



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
December 2005

Volume 1, Issue 4

November Meeting

Our November meeting was 11 members strong, with 3 guests (**Phil Zorkoczy**, **Dale Rex**, and **Gonzalo Arboleda**) along for the ride. The topic was money magic.

Steve Seguin started off with a sexy Coins Across routine using 3 quarters, featuring sleights by **Jay Sankey**, **Goshman** and **Hong Kong Phooey**.

Max Scott captivated the audience with his bulging briefcase of monetary magic. He made a coin penetrate a card covering the mouth of a glass, and then he penetrated a Toonie with his finger. He showed some mini coins on a chain, and then penetrated the chain with one of the coins. He penetrated a coin encased in a key chain with a key. He made a coin penetrate through a rubber dam, and gave us some sound advice – never trust that stuff! Then he had Gonzalo to squeeze a coin as hard as he could – and he bent it! No penetration was observed. **Mike Fisher** held a balled up bill in one fist and a coin in the other, and Max could always tell which hand held which object! Next, he demonstrated his fire purse and fire wallet, followed by an instant growing bill. After catching his breath, he demonstrated a few more tricks. He turned strips of coloured paper into US currency. He also did some nifty things with a coin reel.

One of our guests decided to entertain the regulars. **Phil Zorkoczy** performed Converting Coins with flare.

Ron Keller showed how to cut and restore \$20 bills, using borrowed bills (just in case).

Don Tuckey upped the ante with a \$1,000,000 bill in his version of Crook Lock.

Jeff Cronkwright showed his version of Pen Through Bill. Max jumped in and showed us his Pen Through Bill to the next level.

Mike Fisher performed a creative cup and bill routine that is great for table hopping. At the end of the routine, the bill turned into coins, which he used in a sexy Coins Across routine. Mike sure knows a lot about photocopying money and printing currency on flash paper. He shared his techniques with us, and then showed us the tattoo he got in prison.

Jim Atkinson folded a blank piece of paper and it turned into a five dollar bill.

Next Meeting:
Wed. Dec. 14, 7:00 pm
Beal Secondary School,
Room 225
525 Dundas St., London
Topic: Mental Magic

Lorne Overholt showed a spooky self-folding bill, and showed us a few ways to jam a pencil through a bill. He followed with a neat coin transposition effect using a twoonie, a Chinese coin, and a wallet. His grand finale was a beauty – he made four coins appear inside a shot glass contained within an overturned glass. He encored with a clever coin ring made by the late great **Al Munro**, and finished with a coin routine with a Romeo and Juliet theme.

Max followed with some coin mentalism using invisible coins.

Jeff returned to the stage with his Scotch and Soda routine.

Mike closed the evening with a scumtralescent version of Bank Nite, in which his envelope was the only one containing a slip of paper that read, "mine."

It was decided that December's topic will be mentalism. "Magic for the blind" was a close second. "Magic for the incontinent" wasn't even considered (Needle Through Balloon plays well with that crowd).

- Andy Parr



Word from the Treasurer

Well it's about time I wrote this article, I guess. I have had sometime to think about it so it should be a masterpiece.... Yeah right. Anyway, I'm going to go through my life story in magic then I'm going to say some things about the club. If you don't care about my

life story, then just skip down to the bottom.

Good you are still with me.

Well, I started off by watching **David Blaine** and saying "Wow! He's cool" That was when I was 14. Now I'm 17 and he stinks. I took some books out of the library, I bought Fearless (David Blaine's movie), and searched the web. I would watch David's hands over and over until I could do some effects. Then I hit the streets walking to stores such as Canadian tire, Compu-Center, even the beer store, just showing customers effects. Then I heard about the club. I quickly went to Andy and ask him about it.

Next meeting I was there. When I arrived I felt kind of uncomfortable. But I soon felt at home, and now I look forward to each meeting. At first I joined for the magic, but I realized it's not all about the magic. I have met so many interesting and friendly people there. I have made friendships, something I was not expecting so quickly. I have really benefited from the club. I'm also honored to have received the Al Munro award. I again want to thank the club for giving me this honor.

I walk into the meeting every month and just like to see the difference in the magicians there, some do it for a living, Some are just hobbyists, but everyone's love for magic is so noticeable.

