



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
December 2009

Volume 5, Issue 4

November's meeting

Finger-flicking was in full swing in November as the club had its members present their favourite Forces, Controls and Reveals.

Everyone sat around one large table and showed off whatever force, control or reveal they wanted. Dom St-Jacques demonstrated several forces and controls, including some of his own creation, which were very impressive. Peter Mennie showed several forces of the same card that could be used in an "Ambitious Card" routine, and also demonstrated his "Card through the card box through the handkerchief" reveal that is simple but plays very strong.

Ron Keller showed us his prediction coin reveal, where a selected card appears imprinted on a coin after heating it with a lighter! And Mark Hogan also did his duty and performed "Hole Sensation" – this time using a story about playing cards as prisoners.

The night ended with some discussion about a new book about Doug Henning's life, and a heated debate about whether a "Perfect Faro" can be imperfect! (You had to be there!).

Mark Hogan

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, December 9 7:30PM

Topic: VIDEO NIGHT!

Beal Secondary School
255 Dundas Street, London
T-253

December's Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, December 9
TIME: 7:30 PM
PLACE: Beal Secondary School
T-253

Topic: VIDEO NIGHT!

Christmas will soon be here, and we only want one thing from Santa – MAGIC VIDEOS! So why not give Santa some direction and come out to Video Night!

Bring a selection of some of your own magic DVD's. We'll preview them, and others supplied by your fellow club members. It's a great way to get a taste of what DVD's are available – and see if others like (or dislike) your DVD's as much as you do!

So dig through your pile of magic DVD's (good ones and bad ones) and bring a selection of them to our December meeting.

<p>We Want Your Reviews and Tricks! Please send any original reviews, magic tricks or routines to: magic_london@yahoo.ca</p>

IMPORTANT NOTE: Our web site has moved!!

The London Magicians Guild web site has moved to another address. Set your browser to this new address to get information on future meetings, recent newsletters, and other information about the club:

<http://magiclondon.brinkster.net>

News Of Interest



Greg Frewin on Television (from InsideMagic.com)

Canadian viewers will have a unique opportunity to experience the jaw-dropping skills of Greg Frewin, Canadian illusionist and 'International Grand Champion of Magic', in the CBC holiday program Greg Frewin Magic Man: Home for the Holidays.

Premiering on Wednesday, December 9 at 9 p.m. ET/PT, this one-hour CBC special produced by Frogwater Media takes viewers on a compelling journey as Frewin juggles the demands of family and his Niagara Falls dinner theatre, while preparing for the most ambitious and dangerous illusion of his career.

"Greg is the consummate performer but he graciously allowed our cameras behind the curtain to meet his wife and kids, his dancers and his beloved jungle cats," says Tim Troke, Executive Producer and CEO of Frogwater Media. "This special documents the lead up to his "Grand Illusion" shot outdoors beside the Falls in sub-degree temperatures. He's suspended upside-down in a strait jacket with 'blades of fire' hurtling towards him."

Recently Frewin was presented with the prestigious Merlin Award for Magician of the Year at a star-studded event in LA - making him one of the few performers to have won every major award that the international world of magic has to offer.

Greg Frewin Magic Man: Home for the Holidays premieres on Wednesday, December 9th at 9:00pm ET/PT on CBC.

Swine Flu Kid Show Magic

(from InsideMagic.com)

We were trying to figure out why our bookings had fallen off dramatically. We still have our Yellow Pages ad, the newspaper classified and display ads, our radio blitz, and even a 15 second spot on local cable news. In fact, our advertising expenses have only increased this year over last but the number of shows per dollar has fallen harder than a husky kid on our home-made Flying Carpet Illusion.

It turns out we have been victimized by the Swine Flu. We were not infected by H1N1, but potential clients apparently fear we could be a carrier of the potentially lethal influenza virus from kids' show to kids' show.

