



# Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community  
December 2017

Volume 13, Issue 4

## November's meeting

Nothing seemed to bring out the crowd like a magic auction! And this night was no different – it was the most turnout we've had in years, including some past members we haven't seen in a while, and some new friends – including two from Hamilton!

**Mike Fisher** was the organizer of this event, for the past few weeks going over the collection of **Lorne Overholt**, which were the vast majority of items in the auction. Mike took the role of the auctioneer, capably assisted in showing many of the lot contents by **Peter Mennie**.

The action was fast and furious, and almost every item was purchased. Mike added his own brand of humour to the bidding, and everyone had a good time. And almost everyone in attendance purchased something – a real testament to Lorne's collection (and Mike's selling techniques!)

The night was a tremendous success, with over \$700 bid and almost every item finding a new home!

Many thanks for **Mike Fisher** for putting so much time in going through Lorne's collection; making lots for the auction of comparable items; making surprise gift boxes for those who made purchases; and auctioning off the tremendous number of items before we had to leave the room! It was one terrific night!

### **Next Meeting:**

**Date: Wednesday, December 13**

**Time: 7:30 PM**

**Topic: BIZARRE MAGIC!**

**Beal Secondary School  
525 Dundas Street, London  
T-253**

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## TOPIC: BIZARRE MAGIC!

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Christmas time is a pretty bizarre time of year. Flying reindeer, elves, and an old guy breaking into your house (and we want him to do it!). So what a great time to look into bizarre magic!

What is bizarre magic? Well, we'll loosen the definition a bit and say it's anything that you'd call a bit different! It could also be a standard effect, but where you've wrapped a story around it that makes it a bit "bizarre".

So get weird for a night and come out in December for some bizarre magic!

**We Want Your Reviews and Tricks!**

Please send any original reviews, magic tricks or routines to:

[magic\\_london@yahoo.ca](mailto:magic_london@yahoo.ca)

## News Of Interest



### Browser's Bash tickets available

(BrowsersDen.com)

VIP Platinum tickets are now sold out for the fourth annual **Browser's Bash**, sponsored by the *Browser's Den*. But Gold, Silver and Bronze level tickets are still available.

This one-day, day-long event (9AM to 9PM) is being held on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the *Montecassino Hotel and Event Venue*, 3710 Chesswood Drive, Toronto, ON M3J 2P6.

Tickets are available at various price levels: *Bronze* (\$99 + HST), *Silver* (\$119 + HST), *Gold* (\$139 + HST). And all tickets include *lunch and dinner meals!* (really!)

Talent announced to date includes **Dick Joiner** (Emcee), **Michael Close**, **Whit "Pop" Haydn**, **James Alan**, **Chris Pilsworth** and **Nicholas Wallace**.

For more information and to purchase your tickets, visit:

<http://www.browsersden.com/bash/>

### Magician can't perform water tank escape in Chilliwack

(Tom Zillick)



**Matt Johnson's** magic show in Surrey won't be quite the same as performed elsewhere.

The Chilliwack-based entertainer will not be attempting an escape from a large water tank here this Friday night (Dec. 1), after being told the contraption can't be used at *Surrey City Hall's Centre Stage* theatre, which doubles as council chambers.

The tank-escape trick was performed by Johnson on the CW Network show *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* last spring.

"I'll be doing my full show (in Surrey) except for the water-tank escape," Johnson told the *Now-Leader* in a phone call Thursday (Nov. 23). "I found out about this about five days ago. The (venue managers) in Surrey have made the call that they can't have the tank in that theatre, because we're told the stage is a hollow one, and they're concerned about the weight of the tank and any water that could leak on the stage."

The show is pre-written, Johnson said, so he'll have to "extend out a couple of things, a minute here or there over the course of the show," to make up for the 10 minutes lost.

"I'm actually thinking of playing the *Penn & Teller* episode with my water escape during the intermission, for anybody who wants to see it. I haven't confirmed that with the theatre yet."

Johnson blends urban street magic with comedy for his *Nothing Up My Sleeves* show, a 90-minute display of illusions, mind-reading, sleight-of-hand and audience interaction.

The U.K.-raised Johnson, who moved to Canada in 1998, has been a pro magician for more than two decades. Earlier this year, a dream of his to perform on *Britain's Got Talent* turned into a bit of a nightmare.

"I went to do *Britain's Got Talent* in February with the water escape, and it was a disaster," he lamented. "On the day of filming, in the morning, we did a rehearsal before we filmed that night, and two minutes under water, the tank cracked and exploded on stage, basically – 200 gallons of water went all over the set."

No wonder the people at Surrey City Hall are a bit nervous. "It was a malfunction in the old tank," Johnson continued. "I had tried to get on the show for three years, and rehearsed for a year and a half, had done breath-holding training. I got all the way there, spent five grand to get my stuff there for the show, and then that happened. It was a real down point in my career, and in my life in general, as you can imagine."

Six weeks later, Johnson got a second crack at doing the trick on *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*, and more problems surfaced.

"I came back (to North America) with my tail between my legs, because I had no tank, so I had another tank built by a guy in Calgary, which cost me a lot more money but built sight unseen, and it was shipped to Vegas," Johnson explained. "I got down there the day before *Penn & Teller* and it was too small – three inches too small all the way around. So the one you see on *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* is a smaller one that I jammed myself in and I basically just went for it, because it cut off my breath-holding considerably. It crushed my lungs, so I

couldn't hold my breath for any more than 30 seconds when I got in it. So we just put it on the stage and filmed it, and my guy was told to leave me in there and if I stopped moving, to get me out. As you can imagine, it was a pretty daunting experience."

