

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns

The Week That Was Abuzz

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The Magic community has been buzzing about the Pro Tour Hall of Fame since Randy Buehler dropped in a not-so-subtle hint about it in his Players Club announcement. This week Chris Galvin pulled back the curtain and [unveiled the first ballot for the Hall of Fame](#) and explained the ground rules. Maybe it's the beleaguered Mets fan in me, but I can't help but think of baseball whenever the topic of the Hall of Fame comes up.

The Baseball Hall of Fame only inducts players who have a fixed number of years between eligibility and retirement. Everyone knows there is no true retirement from the game we all love, so that was not a viable way to determine Hall eligibility for the Pro Tour. At the same time you don't want the game's earliest stars to be overlooked. The system that was eventually arrived at looks for the first season a person played on the Pro Tour and a lifetime total of 100 Pro Points.

I was curious to hear from the [players on the first ballot](#) and set about contacting them for a roundtable interview. What follows are the answers from about a third of the field. I tried to reach everyone, but in many cases the contact info was out of date or they simply did not get back to me in time. As we move closer to determining the first Hall of Fame class, I will try to bring you interviews with the remaining players from the ballot.



This week's roundtable represents a great cross-section of the first ballot, with players who have accomplished all there is to do in the game -- winning Grand Prix titles, National Championships, individual and team Pro Tour titles, World Championships, Invitational glory, or, even in one case, the Ice Age prerelease tournament in Toronto.

Without further ado, here are 2005 Hall of Fame candidates Alan Comer, David Bachmann, Chris Pikula, Svend Geertsen, Peer Kroeger, Kurt Burgner, Dave Humpherys, Jakub Slemr, Rob Dougherty, Steven O'Mahoney-Schwartz, and Matt Vienneau ... in their own words.

BDM: What was your reaction when you saw the first ballot for the Pro Tour Hall of Fame?

Comer: I first got to see it from the inside, so it was really cool watching it develop.

Bachmann: I was actually hoping something like this would happen. I never thought I'd be eligible for it though.

Pikula: I was very excited. We have talked about a Magic Hall of Fame for years, and seeing it become a reality was very cool for us old-school guys. It is nice to know that the glory days will not be forgotten.

Geertsen: Made me think of the good ol' days on the tour... sniff!

Kroeger: I was more than surprised. Actually I didn't read it myself first but was told by a friend who came over and congratulated me. First I thought he was pulling a joke on me, because I didn't have any idea something like the HoF was planned. But after explaining it in detail to me, he convinced me that it was not a joke. I felt very honoured. To see me up there in the list is a very, very good feeling.



Alan Comer

Burgner: I was excited and stunned. I even made my wife come and see the article and said "SEE, I told you I used to be really good at this game." Though I feel that I have no shot at entering the Hall of Fame, I was extremely honored to be eligible even. To even be listed with that group of players is an accomplishment.

Humpherys: I realized I was in for some tougher competition than I expected given the small number of invitees each year.

Slemr: It was mostly memories of great times I had and memories of great people I had met.

Dougherty: It's a good ballot. A lot of great names are on it. I was happy to be one of them.

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: Seemed interesting, my first reaction was that actually getting into the HoF would be harder than I thought.

Vienneau: My immediate reaction was excitement that I was actually on it. Once I was asked to be on the Selection Committee, I was almost certain that that meant I didn't have a chance at getting in. So it was a delightful surprise.

I was excited and stunned. I even made my wife come and see the article and said 'SEE, I told you I used to be really good at this game.'
-- Kurt Burgner

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Once the initial euphoria passed, I was really impressed by the criteria used. By putting in the 10-year delay, you ensure that people don't get into the Hall just because they have a few successes in a single year -- they have to maintain a level of fame/success/work such that 10 years later people still recognize them.

I like that it forces people to look at some of the historical players -- it's not just the obvious Kai and Zvi-type picks.

BDM: *Were you at all surprised to see yourself on that list?*

Geertsen: I hadn't heard about the Pro Tour Hall of Fame until I got your email congratulating me that I was on it, but I'm very proud to be there.

Burgner: Yeah, I was a pretty surprised. I thought the Hall of Fame would have more of the recent starts like (Gabriel) Nassif and (Tsuyoshi) Fujita, not just focus on the old-timers for now.

