



the charles howard ring

VANCOUVER MAGIC CIRCLE

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF MAGICIANS RING 92

Affiliated with the
PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS

September General Meeting—Thurs Sept 25th Annual Auction—Members Only!!

The next meeting of IBM RING #92, The VANCOUVER MAGIC CIRCLE, takes place on Thursday September 25th, 2008 at the Sunrise Community Hall in Vancouver. Doors open at 6:30 for socializing and the business meeting will start earlier than normal at 7:00pm. The business meeting will be followed by the annual auction.

Please note that only members in good standing will be allowed entry. The exception is guests who have items they would like to sell can attend but they must register with David Wilson in advance (call 467-7887) and they will not have the privilege of bidding on or purchasing items.

So, clean out your closet and drawers and join auctioneer Gary Savard for a fun filled evening. All sellers are encouraged to register with David Wilson in advance. Each sellers items will be sold in runs of 10 items, then on to the next seller. After all sellers have had a run, then it goes back to sellers who have additional items. **Note that the food for this meeting will be a light snack only.**



The Magical Minutes

Newsletter Date:
September 2008



A man came to see my magic show. After one especially amazing feat, the man from the back of the hall yelled, "How'd you do that?"

"I could tell you sir," I replied, "but then I'd have to kill you."

After a short pause, the man yelled back, "OK, then—just tell my wife!"

The X-ellent Lecture Series

Our next guest lecturer is Michael Vincent on September 12, 2008.

Where: Douglas College, New Westminster

Time: 7:30pm (doors open at 7pm)

Michael Vincent is one the few magicians in the world who is an 'ambassador' for Slydini's concepts. Michael spent his early years mastering all of Slydini's magic. He will be the first to tell you, "I don't perform any of Slydini's routines any more, except for the Pins, The Coins, and The Knotted Silks, but what I do make use of are the powerful concepts which turns a great trick into a powerful experience of Magic".

This session will be an interactive workshop where you will experience the real power of "Audience Attention Control" or "Mis-direction". Here, Michael will expose you to concepts, which can elevate and unleash the real power of your magic.



Inside this issue:

Summer Picnic Review	2
Presidents Message	5
Tidbits	5
The Province reprint	6
Day 'O Magic Ad	9
Coming Events	10



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Why is this man smiling? (ask him)

2008 Summer Picnic

Submitted by Gord Boyes

Sunday August 17th the sun was shining and magic was in the air. Cathie and David Watters arrived early to get the games and entertainment set up and organized.



Cathie & David Watters

There was plenty of others helping make the day a success.



Chef
Mike Norden

Thanks to John Smithman and Rod Chow, we have some pictures to share. If you take pictures at any meetings or events, be sure to send them to us! (and check out www.champions.ca/vmc.html)



High resolution copies of the above photo are available from VMC member John Smithman

The well attended function saw about 70 members and guests enjoy barbequed burgers and hotdogs, as well as various salads and treats brought along by other members, including an awesome “top hat” cake cooked by Brianna Carlson.

Along with some impromptu entertainment provided by our own Shawn Farquhar (did I mention that he’s two times World Champion?), we had 3 members fulfill their obligations to receive their Magic Wand Award. Con’t —>



Brianna Carlson and her dad Dave



Shawn Farquhar with a young volunteer

2008 Summer Picnic (continued)

... As I was saying (see previous page), 3 of our members fulfilled their requirements to earn their Magic Wand Awards.

First up was Henry Tom. Most of us aware that Henry is a dentist, but for those who didn't realize it, now you can see that he knows his material and helps some of the young crowd brush up on it.



Next up was our 2nd Vice President, Bruce Hunt, who along with a few friends did a great job entertaining the kids in the audience.



Finishing off the Magic Wand performances was one of our newer members, although well known to many, Steve Dickson.



Thanks to all our participants and to the people who helped make the day a success, with a large thank you to Claus Ritter for his generous donation to help with the costs. The danger in thanking anyone is that someone always gets left off, so apologies in advance, but thanks to David & Cathie Watters for organizing entertainment and activities, Dennis Chan for so much help cleaning up, Mike Norden for cooking, Shawn Farquhar for entertaining, Brianna Carlson for the wonderful cake, and to everyone else who brought things or helped out!!



Plenty of time for camaraderie and socializing

Presidents Message

Submitted by Gord Boyes

Rules, rules, rules....