I'm glad to be part of this Guild, and will continue to participate as much as I can. Thank you everyone for all of your support.

- Greydon Gilmore

December's Meeting

Wed. December 14, 2005

The theme for December's meeting is "**Mental Magic**". Once again, everyone is encouraged to show us a trick or two (and teach us how to do them, if you are so inclined). Mental magic includes any piece of magic that simulates psychic phenomenon – mind reading, seeing the future, making things move with your mind, etc.

Also, bring any videos or DVDs you want to share. If we finish early, we'll pull out the t.v. and enjoy watching some favorite performances. Hope to see you there!

Credit Where Credit is Due

Regarding last month's piece on the Strike Vanish, **David Acer** was quick to point out that it was actually **Jay Sankey** who popularized executing the move by dropping your left hand out from under the coin as your wand-wielding right hand sweeps down and scoops up the coin out of the air. **David Williamson** performs the move by tossing the coin UP with his left hand as his wand-wielding right hand sweeps down (see "The Striking Vanish," Williamson's Wonders pg 17).

Acer also went on to say, "Also, I believe **Michael Weber** was the first to apply The Striking Vanish to a coin-in-bottle routine with his "Striking Glass" (The Collected Almanac, pg. 92), although he doesn't use a folding coin - just a single, initialed dime that is actually funneled through the neck of the bottle during The Striking Vanish.



News Of Interest

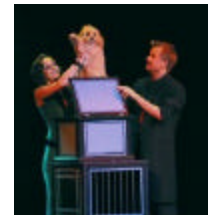
Lee Asher Visits Browsers Den

Saturday, December 3rd
'BROWSER'S DEN' welcomes sleight of hand master Lee Asher between 6:00 pm and 8:30 pm.

This is not a lecture. There is no charge. Lee will be teaching one or two tricks in a fun, informal way. Plus he'll be handing out free stuff, playing some DVDs, chatting, and signing autographs. For more information on Lee Asher's material, visit www.leeasher.com.)

Murray Hatfield Show Murray Hatfield and Teresa will be bringing their Magic 'N Miracles

illusion show to Montcalm Secondary School in London on December 5 (7:00 pm).



They've performed around the world, thrilling audiences from many countries, including Israel, Cyprus, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Mexico, and Japan.



Friday Night of Magic

There's a new magic venue in Toronto. Every Friday night there is a magic show at the REVIVAL Bar on College Street with 3 or 4 performers.

Guests will be able to enjoy a themed dinner from 6 PM and be

entertained by walk around "close-up" performers.

The main stage shows begin at 8PM and feature a variety of hot acts from across North America. Headlining the show will be the "Extremely Mental" **James Biss**. Biss has been messing with minds for over two decades and has been the star of Toronto's Magical Arts Festivals. Described by CITY-TV as "Kreskin on Drugs" this cutting edge performer reads minds and creates opportunities for audience members to do astonishing psychic demonstrations.

Biss will be joined by a rotation of great performers, many whom the public rarely gets a chance to see.

Tickets for the main show are \$20 at the door. A special dinner menu is available for guests coming earlier for dinner (which is served from 6PM). Complimentary dancing follows the stage show with internationally acclaimed DJ's, on two levels of REVIVAL.

Visit www.magical.com for details.

Calendar

December 3 **Browser's Den Presents Lee Asher**

December 4 **UWO Juggling Club Meeting**

December 5 **Murray Hatfield Show**

December 14 **London Magician's Guild** meeting

Magic Reviews



Beyond Secrets by Jay Sankey

Beyond Secrets is a collection of essays, thoughts, half-thoughts and musings written by **Jay Sankey**. Its subject matter ranges from the esoteric ("Is magic art?") to the psychological ("Tension, Expectation, and Release"). In between is a wealth of practical information for the close-up performer: how to approach a group; how to get the most out of your practice time; what common types of spectators will you encounter and how to perform for them; how to market yourself; and how to script routines to maximize impact.

The individual essays combine to form an incredible discussion on magic and performance. Each piece is short – 1 or 2 pages at most. In my opinion, the book is best read one essay per day so that you can ponder each one before pushing on to the next. In a way, I wish Beyond Secrets had been published as a page a day calendar rather than a book.