Comer: Yes, whilst I happen to have enjoyed all that I did in my career, I have seen numbers on how I placed on polls like the Invitational. (Those results are NOT pretty). When I first heard that we were doing it, I was expecting it to be a little more "popular" based.

Bachmann: When I saw you need 100 career PT points, I had no idea I had that many.

Pikula: Not at all.

Slemr: Honestly, I wasn't surprised but I felt honored.

Dougherty: No. Pleased, but not surprised.

Vienneau: Yes. I think I've contributed a lot to the game (writing articles, reporting, judging, critiquing, etc.) and I've been around forever with some successes, but I've never really dominated the playing field at Pro Tour-level events the way some of the other names have. I've tried to make up for slightly less talent with more effort outside of the game, but I don't expect that it will be enough!

BDM: *What would induction into the Hall of Fame mean to you personally?*

Burgner: It would be the nicest thing that ever happened to me in my **Magic** career. Heck, it would probably go on my resume just as something unique. But, again, I know I don't feel as deserving as most of the others on that list and I know that I was never a "Name" player even when I was on the tour and doing well.

Pikula: It would mean a lot to me. I don't know how else to say it. **Magic** was a big part of my life for many years, and I spent those years not only trying to be a good player but also a good guy. Being a HOFer in a game you love is pretty much the point of being a gamer. It is something I would really take a lot of pride in.

Comer: It would be very cool. When I first started on the Pro Tour, my goal was always make Day 2 and finish in the money. Then I made Top 8 at PT LA, and thus Day 3. Being on the stage, knowing that you are one of 8 people left, everything changed. I no longer went to the PT to make Day 2; it was about making Day 3. I wouldn't draw into Day 2 because that would reduce my chances for Day 3. It is all about the recognition that comes with that Top 8. The Hall of Fame is the same sort of thing, recognition by your peers of how good you really were.

Vienneau: It's almost beyond description how excited I would be. I doubt I could remove the smile from my face for months. I've recently been trying to decide just how much time I want to spend on **Magic** and induction would certainly answer that question. It would re-energize my sometimes-stormy affection for **Magic** though my girlfriend may not appreciate the competition. One of my primary goals would be to earn the right to be in the Hall by attaining the successes that have eluded me in the past so people don't shake their heads when they see my name up there.

Geertsen: Besides making me even more proud? It would definitely mean that I would be back on the **Magic** scene traveling to all the Pro Tours. I've been studying at the University of Sydney, Australia for the past year (doing one year of my masters in Exercise and Sports Sciences), so the only tournament I played in 2004 was Grand Prix-Brisbane. Also, I just missed the rating invites for Pro Tour-London by a few points so I'm really eager to get back on the tour.

Kroeger: It would mean very much to me. I would receive the ultimate honor in **Magic** that can be achieved. It is a "permanent" award that cannot be taken away. It would tie my name to the game always.

Dougherty: It's all about recognition and respect from the player community. I poured my heart and soul into the game for a lot of years. I'm not a flashy player or an incredibly prolific writer, so I never did well on the **Magic** Invitational ballots. I have to admit that stung a little.

BDM: *How did you start playing **Magic**?*

Dougherty: I saw the game at Gen Con when it came out and thought "The more you buy the better your deck? What a scam! I'll never play *that* game." A couple weeks later a friend



Svend Geertsen

It's almost beyond description how excited I would be. I doubt I could remove the smile from my face for months. -- Matt Vienneau

said the game was actually great and convinced me to try it. There was no turning back.

Bachmann: One of my friends went to New Mexico in like 1995 or so to visit family. When he came back he had these cards that I checked out. Eventually we found a place in our town where people played called the Outer Realms. Then pretty much I just got addicted.

Geertsen: In August 1994 it was back to school (8th grade) after a nice long summer vacation. Most of my classmates had started collecting these strange, colorful cards and seemed very excited about them. At first it seemed a bit geeky and I couldn't understand why they'd rather sit inside shuffling in the breaks than play a game of soccer outside.

A friend then gave me a bunch of cards and I quickly caught the virus -- a few years later my six **Craw Wurms**, **Force of Nature** and **Gaea's Liege** were replaced by **Spectral Bears**, **Rogue Elephants** and **Harvest Wurms!**



Rob Dougherty

Vienneau: Back in 1993 I was at a gaming convention held at my university and saw a lot of people getting excited over this game they'd encountered at Gen Con. I dismissed it as a passing fad and went off to my AD&D game. Six months later a friend came home from university and brought **Magic** with him. We all started playing and loved it but I resisted getting in too deep as I knew once I started dabbling, I'd be hooked. Eventually I caved and purchased ten packs of Legends, thinking "if I like it, I can come back and get some more next week" (which wasn't true -- Legends sold out in a week). I liked it, and as expected, spent thousands of dollars on the game and of course none of those original friends still play.

