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July / August 2025

— RING 92 —
VANCOUVER MAGIC CIRCLE

ibmring92.com



the Charles Howard Ring

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NEWSLETTER

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John Stenning

TLR SCRIBE(S)

Scott Barker

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Unfilled

PHOTOGRAPHY

Henry Tom

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COMPETITION CHAIR

Michel (Mike) Vetterli

Congratulations Billy Hsueh FISM World Champion



Simon Says

Hi everyone,

I hope you're all enjoying the beautiful summer here in Vancouver! It's been an exciting season for the VMC, filled with inspiring magic.

We kicked things off with a fantastic lecture by Joe Turner, followed by an unforgettable *Cabaret of Wonders* show featuring Joe, Sam Bennison, and Billy Hsueh. A big thank-you to Billy and Alex for making it possible to bring such amazing talent right here to Vancouver.

Summer also brought fantastic news—our former VMC President and current IBM International President, Billy Hsueh, won an Invention Award at FISM for his *Impossible-Billy-Tea*! Don't miss his *Fool Us* performance online, and be sure to join us in September as we celebrate his achievement.

Coming up: "G" will be here on Saturday, August 16 at noon at Hidden Wonders for a Show + Lecture. Tickets are available online. Note that it's also New West Pride, so come early for parking or use transit.

And don't miss our annual Picnic on Saturday, August 23—more details coming soon!

Have a great rest of your summer—I hope to see you all soon.

Cheers,
Simon

The Editors Desk

Here we are, halfway through the year. It's been a busy time for the VMC, and the pace shows no signs of slowing down!

It's wonderful to see members out performing, sharing coffee, and enjoying magic jams together. These moments truly keep the spirit of our club alive.

Looking ahead to September, we'll be holding our annual auction. Start preparing your list of items to sell, and maybe begin setting aside a few dollars for purchases too! More details will be coming your way soon.

We always welcome contributions to the newsletter. If you have news to share, an article you've written, or photos from recent events, please reach out to John Stenning or myself—we'd love to include them.

In the meantime, keep practicing, keep performing, and most of all, keep the magic alive and live.

Roy J. Hopwood Editor

Linking Ring Report

VMC #92 Ring Report for Thursday, June 26th, 2025

The Vancouver Magic Ring's monthly meeting took place on Thursday June 26th, the last one until September. The meeting started a little late as we waited for some members to arrive due to traffic and weather delays. The extra time gave the early arrivers a bit more time to socialize prior to starting the meeting. Thanks to President Simon Cassegrain for opening up the hall and stopping to buy some cookies and Genpei Cai who helped set up tables and chairs. When Graham Kita arrived, he made coffee for everyone and put out water. Thanks to our mystery member who brought a large box of assorted chips.

Simon got things going at 7:30pm with a few brief announcements about the upcoming Joe Turner lecture and VMC annual Picnic, renamed in honour of the recently passed VMC Sergeant at Arms Dennis Chan, The Dennis Chan VMC Picnic.

Genpei Cai followed with an amazing workshop with cards and coins. He demonstrated

and taught some easy, but strong card magic and continued with some more advanced sleights using palming and lapping techniques. He then finished up with some incredible coin tricks with regular and gaffed coins. The members were amazed at his skills and allowed him extra time to go through all his material.

Genpei finished after a thoroughly engaging hour. We broke for refreshments and some socializing while the contestants prepped for the Ray Gamble Unopened Deck competition. This competition is about using a brand-new deck of cards for a card routine.

Our new Competition Chair, Mike Vetterli, talked about some of the changes he's making to the competitions, including the explanations to the criteria the judges will be using during contests. This will be posted on the VMC web site, as well as the filming of all the competitions, per contestant approval, and improving the stage set up with lights and table cover to give a more professional look. He is also extending the time between contestants to give the judges more time to fill out the judging forms. Mike then read the rules and names of the contestants, John Stenning, Scott Barker, *who really wanted to go first*, Ken Cowie, Glen Labarre, Michael Glenister, and Bob Britton. The winner of the Ray Gamble trophy for this year was first time contestant Ken Cowie. Congratulations Ken!

