast" forces, but the classic force is certainly more



open, and would certainly seem more "free and fair," one would think. That brings us to...

Important Thing #2 - A Layman's Understanding of Forcing

When we asked a few people who had rated the classic force the lowest why they did so - when we asked why spreading the deck for a selection didn't feel fair - four of them said something like this with no prompting: "Because, that's how you force a card."

Of the 18 people we asked, "Are you familiar with the concept of 'forcing' a card?" Seventeen had heard of the concept. When we asked, "Do you know what that means?" Two said no, two gave a general (accurate) description of what it means, and the other *thirteen* said something along these lines, "It's when you have someone pick a card and you kind of push the one you want them to take into their hand without them knowing." Obviously, they didn't all use the exact same words, but they all expressed a similar idea. That's 13 out of the 18 people we asked (and we can assume the first four who weren't asked, but put the classic force at or near the bottom as well, would likely have a similar view).

Men and women, old and young—they *don't see card forcing as a general term, they see it as a specific thing which means to spread a deck and secretly push a particular card on someone.*

Wrap your head around this: **When you do the classic force you are literally mimicking the ONLY process many people associate with card forcing.**

With that in mind, *of course*, the actions of the classic force were rated as "least fair." Cutting the deck doesn't conform with their understanding of what it means to force a card. Nor does dealing through them. A riffle force might not seem like a "free" selection because of the speed at which it happens, but it's a little more fair seeming to some people because it *doesn't consist of the exact actions of what they understand a card force to be.*

"Yeah, but everyone says the classic force is the best force."

Yes. They do. And I always just assumed it was as well (although it's not something I performed) however I don't think that way now. You could say that 100s of years of magic wisdom shouldn't be flushed away for

what I learned over the course of one Saturday with 22 people, but the findings make sense to me.

So why do so many do it and champion it?

I can't say for sure, but these are my theories:

First, I think it probably was, at one time, a very strong force. Maybe in the 1800s spectators didn't have the concept of forcing a card. I don't know. Maybe spreading a deck of cards and saying, "pick a card, any card" wasn't associated with deceit and shadiness. I know the one person in our study who said she wasn't familiar with the concept of forcing a card also rated the classic force the highest of any of the other people. That's just one data point, but it might point towards an explanation.

Second, a lot of magicians live in a bubble in regards to technique—what fools people, what people enjoy, etc. I read some of these theory books and so many seem completely bogus. Not like the author actually asked any real spectators what they think, but just made assumptions. So maybe the classic force was once a very strong force, but over time, as the public's understanding of the concept of card forcing increased, no one bothered to see if spreading a deck between your hands for a card selection still feels innocuous. I'm the only one who admits to being dumb enough to need to test these things out.

Third, while the classic force might fool people less often than we think, I think it still *impresses* people. So performing it still gets the magician a positive response. What do you think is happening when you do the classic force half a dozen times in a row, forcing the same card on the same person, as many magicians do? They're not marveling at the magic. They're marveling at your skill.

Fourth, I think it's just more satisfying to pull off the classic force than most other forces. The degree of difficulty is much higher, so it feels like more of an accomplishment. But that difficulty isn't reflected in how fooling it is.

"But seriously, the Cross Cut Force?"

Yep. And not only that, it wasn't some clever variation on the cross-cut force (See Ben Earl's work for that). It was literally just, "Cut the deck in two piles." Cross the halves. Wait a bit. Reveal the card. And think about this, this was the only *actual* force we did all day. and it was rated the most fair!



And it averaged the highest score despite the fact that one guy gave it a zero because he was familiar with it from a book on magic he read as a kid. (We weeded out anyone with an *active* interest in magic, but not someone who had played around with it as a kid.)

When we asked those who rated it the most fair why they did so, we got two main answers.

1. **"Because I was holding the deck."** Duh. That seems ridiculously obvious now, but yeah, of course it will feel more fair given that they are doing it themselves.

2. **"It was just cutting to a card."** Again... *of course*. Spreading the deck for a selection is what you do in a magic trick. But cutting the cards is something you do in card games. It's a normal action. It's no surprise the top two forces involved dealing and cutting; actions people are familiar with outside of magic tricks. There is very little dribbling and riffing in daily life. I don't know of any card games where you spread and select a random card.