Comer: Sort of funny really. I first saw it being played at the San Diego Comic Con that very first year. I took one look at the game and decided it was a horrible idea. Some crazy kid would just come along and buy tons of cards, and have access to all the cards. I just didn't think it would work. A friend talked me into playing it about four months later, with the idea that we would both just buy a little bit. Two months later, I realized that I was that crazy kid, buying way too much...

Burgner: I read about it on the Internet and decided to try it out. I even sold my first **Black Lotus** for \$8.50 on rec.games.trading-cards since I felt I would never play in tournaments.

BDM: *How long did it take you to get from starting out with the game to the point of playing the game competitively?*

Bachmann: Well we always had great players at our store; Jon Finkel, "Happy" John Chinnock, and so on. We practiced a lot to play in the Gray Matter tournaments, then eventually the Pro Tour began and then we went on from there.

Comer: Not long. I was already going to gaming conventions and playing other tournaments. I had played bridge and chess tournaments before too, so pretty much, as soon as I heard about a tournament, I tried to enter it. Unfortunately, seven **Deserts** was not a legal deck choice at the time...

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: Almost right away I was playing magic competitively in the early NY **Magic** scene of Grey Matter and Neutral Ground tournaments.

Dougherty: I was trying to break the game right away. My friends and I had two kinds of decks, fun decks and competitive decks, and the competitive decks got pretty sick. This was before card limits, and after about a month my best deck had evolved into 20 **Black Lotus**, 20 **Ancestral Recalls** and two **Fireballs**. It killed turn one every single time. I was happy to see the four-card limit.

Geertsen: I played my first local tournament only a few months after I cast my first **Craw Wurm**. In March 1995, I qualified for the first Danish Nationals by beating my mentor in the final. I then finished top 4 in Nationals earning an invite to 1995 Worlds in Seattle and since then I've played the game very competitively.

Pikula: We held our own tourneys before we knew about organized ones. All we wanted to do was play tourneys every day. The first time we heard about a tourney at a comic store, we were giddy. I'd say I was competitive from day one. In the first tourney I played I had only Revised cards; I beat some guy who had four Juzams in his deck.

Vienneau: Maybe a year? This was before there were sanctioned tournaments so it was pretty casual everywhere. I was never terribly competitive at Type 1 because I wasn't willing to pay an outrageous \$30 for each Mox, so it wasn't until Standard became popular that I was able to hold my own. My first real tournament was a Sealed Deck run by Eric Tam that I unexpectedly won. I realized that maybe I was good at this game and I started looking for more. I made the Top 8 of the first few PTQs and the **Alliances** Prerelease (which was run like a PTQ) and then finally qualified for the Pro Tour.

Kroeger: There was not much competition when I started playing, only (very big) fun tournaments, leagues and that stuff. It didn't take long to catch up to that level, but there was no DCI and no organized play yet. As soon as competitive play came over to Germany, I started playing on a serious level. I got my DCI number at Nationals 1996 -- and became National Champion that year!

Burgner: Ironically, not long. Within six months I was playing in tournaments and actually winning some with my 64-card monstrosity of a deck with four **Clones**, four **Serra Angels**, two **Dopplegangers**, and stuff like that.



Dave Humphreys

Humpherys: I played some more with roommates in college. I played a few tournaments that summer at in a card store in San Diego, then played in many more tournaments once I moved to Boston and met people who played there that fall.

Slemr: It took me couple of months at least; it was hard to find any tournaments here at the beginning. We had to organize tournaments ourselves before the DCI got established; I actually organized one or two myself as well.

BDM: Which was the first Pro Tour you played on and how did you qualify for that event? How did you finish?

Kroeger: I played the '96 Worlds (qualified as National Champion) and placed somewhere in the middle. But I played against a lot of "the big names" back then (like Henry Stern) and realized they are "only" normal people that can be beaten as well. A little later I won a PTQ and qualified for Dallas '96, where I finished in the Top 8.

