



Vol 24 No. 4

August 2026 Special Edition

The Magical Minutes

V — RING 92 — VANCOUVER MAGIC CIRCLE

lbmring92.com

the Charles Howard Ring



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Vale

John 'Melrick' Stenning

March 10, 1968—August 26, 2026

In loving memory of our friend, colleague, and fellow magician



John at the VMC — always ready with a kind word

Hi fellow VMC Members,

It is with an extremely heavy heart that I write this column and produce this edition of The Magical Minutes.

On Wednesday, August 26, 2026, **John Stenning** — my very good friend, fellow magician, VMC member; and my right hand man on the newsletter, died.

John was a brilliant proofreader, he was also a good creative content person, he was also a constant content provider.

We were a team that work hard on producing the very best newsletter we could.

This edition is dedicated to **John** and as a mark of respect his column as Co Editor has been intentionally left blank.

if you would like to post a tribute or share a story about **John**, our webmaster **Simon Cassegrain** has produced a tribute page on the VMC Website. The link is [John "Melrick" Stenning](#)



Talk again soon,

Roy

**“Your death was tragic,
your life was magic”**

- Annette M Stenning

Wednesday September 2, 2026

Vale John Stenning

A friend. A magician. A contributor. A champion. A man of kindness, humour, and quiet strength.

John gave generously to the Vancouver Magic Circle — not only through his writing, his proofreading, and his steady presence, but through the way he lifted others, encouraged them, and made the club feel like a community.

He leaves behind a legacy of clarity, integrity, and friendship. His words remain in our newsletters. His laughter remains in our memories. His spirit remains in the VMC.

Vale, John.

You are already dearly missed.

Tributes for JOHN

Very sad to hear. Only recently we spoke about him possibly getting back into martial arts.

Robert Britton

I'm in shock. Very sad news.

Glen LeBarre

So sorry to hear about the passing of John Stenning. Wiley messaged me to let me know. He left me a message a week ago and I was going to call him when I heard. He will be missed and one of the few allies I had during my time with the circle!

Gary Robins

Such sad news Roy, he was the one who really encouraged me to enter the contests to improve my magic. This was very early in my membership to the club.

Scott Barker

Very Sad news

Ken Cowie

Omg. Such sad news.

Errol Lipschitz

Kaj and I are deeply saddened hearing the news of John's passing. He always had a kind word to say about everyone. RIP John.

Marianne Dumay

So very sad! please extend our deepest condolences to his brother and sister (and any other family that you know of)

Graham Kita

Not only sad but shocking. I'll miss our long chats over FB. Enjoy your journey, my friend. My sincere condolences to John's family and friends. Just think, John, no more problems with the cat upstairs. Inside story.

David Hambone Hamil

I'm so sorry to hear this. My condolences to John's family and close friends. He has been so diligent producing the newsletter.

He will be missed. I'm just sad with this news.

Amanda O'Leary

Such sad news , I can't even imagine . John was such an amazing person and friend. He will truly be missed. May he rest easy

Dennis Bauyon

CO-EDITOR'S DESK: Aug 2026

Well, what can I say? It's another hot summer (with no A/C in my place) however, I'm glad to be here in Vancouver and a member of the VMC, ring 92.

I really don't have much to tell you that you don't already know:

- Lecture coming up
- Picnic

And here is the most exciting thing (for me anyway):
A LIVE AUCTION NEXT MONTH! That is in addition to one online! Christmas in September for us magicians, so sort out your magic, go over your budget and get ready to have some fun and add some new stuff to your collection!

Oh and it's not too early to start thinking about the Halloween competition; please remember, we need at least three competitors.

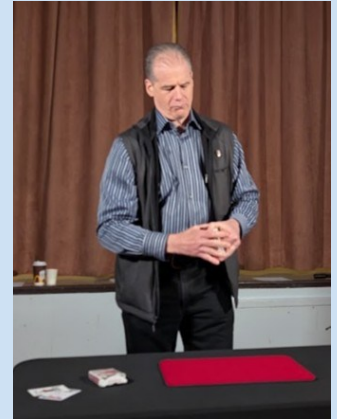
Stay magical, stay hydrated and enjoy the rest of the summer.

J.Stenning

S.A.A.

Aug 10/2026.

Photos of John Stenning — Page 1



The new (rebooted) Scrubs show, featured an episode (#4 “My Poker Face”) about J.D. (Zack Braff) holding a poker night for some of the staff.

The close-up shots of card sleights were done by our own John Stenning who was hired to be Zack Braff’s hand double).

MAGICAL THOUGHTS

(You might want to ponder)

“The art of a magician is not found in the simple deception, but in what surrounds it, the construction of a reality which supports the illusion.”