Honourable mention goes to runner ups Bob Britton, and Scott Barker.

In addition to winning the competition, Ken Cowie has accepted the position of interim Sergeant At Arms until the clubs next AGM.

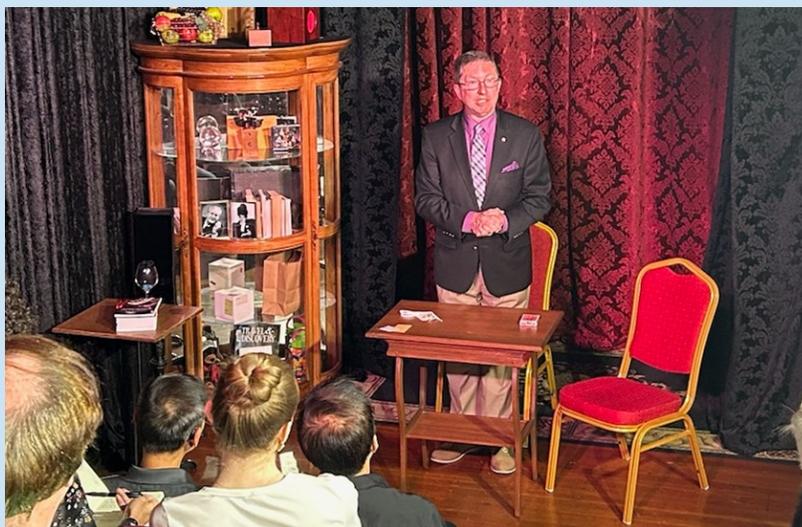
Mike Vetterli was the M/C for the contest as last year's winner, Charles Gauthier, was away. Mike did an excellent job filling the time between contestants with demonstrations of how psychological concepts relate to magic performances, with some dad and magic jokes thrown in. Simon Cassegrain was the time keeper.

After the contest was over junior member Blake Aleong performed a very nice card routine that he has been working on.

Visiting the meeting was Julius Palme from Germany and Melinda Zhao. Thanks to Graham Kita for giving Roy Hopwood a ride to the meeting and Ken Cowie for giving me a ride as well. We had twenty-one members, and two guests attend.

Scott Barker

JOE TURNER LECTURE



Many of us meet at Hidden Wonders on Monday night (July the 28th) to hear former I.B.M. president and working magician Joe Turner. I think I can speak for not just myself when I say we were not disappointed!

Mr Turner has over 25 years of experience working as a magician, along with other interests like music. He started by teaching us a ring on string technique that was fantastic!

Over the course of the lecture, he showed us some of his card routines and talk about a memorized deck, which he highly recommended. He was quite modest about his skills, however, I was very impressed, especially with his palming techniques.

At one point he talked about networking and how to connect with people as well as other aspects of becoming a working magician. Of course, there was much more than I can write here in a short article, however, I will say, that for only \$20, it was well worth the price. He even sold us his lecture notes/book for \$20 Canadian which usually sells for \$25 U.S.

Mr Turner gave a great lecture with awesome tricks and valuable advice; he is a class act and a gentleman, if you have a chance to see him perform or lecture again, I would highly recommend it.

J.Stenning
July 30/2025
Stay magical

Photos from the Joe Turner Lecture



Photos courtesy of John Stenning; Graham Kita et al

The Turners waiting for a Uber at 3am Wednesday



Photo courtesy of Joe Turner

I Recall...

By

Roy Hopwood

Copy Right

I recall when I first started in magic over 60 years ago, my only source was books I borrowed from the local library. There was no VHS/Beta, CDs, DVDs, internet, Facebook, YouTube, I didn't even have access to a Magic Store.

I had no idea what copyright or Intellectual Property was or meant.

