



# Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community  
May 2015 Volume 10, Issue 9

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## April's meeting

Sometimes meetings look like they'll be one way and end up totally different! It was thought the people would be sparse, but then came newly crowned *Canadian Association of Magicians* (CAM) President **Ron Keller**, as well as our good friends **Greydon Gilmore** and **Keith Brown** – both preparing for a performance later in the week in Toronto.

Ron distributed copies of the new and greatly improved *Northern Peaks* (the CAM newsletter). He spoke about changes being planned for CAM, including the web site being "rebooted" to include the newsletter (with videos!).

**Keith Brown** told us the story of the year – his signature needle-swallowing effect took a wrong turn when he found he was missing a needle after an unexpected cough. Yep - you guessed it! We couldn't stop laughing as he showed us the x-rays and pictures and heard the reactions of the doctor and nurses. I don't want to say any more – Ron talked Keith into writing up an article about the whole experience for the CAM newsletter! That will be a must-read!

### **Next Meeting:**

**Wednesday, June 10 (NO MEETING IN MAY)**

**Time: TBD**

**Topic: YEAR-END DINNER!**

**LOCATION: TBD**

Eventually we got down to the topic for the night – prop management! And there's no one better at prop management than **Mike Fisher**, who showed us two of his prop cases. His current stage show case (black, as to not be a primary focus) stood on a speaker stand that also holds a jam box & wireless

microphone. There were slots for a chalkboard sign that could be optionally placed in front. The case was a old "travelling bar" with 3 shelves of various heights. The back opening was large enough to hold several jumbo cards. He placed Velcro on the lid to hold scissors, knives, etc. A board facing the back held hooks he installed to hold several smaller items, as well as his set list and some patter. No props were stacked – which made it easy to find any prop at any time.

His close-up case, resembling a pirate chest for his pirate act, was an old tool box with multiple sliding drawers. The board used to hold screws and washers was easily converted into a close-up mat for his *three shell game*. Mike indicated that every show you have should have its own case, so it becomes easy to pack and go.

A big thanks to Mike for bringing out his prop cases and teaching us about good prop management!

Mark Hogan

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## April's Meeting

**DATE: Wednesday, June 10 (NO MEETING IN MAY)**

**TIME: TBD**

**PLACE: TBD**

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## TOPIC: YEAR-END DINNER!

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Due to several members being away in May (working, of course!), the May meeting is being cancelled.

June is our YEAR-END DINNER in June 10. So book that date! More information will come in the next newsletter.

**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



## Success of Secrets project - interview with Greg Frewin

(Anthony Lindan)

The **Secrets of Success Project** is a collection of inspiring and motivating Niagara success stories.

**Anthony Lindan**, whose 15 years old son is on the Autism Spectrum, created the Project as a third party fundraising initiative to raise both money and awareness for Autism.

Anthony interviewed some of the most interesting people in Niagara - world class athletes, radio personalities, business people, entertainers and entrepreneurs - about their success. The interviews offer powerful tips and insights about becoming more successful both personally and professionally.

Amazing is the only way to describe **Greg Frewin's** career and his passion for amazing and entertaining his audiences. Greg is currently Canada's most accomplished and successful magician. He has performed on every major stage in the world, on numerous TV specials and has won every magic award and honor offered. For the past 10 years Greg has performed about 275 dates a year in his own theatre - *The Greg Frewin Theatre* - in Niagara Falls, ON.

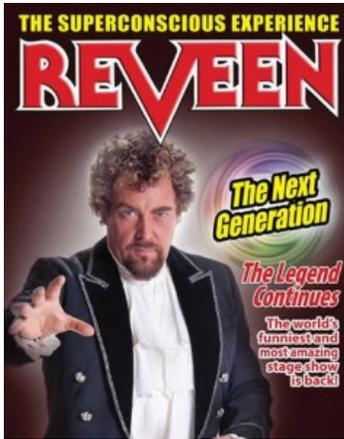
Greg shares the real secrets that have brought him incredible success both on and off the stage.

Greg's interview is online at:

[http://secretsofsuccessproject.com/?page\\_id=6](http://secretsofsuccessproject.com/?page_id=6)

Visitors are encouraged to listen to as many as they like and make a *'pay what you can'* donation.

All net proceeds from the Project will go the *Autism Ontario Niagara Region Chapter*.



## Reveen the Impossibleist's Tradition Continues

(Inside Magic)

The late **Peter Reveen**, known professionally as *Reveen the Impossibleist*, passed away in 2013 but his family's gift to the *St. John's Arts and Culture Centre* in Newfoundland, Canada.

Mr. Reveen's last show was on the main stage at the Arts and Culture Centre in 2008 and now on Saturday, his son **Ty** will carry on in the Impossibleist tradition with a new Reveen show on the same stage. Mr. Reveen's 13-year-old grandson **Taj** was also at the presentation. He says he's looking forward to taking over the show when his father, Ty, retires.

The family donated Mr. Reveen's famous bejewelled red tuxedo to the Centre.

Check out the [Reveen website here](#).

## Woody Allen disgruntled with Chicken at Magic Castle

(Tim Quinlan)

*The National Enquirer* spills the fava beans with a story about **Woody Allen** being disgruntled at *The Magic Castle*.

We have always said that if some cannot be grunted at the Magic Castle, there is no place they will not be disgruntled. This just proves our point.

According to *The Enquirer's Mike Walker*, Mr. Allen ordered a "plain broiled chicken" for his entrée. Unfortunately, the chef did not serve him just a plain piece of poultry but provided a portion with a "special sauce."

