



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
October 2005
Volume 1, Issue 2

September Meeting

The theme of our first meeting after the summer break was "Our Favourite Magicians". We were encouraged to learn a little about one of our favourites and do one of their signature effects.

Steve Seguin (our new prez!) chose **Paul Harris** and did a very entertaining take on "Las Vegas Leaper". **Mark Hogan** spoke a little about **Boris Pocus** (the **Jay Sankey** incarnation), then introduced his brother "**Markus Pocus**" to do "Unconscious Knowledge" – a "Card At Any Number" effect.

Greydon Gilmore also picked Paul Harris (must be a popular guy!) and did "Reset" – a cool Cards Across effect. **Andy Parr** challenged our brains with a **Giovanni Livera** effect where prisoners (pennies) kept escaping from the prison yet the total prisoner count never changed!

The legend of **Anverti** was introduced to us by **Max Scott**, who showed us the "Surprise Box" (an automatically closing card box); a box with seven keys which would only open with the one key left for the magician; a dog that barks when the chosen card is dealt (really!); and an impressive mental dice effect.

Justin Govan likes the magic of **Jay Sankey**, and chose an effect where a shuffled pack was dealt into 3 piles and the top cards of each pile matched his prediction. **Steve Wallace**, our sole guest, did "5 Card Mambo", where 5 cards disappear and show up in several of his pockets!

After the break, **Mike Fisher** got us ready for next month's **David Ginn** lecture by doing several of David's effects: the colour changing shoelace, a cups & balls routine, and a multiplying bunnies routine with rubber chickens!

Thanks to everyone for preparing and performing effects from their favourite magicians. And get ready for next month's lecture – it should be great!

- Mark Hogan

Next Meeting:
Wed. Oct. 14, 7:00 pm
Beal Secondary School,
Room 225
525 Dundas St., London
Topic: David Ginn Lecture



Word from the Vice President

I'm really looking forward to David Ginn's lecture.

I have read most of David's books and I'm looking forward to meeting one of my favorite magician's in person. David has been around for many years as a performer, lecturer, and magic dealer and I'm sure that everyone attending will get something out of the event.

I have been promoting David's lecture to everyone I can think of, not only magicians but also other variety performers and I'm hoping that many of them will attend. One of my desires for the club is to increase its awareness through events like our lectures. Wouldn't it be great if we could fill our room with performers of all stripes? Clowns, jugglers, magicians, cat hurlers, hypnotists - all joined together to learn and socialize with others. Now please don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about having clowns join us at our regular meetings (we have enough clowns there already, myself included). Besides, there's a perfectly good clown club in London. I'm just saying that for the occasional lecture it would be great P.R. and not bad for the club's coffers to promote it to all entertainers.

I'd love to see us do more events, perhaps another Super Supper Show. I'd love us to do a Public event like a charity Magic fundraiser for the Red Cross where our members perform for the public at a dinner, some doing close up, some doing stage and the proceeds could go to the latest disaster (like

the next hurricane). I would also like to see another Social event for our club in January. Something like our June banquet, but less formal and more family fun. Our club used to be very large in years past, and when I read over the newsletters of those days I find that the club did many things outside of the regular meetings (like barbeques). I'd like to see our club to move in that direction once again, let me know what you think, if any of these ideas move you, or if you would like to help.

- Mike Fisher

Memberships

Remember, we will begin collecting membership fees again at the October meeting. **Membership for the year is \$30.** This allows you to attend club meetings, lectures and special events for free. It also gives you voting privileges, which in turn allow you to have a say in the direction of the club. Finally, club membership gives you a free listing in the club's online magician directory, which can be a valuable way to get paid performances.

London Juggling Club

Mon. October 3, 2005

Did you know there was a juggling club in town? For \$10 you can learn how to juggle. Already know how to juggle? Learn how to juggle 4, 5 or even 6 balls. Learn how to pass pins between two or more people. Learn diabolo, rola bola, devil sticks and more!!! Anyone can join. For more info visit <http://www.usc.uwo.ca/clubs/jugglers/home-fs.html> or email <mailto:uwojugglingclub@hotmail.com>.

News Of Interest

Family Entertainers Workshop

The Family Entertainers Workshop promises to help you become a better kid show and family entertainer. Each year the Sid Lorraine Hat & Rabbit Club brings the finest practitioners in the field in an information-packed day of learning.

On October 23, they are bringing in **Tim Sonfelt** and **Julian Franklin**. Together, in a series of six lectures, they will share the "real world" material that has made them successful as well as the marketing secrets that keep the bookings rolling in.

The Workshop is at the Quality Suites Toronto Airport. Registration is \$50 in advance or \$65 at the door. For more information, contact **Ron Guttman** at (905) 889-5113 or at <mailto:ron.guttman@sympatico.ca>.

