



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
March 2015 Volume 10, Issue 7

February's meeting

February's meeting was on a cold winter night, but it warmed up quickly when we started into sponge ball magic! There was lots of different shapes and colours of sponge balls brought by those in attendance.

Mark Hogan had put together a new sponge ball routine using ideas from **Frank Balderak, Steve Dacri, Frank Garcia, Aldo Columbini** and **Michael Finney**. This was his first presentation of this, and was looking for ideas and suggestions.

He made a straw disappear and reappear, and out of it blew a red ball – or actually a **Martian** (it's red, your know!). In fact, it was a "goback" Martian that went back to Mark's hand whenever it was placed in his pocket. It also jumped from hand to hand, and then split into 2. The two Martians do a trick where they jump together into one hand. Then each was held in a spectator's hand and they both jumped into one hand.

Finally, Mark let us in on his secret – he had *another* Martian – they are a set of triplets! Mark put two Martians in his hand and one in his pocket - but they all like being together, so they jumped into one hand. They were again placed two in the hand & one in the pocket – but they were "goback" Martians and they all disappeared and went back where they came from!

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, March 11

Time: 7:30 PM

Topic: SWAP MEET!

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

Mark then stepped through the routine - with everyone having sponge balls in hand. There were a number of suggested improvements to the use of the straw, alternate endings and different handlings.

As well, Peter Mennie and Jon Akrey both showed their sponge ball routines, which were both excellent. And Jim Atkinson presenting his presentation for Entourage, where a thought-of Queens was the only Queen left when 3 others were removed – and those three Queens turned into Jokers!

Thanks to all who came out and shared!

Mark Hogan

March's Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, March 11
TIME: 7:30 PM
PLACE: Beal Secondary School
T-253

TOPIC: SWAP MEET!

It's like an auction – but won't leave you broke. If you have magic items at home that you don't need, why not trade them for something new (to you)?

Dig into your magic drawers and look for tricks, books, DVD's etc. that you'd like to trade with your fellow members for something they have! Bring them on March 11 and walk away with some new (to you) magic goodies. And it won't cost you a cent!

Hope to see you on March 11!

We Want Your Reviews and Tricks!

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

magic_london@yahoo.ca

News Of Interest



Browser's Magic Bash - April 12

(Browser's Den)

Imagine 12 jam-packed hours of magic filled with a plethora of amazing talent, delicious food, and wonderful experiences that you cannot find elsewhere.

Card guys, mentalists, stand-up magicians, stage performers, and everything in-between... there's something for everyone!

You're going to have a fantastic time at the **Browser's Magic Bash**. It might even challenge the way you normally look at magic conventions.

Jeff Pinsky says, "Though in our 39 plus year history in Toronto we have had countless special events, we have never attempted something of this nature. And with your kind participation, we hope this will be the first of many more to come! Save your seat now."

There will be over 10 performers (including **Richard Sanders, David Acer, Greg Frewin**, and more!), with professional lectures, informative mini-sessions, a close-up show and a stage show. And *both dinner and lunch are included* in the ticket price!

Ticket prices are only **\$75 + tax** (with a few *VIP tickets* still available at **\$139 + tax**).

This sounds like a terrific event. Visit www.browsersden.com/bash, or click the link below for more details or to register.

[Browser's Magic Bash -- April 12th, 2015 \(9am - 9pm\)](http://www.browsersden.com/bash)

The science of how magicians influence decision-making

(PBS Newshour)

Pick a card, any card, says the magician. Though seemingly offered a choice to pick whichever card you want, in a majority of cases your brain has already fallen right into the magician's trap.

Pulling off a card trick doesn't require spells or magic words — rather the magician's key ally is the ability to subtly influence an audience to make key decisions while making the people believe they are choosing freely. In a [study published Saturday](#) in the journal *Consciousness and Cognition*, a team of Canadian researchers explored the psychology behind the magic.

"We found that people tend to choose options that are more salient or attention-grabbing, but they don't know why they chose them," said Jay Olson, lead author of the study and a professional magician.

To explore why people chose a certain card without being aware of any influence, Olson decided to test out some magic on the streets. Olson asked 118 people to choose any card by glancing at the one they wanted as he flipped through a deck. Unbeknownst to each of the subjects, Olson made a specific "target card" more prominent than the rest of the deck. In the end, an overwhelming 98 percent of participants ended up choosing the target card influenced by Olson, while nine out of 10 claimed they felt they had a free choice in the matter.

As a follow up, the research team reenacted the flipping of the deck, except this time using a computer program which subtly kept the target card on slightly longer than all the others. Like the street version, participants were asked to choose a card while glancing, though this time they were to record their choice silently throughout 28 separate trials.

This trick seemingly had less magic, however, as the target card was only chosen in 30 percent of the trials.

Why the lower success rate for the computer version, despite using the same subtle technique? According to study co-author Ronald Rensink, it was “possibly because many of the social and situational factors central to magic tricks were absent.” In other words, the magic is not only in the trick, but also in the personality and performance of the magician.