-Jim Steinmeyer

“The real secret of magic lies in the performance.”

-David Copperfield

“If I don’t fool you, I’m not doing my job as a magician. If I make you feel foolish, I’m not doing my job as a human being.”

-Jerry Andrus

in the spotlight

This month is John Stenning

MM: Tell us a little about yourself and your family

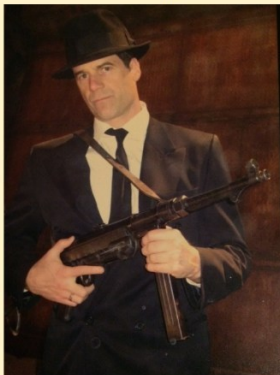
JS: I was born and raised here in Vancouver, my parents are originally from England (mum was born in France and went to boarding school in England).

MM: How did you become interested in magic?

JS: I was always attracted to magic and like many of a certain era, would look at the ads in the backs of comic books for all the tricks and effects offered; I wanted to buy it all! I would watch anything on TV to do with magic. There were two shops in Vancouver I used to go to as a kid that sold gags/pranks: The Grin Bin on West Broadway and Krack-a-Joke downtown on Granville.

MM: Who are your biggest influences in the magic world?

JS: I vaguely remember Doug Henning and saw David Copperfield's specials on TV. I saw him live in 1986 it was the night before the show, he had a special on TV, and he did the same tricks! I was not too happy. (LOL)! I also met Shawn and Lori Farquhar on the set of a Leslie Nelson movie in the late 90's and talked with Shawn. Shawn has not only, been inspirational, but extremely helpful as well as generous with his time and knowledge.



MM: What is your favorite trick to perform and why?

JS: I do not like questions like that, you might as well ask me what my favourite movie or song is. I have gotten good reactions from people doing various card tricks, sometimes a not-so-difficult one that they enjoy, so to answer your question, I would say any card trick that gets a positive reaction and is enjoyed.

MM: Can you share an interesting story from one of your performances?

JS: Before COVID, I was hired to do a family-friendly magic show and balloon Twisting for kids and adults. The show went well, with great feedback, and one little girl even thanked me for coming to do the show! The lady who hired me gave me a swag bag with a card signed by all the kids.

MM: What advice would you give to someone who wants to learn magic?

JS: Start with something you are interested in, maybe coins or cards, and get some books and read them. I think too many people these days don't read enough period and there are many benefits to reading magic books you can't get from a DVD or YouTube; also, don't buy every new trick, which comes out.

MM: How do you come up with new tricks or routines?

JS: I think the magicians who have said to make a trick suit you are right, that is, change the patter, or even the method to make it yours. I came up with a few close-up effects that I used at Granville Island when I busked there.

MM: What's the most challenging part of being a magician for you?

JS: Being disciplined and practicing, every day, as well as continuing to study the art is essential.

MM: What's the most rewarding part of being a magician for you?

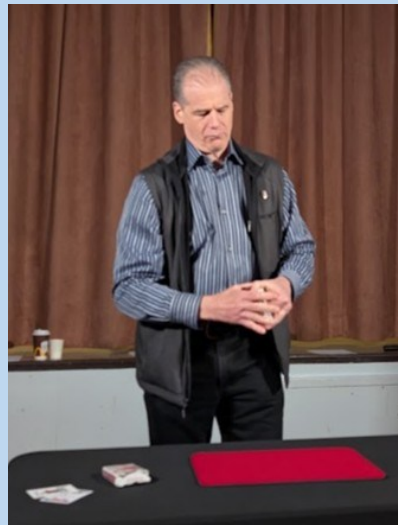
JS: It's about following through with a goal, stepping out of my comfort zone at times and the joy and astonishment it brings to people.

MM: Can you share with our readers a fun, non magic, fact that we didn't know about you?

JS: I trained in Martial arts for many years and earned black belts in Judo and Karate. I also taught and competed in local tournaments doing sport karate (point-fighting) and a division called sport JuJitsu which was held once a year. I won that four times, making me the Heavyweight champion of Canada for that year.



Photos of John Stenning — Page 2



CARDS OR COINS?

What do you prefer? Do you work with both? I mention this because of the different opinions of various magicians in our own club and that of some “heavy hitters” in the magic community.

One example is Paul Gordan, the English magician who, throughout his entire career (I believe he’s retired now) only performed card magic and many of his tricks were not too difficult to do, however, they did get great reactions from laymen (muggles, non-magicians). I’m not 100% sure if he said this, however, I have heard the same thing from more than one magician and that is: “I don’t like coin magic” or something along the lines of: “it doesn’t look right to me”. I have to admit, that I am quite ambivalent about this issue, because I do love coin magic (and cards too of course) however, I have to agree to a certain extent, because some of the moves just, well, don’t look quite right. That’s just my opinion and I will add that MANY of the moves DO work to great effect, so perhaps it’s a matter of performing in front of people enough until you find the ones that work for you.

