



**Spirit of the North
TRADE SHOW
is back in High Level!**

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Page 10 - The Echo, Wednesday, May 9, 2012

Magic comes to High Level

Michael Stamou

John Kaplan arrived in High Level and thrilled children and adults alike with his Abraca-dazzle Magic Show at Florence MacDougall Community School on Wednesday May 2, 2012.

Kaplan put on two shows at the school Wednesday night to the delight of audiences. Kaplan travels for six weeks in the spring to towns like High Level to put on magic shows that will help a school or an organization raise money for other programs.

"It is great to be able to do these fundraisers, and at the end of the day, not only are we able to put smiles on kids' faces but hopefully put money into the bank accounts of organizations like this school," said Kaplan.

When asked why Kaplan puts on these shows he said he always knew that performing was in his blood and he liked to travel, so he combined them to make up his show. Kaplan loves seeing the kid's faces and how they light up when he does one of his illusions. But ultimately, it is about fun for the entire family.

"I love this because we are

getting families together and getting kids together with their parents and they are able to enjoy these shows on the same level, there are not a lot of things like that out there, so it is great to be able to do that," added Kaplan.

The school created a concession stand for the event where they sold a variety of items, from hamburgers to popcorn to bags of candy with all money going to the school. They also had four types of raffles that increased the fundraising campaign. Florence MacDougall Community School raised over \$7,000 from the magic show and that money will now go to having the Trickster Theatre Group come into town next year to put on a production with the students from all three schools.

School principal Kevin Crosby was excited he managed to get Kaplan to come to town and was pleased with the turnout of both shows.

"We had 400 people for the first show and over 200 for the second show which was nice to see. The show was really great. It was very well received, everybody was happy and there were lots of smiles everywhere,"

said Crosby. "I think the biggest thing is when you can look at your audience and everybody is still smiling you know you had a good show."

Kaplan is an illusionist who performed some big and small tricks, all of them exciting the children. He even involved the audience members in his show when he put Aydin Chisaakay-Soucy on a surfboard and levitated her off the ground. Allan Packard, another audience participant, was lying on a bench when he had spikes driven through his torso. His grand finale was a tribute to the great Harry Houdini as he locked his assistant in a trunk and then managed to switch places with her right before the audience's eyes. Kaplan also performed card tricks, which had kids buzzing about them the next day.

"There was a lot of talk on the playground (on Thursday). Kids were saying how much fun they had at the show and the kids were describing the tricks to each other. Some of the kids were even trying the card tricks from last night. There was just a real chatter about the show," Crosby said.

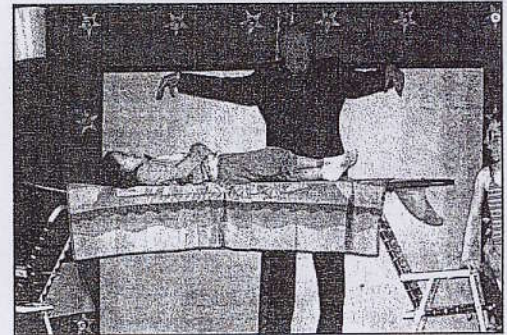
With Kaplan and his

magic show having come and gone the only question that remained was would Kaplan reappear next year.

"Absolutely it was worth having John (Kaplan) come here but it is a timing thing, it is not a show you would want to repeat annually. You need people to be fresh, engaged and watching the show. But this year, it was the right thing to do," added Crosby.

The sole purpose for the magic show wasn't necessarily about raising money it was more about variety.

"One of the things we try to do every year is one of our schools budget a certain amount of money for cultural activities or entertainment you wouldn't get the opportunity to be exposed to given where we live. This magic show was one of these activities. We wanted to bring in something the kids weren't going to get a chance to see unless they travelled a great distance," Crosby said. "If we made money that was a bonus, but at this point, we brought something different into the community and I think everybody went home happy. In the end you just looked at the reactions and you knew it was worth doing."



MICHAEL STAMOU

Magician John Kaplan levitates audience volunteer Aydin Chisaakay-Soucy on a surfboard during his magic show at Florence MacDougall Community School on Wednesday May 2, 2012.



Kaplan and Aydin Chisaakay-Soucy received a round of applause after the trick.



MICHAEL STAMOU

Magician John Kaplan appears out of thin air wearing a Team Canada jersey after the grand finale paying tribute to Harry Houdini during the magic show at Florence MacDougall Community School on Wednesday May 2, 2012.



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Magician John Kaplan's assistants trap him in an awkward position during his magic show at Florence MacDougall Community School on Wednesday May 2, 2012.