Yup, everyone has to have them, and the Vancouver Magic Circle is no exception. But do you know the rules? Many of our members don't. During the initiation ceremony we all pledge to "conform to all the rules and regulations of the Vancouver Magic Circle, the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians", but most people probably don't know what the rules are that they're pledging to conform to, and in recent years we've done a poor job of educating members about the rules and enforcing them throughout the year.

So, who knows all the rules? Well, not many people. The president ought to know all the rules, and although I've read them in the past I have not read them recently and can't honestly answer questions about some of them off the top of my head. Heck, I may have broken a few!

This has to change.

We have bylaws and a constitution which must be adhered to. There are reasons for every rule, and only by following them and acting in an ethical manner can we continue the tradition of making this an elite club.

And who enforces the rules? Currently we rely on the Sergeant at Arms to enforce rules of behavior at club events, and it's really not

fair to put such a burden on one person. Realizing this, Dennis Chan (former Sergeant at Arms) always helps out, but we really need the help of all members. Every member may not all know all the rules, but we can start out by doing a better job of showing respect for each other. Things like showing respect for participants in competitions, or the people running workshops, by not talking or taking part in distracting activities during their routines.

This has been a topic of discussion at our Executive meetings. Our plan is to create an ethics committee, much like the one that already exists within the Brotherhood of Magicians. The Ethics Committee will work as a separate body and at arms length from the Executive Committee, thereby ensuring that all members, including the Executive Committee, conduct themselves in an ethical manner with respect for our constitution and bylaws. This plan is in its infancy, but is something we're committed to carrying out.

We'll try to include information in each newsletter aimed at educating members about the rules as set out by our Constitution and Bylaws.

I encourage all members to ask questions about our club Constitution and bylaws, and I invite you to provide input as to what the club needs to do in order to act in a more ethical manner. Please join me in learning more as we attempt to make the information more readily accessible.

Tidbits

It's time to order your Official 2009 Vancouver Magic Circle calendar. The price is \$20 including shipping within Canada and USA (for those out of town members!) It will feature 12 great photos and all our functions and dates will be printed right on the calendar - now you will never forget a meeting or event! No excuse now! We are selecting the photos now - so if you want to be in it and have a photo of you or a group IN A RING EVENT then please email it to Mike Norden at mike.norden@ibmring92.com John Smithman will be touching up our choice of photos and we will have the calendars for sale at the Christmas dinner. Only pre-orders will get them so email Mike now!

Our Past President, Mike Norden, was on radio station 96.9 JackFm in July. He won a contest sponsored by Granville Island Brewery and was awarded his prize by Larry and Willy, the morning show hosts. Nicole nominated Mike for an 'Intervention' as he is always performing magic and needs to stop his addiction. Whether at parties, in public, and even funerals?! Mike was on the air for over 10 minutes and performed a cool trick (with Shawn Farquhar's ideas) and it went off pretty good. You can watch the video of it at www.jackfm.com and just go to the audio/video page.

Canada will now have a place to honour our magicians of the past and the present. The Canadian Magicians Hall of Fame will be up and running in 2009 at www.MagiciansHallOfFame.ca We are looking for suggestions and input on running this important site. We will be looking for nominations for inductees starting in January and it will include five from the past and five living legends. So get your thinking caps on who YOU think should be included in the initial list. All magicians can participate and more information will be sent to all Rings and Assemblies in Canada. We hope to run this with the support of the Canadian Association of Magicians to help give it the official status it deserves. Contact mike.norden@ibmring92.com for more information or if you would like to help with this project!

Web Corner

The website is up to date with our events for the next year - always check what's happening by visiting www.ibmring92.com - and remember it is the fastest way to read your newsletter! We are going to replace the section with 'magic reviews' with a YouTube section. This will have links to MAGIC related videos - please email your links to our webmaster at mike.norden@ibmring92.com

What else can you do on the website?

Well you can pay your dues with credit card by Paypal and even pay for lectures! You can sign our guestbook or submit a funny joke. You can read about our history and see a list of all our members with direct links to their websites! Check out who our Member Spotlight is this month - we figured it was time to update it since Rick Mearns was it for awhile - check it out and email our webmaster the answer and you will win a FREE CALENDAR for 2009!

And please don't forget to check out our sponsors websites by clicking on their ads.

unwind

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



ALA-KAZAM! B.C.'S FIRST FAMILY OF MAGIC

Vancouver's Chow family are tops in the battle of the hands. But they're not the only B.C.ers playing with smoke and mirrors. Locally and internationally, magicians are conjuring up a renaissance of the arcane arts. **PAGES B2-3**



International award-winning magician Rod Chow has raised Jack and Nicholas to follow him into the craft and become champion magicians in their own right.



