



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
May 2011
Volume 6, Issue 9

April's meeting

It was a pleasure to have our very own prez Steve Seguin present a lecture to us called "President's Choice": a series of effects that have no unifying theme, other than Steve likes 'em (which actually is a pretty good enough theme in itself!).

Steve started the night with a cute little effect where a spectator makes a free selection of an invisible coin (penny, nickel or dime), and Steve's holding the chosen coin all along! He followed that with a twist on a "Clippo" effect by Richard Osterlind that fooled us, where a newspaper clipping was cut, a line selected and it matched Steve's prediction.

Next up was a beautiful sandwich card effect by Chris Mayhew where a selected card appeared in between two cards with holes in them!

Steve also performed Swindle Transpo, a "Cards Across" effect he performed years ago (and floored me with) at a club dinner show. He also performed his take on Paul Harris's Las Vegas Leaper.

Paul Wilson's Con Can Coincidencia was next, where a selected card was found as the last card dealt by a spectator, and its three matching cards were the last cards held by three other spectators! He ended with a "Card at Any Number" effect where he demonstrated a very cool move to control a selected card (one of those times where he learned the trick because he wanted to learn the move!)

Next Meeting: (NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME AND DATE!!)

Wednesday, May 4

Topic: LECTURE by JON ALLEN!
Kitchener Hat & Rabbit Club

(Meet in Beal parking lot at 5:30pm and we'll carpool to Kitchener)

Steve is someone who knows a good effect. So when something catches his interest, you know it's time to pay attention! Many thanks to Steve Seguin for sharing his interests and talent with us!

Mark Hogan

May's Meeting (NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATE AND TIME!)

DATE: Wednesday, May 4

PLACE: Beal Secondary School parking lot – carpooling to Kitchener!
Leaving the parking lot promptly at 5:30 pm!

Topic: LECTURE by JON ALLEN

(NO COST for London club members! \$20 for guests at the door.)

The lecture with England's very own Jon Allen has changed to Kitchener's Hat & Rabbit Club.

We'll leave in the Beal parking lot at 5:30pm. There will be rides available for everyone. The lecture starts at 7:00pm in Kitchener.

Our club is covering the cost for all London club members. Guests will be charged \$20 at the door.

Close-up magician Jon Allen is England's only World IBM close-up magic champion, a Gold Star Member of the Inner Magic Circle and a natural entertainer He is on his way to Obie O'Brien 's prestigious FFFF convention and is making a special lecture stop just for us!!

Jon is also a previous recipient of The Magic Circle's 'Close-Up Magician of the Year' and a previous British IBM Close-up Magic Champion.

Jon lectures to magicians around the world in USA, Canada, Australia, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, Scotland and England.

He was invited to lecture for a world-wide audience of magicians at FISM, the most prestigious magic convention in the world, further establishing his position amongst the elite in the world of magic.

As well as a lecturer, Jon is also respected around the world as an author and inventor of original tricks that thousands of magicians perform. His work has appeared in numerous magic magazines around the world. He also creates bespoke magical effects for TV commercials & corporate clients.

Jon is the author of "Experience: The Magic of Jon Allen" by John Lovick, a well received book explaining 50 of Jon's most prized routines and ideas.

TV work includes Panorama, MTV Awards trailer, RI:SE, Big Breakfast, Hidden World of London, London Today, Mrs Cohen's Money, XChange and numerous TV commercials.

He has been invited to perform his close-up magic at the very first All-British Week at the world-famous Magic Castle in Hollywood

He has also been invited to entertain the 'A' list guests at Lennox Lewis' Official Undisputed Victory Party, as well as backstage hospitality at concerts for Phil Collins and Eric Clapton.

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

News Of Interest

Magicians seek to reinvent an old art for the Internet age

(Curtis Rush, The Star)

In the days of the Internet, magic is losing its mystery, and some magicians are running out of rabbits to pull out of a hat.

"Magic is definitely in decline," says Toronto comedian/performer Jay Sankey, who creates magic and consults with the best magicians in the world, including David Copperfield. "It's shrinking."