Burgner: The first PT LA, so the second PT ever. I qualified on Constructed rating and I had what was probably my most heartbreaking finish ever. Day 1 was by GAME total and you needed to be 9-6 in games to make Day 2 (with a guaranteed money finish). I swept my first two matches and was 6-0 and then won the first game of the third round to be 7-0 (against Eric Tam). I then lost the next two games to Tam (game 3 on a mistake by me).

I managed to 1-2 my fourth round and my final round I only needed to go 1-2 again. And everyone knew that there was no practical difference between 9-6 and 10-5 (records did not carry over to Day 2). Well, I lose the first two because my deck was basically awful, and game 3 I try so hard to win and he has an answer for everything. But he can't kill me. I end up losing by decking, solely because I had cast a cantrip that searched out land and removed two cards from my deck that I didn't really need. I was very upset and probably should have gotten a penalty for yelling and swearing.

So basically, I only needed to win two out of eight games to make the cut and win some money and I couldn't do it.

Comer: I first played at PT Columbus, finished 23rd. I qualified in a four-slot qualifier in Los Angeles, beating three members of Pacific Coast Legends the last three rounds. Those playing Necro were not pleased with four maindeck **Whirling Dervish** and four **Spectral Bears**.

Slemr: It was Worlds 96 actually -- I made it as a member of the National team and we did quite remarkably, surprising everybody as we finished a strong second to the USA in the team competition. I ended up 18th I think. I remember going 6-0 in a Booster Draft beating Mark Justice and other players on the way, players I only read about in Duelist before. It was like dream came true. That got me qualified for Atlanta; I went there without much of the success. Then I didn't qualify for Dallas but then I didn't miss a Pro Tour for a long, long time.



Jakub Slemr

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: First Pro Tour I played in was a Juniors Pro Tour that all I had to do was sign up for and I finished 33rd. My first regular Pro Tour was Columbus -- that didn't go all that well for me. After our flights got canceled cause of bad weather we rented a van and drove all night to the PT. We finally show up just in time for me to start losing every round and finish near the bottom of the Pro Tour, with me failing asleep in the middle of rounds... For this I won a PTQ in the NYC area.

Vienneau: My first Pro Tour was Pro Tour-Columbus in 1996 (the third Pro Tour). I had been making repeated Top 8s in every PTQ I could find but my white-green deck kept losing to Necro in the Top 8. I finally put so much kill (including four **Aeolipiles**) into my deck that I could handle the knights and specters and managed to qualify in Ottawa. I finished 29th at that event, though I would have done much better if not for a foolish play error against fellow nominee Chris Pikula (which I detailed in "My 12 Most Expensive **Magic** Mistakes" on the former **Sideboard**, but I can't find the link anymore -- I'm happy to send anyone a copy!).

Bachmann: I played in the first Pro Tour in New York as a junior and finished 9th. A loss to Finkel actually kept me out of the Top 8.

Pikula: I placed 26th in Pro Tour One with a G/R/W good stuff type deck.

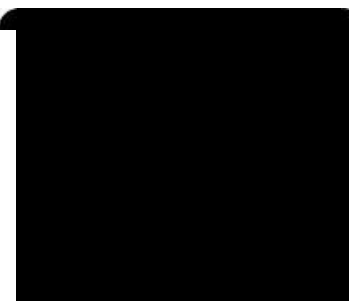
Geertsen: 1st Worlds: Seattle 1995, finished 30th (I think) - qualified by finishing top 4 at Danish Nationals. 1st Pro Tour: PT-Paris 1997, finished 57th - qualified by winning a PTQ.

Humpherys: I played in the first PT. I was invited by virtue of having won the only **Ice Age** Prerelease event, which was held in Toronto. In the first PT, I started 5-0 then lost my last two rounds to finish 25th.

Dougherty: PT 1. I was quick on the phone. I got knocked out Day 1.

BDM: What is the highlight of your professional career? Lowlight?

Pikula: Winning the Invitational and making Top 8 of a very tough Worlds were probably my best achievements. But those aren't really the highlights for me. The highlights of my **Magic** career still happen now. When someone asks me to sign a **Meddling Mage** (and not because they want to sell it), that is a highlight. When someone says they are happy that they "got a chance to play me" in a tourney, that is a highlight. All the time people message me on **Magic Online** and say "dude I just wanted you to know that I think you are an awesome player and **Meddling Mage** is a great card" or whatever. Those are the highlights for me; this is the stuff that makes me glad I played **Magic**. I don't really recall any lowlights. I guess finding out that many of my peers were vicious cheaters is probably the only lowlight.