Doug Henning on the Walk of Fame?

There is a grassroots movement to get **Doug Henning** inducted into the **Canadian Walk of Fame**. Doug Henning – with his chipmunk grin and tie-dyed clothes – reminded adults why the world needs wonder. From the Royal Alexandra to Broadway to Emmy-nominated NBC TV specials, Henning made an elephant vanish, walked through a brick wall and recreated Houdini's acclaimed underwater escape – all while reminding us that "It's an *illooooosion!*"



Nominations to induct Henning into the Walk of Fame may be made up until December 31st at <http://www.canadaswalkoffame.com/inductees/nominations.xml>

Watermelon Festival

Max Scott

performed at
Straffordville's 8th
annual

Watermelon Fest.
By all accounts,
the show was
extremely well-
enjoyed. (Photo
courtesy of
Tilsonburg News)



Shriner's Haunted Mansion

The Shriner's Haunted Mansion returns to the Western Fair this month. For seven years, London Illusionist Timothy Drake has helped create 20,000 square feet of spooky special effects and illusions. The Mansion is fun for young and old. It runs from October 20 to October 31 at the Western Fair. Proceeds benefit Children's Hospitals.

Calendar

October 3 **Western Juggling Club** Meeting

October 14 **David Ginn** Lecture in London

October 20-31 **Shriner's Haunted Mansion** at the Western Fair

October 23 **Family Entertainers Workshop** in Toronto

Magic Reviews



Seriously Silly: How to Entertain Children with Magic and Comedy by David Kaye

Even though I perform primarily for family audiences, before reading **Seriously Silly** I had only ever read one book on kids' magic. That first book consisted of a half-dozen inane routines in which every single prop used for some reason hit the performer on the head.

I've stayed away from kids' magic books ever since. The few times I've been tempted, the photos of ruffled-tuxedo wearing magicians – which seem to predominate in these books – always turned me off at the last moment.

A few months ago, I started reading raving reviews of **Seriously Silly**. Next, performers I know and respect started telling me how good the book was. I found myself at the **Browser's Den** holding a copy, trying to get past the image on the cover of a middle-aged man in large novelty sunglasses, rainbow bow tie, and matching shoes.

Against my better judgment, I bought it.

And I loved it.

Seriously Silly is a collection of thoughts, stratagems, tips and routines by New York City's premier children's entertainer, **David Kaye**. He performs under the name **Silly Billy** and is legendary not only for the high rates he charges for

birthday parties, but also for the list of celebrities he's worked for.

A large portion of the book discusses the psychology of children's magic, making logical links to popular children's psychology. He discusses what each age group thinks is funny and what they look for in a magic effect. He then breaks down and analyzes a single routine in detail, describing exactly how to present that same routine to three different age groups. This case study alone is a graduate course in kids' entertainment.

Kaye then describes six full routines, giving not only the full patter but also the little bits of business that makes the routines memorable. I'm happy to say that each one of these routines is strong enough and funny enough to be added to your show without modification. The routines all require some common magic props to perform, and I'm happy to say that only a few of them hit the performer on the head. Strongly recommended.

- Steve Seguin

We Want Your Reviews! Please send any reviews of magic tricks, books and videos to:

Steve_Sequin@hotmail.com



Guest

David Ginn on Entertaining Children

In my **Crash Course on Kidshows** book, I talk about 33

things children enjoy seeing in shows. This is not to say you MUST include all 33 things, but the more you include, the better kids like your performance. Let me share with you several of them right now, and when I lecture in London on October 14, I'll tell you about many more. - DAVID GINN

Get Hurt

Crazy as it seems, children love to see a performer get hurt in some way physically. From slapping my hand accidentally against the mike stand and yelling, "OUCH!" to slamming a box down on my thumb and pulling it out with a giant thumb attached (and again acting in pain), I often include something in a show that uses this technique.

Yes, it's basic SLAPSTICK, never carried too far . . . just enough to make the kids laugh and sorta think I've been injured.

Magician **Harley Day** once told me he used Rocco's Delite thumbtip to "show pain" and make kids laugh. How? He opened a box to take something out, slipped on the tip with a red light inside it. As he closed the box with a BAM!, he pulled up his thumb, yelled in pain, and activated the red light. Suddenly his thumb glowed RED for an instant, long enough for the kids to see, then Harley quickly blew out the light like blowing out a burning candle. "Wow, that hurt!" he said, then went on with the show!

Years ago, in my "Computerized Magic" school show, I had several spring snakes come zooming out of a box. I had already learned, at that time, NOT to shoot the snakes out towards the audience. Someone could get hurt

fighting over them or the children will destroy your snakes grabbing to get them. So I developed the method of letting the snakes shoot STRAIGHT UP into the air over MY head. That way the spring snakes came down on me, the performer, and I could control them.

