



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
January 2010

Volume 5, Issue 5

December's meeting

December's meeting was a time to kick back, relax, pull up a chair, and watch some magic DVD's and videos.

Selections for the night's viewing were wide and varied. We watched clips of Houdini's straitjacket escapes from extended versions of his movie serials from the early 20's. We also watched pieces of David Merry's stand-up routine; a young John Carney; a comedy magic act by Simon Lovell in New York, and ended with the Amazing Jonathan's very funny cable special.

A nice, relaxing way to start the holiday season off right!

Mark Hogan

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, January 13 7:30PM

Topic: COIN NIGHT!

Beal Secondary School
255 Dundas Street, London
T-253

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

January's Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, January 13
TIME: 7:30 PM
PLACE: Beal Secondary School
T-253

Topic: TRICKS WITH COINS!

One of the exciting things about the magic club is being able to experiment with things we don't usually do.

There aren't many of us who do coin magic, but it's hugely popular with spectators. Our own Mike Fisher is going to show us some of his favorite coin effects – and we are encouraging everyone to give them a try! And if you know some good coin effects, share them with the rest of us!

So come out with a fistful of coins, and let's try together to learn some tricks with coins!

World's fastest magician

Thanks to Max Scott for passing on this link of what people are dubbing the "World's Fastest Magician". To see Hans Klok and his "Divas of Magic" perform 10 fairly impressive illusions in less than 5 minutes, click on:

<http://www.flixxy.com/worlds-fastest-magician-hidef.htm>

News Of Interest



Frewin's hook for magic fame: Be family man.

(From blog.ellusionist.com)

Ellusionist Web master David Mitchell reminded us of Greg Frewin's upcoming Christmas special, "Greg Frewin Magic Man: Home for the Holidays," which will be shown tomorrow by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The show sounds pretty interesting just from the CBC's description (only Canadians can access the accompanying online-exclusive videos).

<http://www.cbc.ca/holiday/2009/11/magicman.html>

But a series of stories by the Niagara Falls Review make it downright compelling. Reporter John Law scored exclusive, behind-the-scenes access to taping for the show and preparations for a big stunt at the end; his three-part series was published this week.

<http://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2206307>

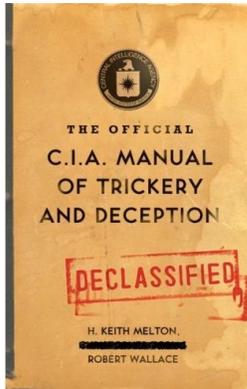
<http://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2210782>

Frewin, a former Vegas entertainer, invested almost everything he had into converting a factory into a 700-seat theater. The bold move paid off after its bumpy first year in 2005 — it now sells out every summer and has become a top attraction for the city of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. But he knows that it's TV that will push his name to legendary status, he said. Instead of emulating Blaine's urban shamanism or Angel's shock and raw, Frewin's hook is to show life behind the curtain, as a husband and father of two.

Lee Asher, Frewin's street-magic consultant, vouches for his work ethic in part one:

"Greg is cut from a different cloth. Greg will do a show, and when he's done he'll go backstage and weld his props. When he's done with that, he comes out and manages the theatre. When he's done with that, he gets to go home and be a dad. He's constantly doing something, constantly pushing. Hopefully, they'll film that. There's no one like Greg, there really isn't. Greg's working on the lights ... I don't know anyone (like him) who does that. They'll wait. Greg, he

doesn't have time for the light guy. He's gotta get down there and get his hands on that board. We work with Greg. We don't work for Greg."



CIA's Lost Magic Manual Resurfaces

(from www.wired.com)

At the height of the Cold War, the Central Intelligence Agency paid \$3,000 to renowned magician John Mulholland to write a manual on misdirection, concealment, and stagecraft. All known copies of the document — and a related paper, on conveying hidden signals — were believed to be destroyed in 1973. But recently, the manuals resurfaced, and have now been published as "The Official CIA Manual of Trickery and Deception." Topics include working a clandestine partner, slipping a pill into the drink of the unsuspecting, and "surreptitious removal of objects by women."

This wasn't the first time a magician worked for a western government. Harry Houdini snooped on the German and the Russian militaries for Scotland Yard. English illusionist Jasper Maskelyne is reported to have created dummy submarines and fake tanks to distract Rommel's army during World War II. Some reports even credit him with employing flashing lights to "hide" the Suez Canal.

But Mulholland's contributions were far different, because they were part of a larger CIA effort, called MK-ULTRA, to control people's minds. Which led to the Agency's infatuation with LSD, as David Hambling recounted here a few weeks ago:

"In the infamous Operation Midnight Climax, unwitting clients at CIA brothels in New York and San Francisco were slipped LSD and then monitored through one-way mirrors to see how they reacted. They even killed an elephant with LSD. Colleagues were also considered fair game for secret testing, to the point where a memo was issued instructing that the punch bowls at office Christmas parties were not to be spiked."

The Boston Globe has put together a great visual summary of some of Mulholland's best tricks for the CIA: the shoelace pattern that means "follow me"; the hidden compartment to smuggle in an agent; the best ways to appear dumb and non-threatening. Because there's no better misdirection than appearing to be a fool.



100 Years of Magic

(by Alex Dobuzinskis, <http://new.whtc.com/news>)

One hundred years ago, a wealthy couple built a mansion in Hollywood and installed a speaking tube allowing them to order a Scotch whisky from their servants -- a handy trick, but nothing compared to what the home's later occupants would conjure up.

Today under the name The Magic Castle, the mansion is a private club for magicians that has been around for 46 years, and is known by tricksters all over the world.

