

Abra kadabra, alakazam!

Spanish professor weaves magic between classes

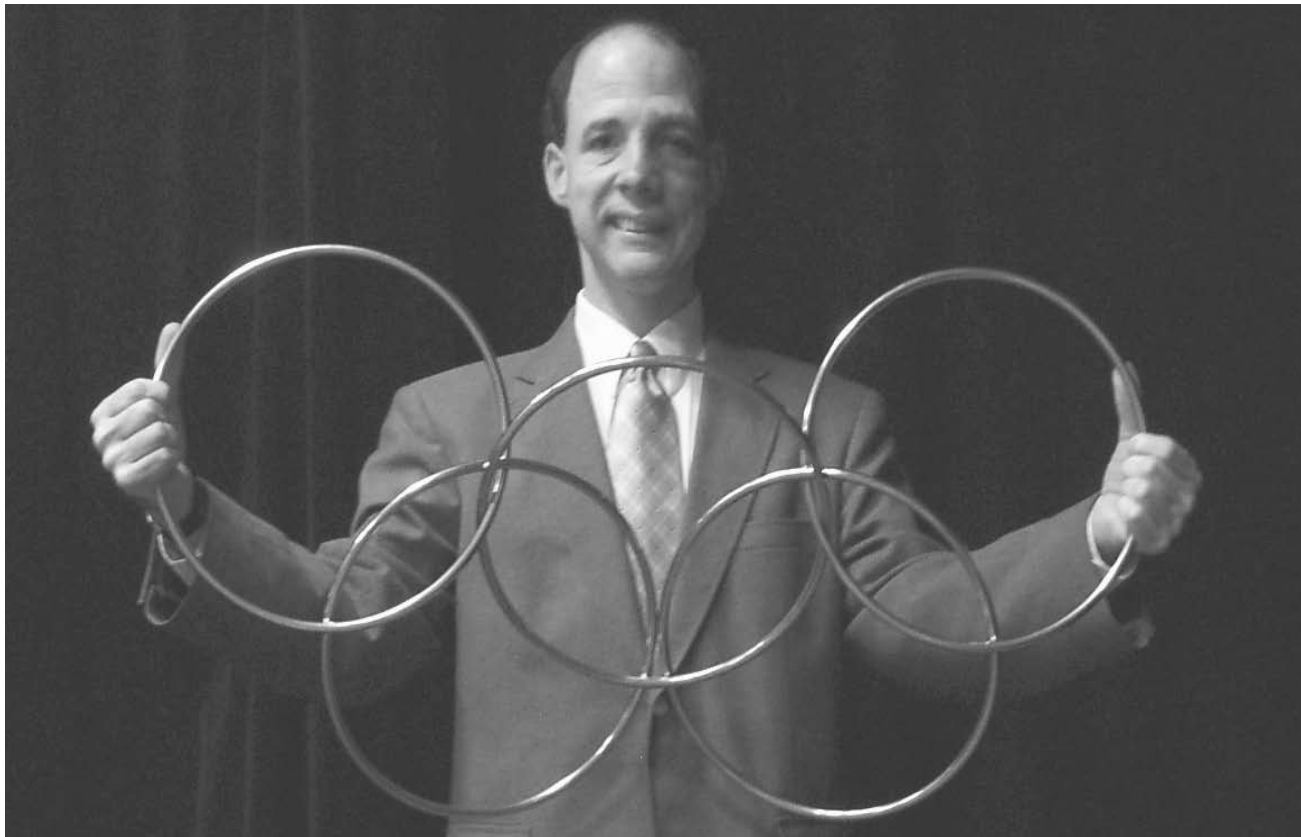
By Lauren Beavin
LOGOS STAFF WRITER

Many professors seem to have magical abilities to detect faulty excuses or to conjure up interest in a stuffy subject, but one professor, Dr. Michael Tallon, is the real deal.

Many students have taken Spanish classes with Tallon, but most don't know he has a few tricks up his sleeve – literally. He's a magician.

Tallon's interest in magic began in the eighth grade when a classmate showed him a few card tricks. Tallon's father took him to a local magic shop and bought him some beginner's tricks. After mastering them, Tallon went back to the magic shop for more tricks. He did magic for about a year, but his interest faded once he got busy with high school. He picked it up again in 1996 after he watched a David Copperfield video.

Meanwhile, the San Antonio native translated his love for the Spanish language and culture into a fulfilling career. He earned his master's degree in Spanish Lin-



Dr. Michael Tallon, a Spanish professor at UIW, presents five Chinese Linking Rings that appear to be linked. The illusion in this close-up magician's trick stands in making the solid rings interchange.

guistics at Georgetown University and came back to San Antonio to teach. He was hired full time at UIW in 2002 and began working on his Ph.D. at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Tallon learns magic by reading books, watching DVDs, practicing and rehearsing a lot, attending magic conventions and collaborating with fellow magicians. He specializes in close-up magic, which is magic

done in intimate settings for small groups of people, and in parlor magic, which is a show performed before larger audiences of about 30 to 50 people.