Sankey and others lay some of the blame on a saturated market brought on by hundreds of cable television channels and the Internet, where people expose tricks to the world and sometimes claim them as their own.



One magician, Toronto's Dan Trommater, has had enough and is moving away from parlour tricks. Called the "thinking man's magician," he is building a new client base in the corporate world, where he uses magic as a tool in leadership workshops that deal with wrong assumptions and embracing new possibilities.

But Sankey believes magicians themselves are to blame for not moving quickly enough beyond the clichés of card tricks and tuxedos.

Magicians rank only above mimes in the amount of disrespect they get, but magicians have been arrogant and out of touch for too long, he says.

And they have a hard act in Toronto, which has no permanent home for magic. In North America, there are probably fewer than 10 venues dedicated to the art. Compare that with comedy; in Toronto and elsewhere, comedians have a variety of local venues where they can perform.

Yet, watching a magician send ripples of delight and wonder through a crowd, one might wonder why magic hasn't taken off in this city.

In early December at the Ryerson Theatre, for example, a group of world-class magicians performed Magic N Miracles, sponsored by the Toronto Firefighters Association to benefit local causes. A near-capacity crowd of about 1,000 could barely control their gasps through the 90-minute show.

Yet North American audiences seem to be pulling a disappearing act.

"Magic has to reinvent itself," Sankey asserts. "Magic is irrelevant and has been irrelevant for a long time, and I think it's caught up with us."

The most popular acts — Copperfield, Penn and Teller, David Blaine and Criss Angel — are still commanding presences. But few make a full-time living at in Canada. Sankey believes the profession is limited to dozens, "but not hundreds."

"Magic is a hard way to make a living," he adds.

The art is in such a freefall that perhaps Canada's most decorated magician says he can't get an act booked in Canada.

Shawn Farquhar of Coquitlam, B.C., declared the world champion of magic in 2009 at the "Olympics of Magic" in Beijing, says he is more demand abroad than in his own country.

"I do almost all my work in Europe and Asia now," Farquhar says.

His YouTube video Shape of My Heart has been viewed more than a million times, and an audience of 3,000 in Korea immediately recognized the music from the video when Farquhar introduced himself.

"The crowd went insane," Farquhar said. "And I said, 'You know this?' I have a fan base that I didn't know existed."

Comedian/magician David Acer of Montreal agrees that technology has changed things. "What's changed is the ability of magicians to ply their trade based on secrets alone," he says. "It turns out they now have to get better at other things, like being entertaining and real relevant."

Yet the Internet hasn't been all bad for magicians. Although YouTube has created a subculture of magicians who don't perform before live audiences, they use the video-sharing site as a springboard to success. One turned his YouTube act into a hit on America's Got Talent.

The information age has also sped up learning the craft.

"When we were young, the magic trade journals would have maybe 10 new tricks a year," said Farquhar, 48. "Everyone would devour them. Now there are 50 new tricks a day through the Internet. Once somebody sees an idea, it sparks a new idea. The Internet is helping us develop our magic."

Farquhar said the recession that hit Las Vegas also hit magic. But he reasons that the best magicians were born in bad times, when people needed an escape.

Murray Hatfield, who hails from Victoria, B.C., produces and directs the Magic N Miracles benefit tour. He and wife Teresa have turned the act into a full theatrical production, including video projections of close-up tricks, plus contemporary music, dance and costuming.

"My goal is to show audiences that magic is more than just birthday party magic," Hatfield says.

Sankey doesn't share that excitement, and goes so far as to say that magic as we've known it is doomed.

"That's what I think and that's what I hope," he says starkly. "I think it's time. What's next for magic is a really big question and lots of people are wondering about it. I think the days when we try to make magic entertaining just because we know the secret and the audience doesn't, I think those days are over."

He's plotting a reinvention of magic.

"This coming spring, I plan to release something in the magic community which I'm hoping will be the beginning of the change. I think it could be an exciting time."

But true to his profession, he is mysterious about it all, other than to say that "magic" as a label will be gone. The word is "so laden with so many problems, marketing-wise, and clichés, and I think we need to take a break from it."

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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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