According to Mr. Walker's sources, Mr. Allen became "really upset. All he'd wanted was plain broiled chicken, so he barely touched the meal."

He complained about it later when a strolling magician asked how he was enjoying the evening. "So far, nobody's made my hunger disappear!"

See what he did there? Hunger, disappear, magic trick, dinner disgruntlement.

Mr. Allen participated in a trick where the magician caused his \$100.00 bill to vanish. He couldn't let go of his chicken issues, though.

He apparently rolled his eyes and commented "I'll be happy if it reappears as a plain broiled chicken!"

Oh, dear. He must be thinking of that old **U.F. Grant** parlor trick, *Bill to Chicken Supreme*. We used to perform it back in the late 1960s and early 1970s before the animal rights folks became so insistent. It was a great trick and depended on a pull to hook onto the chicken's feet with a little Velcro harness that could be difficult to work.

**Jimmy King** later came out with a much more effective harness system for the chicken vanish but by then audiences had come to disapprove of tricks involving freshly cooked birds.

## Can TV shows about magic be magical again?

(Brittany Fredrick, EW.com)

Magicians are awesome. And we've seen more magic-themed TV shows over the last year and a half than we have in a long time: *Spike's Criss Angel BeLIEve*; Syfy's *Wizard Wars*, *Close Up Kings*, and *Troy: Street Magic*; The CW's resurrection of *Masters of Illusion* and importing of *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*. So why are we not feeling—we have to say it—magical?

First, magic is an art with a certain air of grandeur. It is really hard to create that big feeling on the small screen. A lot of illusions just aren't the same if you're not in the room when they're being performed—you can't see and hear and feel the moment, because you're separated from it by a TV screen and who knows how many months of tape delay. It doesn't help when *Masters of Illusion*, which is an hour in reruns from its cable days, is 30 minutes on The CW. That means host **Dean Cain** has to go through acts so quickly that you barely have time to let the tricks sink in. It's a great platform to give magicians national network television exposure, but audiences don't get the full experience.

Yet a big part of that experience isn't just the illusion itself, but everything that goes into it. If the act itself is an art, then the creation of that act is a science. What was so fantastic about *Criss Angel BeLIEve* when Spike unveiled it in October 2013 was that it was almost about everything *but* the performance. We got to know Angel a lot better and understand what it was like for him to do these challenging tricks every day. We learned about the history involved with many of his demonstrations. We met his team, and were able to listen in on their discussions about how to make magic happen, whether it was building a prop or finding the perfect location. We saw when things didn't go according to plan and how they dealt with those situations. These are elements of magic that most TV audiences probably haven't even thought about.

As *BeLIEve* and Angel's previous series, *Criss Angel Mindfreak*, made clear, magic isn't simple or cheap. It's come a long way from making a rabbit appear out of a hat. Now we get tricks like this:

<https://youtu.be/uGNJXNxmDZE>

The result is fascinating: It's no longer about "Is it real?" or "How did he/she do that?" First of all, magic is never real, unless it's some sort of illusion-less feat like Angel's "*Cement Grave*." But finding out how a magician performs a trick now doesn't necessarily burst the bubble. The transparency leads to a greater appreciation of all the pieces—what took five minutes on your TV screen, you now understand can be months of build time and rehearsals and thousands of dollars. It's not a moment; it's a process, and often a journey.

That's what TV didn't have before *BeLIEve*, and doesn't really have now since its cancellation. The closest we've got is Syfy's *Wizard Wars*, which challenges established magicians to outdo each other with routines created from the same sets of props. There has been some really unique magic created on the show and interesting pairings, such as when *America's Got Talent* veteran Nathan Burton paired up with Marcus Eddie in "Battle of the Vegas Strip." We got to watch them work:

<https://youtu.be/V9WW8pun8DA>

In addition to getting sneak peeks at the competitors' preparation, audiences get to hear very specific feedback on their routines from a judging panel that consists of some smart folks: magic critic **Christen Gerhart**, world champion **Jason Latimer**, and the legendary **Penn & Teller**. Each episode also usually has a magic reveal performed by one of the series regulars; show co-creator **Justin Flom** has a real knack for explaining tricks simply and concisely. But because it's a competition show, *Wizard Wars* doesn't get to pry too deeply into the magic process or showcase any of its talent for too long.

Nor does *Masters of Illusion*, which moves too fast. Syfy also has *Close Up Kings*, which is more of a buddy show that happens to be about magicians, and *Troy: Street Magic*, which has a charismatic lead in **Troy Von Scheibner** but keeps its focus on the trick and not the trickster. Likewise, The CW's *Fool Us* is a competition show, its object to see if anyone can keep Penn & Teller from figuring their act out. There's nothing on the air that really leaves an impact beyond, "Wow, that was cool." There's nobody right now that's able to show the audience just how complex and wonderful and meaningful magic is.

While it's fantastic that there's a renewed interest in showcasing magic on television, and the shows that we do have are fine entertainment, we have yet to find a show that can really take it to the next level. We need a great magician who can truly communicate with a TV audience—someone like **Angel, Burton, Flom, Krystyn Lambert** or **Michael Grandinetti**, just to name a few—to land a series that's the right length and the right approach to tear the lid off magic one more time. This show would not just create great illusions, but also tell a

great story, and ultimately leave us feeling like we're along for the ride, not just watching it at home. If that show could happen, it would be the greatest trick of all.

Shell Game  
Vol. 10, Issue 9  
May 2015

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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