Comer: Eliminating Illusions/Donate from the Extended environment. While I fondly enjoy all the Top 8s, the effects I have had on environments because of the decks that I have built are much more important to me.

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: Highlight was definitely winning Pro Tour-LA after I had come so close at Pro Tour-Mainz. Lowlight would be finishing last at my first Invitational; I would have really loved to make my own card.

Kroeger: There are a few good plays and games that stick to the memory, but of course the true highlights are good finishes, especially good finishes in your home country. I would probably name my Top 8 finish at Worlds 2003 in Berlin my happiest moment in **Magic**.

There are of course a few lowlights as well, mostly bad plays. At PT-Paris I made such a horrible mistake that it cost me Day 2: I played a self-made green-white deck that was supposed to be good against Prosperity Bloom. In the deciding game vs. Bloom (played by David Mills, if I remember correctly) I had played one Enchant World that pretty much had won me the game already (**Hall of Gemstone**) but I wanted to make the game an absolutely certain win, so I played **Null Chamber** banning **Emerald Charm** -- his only way to get rid of the Hall. It was but a moment later that I realized the Chamber was an Enchant World as well and killed the Hall as it came into play. Not only that, but now I was not allowed to play my **Emerald Charms** any longer, which still could have won me the game. Stupid me!

Geertsen: My highlight: Worlds 1997 in Seattle. I finished Top 4 in the individual event and Top 4 in the team event, so we all had something to celebrate -- and we sure did! My lowlight: PT Nice. I finished third which was amazing, but it was the fourth time that I lost 2-3 in the Top 8 of a PT/Worlds (and the third time after being up 2-0).

Burgner: Lowlight would most likely be the above from PT-LA 1. Highlight would be being 9-0 in two PTs in the same season (PT-DC and PT-LA 2000) and finishing both of those events as No. 1 seed after the Swiss.

Vienneau: It's tough to say which is THE highlight since some of them were so long ago that memory fades...

Making the Top 8 in Atlanta was fantastic, but it was too early for me to appreciate it as it was only my second Pro Tour. As hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky once mentioned, it wasn't until he'd gone 10 years without a Stanley Cup that he really began to appreciate the four or five he won early in his career.

Going to Africa for the Invitational was also fantastic, though I was going as a reporter not as a player and likely had more to do with the exotic location and the chance to travel through the continent for a month afterwards. I'd have to say making four Grand Prix Top 8s during *Invasion* Block has to rate as my personal career highlight. In particular, winning GP-Dallas after throwing away game three of the finals (best of five). After years of playing and not winning between 1997 and 2000, it was nice to get back into things.

This of course leads to the lowlights -- the tournaments where you put months and months of effort into them and end up getting knocked out in the first draft or realizing that you don't have a team so your Constructed deck is months behind everyone else's. After my success in *Invasion* block it was incredibly disappointing to get knocked out early at each of the *Invasion* Pro Tours, not to mention missing even the top 128 at the World Championships held in my home city of Toronto. There have been so many low points that it's hard to pick a worst one!

BDM: What do you think the first HoF class will look like?

Comer: For me, the easy picks look to be Finkel, Justice and Darwin. After that, everything is up in the air for me. Too many people that I think deserve the slot, and not enough slots, or differential between them to make the choice.

Bachmann: I'm actually not expecting to make it. At least not the first time. I would expect Jon Finkel, Price, Pikula, one of the Europeans, and maybe Steve O. I don't know if I'm liked enough to get voted in.

Pikula: It will be Jon Finkel and four guys who don't deserve to be in the same class as Jon Finkel.

Geertsen: Jon Finkel, Darwin Kastle, Jakub Slemr, David Price, Me (I hope :))

Kroeger: It depends. If players are voted in for success it should probably read like Jon Finkel, Tommi Hovi, Olle Rade and Darwin Kastle, with Michael Long a close fifth. But it is tough, as all the other players are very successful as well and I might have gotten it wrong and overlooked someone. When it comes to popularity it will most certainly look different, with Pikula and Long having good chances. Jon Finkel is most definitely in. But it is so hard to tell -- when it comes to "who shaped the game" even Shawn Regnier would have good chances, as he was one of the first "big," internationally known players. When I read the *Duelist* back then and read about "Hammer" -- damn, I was impressed!