So down they came on me each show, and I had a Snake Fight with them. I suppose that goes back to pillow fights in childhood. In fact, now that I think of it, my sister Nancy and I use to have fights with our stuffed animals! Anyway, I fought and wrestled with the five spring snakes, shaking them all around, punching them, and after about ten seconds tossing them off the stage, all the time yelling as though they were "getting the best of me," but finally winning the fight. At that point, I had so physically worked myself up, that I actually leaned down onto my table top and buried my face in my arms and RESTED for about five seconds.

But let me tell you what happened during those five seconds. Not only did I catch my breath, but I listened to the children laugh . . . and laugh and laugh and laugh. I have this on an old video tape I used to show at lectures, and the tape doesn't lie. Those children laughed their little heads off BECAUSE they THOUGHT I was being ATTACHED by SNAKES!

Do you see what I mean? Go ahead, get hurt on purpose, and make kids laugh! Just try not to really get hurt. Personally, I quit accidentally hitting my mike stand because I got bruised too many times.

Object Takes Over

Children love to see an inanimate object, a puppet, or even your live rabbit usurp your authority as an adult performer.

I use this to my advantage in many shows. For example, when the Silver Sceptre repeatedly rises out of the handkerchief or carrying case without my permission. It acts as though it is ALIVE and furthermore, in charge! I act frustrated/out of control, and kids love seeing that. Check my **Kidshow How-2** video or the **Klinic Live** video set to see me doing this before live audiences.

You can do the same thing with many tricks. Take the Zombie floating ball, for example. When it starts floating up under the cloth, pretend it is getting away from you, pulling you along, like you're chasing it. Kids enjoy that because they think you are losing control. Let them think that.

Better, MAKE them think that! Use this technique to your kidshow advantage.

Look Don't See

This technique is basic Abbott and Costello to me. When I look at something, I don't see what the kids are telling me about. When I look away, it happens and they yell about it. Hey, it works. I've done the **Trevor Lewis** Blooming Bouquet routine about 2000 times in 25 years to prove it, and it STILL WORKS! Thank you, Trevor, for teaching me and sharing this with the world of magic and clowning!

Thirty years ago I saw **Johnny Giordmaine** perform at a park in Toronto, Canada. He was a master of look don't see, using the

technique every time he produced another billiard ball. "I have two balls," he'd say, and a third would appear. Then the kids would tell him THREE, he'd look and there were only two (because he made one vanish), and he'd repeat this over and over much to the amusement of all until he had FOUR balls!

In my "Every Book is a Magic Book" school show, I perform the Pet Shop Pranks version of Farmyard Frolics. I end up with the cardboard snake on MY back. When the trick is "over" and the snake "gone," I remark to the kids, "Do you know what this means? No? It's means there's a SNAKE LOOSE IN THE SCHOOL!"

With that I turn around, and pandemonium takes place. They instantly see the snake on the back of my shirt . . . and they go wild with laughter and shouting trying to tell me. Of course, I cannot see the snake. I look left and right, walk to both sides of the stage. I look, but I don't see it!

Finally, I pretend to understand what they are telling me: "It's on your back!" I reach behind my back, grab the snake held in place with duct tape, then swivel around to show my back to the crowd, at the same time bringing the snake with me and taping it onto my shirt front, a technique I learned from the late **Edwin Hooper**. Then I feel around my back. Nothing there.

So I face the kids again and say, "It's NOT on my back!" And off they go to shouting again, this time saying, "It's on your FRONT!" I play the look don't see game a moment more, then find the snake, pronounce him a Magic Snake, and

have the children give him a big round of applause. Did they have FUN throughout all this? Sure they did!

- David Ginn



Opinion: Kidshow Challenges

By the Amazing
Corbin

This past summer I performed for children at 47 different libraries across Ontario as well as about 20 birthday parties and other events. During my summer tour I had a lot of fun and met some very interesting people. I thought I would use this column to talk a bit about my experience and a few challenges I had with the children and the venues that I performed in. I hope you enjoy reading how I dealt with the children without the use of a tazer.