This month, the castle celebrated the 100th anniversary of the construction of the mansion that houses it. To mark the occasion, the club threw a gala party and had a magician wriggle out of a straight jacket while hanging from a crane.

The Magic Castle is a show business haunt, but it's not in the business of showing off. Instead of an open door policy, the club perched in the Hollywood Hills has more of a sliding bookcase policy, as visitors must carry an invitation from a member to get inside.

Over the years, celebrity members have included Johnny Depp, Sean Penn, Johnny Carson and magicians Penn & Teller. Visitors find an opulent setting, where generations of magicians exchange secrets of their trade at lush bars when they're not performing at one of the mansion's six theaters.

"I often refer to this place as the Mecca of magic, people come in constantly from all over the world," said magician Andrew Goldenhersh, who moved to Los Angeles from St. Louis, Missouri, just to be near The Magic Castle.

The mansion was built for wealthy banker Rollin Lane and his wife Katherine, back when Hollywood was just a train stop, not an entertainment capital.

MAGICAL TRANSFORMATION

Milt Larsen, who wrote for the television game show "Truth or Consequences," took over the old mansion in the early 1960s, when owner Thomas Glover, a Texas businessman, allowed him to turn it into a home for Larsen's Academy of Magical Arts.

Larsen, 78, who has a mustache and combed-back hair, said he comes from a "magic family" because dad went from being an attorney to a touring magician, and took the family along.

Earlier this month, when the Magic Castle celebrated its building's 100th anniversary, Larsen talked to guests while sitting at a bar with 200 year-old etched glass panels imported from Scotland.

In the corner, magician Jon Armstrong performed card tricks for a group sitting around a table, as Goldenhersh, who likes to work with live creatures, chased down a butterfly.

He explained that the insect sprang loose from "a bit of magic," grasped it from a wall and shuffled off to entertain celebrity guest Tippi Hedren, star of 1963 movie "The Birds."

Not everyone who hangs around the castle is a magician or a movie star. Of the more than 5,000 members, computer programmer Brian Tolman, 46, is an associate, which means he is not a magician but pays to be in the club -- about \$2,000 a year.

"I bring clients here all the time," he said. "Just like in some places you take people to a golf course, this is my golf course. I take them here, they meet important people, get made to feel special ... I close at least two deals a year here."

Tolman gives tours of the club. He shows off a shelf where the ashes of magician Dai Vernon are kept in a box. Then there's the basement, which houses the late comedian W.C. Fields trick pool table.

One place Tolman cannot see is the library and its secret tomes about magic. That is off limits because he is not a magician, but he seems fine with that.

"If this had been open to the public, the magicians wouldn't hang out here," he said.

(Editing by Bob Tourtellotte)

"...and I quote"

- Criss is cool but the walking on water bit. That was a little too much. My 8 year old ask me is Jesus was a magician too. - Anonymous

Did You Know?

- Eliaser Bamberg, the 18th-century Dutch magician, was known as "The Crippled Devil." He had lost one of his legs in an explosion and wore a wooden leg. The story goes that Eliase) had hollowed out his wooden leg and used it as a secret hiding place for his magic props.

- The word magic is derived from the Persian word "magus" which designated a priestly class.
- The Bullet Catch is the most dangerous trick in magic. This feat, in which a marked bullet is fired at the performer who catches it on a plate or sometimes in his teeth, has taken the lives of well over a dozen magicians.
- Matthew Buchinger, one of the premier Cups and Balls performers of the 18th century, was born without arms or legs and was 29 inches tall. Despite all that, he was a master magician, a calligrapher and a musician who played the flute, trumpet, bagpipes and dulcimer. He married four times and fathered 11 children.
- Orson Welles, the actor and great film director, had a lifelong interest in magic. During World War II he had his own evening magic show that he presented for members of the U.S. armed forces. It was performed in a large circus tent and his assistants at times included such stars as Rita Hayworth and Marlene Dietrich.

World Records!

- Most Rabbits Pulled Out of a Hat: Walter Rolfo and Piero Ustignani (aka Jabba) 300 rabbits in 30 minutes, May 17, 2008 Italy
- Largest Card Fan: Ralf Laue held 326 standard playing cards in a fan in one hand, so that the value and color of each one was visible, in Leipzig, Germany, on March 18, 1994
- Largest Jumbo Card Production: Naipes Heraclio Fournier produced 150 packs of jumbo playing cards, each card measuring 37in x 26.5 in. Vitoria, Spain, on October 29, 1998

Johnny Carson's Tonight Show

These magicians all appeared on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. Johnny Carson was himself an accomplished amateur magician. As one of the most powerful people in television, Johnny Carson gave a tremendous boost to the popularity of magic by often featuring a magician on his program. In fact, for several years running, Johnny Carson's New Year's Eve show featured Lance Burton. Here are some other famous magicians who appeared on the Tonight Show:

Harry Lorayne
Ricky Jay
Pat Hazell
Goldfinger and Dove
Jimmy Grippo
Paul Gertner
Joseph Gabriel
David Copperfield
Carazini
Jonathon Neal Brown
Harry Blackstone Jr.
Harry Anderson
Don Alan
Chris Michaels
Michael Skinner
Johnny Thompson
Orson Welles
Mark Wilson
Amarillo Slim (gambler)

Steve Martin
Kreskin
Doug Henning
Johnny Hart
Albert Goshman
Brian Gillis
Uri Geller
Dean Dill
Dick Cavett
Lance Burton
Walter Blaney
Carl Ballantine
Michael Ammar
Scot Morris
Penn and Teller
James Randi
Randall Richmond
Marvyn Roy
Shimada

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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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