2026/2027 Club Membership Dues are now due!!

Please bring your **$40** membership renewal dues to the September meeting, or you can send a **$40 Interac e-transfer** to: *magic_london@yahoo.ca*



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
November 2026 Volume 20, Issue 3

October's meeting

Last month's theme was "*Openers*". Opening routines are often short, visual, and light on audience participation. One thing all openers have in common is their purpose: to gather an audience's attention.

Andrew Olmstead kicked off the meeting with a coins-to-cup routine based on *Three Lumps* by **Doug Conn**. **Peter Skells** showed off his three card monte effect with the aid of a special card he crafted. **Harvey Poole** performed a complex variation of *Poker Player's Picnic*, with an original method of resetting the trick right in front of the audience.

Serge Pereira performed his quick close-up opener. A named card was shown to be the only red-backed card in a blue deck, but then the back of the card changed to blue to match the pack. Finally, **Steve Seguin** performed a surprising opener by vanishing a silk multiple times and finally reproducing it from his mouth.

The rest of the evening was a wonderful hang filled with magic. Thank you to everyone who came out! Join us in November for a theme with a lot of audience interaction, "*Magic in Their Hands*".

Andrew Olmstead

Next Meeting:

Date: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
Time: 7:00 PM

Topic: MAGIC IN THEIR HANDS!

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

November's meeting

DATE: Wednesday, November 11
TIME: 7:00 PM

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

TOPIC: MAGIC IN THEIR HANDS!

We all know it's true - the most impactful effects for spectators is magic that happens in their own hands. It appears that you can do nothing - and they are under complete control. And yet the magic still happens, with them becoming part of the magic.

Come out to the November meeting with some effects you have where the magic seems to happen right in the spectator's hands.

Hope to see you on **Wednesday, November 11!**

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

News Of Interest

The Browser's Den 51st Anniversary Party on November 15

(browsersden.com





When Dating New Tricks Stops Working

(Aaron Fisher - Conjuror.community)

There's a question I hear all the time — sometimes people ask it outright, and sometimes it's just sitting there under the surface.

It usually comes out sounding like this:

"Why do I feel busy with magic, but not like I'm really doing it?"

When people talk about "moving forward," they're almost never talking about learning more. What they usually mean is something much more specific — making the transition from **thinking about magic** to actually **putting magic into the world**.

And that distinction matters.

The people asking this question aren't lazy. In fact, it's usually the opposite. They're watching good lectures. Learning new material. Staying curious. On paper, everything looks fine.

The problem shows up later — when it's time to decide what they're actually going to perform.

At some point, nearly every serious magician hits the same inflection point. People describe it in different ways, but many eventually recognize it as some version of what we've all come to call *shiny object syndrome*.

You like a lot of magic.

You collect tricks.

You enjoy learning.

But choosing which specific pieces you're willing to **do** — not admire, not study, not keep on a list — starts to feel oddly difficult.

That's not a personal failing. It's a stage.

Early on, you *should* explore. You need range. You need contrast. You need to discover what excites you — and just as important, what doesn't really fit once the novelty wears off.

But there's an important practical reality hiding underneath all of this.

Getting a trick ready for real performance — and staying with it long enough for it to become good — is expensive. It takes time, focus, rehearsal, scripting, and a willingness to live with something through awkward stages. And that's just to get it on its feet. There's still a lot more to learn once you start performing it.

That cost is why choosing matters.

Working with magic is a lot like dating.

At first, dating teaches you how to interact with different partners. You learn what feels natural, what drains you, what looks promising but never quite settles. Magic works the same way. You slowly learn something that's hard to see at the beginning: it's not enough to like a trick. You have to be compatible with it.

There are pieces audiences love when *someone else* performs them — the kind of magic you enjoy watching **David Williamson** do, for example — but that never quite comes alive when you try to inhabit it yourself. There are tricks you respect deeply but never fully connect with. And there are effects that simply don't come to life in your hands, no matter how strong they are in theory.

That realization can be frustrating — but it's also necessary.

The trouble starts when people never leave this phase.

They keep meeting new tricks. They enjoy the spark. They feel productive. But they quietly avoid the harder step: deciding which pieces they're willing to stay with once things stop feeling shiny.

Here's where things usually get uncomfortable.

The moment you decide that your goal is actually to perform — maybe to build a close-up set — your relationship to new material changes. You might look at what you already have and realize you like three strong pieces… but none of them really works as an opener.

Now, when you watch a lecture or learn something new, you're no longer just browsing. You're looking for something specific. Your field of vision narrows.

You can still appreciate great magic. You can still take notes. But you're no longer accepting every new idea as a candidate for your working repertoire.

That shift is healthy.

What it often *feels* like, though, is trading the excitement of discovery for something closer to hard work. You give up the constant sense of exploration and replace it with repetition, refinement, and responsibility.

That can feel like a loss — at first.

But that boredom is often the doorway.

Because what you get in return isn't novelty — it's intimacy. Shared history with a piece of magic. You perform it in good conditions and bad. You learn how it behaves across different audiences, venues, moods, and moments. Instead of being replaced, the trick starts to grow with you.

And before any of that happens, you're making a quiet but important decision: what you're willing to carry.

Repertoire doesn't just live in cases and notebooks. It lives in working memory. Choosing what you perform means choosing what you're willing to think about, rehearse, refine, and remember for a long time. Those choices deserve more care than we usually give them.

Of course, nothing is truly permanent. Tricks come and go over a lifetime.

But if you want to move forward, there’s no way around this step.

You have to stop shopping long enough to decide what you’re actually building.

So yes — date. Explore. Stay curious.

But if you take an honest look at where you are right now, it may be worth asking a quieter, more important question:

Which tricks am I ready to keep?

At a certain point, progress stops coming from finding something new — and starts coming from deciding that what you already have is enough.



Hanging like Harry Houdini at the Magic Castle

(CBS News)

In honor of **Harry Houdini's** death 100 years ago, the escape artist known as **Houdini II** reenacted the dangling-from-a-crane, bound-in-a-straitjacket stunt at the *Magic Castle* on Friday morning.

This time, there was an extra challenge involved: dangling from one foot. As **Houdini II** was suspended about nine stories high in Hollywood, he wiggled his way out of the jacket and safely returned to the ground.

He was released from the harness to cheers, and shouted, "Los Angeles!"

"It's beautiful up there … we made history," **Houdini II** said. "That's the first time you've seen a one-legged escape; most escape artists use two legs."

In 1917, Houdini performed the original stunt in New York, above Times Square. He was suspended upside down in a regulation straitjacket, and in front of thousands of spectators he escaped the binds.

Houdini II wore a replica of Houdini's straitjacket, he said. "Houdini has been my idol forever ... so, the 100th anniversary of his death, that made it just so cool for me."

Houdini died on October 31, 1926, at the age of 52 from peritonitis, possibly related to appendicitis, possibly related to gut punches he had received just over one week earlier.

Rob Zabrecky, the director of séances at the *Magic Castle*, said there will be an event on Saturday to raise the spirit of Houdini. "So there's an organization of Houdini aficionados that meet every year. They have since the '40's. And this year, we're meeting at 7001 Franklin, the *Magic Castle*," Zabrecky said.

"And there are no trapdoors, no hidden assistance, no mirrors; we're really going to try to raise the spirit in an honest, in the most honest way we possibly can."

The tradition of holding a séance for Houdini is practiced by magicians throughout the world.

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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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