Conclusion: So, what did I take away from this? Am I just only going to do the cross-cut force the rest of my life? No. Although I will be using it much more, I'll be doing so with added convincers to make it even stronger. The problem with the cross-cut force is when someone *does* spot the discrepancy that makes it work; it falls apart completely. Whereas with something like a riffle force, they can be suspicious but never really know.

Am I never going to bother learning the classic force because it's more of a self-indulgent exercise than an ideal tool for fooling people? Uhm... yeah, that's probably true. I think my takeaways are these:

1. When deciding on a force I will choose one where the moment of selection is not rushed in any way.
2. The actions of the force will, ideally, be something they're familiar with (cutting, dealing, shuffling) rather than something that looks like the actions of what their understanding of a force would be.
3. I will keep my eye out for more forces that happen in the spectator's hands.
4. I'm going to work on my second deal. The idea of dealing through the deck until someone stopped you felt very fair to most of the respondents.



The Omaha Magical Society

A Standing "Ovation" for our CARE Team

A huge Thank You to our CARE Team who dedicated their time, skills, and positive energy to perform magic for the Ovation's Heartland Preserve assisted living community.

Each month for more than a year, five of our Omaha Magical Society members have volunteered to bring their enthusiasm for magic to the community. They are living our club's mission statement every time they volunteer their magical prowess.

OUR MISSION

"The Omaha Magical Society is a professional organization of magic enthusiasts who desire to grow in their knowledge of the art and use that artistry to make their community and the world a better place."



A testament to our group's ability to keep things fresh is that several of the residents have been loyal audience members and yes, the atmosphere and set-up of the Bistro common area is perfect for walk-around magic.





But it is the friendships and kindness we have cultivated, that has sparked real interest and, dare I say, legitimate critiques about our performances. Or come to think of it, maybe it was just about my performance...

I am specifically reminded of rotating to the table of our life-time, member, **Pete Petroshek**. Pete was a professional magician, who just turned 100 years old in August. His eyesight is dimming and his voice is thinner and quieter now. So, after my second try at one of my magic offerings, Pete kindly made the suggestion that "You might want to take that trick out of your routine." Well, you better believe, that particular illusion was definitely eliminated, at least for now.

Anyway, the men of the hour or of the year, really are; **Tim Begley, Thomas Gray, Nathan Roberts, and Neil Bable**. Each magician has a different repertoire. There's Tim, who is a favorite for his friendly style and coin sleights, and Thomas with his blind-folded illusions using coins or cups. His creativity kept things fresh and amazing! Neil always has much to offer and he made things lively with colorful silks, sponge balls, ropes and his deadpan flare.



Then there is **Nathan**... Now Nathan seems to be the rock star of our band. His engaging smile and youthful charm have really endeared him to folks at Ovation. Although, Nate is relatively new to the artistry of magic, his mastery of cards is proving to get better with every performance. I never see him without a deck of cards in his hand and that tells me he is a serious student of magic.

Also, worth noting, are the two ongoing comments from his "groupies". His bright smile is genuine and very contagious, and his stories with his humorous one-liners really engage everyone. Nathan is the "Paul McCartney" of our magical foursome or maybe more like Davey Jones of the Monkeys. But, a rock star none-the-less. October is the last month for our CARE Team to visit Ovation until next year. So, when you see these guys, please let them know that their volunteerism has not gone unnoticed.



Blind-folded Thomas Gray does his magic.

Next year, we hope to add more facilities to our calendar. If you would like to be part of our CARE Team, we would love to welcome you onboard! We can always use volunteers to continue our OMS mission for our community.

By **Patrice Fisher**

**Our Abbott Open House (page 4)
on Sunday, December 7th
is the one time each year
that the public can tour the house at no charge.**

**Might you have a friend or family member
you'd enjoy showing around?**



Check out our website:

<https://omahamagicclub.org>

This month's Magic Event is on **Monday**

November 17th

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Cross Training Center
5030 N. 72nd Street

Or just click on this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/4028718108> (which is the same link we use for all of our monthly meetings).



[Omaha Magical Society -
S.A.M. Assembly #7](#)

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