We think it was Jonas Salk or Ben Casey who demonstrated the truth that children are essentially nothing more than incubators for disease. Ask any teacher about the infectious potential of any given class of 20 or so little ones. The parents, late for work or enchanted rendezvous, send the feverish kids to school with their pockets full of tissues, noses gushing with a steady, gelatinous aggregation of rapidly mutating strains of parasitic, opportunistic infections; imploring them to share with their classmates.

Parents have no compunction about sending their children to school with a fever and an upper-lip encased in viscous, semi-opaque veneer of mucous. It is ironic that they would worry about us infecting their offspring during our three and a half-hour show (that's for the kids under 10; we do the full five hour show for the older kids).

Yes, one could argue our show has elements that may seem less hygienic than conventional kid shows. But that is what makes us unique. As far as we know, we are the only act in the tri-county area performing balloon sculpture with saliva; the Losander Zombie Bubble routine without soapy water; or mouth coils made of candy that can be consumed by the kids after production.



We make a big point of telling the kids to wash their hands after eating the edible garland we magically extract from our previously empty mouth. How do they know it was empty? Because we have each kid look and feel around inside until they are satisfied. Really, if you think about it, we are taking the risk. We allow unknown germ pots to run their grubby fingers inside our cheeks and along our teeth and gums.

We assure parents that our mouth is clean thanks to the antiseptic qualities possessed by even the cheapest bourbon. Its protection lasts for up to 15 minutes according to a peer-reviewed article in a medical journal we just made up.

Before the Swine Flu scare, the kids loved our act. We think they still love it but the parents will not book it.

It is always something. When everyone was upset about kids being injured by guns, we had to stop doing the bullet-catching trick even if the birthday boy or girl was strong enough to hold the revolver and pull the trigger.

We stopped doing our Threaded Razor Blade routine when the HIV and Hepatitis scare was in full-swing. Truth be told, we were rarely cut so badly that there was any risk of a kid coming in contact with the blood. But you know how parents worry about their little darlings.

We no longer do our Buzz Saw or Guillotine illusions because some parents thought that part of the show induced “grossly abnormal sleep patterns due to nightmares and hour-long screaming fits.” And our presentations were not even that scary. In fact, we have not performed the Richiardi version of the Buzz Saw in at least 18 months.

About.com’s Wayne Kawamoto, had a great post on this subject last week. Normally we just read his column to rip-off ideas and tricks without attribution but because his article actually supports our position, we are happy to cite him as the author.

Mr. Kawamoto writes:

With Swine Flu on everybody’s mind, I decided to be proactive. In my shows this past weekend, after performing a “balls from the mouth” segment, I went into my spiel to transition to the next trick. But as I did this, I openly pulled out hand sanitizer and applied it to my hands. I didn’t make a big deal about it, I just cleaned my hands as I spoke. Interestingly, I received a smattering of applause because of my action.

His approach makes sense and we can see how that extra level of protection can help comfort parents whilst their seven-year-olds share amongst each other straws, utensils, food, and a natural curiosity about the nasal passages.

At least they know we are not patient zero for the likely outbreak the birthday party set in motion. So as the kids scramble to grab candy dropped all over the floor by the opening of Sponge Bob piñata manufactured in China out of papier-mâché from mercury-laden flour and water extracted from still, ponds of squalid, run-off from the town’s personal and industrial activities, they can feel safe.

We have seen lulls in the market before. Swine Flu or no, this too will change and we will all be able to get back to what we do best, sharing what we have with those we meet. And isn’t that what makes Magic more than just a public health issue, it is also an art form.



Daniels: no Respect for Blaine

(from blog.illusionist.com)

For those wondering what Paul Daniels has been doing: He has been searching for the best sausage in Britain, as part of British Sausage Week (Sorry, Brits, we just can't bring ourselves to call them “bangers” for very immature reasons). In an interview with Andrew Trendell of the Nottingham Evening Post, he spoke about a number of things, including today’s crop of magicians including Derren Brown, David Blaine and Criss Angel.