Literally dozens of philosophical threads run through this book, popping up here and there in various essays. For this review, I'd like to pull on just one of these threads in order to give you a sense of the level of thought Sankey has put into this volume.

One of the critical questions every performer has to ask him or herself is what is the desired goal for a performance. Is it to create wonder and astonishment? To

impress? To make people laugh? The rest of this review will discuss Sankey's answer to this question.



Considering that Sankey is known primarily for his off-beat sense of humour and his unusually powerful magic effects, I find his chosen goal to be surprising. Simply stated, his goal is to create an emotional connection with his audience. He states:

Magic and performance is essentially about intimate relationship and, strange as it may sound, scripts, practice, and "killer" effects are only of value to the degree to which they help you and your audience connect, identify and empathize with each other.

Initiating this connection with the different individual personalities in the group you are performing for is the very first thing you should do.

How do you do this?

You use you're your eyes.

Make eye contact with everyone. Don't just look at them, but see them. See them for who they are – a collection of unique individuals. Use your eyes and a friendly nod to send them a message of "Hello, it's very nice to meet you. I'm glad you're here."

Sankey talks a lot about looking into the eyes of audience members throughout a performance. He argues that over time, these glances acquire a history, even a familiarity.

A true and meaningful connection, however, cannot be created unless the performer has invested himself emotionally in his

material. In the words of David Mamet, "Don't perform, express."

The performer has to feel something about what he is doing, and that feeling must be communicated to the audience.

A final key to forming a connection is to create a sense of trust and vulnerability. What does it mean to be vulnerable? According to Sankey, it means

...staying fully present with your audience instead of hiding behind your script. It means not having too set an idea of which effects you plan to perform. It means being willing to stop in the middle of a routine if something more interesting comes up.

Sankey often uses the time between tricks to address members of the audience and "touch base" with them. The time between routines holds the greatest chances of losing audience interest. By connecting with them, the possibility of an audience "disconnecting" is greatly reduced.

In one of his more interesting essays, "Magic As a Blood Sport", Sankey contrasts his desire to create a meaningful connection with people to the current t.v.-inspired drive to simply "freak people out". Sankey argues that



...these magicians have little interest in pleasing the members of their point blank audiences. They only want to destroy them. To push them to a point where they do or say something that makes for good television. Nothing more than test subjects, they are not performed for, but rather, are subjected to.

In the end, by shifting the focus from the effects themselves or

how a trick was done, Sankey strives to create an awareness of the magic of the performer/audience interplay. Through this interplay, people have the chance to become more aware of our own distinct personalities and what makes each of us unique. Hopefully they will realize the truth that being alive together is the real magic.

All of these thoughts on interpersonal connection are scattered throughout the 182 pages of the book like breadcrumbs. Maybe I'm putting words into Sankey's mouth. If I am, I apologize.

In truth, I don't know where Sankey's thoughts on the subject end and the thoughts he inspired begin. I think that fact alone speaks volumes about the value of this book.

The above is just one tiny thread that runs through Beyond Secrets. There are more. A lot more. Pick a thread that interests you, and think about it, disagree with it, talk about it, and try it – and your magic will be that much stronger for it.

- Steve Seguin

We Want Your Reviews! Please send any reviews of magic tricks, books and videos to:
Steve_Seguin@hotmail.com

Important Note:

Because of the Holidays, Shell Game will not be published next month. Instead, London Magic Guild meeting minutes and news will be sent out by regular e-mail.



Tricks

Flashy Rope Restoration, by Steve Seguin

A while ago I sat down and put together what I felt would be the ideal opener for a kids' show. It was as much an academic exercise than anything else. The following cut and restored rope routine is the product of that exercise. Let me admit up front that it's something I've played with but never performed.

Effect: A single length of rope spans the length of the stage, tied to a chair located on each side. The performer announces that he will cut the rope, and then magically restore it. To preclude any suspicion that he is using a trick rope, he announces he will cut the rope in the exact spot the audience wants him to.

Taking the scissors, the magician starts at one end of the rope moving along towards the other end. The kids are encouraged to clap in a slow, steady beat while he slowly moves along the rope. The kids are told to clap faster when he gets to the spot they want him to cut.