Vancouver brothers Nicholas, 8, (left) and Jack Chow, 11, (right). Together, the family (mom Sylvia is an award-winning magician's assistant) have won 50 medals. LES BAZSO PHOTOS — THE PROVINCE

Hats off to B.C. magicians

WIZARDRY: Province conjures its share of sleight-of-hand-champion tricksters

BY ELAINE O'CONNOR
STAFF REPORTER

Disappearing women in magic

Vancouver's Rod Chow has pulled a rabbit out of a hat. Two, in fact.

The award-winning magician has raised two sons, Jack, 11, and Nicholas, 8, who have followed him into the craft to become champion magicians in their own right.

In his narrow office in Chinatown, where Chow and his wife work in the family insurance business (in the world's narrowest building, according to Guinness), father and sons practise their craft.

With some coaching, Nicholas, in a shiny tie and black pants, coaxes boas and flowers from empty tubes. Jack displays sleight-of-hand skills as balls appear in his small hands.

Together, the family (mom Sylvia is a magician's assistant) have won more than 50 medals. They just

To call magicians a brotherhood is accurate. There are only 50 full-time professional female magicians in the world. The 7,000-member Society of American Magicians has just 500 women. But more women are refusing to pull a vanishing act.

Massachusetts illusionist Lyn Dillies, who once made two elephants appear before a live audience, has been performing for 20 years.

In 1990, Jade became the first woman to win gold in the International Brotherhood of Magicians' World Mag-

ic Competition and she now tours internationally.

B.C.'s Juliana Chen won world-title gold in 1997. The U.K.'s Romany Diva of Magic entertained the Queen in 2006 on her 80th birthday.

Scarlett the Deceiver, a woman who self-levitates, recently landed a 70-minute show in Las Vegas.

And the next generation of women are ready to take the stage. Most recently, twenty-something "surrealist" Angela Funovits' dangerous stunts won her first runner-up on *Phenomenon*.

returned from the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians Conference in California with five medals up their sleeves — the first time in the event's 75 years a father and two sons won gold in the same year.

No, magic is not genetic. It's the result of practice: weekends and after school. But the boys enjoy it.

"It's fun because they clap," says Jack. "I like to be a good entertainer," adds Nicholas.

They've been raised on it. Nicholas took tricks to show-and-tell and once pulled a live chicken out of a hat for his class at Thanksgiving. He won his first international competition at age five. He's now a four-

time Pacific Coast and two-time Vancouver champion.

Jack also started making magic early. At age two he assisted his dad on stage, and he did his first solo show at three. He won his school's talent show as a first-grader. Today, he's a six-time Pacific Coast and four-time Vancouver champ.

"They are small," their dad says, "but they play big. I'm glad they're into it. It makes our family unique."

Chow fell under magic's spell as a kid watching Peter Rolston at the PNE in the '60s. He took up card tricks and performed his first show at 14 at his dad's office party.

"I could do anything with a deck of cards," Chow recalls.

In the early '90s, he joined the Vancouver Magic Circle and the Society of American Magicians and started competing. He's since won 32 titles and is an international magic champ, having won first place at the World Magic Seminar in 2006. He owns a thousand books on magic and a thousand decks of cards. He even wooed his wife with magic: on their first dinner date he made sugar vanish in his palm. Their wedding featured magic-hat aisle markers and playing-card-

table signs. When their sons were born, they gave out wands, not cigars. Yet magic is Chow's first love.

"It's just really great to be amazed, when there's no possible explanation for what is happening, so it has to be magic. You can really appreciate the skill, thinking and dedication the person has put into the art. As a performer, to get that applause... you really work for that. When you get it, you feel good."

But what does it mean to be an old-fashioned magician in the modern age, where digital effects compete with sleight-of-hand tricks? Is magic a dying art? Not in B.C.

The province has a thriving magician community. The Vancouver Magic Circle, which meets monthly at Sunrise community hall, is the largest magicians' club in Canada, with 150 members, some from as far away as Hope. There are smaller circles in Victoria and Kelowna.

"I say being president of a magic club is like being mayor of Isle of Misfit Toys," says the Vancouver club's Gord Boyes, an Abbotsford magician who together with his 12-year-old son, Jesse, (and pet bird Birdini) forms The Magic Boyes act. "To an outsider, we're an odd group of people." But talented.