One of the big names in coin magic (who will not be named) has and does this one move, that, quite frankly, puts one of his fingers in a very unnatural position. Not only did I notice this, as well as a fellow member of the VMC saying: “I don’t like that”! When we discussed it, I once showed a family member a video of him doing a routine (which was fantastic) and as soon as he did that move, the person I was with said: “he’s holding something in his hand”!

This guy is extremely skilled, accomplished and intelligent and has achieved other things in his life that I never will and does do some amazing coin magic, so I just don’t understand why he would continue to do a move like that. Perhaps people are too polite to say anything?

We only have so much time to do whatever it is we do and both, coins and cards take many, many, hours of practice.

What about you, will it be cards, coins, or both?

J.Stenning

S.A.A.

July 19, 2026.

WARNING! CON ARTISTS ALIVE AND WELL IN VANCOUVER!



We all know that a well done pick-pocket routine can be great entertainment, however, the art is alive and well on the streets of Vancouver and other cities around the world; I have heard of groups of professional pick-pockets, working together, on the busses and at various locations around the city and have even, many years ago, been sitting with a group of E.S.L. students in a food court downtown when a man tried to sneak up behind one of the students and steal something from their bag, or perhaps take the whole bag!

What really got my attention and why I am writing this, is a recent story on the news, that told of a woman sitting by herself in public, wearing her mothers antique necklace she had owned for many years, when a younger woman (the victim is a senior citizen) came over to her, invaded her personal space and on putting on a necklace for her to try on (something along those lines). Well, you can guess what happened: the senior citizen was left with a cheap piece of costume jewelry and the scammer had disappeared with her gold necklace.

I've heard of worse stories in other countries, however, I believe we must be careful when strangers are getting too close and or are making physical contact, because like the lady who lost her necklace, we could end up missing something ourselves.

Stay magical.

J.Stenning

Oct 7/2025

WORLD'S GREATEST MAGIC: RING FLIGHT (DVD)



In this video, there are some very interesting routines using a ring flight, a few of them even use some “ring on string or wand” applications as well. Some of these methods are very unique and I have personally never seen them anywhere, not that I claim to know how everything works (not by a long shot)!

Michael Close, for example, does a routine that is much different than the usual or classic ring flight, as he does not want to risk damaging a borrowed ring; several of the performers talk about how to be careful with ladies rings that have stones in them, which stones are more prone to coming off/getting loose, however, no one seems to mention just NOT using any delicate rings in the first place.

I really enjoyed this one and found the information very valuable, not just for the ring flight methods, but the ring on string techniques as well.

If you have ever wanted to do a ring flight routine, or combine it with some string or wand methods, this DVD is highly recommended.

Featuring:

