

Wizards employees share stories Magic Moments

MagicTheGathering.com Staff

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For the 10th Anniversary of **Magic**, we asked several of our coworkers for their favorite "**Magic Moment**." A Magic Moment is simply a little anecdote about **Magic: The Gathering** and how it affected your life, career, or perception. Read on; there's a very interesting cross-section of people and stories below.



Elena Moye, Associate Brand Manager

Wizards Employee since April 2000

My most memorable experience playing **Magic** was just a couple years ago at GenCon. I was playing a casual game against an 11-year-old boy. Everything had been pretty much a stalemate until one turn that resulted in me losing lots of creatures and life. In the end, I had 1 creature out; he had 6. I had 2 life; he had 18. For 5 more turns, the kid refused to flat-out annihilate me and put me out of my misery. Instead he waited those 5 turns until I ran out of cards in my deck. Not sure exactly why, but I can't help but laugh when I think of that game and it will definitely remain one of my most memorable.



I was an original **Magic** playtester before working for WotC, and had some of Richard's playtest versions of the cards. I was in the midst of building one of my first decks (an all black deck trying to abuse **Dark Ritual**) when I misplaced the deck. I searched high and low and could not find it. Eventually I was putting my laundry away when a

Charlie Catino, Director R&D Shared Services

Wizards Employee since 1995

bulging pocket gave me a clue – and there was my deck. Since the original playtest cards were just made out of paper, all I had left of my hard work trading and building was a wrinkled mass of paper with a rubber band around it. However, I could just make out the printing on the top card – it was the card **Cursed Land!**



Didier Monin, Data System Manager, Organized Play

Wizards Employee since 1996

My own **Magic** moment was my trip from Paris to GenCon UK in 1994 to meet Jim Bishop, at the time head of the DCI. I was going there to get the authorization to set up an official French National Championship that year in Paris, and to negotiate a place in the

top 16 of the first **Magic** World Championship for the future French **Magic** champion. The answer was yes on both counts, and it started me on the path of Organized Play, which eventually led me to come work for HQ in Seattle in 2000.

Magic has been an amazing part of my life since that time, and I am always looking at the next World Championship event to see who will add his or her name to the list of World Champions (1994: Zak Dolan, United States; 1995: Alexander Blumke, Switzerland; 1996: Tom Chanpheng, Australia; 1997: Jakub Slemr, Czech Republic; 1998: Brian Selden, United States; 1999: Kai Budde, Germany; 2000: Jon Finkel, United States; 2001: Tom Van De Logt, Netherlands; 2002: Carlos Romao, Brazil; 2003: Daniel Zink, Germany).



I worked with Peter Adkison at Boeing Defense and Space Center. We would have lunch together at the cafeteria a few times a week. He would always say, "When my company makes it big, I want you to come and answer my phones." One day, he walked in my office and said, "Well, this is it, I've given my two weeks notice. We just released **Magic** at GenCon and we hit the big time." He invited me to come to have lunch in the cafeteria so that he could teach me how to play **Magic** with his Beta cards.

Suzanne LeMere, A.K.A., Zan, The Gate Keeper, TelCom Supervisor

Wizards Employee since February 1994

Boeing was going through their last round of layoffs for the year. Peter told me, "If anything ever happens, let me know." On Friday, October 29th, 1993

(my 25th birthday), after working with Boeing for six and a half years, I received my WARN notice. I called Peter and said, "Hey, I've just been notified that I'll be laid off at the end of December; when are you opening your new office?" He said January. The opening was delayed a bit and so I joined as the Wizards of the Coast Receptionist on 2/10/94. I'm now the longest term Wizards employee. The rest is history...



**Doug Beyer, Web Developer,
Online Media**

**Wizards Employee since
2000**

My favorite **Magic** Moment was in 1998 during a multiplayer game in a hotel room in Boston. For weeks I had been tweaking and tuning my pet deck – a five-color, creature-based toolbox deck featuring *Survival of the Fittest* and my favorite card at the

time, *Umbilicus*. I had never played the deck against a real opponent yet and I was worried about mana issues, the speed of the deck, dealing with unexpected permanents, and the possibility of having wasted tons of time trading for all those rares.... But the deck worked beautifully, and I swept the table, destroying any type of permanent I wanted and smashing everyone by bouncing *Deranged Hermit* every turn for a huge army of squirrels. The confidence boost awakened my inner "Johnny-Spike." That same weekend I retired the *Umbilicus* deck, and ever since, I've known the exact feeling – the feeling of success with an unconventional deck – that I strive for when I play **Magic**.



My favorite **Magic** Moment was during the state chess championships in 1994. I saw about as many people playing **Magic** as were playing chess. At that moment, I knew that this was not just a passing fad, and that this game was here to stay.

**Michael Dunlap, Direct Sales
Representative**

**Wizards Employee since
1999**



**Karin Smith, Technology
Services**

**Wizards Employee since
1999**

What if mine's not so magic?

Mine would be the time I was demoing *Portal* at the Crossroads Mall store. *Portal* was termed **Magic** "lite." A third

less rules, but same great taste. The demo decks were constructed so that usually the demoer would "win." After creaming ten-year-olds for a few hours, an older guy sat down in front of me and proceeded to shuffle his half of the demo deck. And, three turns later, I never what hit me. Very humbling experience.



My favorite **Magic** Moment was the first time I built a competitive constructed deck. It defined a moment when I started to understand that **Magic** was much more to me than just playing against friends. I finally had built a deck that was winning more than losing at my local card shop. I'd finally reached that point where I understood my local environment, and that is when I realized just what an amazing game **Magic** is.

Daniel Stahl, Managing Web Producer, Online Media

Wizards Employee since 1998



Aaron Forsythe, Online Content Manager

Wizards Employee since 2001

One of my favorite **Magic** Moments was my first sizeable tournament win; I took the \$1000 prize at a Gray Matter event in 1997. The Top 8 was Sealed deck using a *Mirage* starter and a *Fifth Edition* starter and I clearly remember beating pro player Erik

Lauer in the semifinals by flipping a *Healing Salve* up with my *Elkin Bottle* just as I was about to die.

As I left the tournament, check in hand, I walked past a dejected Erik, Randy Buehler, and Andrew Cuneo—the three best players in the city at the time—sitting on a couch in the hotel lobby. (Randy offered to play me for the money, but I wasn't going to bite.) Showing that \$1000 check to all my college pals that thought I was weird for playing **Magic** so much was very fulfilling. It was a great feeling to be the best in the room, if only for a day, and that event was one of the stepping stones that led me to pursue **Magic** professionally, which led to my job here today.



Jeff Donais, former Sr. Manager, OP Programs

My favorite **Magic** Moment was at the end of day two of World Championships 1997. I went into the tournament as the #1 rated composite player in the world. However, many of my matches were against players who had much less access to the best deck technology and the best cards, so I was unsure how well I'd do against the best players in the world.

**Wizards Employee from
1997-2003**

Well, at the end of day two I was first in the standings and had a nice lead over the second place person. It was a good feeling and it was one of my favorite **Magic** Moments.

Unfortunately, the third day of Worlds was this new format called "Extended." I had never played Extended before and neither had many people. I brought the wrong deck to play for the Extended portion and scrubbed out. But what fun I had for a day!

We here at MagicTheGathering.com wish Jeff Donais all the best in his new career at Upper Deck. Send questions and comments to editor@wizards.com.