Burgner: It will include all of the classic big names like Finkel, Kastle, Hovi, Long, Rade. Dougherty maybe. Honestly, there are so many iconic names there and so many Invitational winners that you can't go wrong.

Humpherys: I like to think Finkel and Darwin are a lock. After that it should be interesting, I'd like to hope I'll make it in. Hovi, Steve OMS, Rob Dougherty, and Rade seem like the other likely candidates (as well as Mike



Jon Finkel

Long, although he wouldn't get my vote).

Dougherty: Jon Finkel, Darwin Kastle, Mike Long, David Humpherys and hmmm... who else would be good... How about that Rob Dougherty guy? Writer, 5 Pro Tour Top 8's, founder of team Your Move Games, and at the top of Constructed **Magic** for over two years... yeah, he'd be good.

Vienneau: I expect Finkel will make it no matter what. After that it's an interesting decision with regards to how much everyone remembers and how important the early days of **Magic** are relative to overall "fame." People got a lot of attention in the early years due to the lack of existing stars but either quickly left the game or the game accelerated beyond them. I'm curious whether contributions outside of the game will matter -- will people who played well but never did anything in the community be punished for that? Will personality earn spots over play skill? How much will all the controversy hurt Mike Long and similar players?

I have no idea what it will look like -- but I'm looking forward to finding out!

BDM: Will you attend any Pro Tours if you are inducted (aside from the induction event in Yokohama)?

Comer: I still love playing, and if it weren't for my working at Wizards of the Coast, I would go back to playing on the PT.

Pikula: Certainly. I won't attend all of them, that is impossible with a full-time job and wife. My focus would likely be on Limited events rather than Constructed.

Geertsen: Yes, definitely. I'm REALLY eager to get back on the tour!

Kroeger: Most definitely. With the sponsorship from the Players Club I could afford to go to Pro Tours all around the world again.

Burgner: Yes, as many as my work schedule and wife will permit.

Humpherys: I expect I will attend nearly every future PT if I'm inducted.



Chris Pikula

Slemr: I would love to...if my wife lets me.

Dougherty: Definitely. I've been mostly off the tour since my second son was born. With multiple game stores, running New England Regionals, Prereleases, PTQs and my work as a game designer I haven't been able to find the time to try to get back on the train. But, if I were in the Hall of Fame, I would attend regularly (especially the Constructed PTs) and go back to work as a **Magic** deck designer.

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: For sure I will start attending more events, probably not every one but a few a season.

Vienneau: With an invitation, a love for **Magic** and a \$500 appearance fee, I can guarantee that I would attend every event for the next few years (except if I have children -- even Mark Rosewater now misses events to help with the kids!) It's been a while since I've traveled so I'd love to get back into it!

BDM: Which is a greater accomplishment; winning the Invitational and being 'immortalized' on a card or being inducted into the HoF?

Vienneau: Depends -- are you **Meddling Mage** or **Sylvan Safekeeper**?

I believe the Hall of Fame is a more significant accomplishment. It requires a much greater series of accomplishments than winning a single half-serious tournament. Being on a card is a tremendous honor that you can brag about to all your friends and family, but after a few years your card disappears. And for at least another year there will be more Invitational winners than Hall of Fame members so it's even more exclusive!

Pikula: They are both pretty great, and hard to separate in my mind because I probably couldn't make the HoF without the **Meddling Mage**.

Kroeger: Being put on a card is nice, but a card is around for about two years (unless it manages to sneak into Extended) and your "immortality" pretty much ends after that period. Being a HoF member however truly makes your name immortal for the game. It would definitely please me more.

Humpherys: While the HoF represents a greater accomplishment, I'd imagine many players, myself included, would trade that in for having won an Invitational ... well, were it not for the added perks of Level 3.

Burgner: They are very different. It is like comparing the All-Star game MVP to the Hall of Famers in baseball. They are almost apples and oranges. Winning the Invitational is something you can actually accomplish yourself, while being inducted to the HoF is more receiving recognition from your peers and the committee.

Geertsen: HoF!

Winning the Invitational is something you can actually accomplish yourself, while being inducted to the HoF is more receiving recognition from your peers and the committee.
-- Kurt Burgner

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: This is a tough one -- more personal reward to being in the HoF, but having a card that'd be your own and being 'immortalized' would have to take this one for me.

Comer: Being on the card is much cooler in my opinion.