When I finally understood these things, if someone told me a book was 'copyright', I would joke, '**Yes, I know, I always copy it right.**'

Joking aside, Copyright for Magic is a complex issue, and it appears to me to be a bigger issue since the development of Social Media. In Australia, I can recall **Ben Harris** releasing 'Cosmosis'. There have been many other magicians claiming it is their own. I find it very interesting to note that none of these iterations or claims were made before **Ben** released Cosmosis.

Another Australian Magician who was (is) a staunch defender of intellectual property rights is **Tim Ellis**

Here in Vancouver, 2 two-time world champion of magic **Shawn Farquhar**, is another strong supporter of the protection of performers' copyright and intellectual property rights,

I was looking at Magic Group on Facebook the other day, and they were discussing and reviewing a 'Knock Off' of Quiver against the original. Most were saying they will not use the knock-off, while others argued that you can buy 5 knock-offs for the price of the original.

I asked **Copilot** several questions:

RJH:

Is copyright a major issue in magic?

Copilot:

Absolutely—**copyright is a major and often thorny issue in the world of magic**, but not in the way it is for books or music. Here's why it's such a hot topic:

The Core Challenge

Copyright protects expressions, not ideas. So while a magician can copyright a *script*, *video*, or *choreographed routine*, they can't copyright the *method* or *secret* behind a trick.

This makes it hard to stop others from copying the *effect* of a trick with slight changes, even if the core method is the same.

Legal Grey Areas

Teller (of Penn & Teller) famously won a case by copyrighting the *pantomime* of his illusion, not the trick itself. (**Hessel Bos** registered his tricks by submitting detailed descriptions and photos to the U.S. Copyright Office.

But courts are often reluctant to grant protection unless the work is fixed in a tangible medium and shows clear originality.

The Culture of Secrecy

Because legal protection is limited, magicians rely heavily on **community ethics, trade secrecy, and peer pressure** to prevent exposure or theft.

Organizations like the International Brotherhood of Magicians have codes of conduct that discourage revealing or copying tricks.

Why It Matters

Magic thrives on surprise and originality. When tricks are copied or exposed, it can **undermine a magician's livelihood** and **erode the art form's mystique**.

So yes—copyright is a big deal in magic, not because it solves everything, but because its limitations force magicians to get creative with how they protect their work.

RJH:

Were Houdini and Burling Hull involved in copyright issues?

Copilot:

Not in the courtroom sense, but their relationship definitely had some *intellectual property tension*.

Houdini vs. Burling Hull: A Clash of Magic Minds

Burling Hull, known as the “Edison of Magic,” was a prolific inventor and author who published many magic books and exposed methods, sometimes controversially.

Harry Houdini, ever the protector of magical secrecy, was deeply concerned about exposure and unauthorized copying of tricks. While there's no record of a formal **copyright lawsuit** between them, their paths crossed in ways that stirred friction: Hull was known to **publish secrets** of tricks, including those of other magicians, which irked Houdini and others in the community. Houdini, in turn, used clever legal tactics—like embedding tricks in **copyrighted playlets**—to protect his routines from exposure.

There's even a colourful anecdote involving Hull dancing with **Bess Houdini** at a banquet, which allegedly made Houdini so jealous he stormed out and left his top hat behind—Hull kept it. So while they didn't battle it out in court, their philosophies on secrecy, exposure, and ownership were definitely at odds.

RJH:

When Does a Trick Become “New”?

Copilot:

There's **no fixed number of changes** that automatically qualifies a magic trick as new or original under copyright law. Instead, it depends on:

Substantial originality:

Courts look at whether the *expression* (not the idea) is meaningfully different, like a unique script, choreography, or visual presentation.

Audience perception: If the trick feels fresh and distinct to viewers, that can support claims of originality.

Observable differences: Even if the method is similar, if the *performance* (e.g., mood, props, story) is creatively distinct, it may be protectable.

In the famous [Teller v. Dogge](#) case, the court ruled that even if the method was similar, the **Observable pantomime** was protected because it was a unique dramatic expression. [Court Ruling](#).

RJH:

How do I know if I have bought a 'knock off' and what can I do?

