



Maple Creek NEWS



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A CLEAN CUT! - Blindfolded magician John Kaplan slams the blade of his guillotine down on Tyson Krause's neck as Kaplan performs his guillotine illusion during *Stage Fright, the Thrillusion Show* at the Armoury on Oct. 9. The blade sliced through two carrots on either side of Krause's head, but left the volunteer unharmed. The fundraiser brought in \$5,300 for Jack & Jill Nursery School. Photo by Marcia Love

Thrills and chills at magic show

By Marcia Love

"Any last words?" magician John Kaplan asked as he locked Tyson Krause into the guillotine frame.

"Can I have that blindfold?" responded Krause to a roar of laughter from the crowd.

A blindfolded Kaplan then placed the razor-sharp guillotine blade in the device and slammed it down on Krause's neck, cutting clean through two carrots placed on either side of his head, but leaving the willing volunteer unscathed.

The illusion was one of many Kaplan performed before the eyes of children and their parents at *Stage Fright, the Thrillusion Show* on Oct. 9.

The fundraiser for Jack & Jill Co-operative Nursery School brought a full house of 300 people to the Armoury to be dazzled and puzzled by the Vancouver-based magician's tricks.

His show included participation by children and adults in the audience, garnering screams of surprise and cheers of amazement from youngsters watching.

Mind-boggling illusions Kaplan carried out included "the witch's cabinet," in which he shoved broomsticks through a cabinet and a doll stored inside. After the broomsticks appeared to eerily dislodge from the cabinet on their own, a woman emerged.

Janae Wilson joined Kaplan on stage for his levitation illusion. Lying down on a board placed between two chairs, Wilson maintained the same posture as Kaplan removed one of the chairs and the board.

Kristine Scheller assisted the magician with his "Great Canadian Card Trick" - a truly Canadian illusion he created and debuted at the Maple Creek show. After Scheller picked a card out of a deck and wrote on it, the card was placed back in the deck, hidden in a box and doused in maple syrup. Kaplan then waved a hockey stick over the box, which immediately began spewing out cards. With one card clinging to the hockey stick, the illusionist held it out for Scheller to see. Smiling, she confirmed that it was the card she had signed. *Continued on page 2*

Show a thrilling fundraiser for play school

Continued from page 1

Kathy Schneider was the lucky winner of a prize pack from Cypress Park, the Resort at Cypress Hills and

Cypress Hills Eco Adventures Ltd. when she picked the right key that opened a locked coffin.

Kaplan closed the show with his metamorphosis illusion, in which his assistant was tied inside a large bag, set in a crate and locked inside. The magician then stood on the crate as a second assistant threw a curtain around him. When the curtain dropped, the woman who was locked inside the box stood in his place. Opening the crate, Kaplan emerged with a grin.

After 34 years of performing at fundraising events across the country, Kaplan said the thrill of hearing children exclaiming their excitement and shock at seeing his magic tricks still hasn't gotten old.

"It's a reward when people come back afterwards and comment about how they enjoyed it with their

they had," he said.

Assisting in raising money for local groups and organizations is also one of the best parts of the show to Kaplan.

"It's always rewarding when I know that we've succeeded in helping a worthwhile community group raise good money with the show, because that's part of our mandate," he explained.

Kaplan gained an interest in magic tricks at a young age.

"I saw a magician when I was nine years old at a Christmas party, and that same Christmas I got a magic set," he recalled.

After graduating high school, he began apprenticing under a professional magician in Calgary. Since then, he has been using his skills to aid in fundraising efforts in more than 500 communities across Canada.

His *Stage Fright* show raised \$5,300 for the nurs-

ery school.

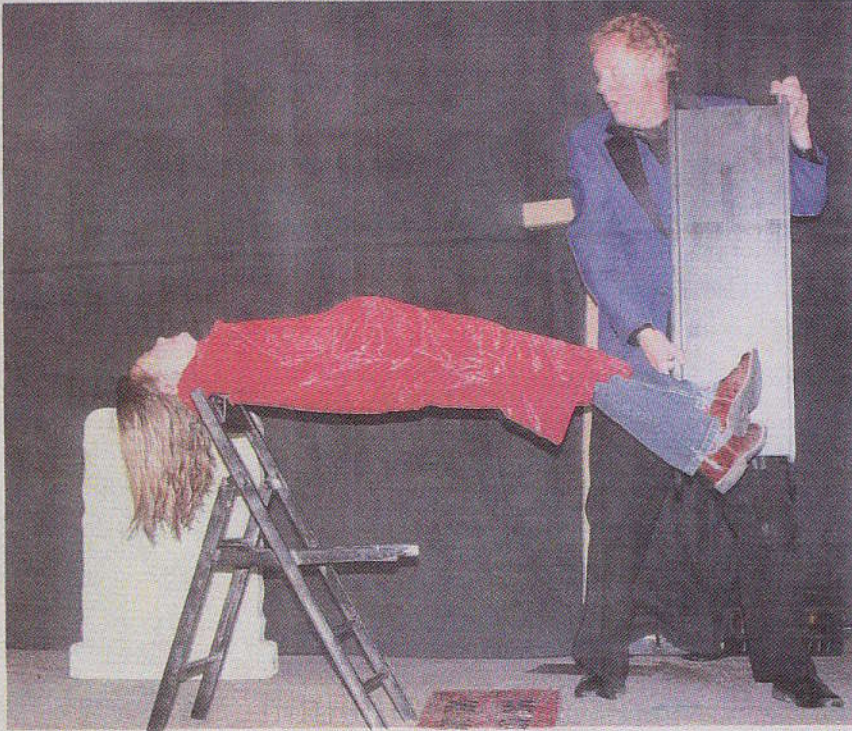
Organizer Tracy Bowie said the event was a huge success, selling out within a week.

"It was excellent, because the community support was just unbelievable," she said. "We never expected a sold out show... and I think everyone enjoyed themselves, so it was worth it."

The proceeds will go towards operating the play school, as the number of children attending has been down in recent years.

"Unfortunately, in the last few years we've just had a declining number of three- and four-year-olds," Bowie explained. "So in a couple of years when the population of three- and four-year-olds is more, we expect that we'll be back up in numbers at the school, because it's a really beneficial pre-step into kindergarten. We just wanted to make sure it's available for those in the future."

Thrillusion Magic Show wows audience



Janae Wilson is suspended in mid-air as magician John Kaplan removes one of the chairs and the board she was lying on during his levitation illusion at *Stage Fright, the Thrillusion Show* on Oct. 9. The Vancouver-based magician performed for a full house of 300 eager children and their parents, raising \$5,300 for Jack & Jill Co-operative Nursery School.



Is this your card? Kaplan shows Kristine Scheller the card she signed and tucked back in the deck, placed in a box and doused in maple syrup for the magician's "Great Canadian Card Trick." He retrieved her card after waving a hockey stick in front of the box.



ABOVE: An eerily clad Kaplan shoves broomsticks through holes in a cabinet with a doll placed inside in his "witch's cabinet" illusion. The broomsticks later appeared to be thrown from the cabinet on their own and a woman emerged.



RIGHT: Kaplan's head and legs remain visible, but his assistants show that his torso has disappeared during the magician's "disembodied" trick. The women then closed the doors on the box and opened them again to bring him back perfectly intact.

Photos by Marcia Love