Bachmann: Definitely the Hall of Fame, because it's not just one tournament, it's a number of tournaments and your accomplishments throughout all the years you have played. It shows you played consistently at a high level and I am proud to be eligible.

Slemr: I think that both are acknowledgement that you did something remarkable.

Dougherty: It's a tough call, but I'd have to go with the Hall of Fame.

BDM: *What have you all been doing with yourselves of late? Do you still keep up with the game? Do you play online, casually, semi-seriously or not at all?*

Slemr: Well, I started playing bridge couple of years ago and I am very happy with the way my game evolves -- I made it to the top of my country and also represented Czech Republic couple of times, most notably at the 2004 Bridge Olympiad in Istanbul. We hadn't much success (international bridge is very strong) but it was great to be there.

I also play **Magic Online** casually and from time to time I show up at Limited tournaments.

Geertsen: As I mentioned earlier I've been living in Australia for a year, but now I'm back in Copenhagen, Denmark and working on my master thesis at the Institute of Medical Physiology. I've only played a few times lately, but I was planning to go to PT London until I found out that I'd just missed the rating cut. Last year I didn't go to Worlds in San Francisco because I was stranded in Australia, so I'm gonna do my best to qualify at Nationals so I can play my 10th Worlds.

O'Mahoney-Schwartz: Just recently quit my full-time job and am just taking it easy and seeing what comes. I still play **Magic** every once in a while with my brother.

Comer: I go to local unsanctioned drafts every week. It is amazing how bad I was when I first started going. Even now, only playing like 4-6 hours a week, it just isn't enough to really get good again.

Bachmann: I never really play. I own no cards or anything. The only reason I don't is because none of my close friends do either so I'd have no one to play with really. I might start paying more attention now.

Vienneau: I've been working harder in real life, the bane of any successful **Magic** career. I keep up with the game by reading the major websites and the judge's list and I play online and have started writing articles about **Magic** again. I attend local PTQs and GPs and would love to get back on the Pro Tour. That being said, I only concentrate on Limited as that requires less research and investment though every month or so I'm tempted to shell out for all the Constructed cards just for fun.

Pikula: I go through stages with **Magic**. When I like a format I play a lot. If I don't, I won't play. I guess I play semi-seriously, but sporadically.

Kroeger: I am currently pretty busy at the university, as I need to finish my studies finally. That leaves me without much time for **Magic**, but I still play, mostly in our national league, Prerelease tournaments, Nationals and some GPs. But I hope to play more again in the near future. But nevertheless I still keep up with the game and I still write a lot about it (mostly for the German market). I don't play **Magic Online** and do not plan to do so. For me **Magic** is not a competition in the first place but a game. And as part of the game and the fun I want to communicate with my opponent, I want to physically feel the cards and all that. Playing **Magic Online** reduces the game to the competitive part.

Burgner: I recently got married, and I went to school for a year and a half to get a career as a teacher. The new teaching career is, however, keeping me away from the game. I like to say that I "casually" play in a few PTQs a year, and sometimes even Top 8, but this school year I have been too busy to even do that. I do still follow the game online and I would like to get more involved in competitive play when time permits.

Humpherys: I've been busy with my current job as a game designer. I have kept up with the game; I've played in many events until just recently when I missed one event due to unforeseen circumstances and another because I hadn't made the time to prepare. I played in the Team PT not too long ago. I play from time to time online and casually.

Dougherty: I've kept myself very busy with the multiple game stores, running New England events (Regionals, Prereleases, PTQ's), and my work on Your Move Games Inc.'s new Table-Top Tactical Card Wargame (Battleground: Fantasy Warfare). I play a bit Online.

Firestarter: Sift through Sands of Time

I am settling in this week to break down my Hall of Fame ballot. On the ballot, it tells voters "Voting shall be based upon the player's performances, playing ability, integrity, sportsmanship, and contributions to the game in general."



What weight would you lend to each category and how would you measure some of the more intangible elements? It is one thing to look at the all-time money winners list and see Jon Finkel sitting atop the ballot, and another to weigh play ability or integrity. What qualities would you be looking for as a voter and what would your resulting ballot look like?

Brian David-Marshall has been involved in **Magic** since 1994 when he was violently shaken by someone searching for the game. He has organized tournaments, run a store, and is currently the Pro Tour Historian. His latest venture is Top8Magic.com, the publishing house that is releasing Michael J. Flores: Deckade.



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