Blaine and Angel drew Daniels' ire, because of their use of technology:

"I can't respect David Blaine, Chris (sic) Angel and particular others coming from America. There was a rule for us magicians when we were on television, and that was that if you can't do it live then you don't use technology to change the appearance. You have to be able to do it live, that's the job of being a magician."

Daniels also wasn't impressed with how Blaine has moved into stunts, and his wife, Debbie McGee, said that it's the same thing as the vaudevillian endurance acts of the Great Depression, only that TV companies are paying, not customers.



Pity the dead on Halloween: Houdini not amused

(from InsideMagic.com)

Discover Magazine's Phil Plait worked with Justin Robert Young, Andrew Mayne and the folks at the James Randi Educational Foundation attempted to communicate with Harry Houdini during the foundation's Halloween Seance.

Poor Houdini. He works hard his whole life, from circus worker, to neck-tie cutter, to sideshow freak, to dime-museum magi, and finally world's greatest escape artist and spiritualist debunker. He cannot even rest in peace where ever his soul may now exist or not exist.

His work as an escape artist had him dangled from tall buildings, shoved into tight quarters with little air, submerged in frozen lakes and rivers, and a combination of all of the stunts in his Water Torture Escape.

To prepare for the exhibitions, he had to stay in top physical shape (without steroids or personal trainers), secret picks about and within his body, work the publicity machine around the world without the internet or even a fax machine.

Now, as he looks forward to an eternity of repose with his beloved, we magician types harass him to prove essentially that he will not answer.

We are just as skeptical as the next person — of course no one sits near us because we are constantly making comparisons to them — but wonder if there might be a better target for seance debunking.

Why not go for the spirit of some chatterbox? Alexander Graham Bell might be someone to pick on. He loved to talk. How about Martha Raye,

Oscar Wilde, or Woody Woodpecker? Any politician might serve as a better test subject than someone who had already suffered so much attention and demands on his time like Houdini.

The seance debunking team were unable to raise Houdini via ghost-link. In the event that they were able to link up with the great magician, the group solicited test words from Penn and Teller, David Copperfield, and others.

The spirit divined one or two of the words during the short seance.

Check out the full video of the seance as it was broadcast live this weekend over on the Discover Magazine site.

“...and I quote”

- “For those show believe no explanation is necessary, for those who do not believe no explanation will suffice.” – Joseph Dunninger
- “Think of a card. Was it the three of diamonds? If it wasn't the three of diamonds, you're wrong.” - Harry Blackstone Jr
- “The real secret of magic lies in the performance.” - David Copperfield
- “There is a world of difference between not knowing how something is done verses knowing that it can't be done.” – Simon Aronson
- “The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.” – Albert Einstein

Did You Know?

- Joseph Dunninger, Was a magician who in the forties hosted and radio magic show where he read minds and because of his popularity inspired The Shadow radio program.
- Fidel Castro used trained doves during his first triumphant rally, one was made to land on his shoulder and the crowd took it as a sign he was their savior.
- In the late 1800s, magicians frequently used automatons in their shows. These mechanical figures played cards, chess and even sketched profiles of their spectators.
- Okito (Theo Bamberg) developed his silent oriental act to compensate for the fact he was totally deaf.

- Paul Daniels is a British magician and television performer. He achieved international fame through his television series The Paul Daniels Magic Show, which ran on the BBC from 1979 to 1994.

World Records!

Longest Running Magic Show: Le Grand David (Cabot St Theater, Beverly, MA) Still running, this show has had over 2,000 performances, starting on Feb. 20, 1977

Longest Running TV Magic Program: Magicland (WMC-TV, Memphis TN) Broadcast more than 1,200 episodes between January 1966 and January 1989. Hosted by Dick "Mr. Magic" Williams

Strongest Magician: Ken Simmons, Can bench press over 500 lbs.

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Concept by : Steve Seguin

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

Opinions expressed do not reflect the views of the London Magicians Guild.

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