- STEVE DRAUN
- BRUCE CERVON
- DAN TONG
- DAN FLESHMAN

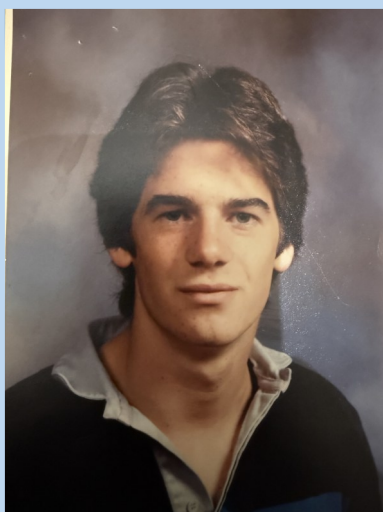
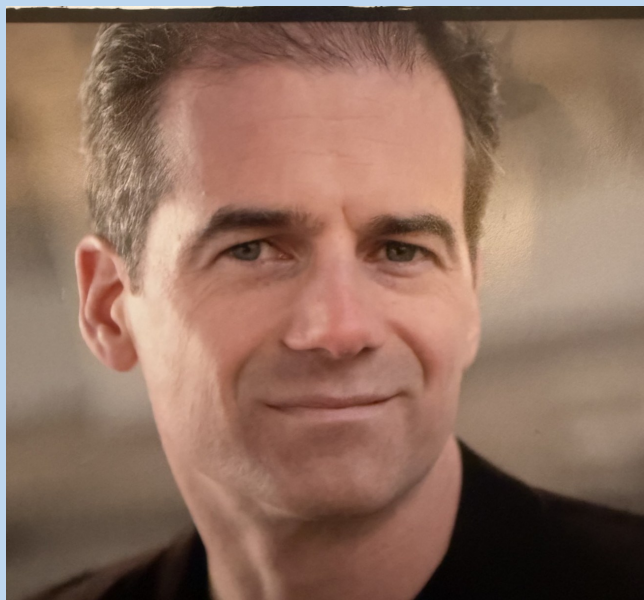
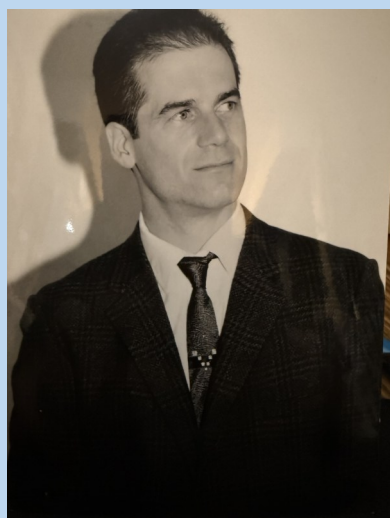
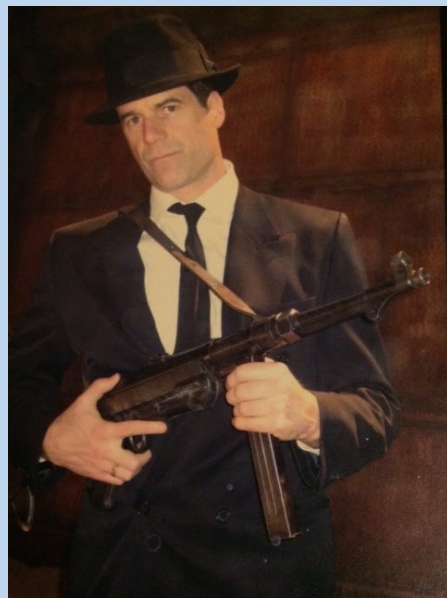
And Michael Close.

Stay magical.

J.Stenning

September 26, 2025

Photos of John Stenning — Page 3





MAGICIANS DURING TIMES OF WAR

(Top picture is that of an inflatable Sherman tank)

In honour of the men and women who bravely gave their lives, so that we may have the freedoms that we do, I wanted to briefly mention some of the contributions that magicians made towards our victory, especially during WW2.

Many people from all walks of life contributed to the war effort and magicians were no exception. I know books have been written about this subject, however, I am only briefly delving into this topic.

Did you know that Maskelyne was the leader of a “magic gang” that was involved in creating tactical diversions, including the camouflaging of the city of Alexandria from aerial bombardment, as well as the mobilization of phantom tank battalions and more?

Another great feat (among many) were the use of canvas and plywood to disguise 1,000 tanks as trucks, create fake tanks (some, as the picture depicts, were inflatable), as well as a fake railway line. Parachuting dummies on D-day was another tactic, and there was much more than that!

Fast forward to a different era, I’m sure some of you have heard of John Mulholland’s involvement with the CIA, who paid him to write a manual on deception and misdirection. Supposedly, the document was destroyed in 1973, however, copies later appeared and were published as “The Official CIA Manual of Trickery and Deception”.

As I have said, there is so much more written about this subject, which is truly fascinating.

So please, remember those who died so that we could be free of those who would see to it that we are not and be grateful for what you have in this great country of ours.

All the best to you and yours; stay magical and have a great holiday season and a Happy New Year.

J.Stenning Nov 13/2025

NATHAN COE MARSH: Lecture at H.W. June 1, 2026

Nathan Coe Marsh gave an entertaining and informative lecture at Shawn Farquhar's Hidden wonders theatre in New Westminster, for a good two solid hours or more.

Starting with, basically, making us all promise to ask him before we use it, he showed us an ingenious coin in bottle/vanishing bottle routine of the likes I'd never seen before, using some very creative methods! After that, he went on to:

- Do a great card routine involving a member of the audience and a vanishing deck.

- A thumb tie routine with pipe cleaners.

- A signed bill to orange routine that had some hilarious lines!

Of course, there was so much more, with Nathan offering a package deal at the conclusion.

A very interesting, informative lecture for only \$20! I urge you to take advantage of these opportunities when you can.

J.Stenning

June 8/2026

Acknowledgements

This special memorial edition of *The Magical Minutes* in loving memory of **John Robert 'Melrick' Stenning** was curated and compiled by **Roy J Hopwood** with heartfelt thanks to those who supplied photographs of **John**, including:

- ♦ Annette M Stenning
- ♦ Peter Stenning
- ♦ Roy J Hopwood
- ♦ Henry Tom
- ♦ Scott Barker

*Thank you, John. For
your friendship, your
work, your humour, and
your magic.*