

You Won't Believe Your Eyes!



holds, they are told: "There are 999 . . . and there's room for one more!"

How does he do it? The question burns in the mind of everyone who enjoys magic. A magician, though, would rather hang up his top hat for good than reveal his secrets.

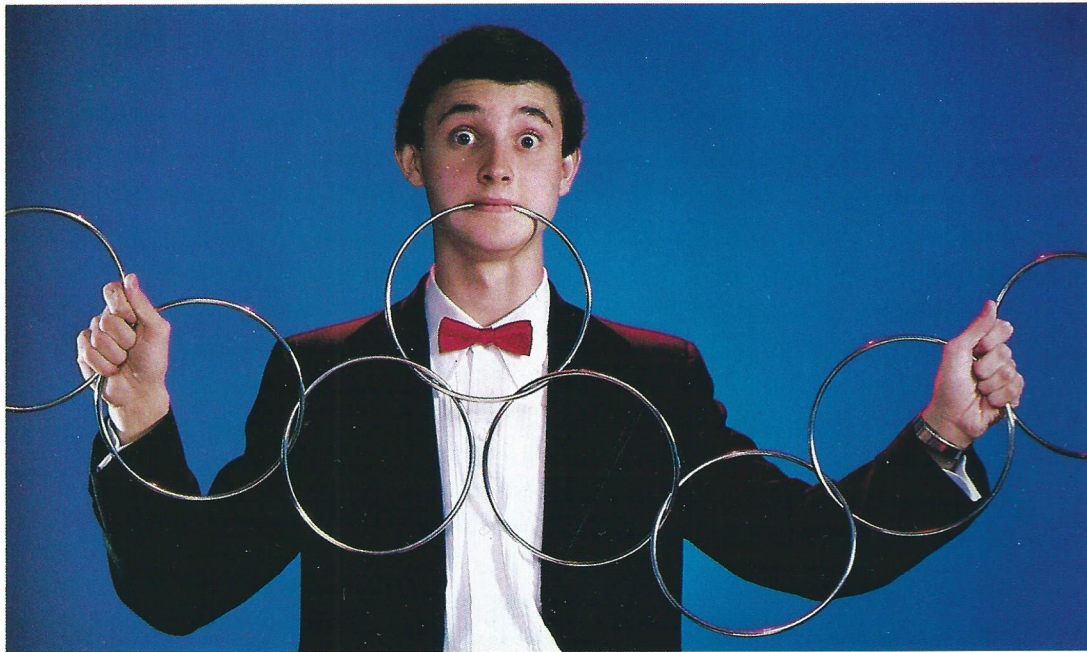
"People want to be fooled," says Michael Chamberlin (left and below), a magician from Bowie, Maryland. "Most tricks are difficult to perform, but the secrets are simple. If the audience knew the secret, they'd say, 'Oh, is that all there is to it?' They'd be disappointed. The fun and mystery would be gone."

Michael, 18, has been interested in magic since he was 8. He performs at birthday parties and at other events. Usually he

performs for young people. "Children are the most challenging audience," says Michael. "They haven't been taught what to believe and what not to believe. A child always wants to know how a trick works."

To help prevent an audience from figuring out a trick, Michael, like all magicians, uses misdirection. That's the art of derailing the audience's train of thought, of distracting attention away from the means by which a trick is done. The viewers mustn't know they're being misdirected. As you can guess, the technique requires good acting skills.

Magicians say that many tricks have a weak spot—a part where there's danger the audience will learn the secret. That's when misdirection comes into play. When Michael makes a coin vanish, (Continued on page 95)



◁ *Balancing act: A silver ball appears to rest on the edge of a silk scarf as Michael Chamberlin, of Bowie, Maryland, performs a famous trick. Like many good magicians, Michael uses facial expression to add to the effect. He stares at the Zombie Ball as if he'd never seen such an amazing sight in his life. Actually, he has practiced the trick many times. Good acting helps make magic entertaining—and convincing. Michael, 18, hopes to become an actor.*

△ *Tough trick: In another routine, Michael links and unlinks eight solid steel rings. To begin, he invites someone from the audience to inspect the rings. Inspection complete, presto!—Michael slaps the rings together, and they link up. Michael calls this one of his most difficult illusions. How does it work? Michael's not telling. "That," he says, "would spoil the fun."*

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