The trick of escaping from a water tank is something he's worked on for quite some time, Johnson said.

"Doing the trick, when I first started breath-holding, I couldn't hold for longer than 30 seconds, and now I can do four minutes," he said. "But I'm claustrophobic, it's very scary, and I don't like doing it in the show, but it is something in my show now."

To see Matt perform his water tank escape on Penn & Teller's Fool Us, visit:

[https://youtu.be/Pma\\_NXa7WZg](https://youtu.be/Pma_NXa7WZg)

## David Ginn's new book is magnificent

(C. Dennis Schick)

Before reviewing **David Ginn's** new book -- ***Kidshow Magic Kompendium*** -- this disclosure: I wrote the index for the book. As David was finishing his monumental book late last year, several advisors said it really needed an index. The book is full of people and events and magic effects and props and tips and advice. It would be much more useful with a comprehensive index.

When David finally agreed, he checked with a professional indexer (yes, there are such people), and found out she was cost prohibitive. **Sammy Smith**, editor of *The Linking Ring*, also owns a book-publishing business, publishing many magic books. He recommended me since I had created indexes for him in the past, as well as have a background in journalism and magic. We negotiated a reasonable compensation, and I subsequently spent over two hundred hours reading and re-reading every page of the book.

So the following comments about his book are not exactly unbiased nor neutral. Also, I have known David Ginn for many years, having attended three of his lectures and talked with him at several magic conventions, especially in the dealers room. I also own a number of Ginn products, including books and DVDs.

Even with all that in mind, I was completely blown away when his finished book came in the mail the other day. It is *five hundred and forty-four pages long* -- you read that right, 544 -- in 8 1/2 X 11 size. And it's hardback. It easily could have been two or even three books. It has nine hundred full-color photos,

and one hundred and thirty routines. It is a combination children's magic how-to manual, as well as an autobiography of David Ginn's five-decade career. Wow!

Ginn loves the number thirteen, which he explains in the book. It's his lucky number. So he forces the content into thirteen chapters, and into those one-hundred-and-thirty routines (a multiple of thirteen). But here's a secret. There are many more than one-hundred-and-thirty gems and tidbits and tips and gags and one-liners and come-backs and good ole solid advice within those pages. He even gives you a list of all the videos on YouTube where you can watch live performances of the routines and tricks throughout the book. And he also gives a list of all his books and DVDs.

For many of those one hundred and thirty "routines," he gives the background, the "why," the description of what happens, and then the workings and method. You learn each one with a complete understanding of the who, what, when, where, why and how.

Throughout the book he gives a huge bonus in each chapter -- "*Lessons Learned*" -- priceless tips and advice. There are seventy-five of these "lessons" which are from five decades of experience. Talk about added value. With a bit of expansion on each point, these could comprise an entire book on their own. And they come with the book.

If I was just starting out in kidshow magic, this book would be my first purchase and would be my day-to-day guide. Why not learn from the master? Why make mistakes by trial-and-error when you can AVOID mistakes by reading this book (and watching the related videos)?

Yes, I have read the book at least three times -- as an INDEXER. Now I have started reading it again, as a READER. And I am taking notes along the way, part of my training as a journalist, but also because there is so much "good stuff" throughout the book, I want to try and remember it all.

So why do I say David Ginn's new book is "magnificent?" Because it is, in every way possible -- scope, quality, quantity, depth, breadth, usefulness, etc.

Yes, I highly recommend **Kidshow Magic Kompendium**. What a valuable addition to magic literature.



## Shawn Farquhar in Hocus Pocus Magic Show

(Rozanna M. Martinez)

Magician **Shawn Farquhar's** mother told him that when he was born he said "pick a card" after the doctor slapped him.

The idea is not farfetched, because magic is part of Farquhar's DNA. He's a fourth-generation magician. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather all

practiced the craft.

"I jumped in with both feet, champing at the bit to learn from my father," Farquhar said. "He was surrounded by great magicians who all helped me. Unlike all the other stories of kids getting a magic kit, it was just everything I wanted to do since I can remember."

Farquhar will amaze audience minds as part of the *Hocus Pocus Magic Show* on Saturday, Nov. 25, at *KiMo Theatre*. The show also features **Kalin, Jinger, Nickey Fynn** and **Liberty Larsen**.

"I'm just as big of a kid as everybody else is," Farquhar said. "I love magic just as much if not more than some. Being on a compilation with such awesome artists is really pretty exciting for me."

Farquhar's style of magic is not Las Vegas glitz or street tricks.

"I can tell you everything in my show is something you'd find in your living room," he said. "... I have old bottles and a deck of cards and a handkerchief, just things that you would find anywhere. ... I want you to really disengage from the props and go to the person, because I think between myself and whoever comes on stage, that's the magic, and what we do together creates whatever that magic is."

Audience participation is a must in Farquhar's shows.

"Everything in my show is audience participation," he said. "I think that magic, that's when it's done in somebody else's hands, you get to see the experiences of that person. The majority of the show that they'll see will all be audience involved, and if it isn't with a person on the stage, it will be interactive with everybody participating with me."

Farquhar will perform one of his favorite effects, which he calls "*Shape of My Heart*."

"I discovered a piece of music, decades ago, that was just so beautiful," he said. "The lyrics spoke to me, and I created a magic effect where the music and the lyrics all go hand in hand with the effect. It's just a beautiful piece of

music and a really creative piece of magic all woven in with sleight of hand so people can appreciate the skill that goes into it, the wonder of the magic, while experiencing the music itself.”

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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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