Seating arrangement

Some Children behave badly, they just do. They're kids that's why. During our magic shows nothing changes. The only time those kids behave properly is when their parents are beside them. But when their parents are beside them they do not react to our shows well. I have found that the children's behavior at a magic show is directly related to the distance between them and their parents. There's a mathematical equation in there somewhere I'm sure. Growing up this was not the case with me. I was always a well behaved child, mostly because I knew that wherever my mom was she could pull off her flip

flop sandal and whip it upside my head in seconds. Now aside from giving every parent in the audience a flip flop sandal I like to make sure they are far enough away from their children so I can have a good show, but close enough for them to be able to give their kids the "evil eye" occasionally. I usually have chairs for the parents strung along the back of the room immediately behind children, who are seated on the floor. If you notice that the room is not filling up as you had thought, pull the parents chairs forward. I did a show at the Windsor library and the parents were so far back they might as well not have even been in the room. Before I began that show I could see a problem starting with some of the children so instead of moving 100 chairs I told the parents to come forward and sit on the floor behind the children. Most of them did and it made for a fun show as the parents became more involved, yet they were still not sitting with their kids. They were close enough to give them the "evil eye" though (otherwise known as the "wait till I get you alone look"). You may be going against the "normal seating plan" of the room you are in, but I believe it is essential for a good show to separate the parents and the children. Occasionally I have had clients state "we don't normally seat them that way" but I remind them they do not normally have live performances either. As the magician you are the expert of your show and with a little explanation sometimes, I have found the client will set the room up as you wish.

I hope I've offered you at least something to think about the next time you present a show. Creating a magic show involves a lot

more than just the tricks- give some thought to how you want your audience. I know others do not share my opinion of how I like my audience seated, but I'm sure it is something that everyone has thought about at one time or the other. As I mentioned earlier you are the expert, you know your show best – and therefore you are the one best suited to do a "seating plan" Next time you are talking to a client about a future show, let her know then how you would like the audience set up, it will avoid any surprises when you arrive at the event.

- Mike Fisher



Tricks

Bringing On Santa, by Steve Seguin

Rather than a magic trick this month, I decided to include the script I use to bring on Santa in my Christmas shows.

At most corporate Christmas parties, Santa usually enters immediately after the entertainment is finished. It is usually assumed that the entertainer will introduce Santa.

I found this out the hard way when I first started performing. The first time I was asked to do this, I had a vague notion that you were supposed to get the kids to sing together and then Santa would hear the singing, land on the roof, and join the party.

Unfortunately, I can't sing.

After a while, I developed a set script I now use every time I have to introduce Santa at a party.

It accomplishes four things for me. First, it's true to my onstage character. Second, it maintains some suspense on whether Santa is actually coming or not. Third, it keeps my singing to a minimum. Fourth, it whips the kids into an absolute frenzy (after which, I can leave).

Before I give you my script, let me emphasize that whenever you work a Christmas party, you should always ask what is going to happen immediately after your show and whether they want you to simply turn things back over to an emcee or announce the next event yourself.

If you are introducing Santa, always make sure that Santa is physically in the building and dressed before you start. Tell the event coordinator exactly what will be your last routine so that Santa can be in position and ready to go. Santas are notoriously late, and there is nothing worse than building up the premise that "if you're really good, Santa will come" only to find out he's not there.

Ok, here's the routine I've written to introduce Santa:

"You guys are in for a treat. We have an extra special guest lined up today, and you're never going to guess who it is... William Shatner. That's right.

"No, I don't like to brag, but I happen to be a close personal friend of Santa Claus's brother in law.

"No, because you've all been good this year, somebody pulled some strings – I think it was [name the person in the company who booked you] and got you on the waiting list for Santa.

"This is how the waiting list works. Every year around this time, Santa starts taking practice flights on his sleigh. He's up flying around, and what he does is, if he comes across a really good Christmas party, he'll land the sleigh on the roof and come on in.

"There're a few things he's looking for. First, he only picks a party where everyone is happy and smiling. Can I see everyone with a big smile? Good. That was a nice one [pointing to someone in the audience].

"The next thing he looks for is if people are in the Christmas spirit. Let me hear you say "Merry Christmas." You're going to have to be louder than that if you want him to hear you up there. "Merry Christmas." One more time as loud as you can! Merry Christmas. That was great.

"The third thing he looks for is if people are laughing and having fun. Let me hear you laugh... No, it should be more of a "Ho, ho, ho." Let me hear that... No, more from the belly. "Ho, ho, ho." Perfect.

"Finally, Santa always likes to hear his favourite song. Does anybody know what his favourite song is? [Let them shout out a few names] It's 'Walk This Way' by Aerosmith. No, what was it? Jingle Bells.

"Maybe if we all sing Jingle Bells as loud as we can we'll catch Santa's attention. [Get the kids to start singing] What was that? I thought I heard something on the roof. Keep singing..."

[Santa should enter to the delight of all.]

We Want Your Tricks! Please send any original magic tricks or routines to:

Steve_Sequin@hotmail.com

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Steve Seguin, Editor

The Shell Game is a free newsletter sent to members of the London Magicians Guild and other people in the community interested in magic.

Content and opinions expressed do not reflect the views of the London Magic Guild.

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