Copilot:

Spotting a knock-off magic trick can be tricky, especially when some copies are cleverly disguised. But here's how you can tell, and what to do if you've been duped:

How to Tell If You've Bought a Knock-Off

Missing Creator Credit If the packaging or instructions don't mention the original creator, that's a red flag.

Suspiciously Low Price If it's significantly cheaper than versions from reputable dealers, it might be a copy.

Generic or Poor Packaging. Knock-offs often come in plain or low-quality packaging, sometimes with vague or poorly translated instructions.

No Instructional Video or Documentation. Legit tricks often include a tutorial or link to a video, especially if sold by the original creator or licensed dealer.

Community Warnings Check forums like The Magic Café or Reddit's r/Magic for discussions about known knock-offs and shady sellers.

What You Could Do If You Bought One

Stop Performing It Ethically, it's best to retire the trick if it's a known knock-off, especially if it harms the original creator.

Buy the Legit Version. Support the creator by purchasing the official release if it's still available.

Leave a Review or Warning: Help others avoid the same mistake by posting a respectful review or comment on the seller's page.

Contact the Seller. If you purchased it from a marketplace (such as eBay or AliExpress), you can sometimes request a refund or report the listing.

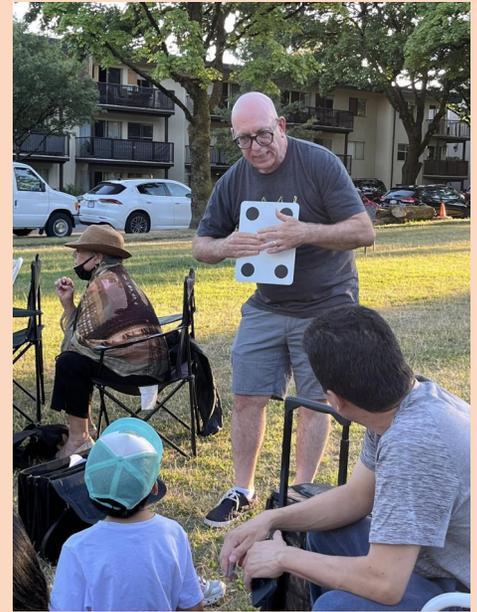
Use It as a Learning Moment. Keep it as a reminder to vet future purchases more carefully. You're not alone—many magicians have been burned at least once.

As you can see from this brief discussion, the issue of copyright and knock-off products is a complex matter with no easy answers. Where do you stand on this matter? I would love to hear your thoughts and opinions.

Liu Fuchang from China, the Guinness World Record for the **largest collection of playing cards**. As of November 1, 2007, he had amassed **11,087 different decks**.

Each deck in his collection is unique—no duplicates allowed—and the record is based on sets that meet specific criteria for what counts as a playing card deck

Scott barker and Charles Gauthier entertained the crowd before the outdoor movie was shown in **Marpole**. Thanks to the organizers for the opportunity!



Six sick hicks nick six slick bricks with picks and sticks.

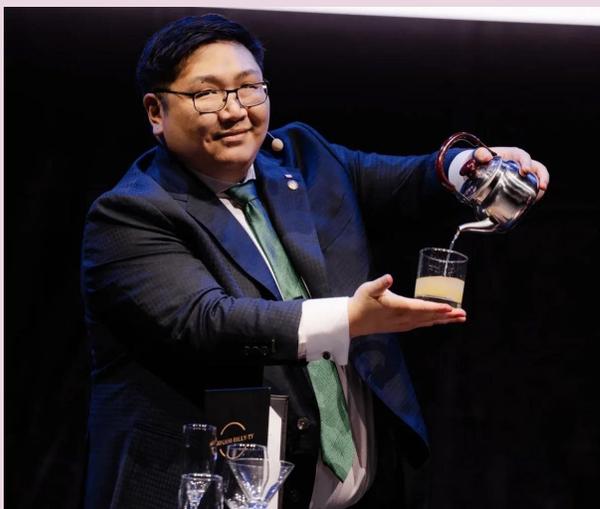
The big move



A Big thanks to members who came out to help with the move of the VMC Library to Shawn Farquhar's home.