Jesse's won three club competitions and is a junior director. He got into the act when his dad made a coin vanish for him at age five. His son's enthusiasm prompted Boyes to revive his childhood passion. They've been pulling doves out of thin air together for over two years.

The club itself began in 1942 and was helmed by a retired army captain and magic historian, Charles Howard. The club's been fielding award-winning magicians ever since, most recently the Chows and Delta duo Trevor Watters and his girlfriend, assistant Lorena Paradon.

Watters also just returned after winning a bronze medal in the pro challenge at the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians Conference.

"It was great. We didn't think we were going to place at all. We were the only Canadians in that competition. Two of the acts work full-time at the Magic Castle and we beat out both of them," said the 25-year-old.

As he talked, Watters was helping another B.C. magician, Lon Mandrake, son of "The Great Mandrake," practise lying on a bed of nails in his kitchen. There's never a dull moment around magicians. That's why Watters loves it.

Inspired by a hospital clown, he started magic in Grade 9, working with his dad. The pair performed for three years before Watters and Paradon met and formed their own show. (The first question he asked her when she visited his home was: "Do you think you would fit in that box?" She said: "I'll try." Love magically appeared.)

"Vancouver is a great city for magic. We have a lot of magicians here. We help each other out with tricks and teach people who want to learn," Watters says. "A 12-year-old



Delta magician Trevor Watters and his girlfriend, assistant Lorena Paradon, perform. Watters and Paradon (inset) just returned after winning bronze in the pro challenge at the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians Conference.

can teach a 70-year-old a trick. That's what makes magic so great; it's like an international language."

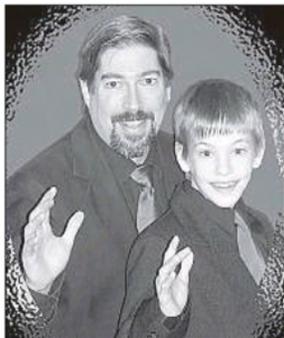
B.C. has also launched international-calibre performers.

Juliana Chen, a celebrated Chinese magician, immigrated to Vancouver in 1988. In '97, she won a first in sleight-of-hand at the World Congress of Magicians, making history as the first woman and Chinese magician to win a world title for a solo act in the event.

In earlier times, New Westminster vaudeville stage magician Leon Mandrake also won acclaim. He started performing in the 1920s and was known for his top hat, cape and fire-eating feats. He's believed to have been the inspiration for the popular '30s comic superhero Mandrake the Magician.

Magic, in its most basic forms, dates back to early society (the word comes from the Persian *magi*) as entertainers performed in markets or for royalty. Sleight-of-hand card tricks date back to cards themselves, used in ancient China and first documented in Europe in 1377. A 1475 painting, *The Conjuror*, by Hieronymus Bosch, depicts a magician astounding spectators (while another man picks a pocket). Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* manual was published back in 1584.

But the father of modern stage



GORD BOYES AND SON JESSE, 12

magic is Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin (1805-1871), a Paris clockmaker who opened a magic theatre in the 1840s and performed tricks with clever machines.

Hungarian escape artist Erik Weisz (1874-1926) took inspiration from Robert-Houdin for his stage name: Houdini. Today he's considered "the Shakespeare of Magic," the greatest magician who ever lived. His feats include escaping from a water torture cell and a milk can.

Dapper illusionist Harry Blackstone Sr. (1885-1965), The Great Blackstone, dazzled audiences by levitating ladies and light bulbs and sawing women in half. His son, Harry Blackstone Jr. (1934-1997), picked

up the torch — or light bulb.

TV performances by magicians like Doug Henning (the Winnipegger who brought magic to Broadway in the 1970s), Penn and Teller (who made their name exposing illusions to audiences only to fool them in the end) and David Copperfield have popularized the form.

Copperfield (born David Seth Kotkin in 1956) was the youngest magician ever admitted to the Society of American Magicians, at age 12. By 19 he was headlining hotels. He's famed for vanishing the Statue of Liberty and Great Wall of China — feats Chow believes make him the greatest magician of all time.

Today, pop-star magicians Criss Angel and David Blaine are redefining modern magic.

Blaine, born David Blaine White in 1973, popularized street magic on his 1997 show and has gone on to perform outrageous stunts: he was buried alive for seven days, frozen in ice for 63 hours, poised on a pillar for 35 hours, hung in a box for 44 days without food, submerged underwater for seven days and set a world record by holding his breath for 17 minutes.

