



Illusionist John Kaplin (left) along with his assistant gets ready to perform an operation on volunteer Cindy Pylypov who came out of the audience on Thursday evening, May 7—and left without a scratch. Story in this paper. ©PROVOST NEWS PHOTO.

Magician Does His Part to Help New Playground Equipment Appear

Hundreds of people were mystified by the work of magician John Kaplin on Thursday, May 7 as he put on an eye-popping show to help the Provost Public School raise funds for new playground equipment to appear at Provost Public School this fall.

Kaplan's tricks and illusions were enough to make a full house of about 400 people at the Provost Recreation and Culture Centre gasp in disbelief time and time again.

A handful of card tricks, several disappearing acts, elevating an audience member and cutting another in half were just some of the many illusions Kaplan pulled out of his bag of tricks.

The 51 year old from Richmond, B.C. has been in the business for decades. It all began when he received his first magic set and saw his first magician at the age

of nine. "After that I was just totally hooked," he said.

Kaplan generally performs at least 75 days a year which translates into about 100 performances. He says he is able to keep his energy with the adrenaline he gets from performing for the audience, and is able to stay in pretty good shape from setting up and taking

down the equipment before and after each show, which can take several hours each time.

Although the first week of a tour is usually the most grueling, he and his crew get into a bit of a routine. The magician, who also does the driving while on tour, lives for "being in front of a family audience, the interaction, and having fun with

the audience."

"He was amazing," said Provost Public School Society representative Trina Kohlman. "The turnout was fantastic, the kids are all talking about him."

This is at least his third time wowing a Provost crowd, but believes it had been at least 10 years since the last time he was in town. The largest audience Kaplan has performed for is about 20,000 fans at McMahon Stadium in Calgary when he did a set as part of a half-time show at a football game.

Kaplan advised anyone who's interested in magic to "go for it. I'm proof it's possible to make a living at it," he said, and also acknowledged parents would be fairly hesitant to have a child embark on such a path. "It's not easy but anyone that has the desire, passion and ability can make it."

Kohlman told *The News* that the existing playground equipment on the west side of the Provost Public School is not up to standards set by the Canadian Standards Association and will be replaced at a cost of approximately \$250,000.

The bulk of the quarter million dollar price tag comes from \$125,000

worth of equipment and another \$100,000 for surf-

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Magician John Kaplin (left) performs famed illusionist Harry Houdini's "Metamorphosis" as the finale to his show in Provost at Prairie Hall on Thursday evening, May 7. Photo right shows the entertainer making different currency appear. Story in this paper. ©PROVOST NEWS PHOTO.

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