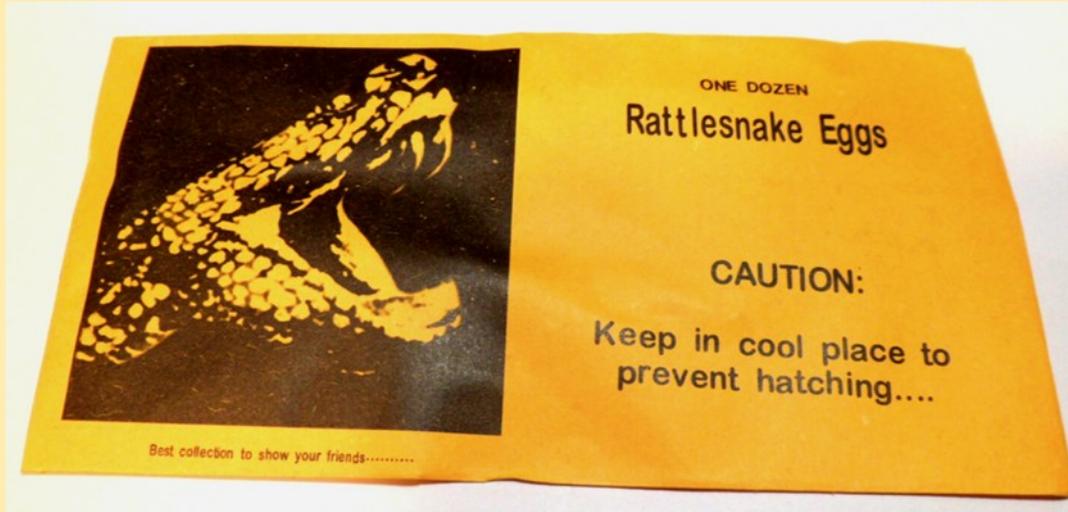
This was a big job. The VMC proudly owns one of the largest magic libraries in Canada, thanks to members like Dennis and many donors over decades who wanted their collections to continue a legacy of magic.

Billy Hsueh World Champion at FISM 2025



Congratulations to Billy Hsueh on receiving the **Invention Award** in the **Close-up Parlour Magic** category at FISM Italy 2025. That's a pretty prestigious recognition—it celebrates originality and innovation in magical performance. Quite the honor for a Canadian magician to stand out on the world stage!

RATTLE SNAKE EGGS!



Ah, that old gag some of you might say, but don't underestimate such classics! They've stood the test of time for a reason and this classic is no exception, the only problem is finding someone who hasn't seen it before, which, in our "phone zombie" society that we live in these days, is not as hard as you think.

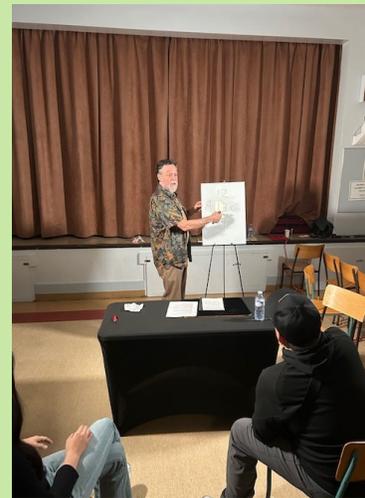
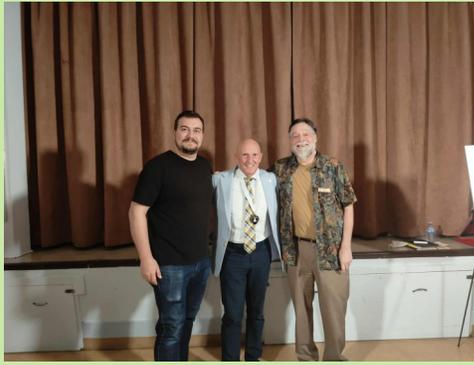
While working at a western themed store in Gastown earlier this year, I noticed some familiar looking envelopes in the front display case with some other merchandise and asked the owner: "is that the old prank" she confirmed it was, (they had been sitting there for literally decades) so of course I had to not only buy one for myself, but also set one up to try on one of my co-workers who had never seen it before and got quite a scare!