In addition to beginning to understand the psychology behind the centuries-old art of magic, the researchers also note that the study could help us understand why people make the decisions they do in everyday life.

“These results show that combining real-world and laboratory research can be a powerful way to study magic,” the authors wrote, “and can provide new methods to study the feeling of free will.

A Magician with nothing but an iPad

(Yahoo News)

A magician was on the Ellen show recently performing magic with nothing but an iPad, doing some very cool stuff. Watch his full performance here:

<http://news.yahoo.com/one-magician-needs-nothing-ipad-perform-magic-tricks-170022623.html>

Why so few women in magic?

(Wired)

Quick: Name a female magician. Just one, dead or alive. Go!

You probably can't. And it's not your fault; there aren't many of 'em.

For a while, if people thought a woman had magic powers, they called her a “witch” and killed her. Once people figured out magic isn't real, illusionists started dressing women in ugly costumes and shoving them into boxes. The women were impaled, bisected and decapitated. But this time it was pretend, so I guess that's progress?

There's nothing wrong with a magician using a woman (or a man) as a physical object; problem was, in the past, every woman who showed an interest in magic was immediately relegated to the assistant role. Sure, a handful of women resisted this relegation and tried their hand at the spotlight, but none of them fully grabbed the American public's attention.

Women like **Eusapia Palladino**, **Sylvia Browne**, and the **Long Island Medium** have achieved fame performing magicians' tricks (parlor illusions, mentalism and cold reading), but they've presented themselves as psychics and mediums. A far lower hurdle to jump. (It's easy for you to trick people when they don't know you're tricking them.)

Paradoxically, when a woman does identify as a magician, people find ways to rob her of credit. Look to wife-and-husband team Mistie and Kyle Knight. They just won Syfy's magic competition show *Wizard Wars*. But when they perform on cruise ships, sometimes, after the show, people will ask Mistie, "Do you know how the tricks are done?"

"Obviously that's hugely frustrating," Mistie says, "because I'm involved in every aspect of the show—writing the script, creating the illusions, building the props."

If female magicians can't get support from the general public, can they at least find support within the magic community?

Not even close.

I started magic when I was four, but I didn't "come on the scene" until I hit 28. In the past four years, I've consulted for **David Copperfield**, designed illusions for *Penguin Magic* (the biggest magic shop in the world) and created a magic TV show called *Wizard Wars*, which currently airs on Syfy. But I had 24 years to practice before anyone noticed me. And believe me, going unnoticed wasn't hard.

A white suburban boy bought a trick deck of cards? Stop the presses!

By comparison, the SECOND a woman expresses interest in magic, a herd of guys appears at her doorstep, offering free lessons, used props and used

routines. (My girlfriend couldn't complete the sentence, "I think I want to learn some basic-" before some guy threw a copy of *Corinda's 13 Steps to Mentalism* at her. "Some guy" being code for "me.") After a month, a second group of guys offers this woman stage time and TV spots. All of a sudden, this poor novice finds herself performing before a paying audience.

Does she suck? We all suck when we start out. But this woman is sucking alongside guys who've had the luxury of honing their craft for decades.

If you were to put this woman alongside guys who've been performing as long as she has, she'd do fine. But that never happens. Guys who've only performed magic a couple months almost never get on stage. They certainly don't get on TV. I've helped booked the shows and I've read the resumes.

Why?

Researchers [Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson](#) gave SAT problems to two groups of kids. Each group contained some black kids and some white kids. The first group was told that the questions measured intelligence; the second group was told that the questions were a "laboratory problem-solving task that was nondiagnostic of ability."

In the first group, the white kids substantially outperformed the black kids. In the second group the white kids and the black kids performed pretty much the same.

What the hell?

Here's what the hell: Black kids know the stereotype that white kids are smarter. So when the black kids in the first group heard, "intelligence test," they got stressed out and started focusing on their performance, as opposed to focusing on the SAT problems. Then they noticed their stress and tried to suppress it, which further distracted them. The black kids in the second group didn't have to deal with any of that; they just answered questions correctly, same as the white kids.

That was the original “*Stereotype Threat*” study. Since then, similar experiments have been conducted with gender as the variable.

1) If you tell a female chess player, “People think that men are better than women at chess,” she’ll play worse. You don’t even have to tell her, “Men are better”; you merely have to say, “a stereotype exists that men are better,” and it’ll throw her off her game. She’s not afraid the stereotype is true; she’s afraid of giving ammunition to those who believe it.

2) An experimenter gave two groups of women identical math tests. Each woman from the first group took the test alongside two other women. Each woman from the second group took the test alongside two guys. The women in the first group scored 15% higher than the women in the second group.

Do similar scenarios exist in the magic world? Yes, but times 10. Female magicians are hyperaware of how their male counterparts are seen. And female magicians always perform alongside men. But in magic, women aren’t outnumbered 2-to-1; they’re outnumbered probably 100-to-1.

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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.

London Magicians Guild web site:
magiclondon.brinkster.net

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