Angel (born Christopher Nicholas Sarantakos in 1967) launched his 2005 *Mindfreak* show after a successful Broadway run. Angel — a favourite of Jack's — is best known for walking on water, levitating

above a hotel, floating between two buildings, cutting himself in half and getting run over by a steamroller. He's set to perform with Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas in the fall and star as Mandrake in a film.

Purists worry TV magic damages the reputation of the craft, as viewers grow cynical and chalk up effects to trick photography.

But Chow argues, "I think it has actually enhanced the visibility of magic. Magic is really in the forefront these days. We used to have to wait a year for a new David Copperfield show, now kids can turn on the TV and see magic any time."

Recent films have also been conjuring fans. Harry Potter (technically a wizard), has enchanted children into taking up magic; the Magic Circle's Young Magicians Club in London has 600 members. Adults have flocked to films like *The Prestige* and *The Illusionist*, which re-enacts Robert-Houdin effects like the blossoming orange tree.

Magic, Chow asserts, is in no danger of doing a disappearing act.

"Magic is always evolving. Magic will not die. I think the younger generation will keep it alive."

Like members of secret societies, magicians must swear an oath: never reveal a trick to a non-magician.

That oath opens the door to a subculture made up of mentalists, illusionists, sleight-of-hand artists, comedy magicians, street magicians, prestidigitators, conjurers, ventriloquists and escape artists.

Magicians' groups (a gang of magicians is called a "misdirection") are myriad. There's the International Federation of Magic Societies, which holds the World Championships of Magic (the dark arts' Olympics) in Beijing in 2009, the International Brotherhood of Magicians, the 106-year-old Society of American Magicians, the Canadian Association of Magicians and the Society of Young Magicians — there's even a Fellowship of Christian Magicians.

Magicians also have a de facto Magic University: the World Magic Seminar, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. And potentially a real one: Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania offers a Theory and Art of Magic class run by a philosophy professor.

There are magazines for magicians — *Magic*, the top-selling publication among illusionists, was founded in 1991. There are reality shows — NBC's *Phenomenon* last year, hosted by "paranormalist" Uri Geller, pitted 10 mentalists against each other for \$250,000. There are even clubhouses — Hollywood's Magic Castle is the "Mecca for magicians" and has 2,500 elite members.

Magicians even have Oscars. The Academy of Magical Arts Annual Awards Show is in its 40th year. Performances there often stun peers.

As Chow quips, "Magicians like to be fooled, too."

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NIGHT O' MAGIC

An Evening of Mystery with Stars of Magic

Featuring the Talents of

Eric Buss



Reed McClintock



Michael Vincent

& Your Emcee



Master Payne



**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13TH
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Adults \$15.00 Children under 12 \$10.00

Showtime 7:00 p.m.

Presented by the Lynnwood "Ring of Fire" Magic Club



September 13th, 2008

Lynnwood Ring of Fire presents

DAY OF MAGIC 7

Featuring Eric Buss at the fabulous Everett Historical Theater. Don't miss the 2 big lectures, a swap meet, the anything goes contest, the gala evening show,

and much MUCH more!

Dealer tables available for \$10. Email Evan West (evanwestmagic@gmail.com) to reserve a table.

Thursday Sept 25th
VMC General Meeting
and
Annual Auction.

Auctioneer Gary Savard will help you fetch top dollar for your unwanted magical items, or you can find a great deal on items from others. Not usually a case of one mans junk being another's treasure, although there are certainly treasures to be found.

Sunrise Hall, doors open at 6:30pm



PCAM 2009

PCAM 2009 will be held on a cruise ship, the Norwegian Pearl, departing the port of Vancouver on Monday September 21st, disembarking in Los Angeles on Saturday September 26th.

Don't miss it!!

Check www.magicatsea.com for info.

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Michael Vincent
The Tapestry of Deception



Disclaimer—These Magical Minutes have been brought to you on a tight deadline with little resources. The author(s) accept no responsibility for typos, spelling errors, grammatical errors, accuracy of fact (or lack of), omission of details, layout, graphics, political correctness, oversight of individuals or groups or groups of individuals who may or may not have contributed to the creation process or the creative inspiration of others. No animals were harmed in the creation of this newsletter.

THE NORTHWEST RING OF FIRE PRESENTS

DAY O' MAGIC 7

FEATURING THE MAGICAL TALENTS OF

 **REED McCLINTOCK** 

& Eric Buss

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13TH 2008

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