



# KidsPost

**SURVEY SAYS**

Last week's survey asked:	
As a student, I expect to . . .	
More than 130 readers responded:	
Go to high school	3.9%
Finish high school	5.4%
Go to college	6.2%
Finish college	30.2%
<b>Go to graduate school</b>	<b>54.3%</b>

## WHEN I GROW UP

# I Want to Be a . . . Magician

*Here's the Real Trick: Practice Makes Presto*

**"B**oogidee, boogidee," Noland Montgomery commands.

And just like that, two foam balls become three in a clinched fist.

It's magic, and if you ask him his secret, he won't tell you. That's the golden rule of magic: no telling how the trick is performed.

Telling "takes the fun out of it for the person who just saw it," Montgomery says.

Montgomery, 56, started learning magic when he was about 12 years old. His father was in the Foreign Service. His family moved frequently and lived all over the world. Montgomery was an avid reader, and after he came across a book about magic tricks, he was hooked.

"I read it from cover to cover many times," he says.

Montgomery says that mastering a magic trick was for him similar to how some kids play video games. He would practice over and over again until his performance was flawless.

After years of perfecting his tricks and showing them to family members ("You wear your family out pretty quickly," he says), Montgomery made the leap from amateur to professional.

After many performances, he overcame his nervousness.

Eventually, Montgomery quit his job as a legal assistant to dedicate all his time to being a magician, per-

forming for children and adults.

Rather than commuting to work through heavy traffic, Montgomery wakes up, has a cup of tea and practices. Most of his performances are in the evenings and weekends, so he spends his days preparing.

Three rooms of his house are dedicated to his work, and one includes a video camera that he uses to film his routines. When he watches his performance on tape, he is able to figure out what he can do better.

Being a professional magician has its challenges. It can take years to master some tricks, and each trick requires a lot of practice. And there is always a danger of messing up or performing a trick that audiences don't react to.

"You deal with it as best you can," Montgomery says with a shrug.

Montgomery has learned from his peers, but for the most part he has taught himself. His hard work has paid off. He was named the best magician in Washington four of the past five years. He has even performed at the White House!

There isn't a class to take in high school, he says. You have to read books; watch other magicians perform; and practice, practice, practice. Montgomery says that anyone, at any age, can be a magician.

"You become a magician the first time you learn a magic trick," he says.

— Amy Orndorff



Magician Noland Montgomery, above, performs with the help of a wily rabbit named Chester. As with most magicians, it's hard to know what is up his sleeve — or in his pocket. At right, some of the tools Montgomery uses in his shows.

### About the Job

**13,000**

About the number of members in the International Brotherhood of Magicians (IBM), the largest group devoted to performing magic. Noland Montgomery is a member.

**9,500**

American members of the IBM.

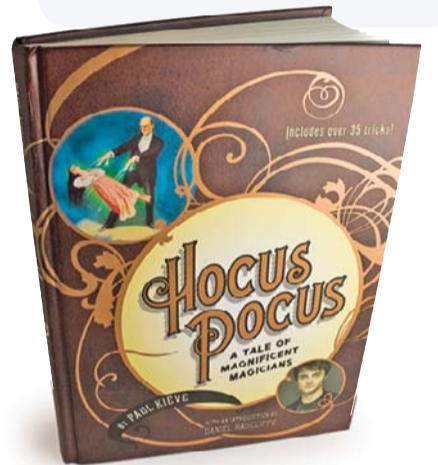
**10**

The age at which a kid can join IBM.

**241**

The number of IBM members ages 10-17.

SOURCE: IBM



### HOCUS POCUS: A Tale of Magnificent Magicians and Their Amazing Feats

By Paul Kieve  
For ages 9-12

Looking to get started as a magician? "Hocus Pocus" is a fictional tale inspired by the lives of the world's greatest magicians. The book also includes instructions on how to perform more than 35 magic tricks.



Have you ever seen my disappearing bolts trick?



### CAREER TIPS

*Before you wave that wand, get ready for a lot of practice:*

#### Visit your library

Noland Montgomery learned his first tricks from books he found at his local library.

#### Watch a magic show

Half the battle in learning a magic trick is figuring out how it works; the other half is showmanship. Montgomery suggests watching a live show or checking out DVDs of performances.

#### Check out a magic shop

Montgomery recommends visiting Barry's Magic Shop in Rockville. Barry Taylor has public shows most Saturdays. For more information, call 301-933-0373.

#### Practice!

Montgomery suggests practicing in front of a video camera (or a mirror) and then watching for ways to improve. Also, an audience made up of your friends and relatives can give you good feedback.

#### Do it for fun

Montgomery says most magicians have other jobs to pay the bills, and they do magic for fun.