"Although I have many favorite tricks," said Tallon, "three of my favorites would have to be an effect in which a pencil penetrates a borrowed bill, a coin trick in which three silver dollars magically travel from one hand to the other and a card trick involving 'marked' cards and a stunning ending."

Tallon has been involved in magic for the past 11 years. He has been a member of San Antonio Ring 18 of the International Brotherhood of Magicians since 1996, Assembly 52 of the Society of American Magicians since 1998, the Texas Association of Magicians and Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic.

He has also performed magic at restaur-

ants, private parties, banquets and corporate settings, as well as some events at UIW, including a staff luncheon hosted by Dr. Denise Doyle, vice president of academic and student affairs.

Doyle's administrative assistant, Itza Casanova, was quite impressed with Tallon's performance at the luncheon.

"It's always great fun to experience the sleight-of-hand expertise of Dr. Tallon," Casanova said. "His appearance at the staff luncheon was intriguing and entertaining. He casually moved from table to table, quietly drawing in our attention as he manipulated a magical deck of cards. We tried to scrutinize his hand movements as carefully as possible. We thought we knew what was going to happen and then he makes an off-hand

comment and bam! It's a surprise delivered with a sly smile."

Most of Tallon's students don't know he's a magician. He doesn't perform much magic in his classes because once students find out he does magic, that's all they want to talk about.

"Who can blame them?" said Tallon. "Who wouldn't want to watch magic and be

entertained rather than have to work?"

However, sometimes he will perform a trick or two at the very end of the semester, especially if the students have been asking all semester long.

As for his discipline, Tallon said he plans to publish some scholarly articles based on his dissertation, as well as some other research he will pursue in the near future. His goal is "to continue doing the best job I can for my students, my department, my college and UIW as a whole.

"As far as my magic, I want to continue working to improve in the art I love so much. I have a passion for magic because it is a unique hobby that is fun to learn and perform. When you watch an audience experience magic live, you see this childlike wonder on their faces. The spectators are able to forget, if only briefly, their everyday problems and be astonished by what seems like the impossible."

BEN YUMOL/LOGOS STAFF



A wave of the wand will make this fruit disappear.

For more information about Dr. Michael Tallon's magic, visit his website at <http://www.michaeltallonmagic.com>



A pencil is pushed through a dollar bill in this trick but the bill is not harmed.

For action - few films give satisfaction

What to rent in the action aisle

Did the over-the-top action blockbusters of summer 2007 leave you wishing you had taken more hours of summer school?

Did you think "Spiderman 3" and "Fantastic 4: Rise of the Silver Surfer" were abominations to the cinematic genre of action?

Do you need a reminder that some action movies actually have the potential to impress, amuse, entertain and awe? If so, take a break from the theaters and head to the action aisle of your nearest rental store. If you've already seen all the Bond flicks



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and are, therefore, unsure of which "action-packed adventure" to rent, read the following reviews to ensure your spare time and pocket change are put to good use.

Rent it: "V for Vendetta" (2005)

Starring: Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Rea and John Hurt

Synopsis: This bleak peak into the not-so-distant future features corrupt officials on every level of the societal totem pole from security guards to men of the cloth. Although that's nothing new to the action genre, the fact the audience is expected to cheer for the terrorist who threatens to thwart the oppressive British government by bombing buildings to the sounds of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" serves as an interesting new addition to the genre. Director James McTeigue and

his crew stay true to the radical implications of the original comic series, which already included depth that rarely graces the pages of graphic novels. This film constitutes the perfect combination of political skepticism, human rights activism and high-flying action.

Others to rent: "Full Metal Jacket" (1987), "Children of Men" (2006) and "Batman" (1989)

Skip it: "S.W.A.T." (2003)

Starring: Colin Farrell, Samuel L. Jackson, Michelle Rodriguez and LL Cool J

Synopsis: This so-

called "thrill ride" inspires about as many thrills as waiting in line to buy peaches at the grocery store. Both are boring, predictable and unsatisfying. The special effects are tired, cheap and overdone, and the plot is just tired and cheap. The story doesn't even get moving until about an hour into the film, and when it does, it's about as familiar and exciting as the palm of your hand. If you're still awake when the "action" begins, the ending, right down to who gets killed and who gets together, couldn't present itself any clearer than if director Clark Johnson had scrolled

it across the screen in 10 different languages. The acting, even from Samuel L. Jackson, disappoints almost as much as the complete lack of character development. The flat, typical and uninteresting characters make even the dullest of lectures seem like the true "thrill." I recommend this piece of cinematic drivel only to insomniacs and others in need of a good night's sleep.

Others to skip: "XXX" (2002), "Uncommon Valor" (1983) and "Batman and Robin" (1997)

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