



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
January 2026

Volume 19, Issue 5

December's meeting

The December meeting was held at *Crabby Joe's* restaurant downtown. A few hardy souls had dinner beforehand, and others came for the actual meeting – which this month was the game “*Pass The Deck*”.

We passed around what started as a unopened, complete, ordered deck of cards to everyone, and were asked to do a trick using it. You can mark the cards, tear the cards, whatever you like. If you do a trick, pass the deck and you stay in the game. If not, you're out.

The competition was ferocious. Everyone had at least one card trick to show. Someone (not mentioning names, **Byron!**) brought in a couple unexpected gaffs to add to the deck, stretching the rules to the limit! But one rule did cause the downfall of many: *If the trick doesn't work, you're out!*

One by one the competitors dropped like flies, until there were two warriors left – **Leo Martins** and **Andrew Olmstead**. Unable to decide a winner, they used the deck to cut to a high card, and **Andrew Olmstead** walked away the champion. **Peter Mennie** brought a *Sven Deck* for the winner, and all other competitors got a chocolate for their efforts.

We saw a lot of great card magic. Thanks to everyone who came out on a very snowy winter night to have some fun passing the deck!

Mark Hogan

Next Meeting:

Date: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

Time: 7:00 PM

Topic: YOUR NEWEST TRICK!

**Location: Beal Secondary School
525 Dundas Street, London
Room 253**

January's meeting

DATE: Wednesday, January 14

TIME: 7:00 PM

**PLACE: Beal Secondary School
525 Dundas Street, London
Room 253**

TOPIC: *YOUR NEWEST TRICK!*

It's a brand New Year – so what better time to show us your newest trick!

It could be something you've purchased, or a routine you've recently learned. It could be hot off the shelves, or something that is old as the hills, but new to you! And it might be something you're still learning that you want some help with.

Hope to see you for the first meeting of 2026 – and bring along your newest trick! And **Happy New Year!**

We Want Your Reviews and Tricks!

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

magic_london@yahoo.ca

News Of Interest



2025 Inspirational Canadian Magician Showcase

(CanadasMagic.blogspot.com)

The third annual Inspirational Canadian Magicians Showcase nominees have been announced.

As in the past, this year's nominees were submitted by asking last year's nominees, who came up with their submissions of inspirational Canadian magicians for 2025.

The 2025 nominees for the *Inspirational Magicians Showcase* are:

[Matt DiSero](#)

[Dean Gunnarson](#)

[Connie Boyd](#)

[Alain Choquette](#)

[Ed Fernandez](#)

Click on each name to read their submission for the Showcase.

Congratulations to each of the nominees!



AI Patter for Cups & Balls

(InsideMagic.com)

Maybe we have been wrong about AI all along.

Here is [Chat GPT's](#) take on the best patter for the classic Cups and Balls.

We used to demo the [Fun Incorporated plastic "Cups and Balls" trick](#) at a magic shop hundreds of times per week. It may not have been as funny but it is burned into our frontal lobe.

Our patter never changed, "Here's three balls of the same color and three differently colored cups. We take the first ball and place it on top of the first cup, cover it with the second cup and" Unlike *Chat GPT's* patter, we had no

secret surprise of fruit at the end. We just said the price (\$1.25) and laid out the three different colored cups and three balls and waited for the sale to occur.

In the AI version of the patter, there is no passing of a furry ball through one or two cups. *Chat GPT* goes for a more of a classic version of the trick. It even gives itself a compliment on its AI powers at the end. *Chat GPT* describes this patter as "This patter keeps the routine light-hearted and fun, focusing on misdirection and humor to enhance the audience's experience."

Our patter was developed by copying exactly what we were taught by the owner of the magic shop and *Chat GPT* was not available to us way back then. Heck, this was before personal computers and whatnot. Actually, we had "whatnot" but not a lot of it and it was mostly our older sibling's whatnot and we got it as a hand-me-down.

The closest we had to a computer was a [slide rule](#). It got **Neil Armstrong** to the moon and back so no shade to it. In fact, next to Magic, it was our chief passion. We went on to become the president of our high school's *Slide Rule Club*. Oh, the fun we had seeing who could calculate figures to the greatest number of decimals.

We're sure you can imagine.

Anyway . . .

Our prompt for this to *Chat GPT* was: "write patter for a magician performing 'cups and balls'".

Here's its routine:

This patter keeps the routine light-hearted and fun, focusing on misdirection and humor to enhance the audience's experience.

Magician:

"Welcome, everyone! Now, what I have here are three cups and three balls. Three very ordinary cups and very extraordinary balls. I know, you're probably thinking, 'Those cups look suspicious!' But I assure you, they're just as innocent as my search history. Let's begin, shall we?"
(*Magician displays the cups and balls.*)

Magician:

"Now, the cups are solid, the balls are solid, and my logic is questionable, but trust me, this is magic. The goal of this trick is simple: keep your eyes on the balls. The first ball goes under the first cup..."on the balls. The first ball goes under the first cup..."
(*Magician places a ball under the first cup.*)

Magician:

"...The second ball goes under the second cup..."
(Magician places a ball under the second cup.)

Magician:

"...And the third ball goes under...oh wait, it's in my pocket! Magic already, right?"
(Pulls ball from pocket, jokingly places it back under the third cup.)

Magician:

"Now watch closely, because the balls are sneaky. They don't like staying where you put them. Just like your car keys or your remote control. I wave my magic wand, give a little tap, and—" *(Magician lifts the cups to reveal the balls have moved.)*

Magician:

"Would you look at that! The balls have decided to play musical chairs! But we're just getting started." *(Magician continues moving the balls under different cups while distracting the audience with humorous banter.)*

Magician:

"Now I know what you're thinking: 'He's just moving the balls around, right?' And yes, you're absolutely right...except when you're wrong! Watch this—one tap, and..." *(Magician lifts all the cups to reveal a large ball or a surprise object, like a lemon.)*

Magician:

"See, you thought there were three little balls, but magic has a way of surprising us all! Now, how did that get under there? Maybe it's lemon juice for my tea!" *(Magician pauses for audience reaction.)*

Magician:

"And just like that, folks, you've witnessed the mystery of the Cups and Balls—a trick that's been baffling minds for centuries. I hope you enjoyed it as much as the cups did. Thank you!"

Behind the Scenes of “Now You See Me, Now You Don’t”

(GeniiMagic.com)

The recent movie “*Now You See Me, Now You Don’t*” uses an entire magic department, including big names in magic like **Jared Kopf, Jim Steinmeyer, John Lovick, Ben Seidman**, and others to teach magic fundamentals to the cast and create grand illusions for the movie.

You can see the amazing results on screen, but here is an article from *Genii Magazine* that explains the creative process, struggles, and successes behind the scenes – including a video clip showing the incredible “*Magic Showdown*”:

<https://www.geniimagic.com/now-you-see-it-behind-the-scenes/>

Shell Game Vol. 19, Issue 5 January 2026

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.

London Magicians Guild web site:
magiclondon.brinkster.net

London Magicians Guild e-mail:
magic_london@yahoo.ca