

# Magic man makes money appear

## PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDRAISERS/

*John Kaplan has made a career as a magician who helps community groups get projects rolling*



Magician John Kaplan, pictured here with his part-time assistant Dana Hunter, brings his *Makin' Magic* show to dozens of schools around the Lower Mainland.

PHOTO/Contributed

John Kaplan is fond of making people disappear, but he's even better at making money appear for community groups.

The longtime magician has carved a niche as equal parts performer and fundraiser.

For more than a quarter century, the in-demand magic man has developed a step-by-step plan to help community groups sell tickets and maximize profits for various projects, such as playground construction, computer equipment and big field trips.

"I realized in those early days that when I'd agree to do these shows, I didn't want these groups to be there on show day biting their fingernails hoping people would come," says Kaplan, a native Calgarian who now calls Richmond home.

"I had to create a fail-safe plan for them to follow. It's all part of a project kit I send out, and I hold their hand a little bit along the way."

Kaplan's performance calendar is well inked with dates at schools and halls in Surrey, Delta and other places around Metro Vancouver.

Next up locally is a performance Friday, March 14 at Seaquam Secondary in North Delta, a key fundraiser for the construction of a new playground at nearby Pinewood Elementary.

Kaplan's family-friendly *Makin' Magic* show offers the best tricks of his career, including sawing someone in half, making audience members appear, disappear and float in the air, and "having an orange read somebody's mind," along with multi-media sights and sounds.

In addition to tickets sales for his shows, Kaplan helps groups produce other revenue streams such as a souvenir program and a pledge contest that sees the winner (or loser) get sawed in half on stage.

There are more than three dozen such "piggyback" fundraisers detailed in Kaplan's project kit.

"If groups take a handful of those ideas and add them in the mix,

Tom ZILlich  
Staff reporter

with ticket sales, the show can be very profitable," says Kaplan, noting one recent performance that grossed more than \$14,000 for a community group.

"It proves this program really works, and I'm proud of that. It's rewarding and gratifying work, because I get to perform, people get to enjoy a show and groups raise money for something special. It's all win-win."

**JOHN KAPLAN/**  
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In a way, Kaplan was tricked in the world of magic when, at age nine, he received a magic set for Christmas and was hooked. As a preteen, he was getting paid to perform at birthday parties. By age 21, he'd logged hundreds of shows as an apprentice of veteran magician Micky Hades.

"It was a childhood ambition that led to a full-blown career," he says.

In 1980, Kaplan developed his own touring illusion shows, which over the years have been honed, tweaked and made thematic for special events on the calendar (Halloween, Christmas) and other occasions.

Tickets for Kaplan's *Makin' Magic* show March 14 at Seaquam are \$10 for adults or \$5 for children. For details, email [glfin@telus.net](mailto:glfin@telus.net) or call Pinewood Elementary at 604-590-3357.

In Surrey, Kaplan performs in April at events organized for William F. Davidson and Janice Churchill elementary schools.

For more details about the *Makin' Magic* show, go online at [www.welikemagic.com](http://www.welikemagic.com) or call 604-521-8804.

# HOW Livings

## Egg-painting sessions this month

Ever wanted to put a fine paint job on an Easter egg?

A series of pysanka workshops happen this month at the Ukrainian Orthodox Centre in North Surrey.

The sessions, sponsored by Ukrainian Women's Association, are held Thursday (March 6, 13 and 27) at the centre from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., at 13512 108th Ave.

The \$15 workshop fee includes eggs, tools and dyes.

Pre-register by calling 604-581-8775 or 604-581-0313.