The magician cleanly cuts the rope into two pieces. He then wraps some magic paper around each end of the rope, and teaches the kids a magic word. He lights the paper-wrapped ends on fire, and the rope restores itself in a blinding flash of fire.

Set Up: Take an 8-inch piece of rope that matches the rope you are going to cut and restore. Tie this piece or sew it into a loop and attach it to a pull (that is, a long piece of

elastic fastened to the inside of your left coat sleeve). The loop should be positioned just inside the sleeve so that it is fairly easy to get at but will retract out of sight up the sleeve when released.

Take a long piece of rope (10 feet or so) and tie each end to a chair. Position a chair at each side of the stage, the rope stretched loosely between them.

Visually, this fills the stage quite nicely, making the trick look much bigger than a typical cut and restored rope routine. Also, having this set up before the show creates curiosity amongst the audience members.

Performance: Announce that you are going to perform the world-famous-cut and restored rope trick. Explain that a lot of people think that it is done using a trick rope and that you have to cut it in exactly the right spot. To disprove this theory, you say that you will cut the rope in the exact spot the audience wants.

For a kids' show this accomplishes two things. First, it lets the children know in simple terms what is going to happen – you are going to cut the rope in two and then magically put it back together. For younger kids, this helps them recognize the climax when it occurs so they can respond to it. Second, it eliminates possible methods before you start that could be used later to explain how the trick was done. This is important for older kids in the audience (10-13 year olds). [Note: this thinking is based on ideas laid out in Silly Billy's book, reviewed in October's newsletter. Did I mention that you should own this book?]

Hold the open scissors over the rope and slowly move down the rope. Tell the kids that they should start to clap when they want you to stop and cut the rope. As soon as a few people start to clap, remind them that you have to be at a spot where everyone wants you to cut and is clapping. Be quick and playful here – “Over here? How about over here?” or by intentionally moving away from where the kids want you to go. Don't over do it though.

The goal here is to get the kids used to clapping and participating in the show. The process of turning a bunch of individuals clapping for different spots on the rope into a single, cohesive group all clapping for the same spot helps create a single audience mentality. Not only does this elevate your show to a shared experience, it helps increase audience reactions and participation during the rest of the performance. Finally, it reduces the risk of problem children during the show. All of this thinking is inspired by some ideas Devon Elliott has been throwing around for years.

Once you've selected the spot to cut, you will pinch the rope into a “U” shape in preparation to cutting. At the same time, you will withdraw the duplicate piece of rope attached to the pull and position it where it can be cut instead of the original rope. This will make sense to those of you familiar with cut and restored rope routines. There are no real moves here other than practicing it until it is smooth, covering it with dialogue and misdirection, and letting a larger action hide the smaller action.

Clearly cut the small piece of rope (the audience thinks you are cutting the large rope). Put the scissors in your pocket and get two pieces of flash paper. Wrap each piece of flash paper over an end of rope, still clearly showing the rope as two separate pieces.

At this point either ask the audience for a magic word or introduce your own. I like having a single magic word running through my entire show that the kids use to cause the magic to happen. This is another technique for increasing audience participation and empowering the children (since they cause the magic, not you).

Take out a lighter. Press both rope ends together to make them easier to light at the same time. Have the kids shout out the magic word as you light the flash paper. During the flash of fire, release your hold on the pull so that the cut piece of rope goes up your sleeve. At the same time, let go of the long piece of rope so it falls down, restored. From the audience perspective, they will see an impressive blast of fire and then see the cut ends morph together right in front of their eyes. It's quite convincing when you see it.

The point here, obviously, is the climax of the trick. The fire is an added bonus. I'm a big fan of using fire in your opener.

It's also worth noticing how this routine is jam packed with audience participation without actually dragging anyone up on stage (which typically slows the tempo of the show).

We Want Your Tricks! Please send any original magic tricks or routines to:

Steve_Sequin@hotmail.com

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Steve Seguin, Editor

The Shell Game is a free newsletter sent to members of the London Magicians Guild and other people in the community interested in magic.

Content and opinions expressed do not reflect the views of the London Magic Guild.

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