Completely harmless, unless someone has a heart condition, the rattle snake eggs..., let's just say you should maybe get yourself one if you don't know how it works, I don't want to spoil it for you, I will say, however, that it's very simple and uses no batteries!

Take care, enjoy your summer, stay hydrated and of course, magical!

J.Stenning

VMC Meeting—June 2025



Photos Courtesy of John Stenning; Roy Hopwood and Simon Cassegrain.

In 1918, legendary magician Harry Houdini performed a trick that had audiences gasping—the “Vanishing Elephant” illusion. Onstage at the Hippodrome Theatre in New York City, Houdini brought out a full-grown elephant named Jennie. He led her into a large cabinet in the center of the stage, made a few dramatic gestures... and poof—Jennie vanished.

Coffee and Magic Jam

July - Steveston



Photos courtesy of Ken Cowie

VMC members hosting Cruise Ship Magician **Rob Rasner** at Legends pub in Richmond



Rod Chow hosting Joe Turner and family in the Skinniest Building in the world—Rods Office and Panda Land.



Photos courtesy of Rod Chow

Diary Dates*

Generally meets on the fourth Thursday of the Month—January; February; March; April; May; June ; September; October: November; Plus August—Picnic on date tba.

Vancouver Magic Circle

lbmring92.com

VMC Executive Meeting:

TBA - via Zoom

August 16, 2025

G Lecture—Live—HW

August 23, 2025

Dennis Chan Picnic

September

Auction

September 25, 2025

Meeting at the Hall

Shows (as a courtesy)

Hidden Wonders

<https://hiddenwonders.ca>

Shows are generally on Thursday 7 PM, Fri & Sat 7 & 9:30 and Sunday 3 & 7

TBA—check web site for dates and times

The Parlour Magic Show

[The Parlour Magic Show](#)

Monthly on the third Wednesday

TBA—check web site for dates and times

Other Clubs (as a courtesy)

**Society of American
Magicians #95 [SAM#95](#)**

Meetings of the SAM #95 are held the **first Tuesday of the month** at members homes.

TBA—check web site for dates and times

Fraser Valley Magic Company

[FVMC](#)

Regular monthly meetings take place on the second Friday of most months, at a private home in Mission, BC.

TBA—check web site for dates and times

Magic quote of the month

"Nothing must be left to chance in a magical performance. Everything conducive to enhancing the mystery of the illusions must be arranged with painstaking care and thought." – David Devant

VMC Library

The Vancouver Magic Circle Library Catalogue is online!

Remember: if you want a new trick, look in an old book! Our hope is that whenever our members see a trick they really want, or are trying to learn a difficult piece of theory, or are interested in buying a book— they will first check the library. This is one way we can improve our magic, and this [searchable online catalogue](#) is the first step towards taking full advantage of this incredible resource.

Please Do Not Forward The Magical Minutes to Non-Members*

This is just a friendly reminder to all our members to please not to forward our newsletter, 'The Magical Minutes' or any private newsletter links, to people who are not financial members of the VMC. The online VMC Library, and The Magical Minutes newsletter are a membership privilege. It takes a lot of time and effort to write our newsletter, and we do it exclusively for the benefit of our members. If a non-financial member asks you to forward The Magical Minutes to them, please refrain from doing so. Lastly, the Executive Committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed to and / or sent positive messages about The Magical Minutes newsletter. It is truly appreciated and makes all the hard work worth it.

Thank you
The VMC Executive Committee

** Do NOT rely upon this newsletter for critical dates and times of meetings; events or shows. Always check the official source of the information.*